



The

Veteran

ISSUE 168
AUTUMN 2020

The Magazine of
The British Cinema and
Television Veterans

You are invited...

See page 3



BFI SOUTHBANK (2)

PLUS: The Newsletter of the Film & Television Charity





British Cinema and Television Veterans

Founded 1921

An association of men and women who have given more than 30 years to the cinema, film or television industries

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Enquiries concerning all matters of membership including membership cards, changes of address and notices of bereavements, and all general enquiries:

Company Secretary

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Tel: 020 7287 2976
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Website

BCTV.website
www.britishcinemaandtelevisionveterans.org.uk

PAID BUT NOT RECEIVED YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD?

We are now back at our old address. Due to some problems with our post while we were in temporary accommodation, it seems some members have renewed their subscription but not yet received their membership card. If this applies to you, please contact us by email or telephone:

bctv.veterans@btopenworld.com
020 7287 2976

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The Film & Television Charity is a separate organisation from The British Cinema and Television Veterans – for contact details, see page 31

The Veteran

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BRITISH CINEMA AND TELEVISION VETERANS LIMITED

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AGM

**21 Days' Notice is hereby Given of the
Annual General Meeting of Members on Wednesday 28th October 2020
to be held at 12 noon
at the National Film Theatre, BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Notice convening the meeting
3. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd July 2019
4. Matters arising not on the Agenda
5. To receive the President's Report
6. To receive the Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020
7. To receive the Honorary Independent Examiner's Report
8. To approve the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020
9. To appoint the Honorary Independent Examiner for the year ending 31st March 2021
10. To note that:
 - (i) in accordance with Articles 8.3 and 8.4 of the Articles of Association, one third of the Executive Committee is required to retire at each Annual General Meeting, these being the longest serving Members. This year the retiring Members are Stuart Hall, Mike Vickers, Ted Childs, Linda Ayton and Spencer MacDonald. They are all offering themselves for re-election and are automatically nominated
 - (ii) Article 8.1.1 specifies that no more than 6 Executive Committee Members may be elected in any one year
11. To elect up to 6 Executive Committee Members
12. Any other ordinary business

**By Order of the Executive Committee
Kathy Darby, Company Secretary**

Please note:

*Nomination forms can be obtained from the Company Secretary
Exceptional and special arrangements apply for this year's meeting. Please see the details on page 5.*

Members are reminded they may only vote in person and may be asked to show their membership card to prove their eligibility.

*Any member wishing to attend the AGM should notify the Company Secretary no later than
Wednesday 21 October.*

BRITISH CINEMA AND TELEVISION VETERANS LIMITED

Draft Profit and Loss Account for the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Turnover		
Members Subscriptions	43,263	43,063
Members joining fees	1,375	1,875
Events for members	767	2,538
Contribution towards magazine costs		4,160
Other income	140	182
	<u>45,545</u>	<u>51,818</u>
Cost of sales		
Costs of magazine	23,685	23,727
Costs of events	1,482	4,660
	<u>25,167</u>	<u>28,387</u>
Gross Profit	20,378	23,431
Other Operating Income		
Donations	10,455	11,994
Administrative expenses		
Staff costs	21,174	21,522
Rent	3,000	3,500
Other costs	8,978	6,587
	<u>33,152</u>	<u>31,609</u>
Operating surplus (deficit)	(2,319)	3,816
Interest receivable	157	153
Surplus (deficit) on ordinary activities	(2,162)	3,969
Corporation Tax paid	53	0
Surplus (deficit) after taxation	(2,215)	3,969

