

As my work took me out of the office of the *Daily Telegraph* more frequently, it became obvious that I needed an Assistant Science Correspondent if news items of scientific interest from England were to be adequately covered. Much of my absence was abroad, and the Home News Editor, with whom I was never on the best of terms, threatened to have a poster displayed outside the building "Science Correspondent briefly in Fleet Street". I wish he had, I would have treasured it as a great compliment. My principle had always been that the best science stories would not be brought to my desk, but that I had to find them, either somewhere in England or abroad.

An advertisement for my Assistant was therefore placed in the *Daily Telegraph* and quite a number of applications were received from which I compiled a short list for interviews. A standard procedure was applied at each interview and after a preliminary talk about experience, scientific and journalistic qualifications, I told each candidate:

"There (pointing) in this office is a normal typewriter with paper, there (pointing again) is a clock. You have 10 minutes to write a short story about either the 'First astronaut to land on the Moon is British' or alternatively 'A British submarine has discovered the remnants of Atlantis'. Now start to write it!"

Admittedly a brutal test for any candidate for a new job, but I was convinced that this task was imitating the often extremely harsh conditions in which a science writer for a daily newspaper would have to operate. The resulting stories were compared by the friendly old Scotsman of the News Room and myself. Our judgement was clearly in favour of Clare Dover, and a telegram was immediately dispatched to inform her of the appointment.

Many years later she told me that she was furious about me and the test, and had burst into tears when she left the building. But having read the telegram, she accepted and we worked happily and harmoniously together for many years until she was offered a better position on the *Daily Express* and left. I was right in setting the test as Clare proved time and time again that she could master the most difficult assignments, for example to be the first woman reporter on a British oil rig in the North Sea.

I had little difficulty in finding a replacement. Lord Hartwell called me to his office and asked me if I would accept his son, Adrian Berry, as my assistant. I replied that if he would follow my instructions, I would try him out. We soon became good friends, and his experience of having written best-selling science fiction books and his great enthusiasm for space and astronomy, made our joint reporting of Apollo 11 a real pleasure. [see titles 182 + 183] He succeeded me when I left in 1973.