



what the true impact of his illness was on the people he worked with.

To begin with, all the time that David had booked in the studio had to be cancelled. Schedules drawn up long before the first twinge in David's side were torn up. That bothered him, of course, but Wes Farrell came around and chatted for awhile.

"Wes told me not to worry about it, because after all we had been ahead of schedule at the time. We also managed to work out what we would do when I did get back," David told me.

But it was a different state of affairs at the Columbia Ranch. It was, in short, close to chaos. At first, it looked like they would be able to shoot some of the episodes around David. This is pretty standard procedure in filming, and David had made use of it before when he had needed an extra day or two on a concert tour.

BIG ATTRACTION

But that was not much use in this case.

As David had become increasingly popular, the scripts were written to give him a larger role. And gradually, David had begun to be the big attraction in the Partridge Family.

As a result, one of the things that David would have done anything to avoid became a fact.

"The studio decided to cancel filming the show until further notice. I felt bad enough lying around, but when Ruth told me that, I was sick.

Still, it had to be done. There was no Partridge Family without David. Of course, each of the members was important, and if they'd had their gall bladders out, it would have been roughly the same situation. David knew that, but it didn't make him feel too much better.

Still, things were on the mend for him. He was growing less and less uncomfortable as time passed, and he began to get up and around a little bit in the afternoons.

Not much at first, but each day he could venture a little bit further, into the garden or out by the pool.

"I never thought .nat being able to walk around was such a big deal. But after three weeks in bed, I felt like a short walk into the living room was a great exploratory journey!

"It also never occurred to me that I could be so exhausted by so little physical effort. But more than a few steps and I was really destroyed.

It didn't occur to David that there was quite a

good reason for this.

For all his life, he had never had a weight problem. He was unable to keep himself at a more or less 130 pounds.

All of a sudden, there was a rather serious weight problem.

David had lost a stone and four pounds! Where he lost it is something that no one could figure out. After all, he was so thin naturally that it seemed impossible to lose any extra weight.

Still, a quick check of the scales revealed that David was short the 18 pounds.

"It had been a while since I had worn clothes," he told me, "but I realised as soon as I put on a pair of jeans that they were a good deal looser than they had been.

"Still, I guess with all the people who complain about putting on weight, I had it pretty easy. At least I could look forward to putting it back on again!" It was the weakness, though, that bothered David the most. This was especially true when he returned to work.

Everyone on the set was pleasant and concerned about him, which helped. The make-up crew joked with him about having to make him look fatter.

But the hardest problem of all fell into the wardrobe department's basket.

They had to redo some of David's clothes to make sure that they fit.

So David had to stand patiently while some pretty exasperated people pinned his clothes to a considerably thinner figure than the one who had last worn them.

But all in all, everybody was as helpful as they could possibly be. The director allowed the schedule to sag occasionally around David's low points. There was always time for a rest.

And David also found that his voice lacked the quality it had had before the operation. But Wes Farrell was quick to point out that it would come with time.

And David knew that, even if it didn't sound quite right, he would be all right after a few week's time.

And afterwards, the only thing that David had to remind him of the operation was a long, ugly scar across his side.

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