Draft Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020

	Equipment £	Furniture £	31-Mar 2020 Total £	31-Mar 2019 Total £
FIXED ASSETS				
At Cost				
Carried forward 31st March 2020	803	268	1,071	1,071
Depreciation				
Carried forward 31st March 2020	(758)	(253)	(1,011)	(991)
Net Book Value	45	15	60	80
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash at bank			91,758	93,944
			<u>91,758</u>	<u>93,944</u>
ACCRUALS AND DEFERRED INCOME				
Deferred income in advance from Members		29,980		34,605
Accruals		8,045		3,411
		<u>38,025</u>		<u>38,016</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			53,733	55,928
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>53,793</u>	<u>56,008</u>
RESERVES			£	£
Profit and loss account Brought forward 1st April 2019			56,008	52,039
Deficit for the period			(2,215)	3,969
TOTAL RESERVES AT 31ST MARCH 2020			<u>53,793</u>	<u>56,008</u>

These more detailed accounts have been prepared to give members information on the position of the Company. The accounts which will be approved at the AGM and then filed with Companies House will have less detail and will be prepared under the regulations of the Financial Reporting Standard for Micro-Entities (FRS 105) as required by EU and international law.

2020 Annual General Meeting – Attendance Instructions

The meeting has been planned with the National Film Theatre (NFT) so that our visit is Covid-19 secure.

- Attendance at the meeting MUST be pre-booked by Wednesday 21st October.
- Please book by e-mail to the Company Secretary. If you do not have Internet access you may book by telephone.
- Access to the NFT building will be via the entrance in Theatre Avenue. Shown on the front cover, this is the avenue between the NFT and the

National Theatre which connects Belvedere Road with the river front.

- The NFT can be reached by three main routes. These are the pedestrian footbridge from Embankment Underground Station; by foot from Waterloo Station; or by crossing Waterloo Bridge. If using the Bridge there are steps from the east side of the bridge direct to Theatre Avenue.
- The assembly location will be signposted and there will be NFT staff to help you.

- PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 11.30am as there will be no access to the building until that time.
- Please report to Kathy Darby (or a member of the Executive Committee depending on who is available) when you arrive and you will be issued with a seat ticket.
- You will be escorted from the entrance to NFT 2.
- NFT2 is fully accessible.
- There are regular toilets and an accessible toilet adjacent to NFT 2.
- In order for social distancing to be maintained it is very important that you remain in the seat you are allocated until the AGM has finished.
- You will be given any relevant papers when you arrive at NFT2.
- You will be required to wear a face covering at all times within the NFT building unless consuming food or drink.
- Members are reminded they may only vote in person and may be asked to show their membership card to prove their eligibility.
- If Covid restrictions permit it, light refreshments will be provided after the AGM. Details will be announced at the meeting.

The auditorium of NFT 2 – see also front cover. (BFI Southbank).



To: The Members of British Cinema and Television Veterans Limited

The independent examination of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020

I have been asked to be the Honorary Independent Examiner of the incorporated Association by the Executive Committee, ratified by the Members at the 2019 AGM, for the financial year ended 31st March 2020.

I confirm that there is no conflict of interest that prevents me from preparing this report.

This report is made solely to the Members, as a body, in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and Articles of Association of British Cinema and Television Veterans Limited.

The Members have not requested a statutory audit under Section 476 of the

Companies Act 2006 (the Act).

The Directors have claimed exemption from statutory audit under Sections 475 and 477 of the Act and I confirm that the Company was entitled to this exemption.

The financial statements, which will be used as the basis of electronic filing at Companies House, have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions and Financial Reporting Standard 105, on an accruals basis.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the accounting records and the accuracy of the financial statements based on those records lies with the Directors of the Company.

I have not undertaken an audit of these accounts.

When undertaking my review, I have concentrated in particular on the relevance and authorisation of expenditure, the completeness and agreement of the accounts to the underlying records and the format of the statutory accounts.

I have relied on information given by the Honorary Treasurer and from the Executive Committee minutes and have prepared a summary of my findings and comments for the Executive Committee for their information. I have also reconciled the results of the BCTV to those informally published in THE VETERAN magazine, Summer 2020 edition.

PETER SAMENGO-TURNER

THE BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

MOIRA ARMSTRONG

TELEVISION DIRECTOR

Interviewer: Darrol Blake

Cameraman: John Sealey

Date: 18 July 2006

Production Media: Video



(Photograph by John Henshall.)

The full interview runs 108 minutes 32 seconds and is readily accessible free of charge on the BEHP website – just search “BEHP”.

The transcription on which this edited version is based was provided in 2015 by the AHRC-funded *History of Women in British Film and Television* project, 1933-1989.

Moira Armstrong was born in Creiff in Scotland in 1930. She was one of the most active female directors in television. *Body & Soul* (1993) was nominated as best drama serial for the BAFTA TV awards in 1994.

Testament of Youth (1979) won the Best Drama Series/Series category at the 1980 BAFTA TV Awards.

Interview copyright © The British Entertainment History Project

At school, I used to write little plays and bored my school friends by producing them at the end of term. I then started to act myself when I was a little bit older and played in the school play. We always did Shakespeare in the garden every summer because we had an English teacher who herself was an actress and did a lot of broadcasting on the BBC in Aberdeen, so I played Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* before I left school. I did an ordinary degree in English and History and I left and joined Perth Repertory Company. I was a student to start with, which meant they didn't pay me anything, and then, when they gave me a job as an ASM, they paid me the princely sum of four pound ten a week and ten shillings extra for working on Sundays.

I played Bella in *Worm Eye's View*, which was quite interesting, and we went on tour and I played in a terrible farce set in South America. Russell Hunter played the chief minister or something. He was stage manager and John Hart Dyke and I were the two ASMs and we both had parts in the play. I was there for about two years.

Rapidly I came to the conclusion that I really wasn't a good enough actress to get to where I wanted to be, and I'd always been interested in directing. I used to watch the director at Perth Rep and get involved in choosing music and things like that, which was really that side of the business rather than acting. I saw an advertisement to go for an appointments board at the BBC in *The Daily Telegraph*, which I used to do the crossword every day just

to give myself something to do. I was selected to go down to London to be interviewed and then there was silence for about a couple of months – no rejection, nothing. My parents were down in London at the Motor Show, and I learnt afterwards, to my astonishment, that my mother, who wouldn't have said boo to a goose, apparently went up to Portland Place and asked to see the Appointments Officer and said why hadn't her daughter been told whether she'd got this appointment for the job or not? And they said, “Oh well, we sent a letter saying she'd been accepted.” Meanwhile, my father, who was a great friend of Kenneth Horne, told him and Kenneth Horne said, “Well, do you want me to do something about it?” So I had two prongs going. Anyway, they then repeated the letter and they said we can't let you come on to the course that was starting that winter so I joined them in May of the following year [1955].

There were two courses, one at Broadcasting House, which I wasn't on, and the other one, held in Marylebone High Street – a course for studio managers. When they put the advertisement in the *Telegraph* what they asked for was people with a degree and some sort of theatrical training, so I sort of fitted that. Most people on the studio manager's courses when I went were reckoned to be producer material, and that was what they were after.

I started off in Oxford Street once I'd got through the course. There was one night when Alexis Korner was on duty with me. One shift always did the dawn Arabic [broadcast], and in these days the dawn Arabic was in a

pressing which was about this big, you know. We always had about two or three hours in the middle of the night when we could sleep. And I was up on the fourth floor in a sort of hospital bed somewhere. Alexis and I had swapped shifts but he'd taken away the dawn Arabic with him and I didn't know where it was. I was sound asleep and the phone went and there was an engineer saying, "There's nobody done the pre-test for dawn Arabic", and I leapt downstairs all four flights to what was called LG22, a sort of a dubbing theatre in the basement, to find Alexis with the dawn Arabic and we went on air two minutes late. There was an apology sent by the BBC to the Foreign Office and all that, and then the inquest afterwards and what we didn't reveal was the fact that our shift leader had not been there that night.

I did quite a lot of announcing on what was called Green Continuity Service – it was the Overseas Service of the BBC. The night duty particularly was quite fun. And you had to do a programme parade about five o'clock in the morning, which was fifteen minutes long and time yourself on it, which was quite interesting to do. I was there for – was it two years or a year and a half? – and then I did an attachment as an AFM in television and then eventually applied for a job and got it. Before I left, Hugh Venables, who at that time was head of Bush House, tried to persuade me to stay. But I'd done the announcer's course by that time and "I don't want to stay and be bored to death", I said. So I went to television – in 1960 it must have been. I AFM'ed for about six months and then applied for attachment. It was a drama post that I got.

The Infamous John Friend (1959)

That was actually quite fun, live every Tuesday evening – from Lime Grove. In the final episode an actor called David Baron was playing Napoleon and his wife, Vivien Merchant, was playing the innkeeper's daughter, I think. Barry Foster played the lead and Margaret Tyzack was in it too. After one episode, we were all in the club bar in Lime Grove and Barry Foster, a great friend of David Baron, said, "Now David's written a play and he's stuck for the title." So we all threw up suggestions. This was Harold Pinter and the play was *The Birthday Party*.

Maigret (1960)

The opening titles of the shadow of the branch as he strikes his match against the wall was me holding a branch of leaves. I did quite a lot of the *Maigrets*. I worked with Andrew Osborn in his office and, because of my interest in casting, he used to let me do quite a lot of it quietly when he got bored or tired. And Rupert Davies who played Maigret relied on me because I used to really hand feed him. I would draw up a little tiny camera plan of the sets for him so he knew where he was going in the actual studio. I used to run round with my cut key after him around the sets. If he dired, you had a cut key, which was a cable with a key on the end, a little sort of a stopper on it, and you could cut the sound of the studio long enough for you to actually feed the line. If you were good enough at it, it meant they didn't have to do an edit in it. It was actually plugged in to the wall somewhere. Then you ran round the studio with this great length of cable from set to set with the book in your hand and you learned how to prompt pretty well in those circumstances. I was quite glad of my training in the theatre.

I remember being the first AFM to go to Paris on filming of *Maigret*. I was going to Cassis in the south of France on holiday anyway and I offered to recce a location for them, and because I'd done that, they said they'd let me go to the shoot, which was quite fun.

BBC2

There were advertisements for people to go on the directing training course, including members of staff. I'd learnt an awful lot being a PA.

A PA in those days was somebody who helped the director. There was a production assistant who typed the camera script and did all the paperwork attached to doing a show. You had your own office as a director and you had a PA and an AFM and an assistant – they were called assistants then, not production assistants. And you helped with casting, you very often helped with money and it was a training to be a director really, to a certain extent. You learnt an awful lot about cameras and lenses and things in the studio anyway. I worked with



Z Cars. Moira Armstrong, who directed two episodes in 1965, seen with Robert Keegan (Sgt. Blackitt), Stratford Johns (Detective Chief Inspector Barlow), Frank Windsor (Detective Sgt. Watt) and Brian Blessed (P.C. Smith).

Jim MacTaggart for two years, so I learnt a great deal from him. He was considered to be one of the best directors around. And he was – not only was he good with actors but he was very good technically. He did the first production of *Alice in Wonderland* using what they called CSO – Colour Separation Overlay – which was how you actually put your actors in fanciful backgrounds, done with two sets of pictures. It's done with computers nowadays, of course. And he did a lot of writing as well. He was very good at adaptations and he produced *The Wednesday Play*. He did thirty-five plays in one year, which is an awful lot of work. Tony Garnett and Ken Trodd worked for him. I used to watch what he did in rehearsal and I did the camera scripts for him, so that I learnt a great deal. And, in fact, I still do a shot list for film. That's what he taught me and I've never changed it because it seemed to me the most logical way of doing it. People do remember him because The MacTaggart Lecture still happens at the Edinburgh Television Festival.

I applied for one of the traineeships because it was open to members of staff as well as people from the outside. Ken Loach was on the course before me and Gareth Davies was another one. There was an appointments board and if you were selected you then had an individual interview with Donald Baverstock, which I had. He was a rather frightening person in those days. I was selected and we went on a training course in Woodstock Grove. In those days it was six weeks of lectures and then you did three exercises. Two of them were set exercises, you had to do the ones that were offered you, and then the third one was your own one.

The first one was a script that had never been done as *Z Cars*, and I cast John Thaw in it because I thought he was a very up and coming young actor. Then the middle one was a training exercise in how to handle graphics and this was the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, and I got all my mates from radio to do the voices and put music on it. Then the third one was written for me by Jim McTaggart. I said to him, "I don't want anything realistic at all, I want something that I can use the studio." Because I've always maintained that in fact a television studio if used properly is actually just as exciting as the theatre, and you can be just as imaginative if you like. And unfortunately, you know, television went down the road of realism.

Directing

A director was doing a *Wednesday Play* written by Alan Plater and it was a huge set in TC1, which is a very, very large studio. And this director was having some sort of personal problems which was making his work very erratic and he obviously was heading for a breakdown. And Sydney Newman called Jim in to the office one Monday morning and explained this to him and said, "You've really got to do something about it." And Jim said, "Well, Moira's just come off the course", so I was put on it – which was a bit terrifying. I can't remember the director's name now – he treated me rather like a sort of pupil giving the exercises every morning when I brought in the camera script, because the deal was that he kept on talking to the actors and I would do the camera script.

However, we went into the gallery and it was three days in for that particular one because it was reckoned to be a rather difficult production. And this director sat between the vision mixer and me for a bit until Jim eventually came in to the gallery and said, "You can't do this. Moira's doing



Moira Armstrong directing *Sunset Song* (1972).

it, so come in to the observation gallery with us and leave her alone”, so he did. And the moment I remember was after having given final notes and all the rest of it and in the dinner break before we started recording that night, I was making my way to the gallery and standing there on the back staircase of Television Centre and saying to myself, “I could actually walk out of the building right now.” But I went in to the gallery and did it.

I got offered *R3* (1964/5) which was a sort of drama series set in a science lab that Andrew Osborn was producing and it had Elizabeth Sellars and Richard Wordsworth of *Quatermass* fame in it. I did about three or four of that and Andrew said, “I can’t keep you on directing unless you leave the staff, Moira, and I’ll give you a contract if you do.” So I left the staff and I came back on contract.

1970 – going freelance

I had worked with Verity Lambert on *Adam Adamant* in ’66, ’67, and Verity had moved to London Weekend to do *Budgie* and she asked me to come over and do two of those. I put my foot in it immediately I joined because I was sitting in this great big, wide open office in London, South Bank, and I started to cast and I rang up agents. Eventually I had a call from the head of casting in London Weekend saying, “What are you doing, talking to agents? Directors don’t do that.” And I said, “Well, they do in the BBC because we don’t have any casting directors on our staff.” He said, “Well, just do me a favour and come through our department from now on.” The studio that they did *Budgie* in those days was a bit of a ramshackle place in Wembley because they hadn’t moved down to their studios in South Bank, King’s Reach. It was terribly so untidy it was like a second hand shop – there was sad old equipment stacked in corners and things like that.

Villette (1970, five episodes)

A classic serial which was cursed from the start because there was a union disagreement and every single studio day the sets were late getting in so we got behind the whole time and that was very, very hard because it was a difficult show anyway and no one ever gave us the credit for actually getting through it, even though we got late starts and all the rest of it.

People knew me in the BBC because I’d actually been around for quite some time. Occasionally [as a woman] you would find little pockets of resistance. A lighting director whom I eventually got to know quite well, we had terrible arguments. He was really quite a tough customer and I think there was a resistance to being told by a woman what they wanted – not necessarily what to do, because I didn’t know enough about lighting except I knew what I wanted.

There still are predominantly women in the script department. It’s only now that most producers are women – there aren’t all that many male producers now. I think the balance has gone too far the other way myself, because as a woman director you find you suffer because of that. You get gay

men who are producers and don’t want women around or you get women producers who want men directors around and so you lose out on both fronts.

Sunset Song (1972, six episodes)

I had met Pharic Maclaren who was the producer when I was up in Scotland doing *The Boardroom*. And Bill Craig had done this adaptation of *Sunset Song*. It was one of the happiest times of my life because it was going back to one’s roots. And because I came from there, I was a great help to people, because most of the cast didn’t come from that part of Scotland so you had to teach them a bit about the accent. I had one genuine person coming there, in Stonehaven – Victor Carin who played a lead part. And even people like Roddy McMillan and the various actors of that sort of stature came from Glasgow, which is the west of Scotland and quite a different accent. It was a long, hard job ironing out the west of Scotland from all their voices. But it was one of the most satisfying things I’ve ever done because it was a very, very good script. Bill was way ahead of his time because he did write *Callan* and things like that for London Weekend in the ’60s. But because this was very close to him too, he did a wonderful job in the adaptation. It was like a film script actually. A lot of film, and we had a very generous time to do it.

I cast Vivien Heilbron who played Chris in *Sunset Song* because I’d seen her in *Dr. Finlay’s Casebook*. She played a German in that and she’s Scots of course, from Glasgow, but she’s got a very good ear and she looked right. I had to convince Pharic that she was right. She had to come up to Glasgow and do a screen test because he wasn’t convinced. Then eventually he was and she was cast.

Shoulder to Shoulder (1974, serial)

Shoulder to Shoulder was Verity producing and she was determined to have as many women on it as possible because of the subject matter, of course: the suffragettes and what happened with them, like Emily Wilding Davison being knocked down by the King’s horse in the Derby, which was my episode. And it was really the story of the Pankhursts basically, and Siân Phillips played the senior Pankhurst. Christabel and Sylvia were the two daughters. And it was centred round their efforts to get the vote for women and it was written by Hugh Whitemore. Eileen Diss designed it.

The Girls of Slender Means (1975, three episodes)

Girls of Slender Means was Muriel Spark’s novel, a very good adaptation by Ken Taylor, who eventually did *Jewel in the Crown*, of course. But it was really because he was very fond of Muriel Spark. It was great fun to do because it’s a terrific book and I had a wonderful cast: Miriam Margolyes played the lead, with Jack Shepherd and James Laurenson and Patricia Hodge.

Clay, Smeddum and Greenden (1976, Play for Today)

Which was in fact three short stories joined together by a narrator who was a travelling grocer played by Fulton Mackay, who was wonderful actually

with that. And *Clay* was the name of one story. *Greenenden* was in fact the final story, with Claire Nielson and Brian Cox in it. The middle one, *Smedden*, had Eileen McCallum to lead and *Clay* had Victor Corin as a lead. In the north east again – a lot of the locations I knew because I'd found them when I was doing *Sunset Song*.

The thing that really made me very angry was it went on the air during the miners' strike with Heath in power when there was no transmission at night – they'd stopped at something like six or seven in the evening. And then when it came back to normal again, they found they were very, very short of programmes. And Alistair Milne, who was Controller at that time, said "Well, there's *Clay*, *Smedden* and *Greenenden* ready." So it went on the air [24 February 1976] with no pre publicity. Nothing in the *Radio Times*. I was just so angry because I reckoned it was one of the best things I'd done and it just disappeared into the ether. They don't repeat things from Scotland, you know, in London. I've got a DVD of it which I managed to prise out of the BBC.

Abide With Me (1976)

That won a Critics' Prize at Monte Carlo. Mark Shivas, the producer, said, "Well, we'll put it in but it's not going to win anything but never mind." So we got the Critics' Prize which was nice. And that was a very nice script by Julian Mitchell, with Cathleen Nesbitt playing the lead and a wonderful fifteen-year-old schoolgirl [Ann Francis] that I found in the Forest of Dean who was just a natural. And it was a lovely hot summer, 1976 down in Stroud, and it was great fun to do.

One of the Boys (1977, TV series)

One of the Boys was virtually an OB and most of it was set in a garden, a barbecue, day into night so we did about three days in Michael Apted's garden, very near the studios in Teddington. And that started off with a rugby game. I don't really know very much about rugby and I learned the rules very fast.

I remember it very clearly because there was one scene set in the bar at the rugby club and to get the right atmosphere we had them singing "The Ball of Kerry-muir", which is a sort of scurrilous song with a lot of very rude lines and words in it. I had never heard all the verses but I heard the whole lot of them on the night we actually filmed it. Anne Reid and Diane Fletcher were the two wives. Ken Hutchinson was the lead. And it was written by Anita Bronson.

Testament of Youth (1979, five episodes)

Testament of Youth came about as a result of a phone call from Jonathan Powell who was Head of Serials, and he said, "Have you read a book called *Testament of Youth*, Moira?" "Well, funny you should ask me that", I said "because I have." And I read it when I was at school, it was in the class library and I remembered it very clearly because I was very interested in the First World War. And so when he said, "Would you like to come in and talk to us about it?", I went in to Threshold House and there was Betty Willingale who was head of Script and Classic Serials, and they said, "We've had this script by Elaine Morgan and we wondered whether you would read it." And so I took it home and read it and said yes, I thought it was wonderful and please could I do it? So I ended up doing it.

The script had been worked on with Betty and Elaine before that. There was very little that we changed in outside rehearsal, hardly anything at all. I did the casting and Cheryl Campbell played the lead, Vera Britten, because I'd seen her in Piers Haggard's production of Denis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven*. She didn't

look like Vera Britten but she was small and a very, very good actress. Lovely Emrys James played her father. And Rupert Frazer played her brother Edward and Peter Woodward played Roland, her fiancé. I had originally cast them the other way round but it was Jonathan who suggested that we swap it and make Peter play Roland and Rupert play Edward. So we dyed Peter's hair to blonde and gave Rupert different coloured contact lenses because he was blue eyed and Edward was brown eyed.



Cheryl Campbell and Peter Woodward in *Testament of Youth* (1979).

There are some productions that you get completely involved in and that was one because I had a very good crew, and Graham Harper was my PA. We had an office in Threshold House and it was in the winter we were prepping it. I remember Graham coming back from Buxton and there was a photograph in the front page of *The Guardian* that day showing Buxton under six feet of snow. And Graham came back and said, "Well, I think it's all right, Moira, but I couldn't see very much of it."

[*Testament of Youth* won BAFTA TV awards for Best Drama Series/Serial, Best Actress (Cheryl Campbell), Best Design (Sally Hulke), Best Lighting (Dave Sydenham) and Best Costume Design (Prue Handley) with four other nominations.]

The ceremony was at Wembley, in the Conference Centre. Jon and I sort of knew that we must have won it because they were so very careful where they put us so we could get out quite easily, and we were next to each other as well. And somebody, I think it was the Head of Drama, rang me up and said, "You are coming, Moira, aren't you?" It was very exciting to get it from Princess Anne – actually very heavy to carry, it's got a strange weight on top so it keeps swivelling. In those days there wasn't the hype that there is now.

Minor Complications (1980, Play for Today)

A very good script by Peter Ransley, and Peter in those days was not terribly well known. *Minor Complications* was based on an actual case. I happened to have read the *New Statesman* article that it was based on. It was about a woman who had two children and married. She and her husband decided they didn't want any more children so she went for a sterilisation operation which was called laparoscopy – you burn the fallopian tubes. When she came through the operation, gradually she was in extreme pain, her abdomen started to swell. Eventually convinced it was not normal – because they kept on saying to her, "Oh, it's perfectly simple, no one ever had this before" – they took her into an operating theatre and discovered seven feet of her bowel had died because the cauterisation had actually hit the bowel and stopped the blood supply. So they had to take it away. If you lose seven feet of your intestines it's not terribly good, your food tends to go through you rather fast.

So Peter had found this story and he'd fictionalised the character to a certain extent. Paola Dionisotti played the lead part. We did it as an OB in the house in Acton and also in a hospital that is no longer in existence in Ealing. It was January and it was freezing cold so that everyone was talking to each other and breath coming out. So that was tricky.

It was received so well that Peter and a solicitor actually started a charity for people who have suffered from things in the National Health Service.

No Visible Scar (1981, Play for Today)

Julian Mitchell, at the same time that he wrote *Abide With Me*, had read this book written by Sheila Cassidy, who had been a doctor in Chile and had been arrested by the government for helping guerrillas. She eventually decided she wanted to be a nun, she was a Catholic, and she went in to a convent and was not amenable to discipline and so she left. Julian had written this piece about it and Mark Shivas was going to produce it and it was going to be a film but they couldn't get any funding for it, so the whole thing just disappeared. Then Innes Lloyd sent me the script by [another] writer who had since apparently died and I said to him, "Do you realise this is very similar to a script that Julian Mitchell wrote and I think you really ought to clear it with him" – which I think he did but I don't think Julian was very happy about it.

I met a number of Chilean refugees who had been tortured. I got them to describe exactly what happened to them because we did have a torture scene in the piece in the studio. It was quite a good play. It wasn't as good as Julian's script at all, that was the sad thing about it – because it would have been much better if we'd done the film. There weren't any feature films in those days. There was no such thing as the British film industry really when I was directing. I must have come in at the wrong time. No one was offering me a feature film.

Freud (1984, six episodes)

It was written by Carey Harrison, son of Rex Harrison. Very difficult person. Oh, I mean an ego the size of Buckingham Palace. And terribly intractable. He'd seen the opening titles, which I thought were very good, and he was berating me. Eventually I just said to him, "Listen, you wrote the script. That's the end of your commitment. You do not dictate what the titles are going to be. That's my job." I was really riled with him. I bent over backwards, because he dealt with Freud in a terribly oblique way which was actually very clever but it was very difficult to understand on the page. And I

The Girls of Slender Means (1975). Reunion at the home of Patricia Hodge on 8 January 2013. Front row: Patricia Hodge, Marilyn Finlay, Jane Cussons, Juliet Mander, Marion Bailey, Tina Heath. Middle row: Miriam Margolyes, Sarah Nash, Moira Armstrong, Jack Shepherd, Rosalind Shanks, Roger Bunce (cameraman). Back row: Dave Hunter (cameraman), Richard Lennox (cameraman), Don Smith (Radio Times photographer), Peter Fox (cameraman), John Henshall (cameraman). (Courtesy of John Henshall.)



let him come in each episode the first day before we actually started any work on it and he would go through the script and explain to us what he intended to say. Not many producers and directors would have allowed that but it helped everybody. I knew that it would. It certainly helped me.

I thought David Suchet as Freud was terribly good. It was one of the best things I think he's ever done. Hercule Poirot's a snip compared to doing Freud. He had to do him right from the age of twenty-six to when he died when he must have been about eighty-six. Unfortunately, the final day in the studio for the final episode, we had to do one scene when he was twenty-six and he had to go in to make-up for three hours to get ready for when he was eighty-six, because it was actually very complicated make-up.

That was a year of my life, really, because it took a whole year to do. It wasn't received very well in this country but it was received terribly well in North America. It was sold all over Europe and dubbed. I remember hearing someone in Spain saying that their gardener had watched every single episode religiously. I thought, imagine any gardeners in this country watching that sort of series about Freud.

Bluebell (1986, TV series, 8 episodes)

[Bluebell was about Madame Bluebell who ran the Bluebell Dancers in Paris.]

I was asked to do *Bluebell* about a year before we actually started work on it. To begin with, I was very reluctant because it struck me that it was going to be one of those productions where there wasn't enough money to do it properly.

It was about her life really and how she came to be where she was. It wasn't a very good script. I'd said a provisional yes to [producer] Richard Bates, hoping that something else would come along, and nothing did, so we started. I remember going to Paris in January, very cold, with Richard and the writer to do a sort of recce of things that we wanted to see.

Anthony Van Laast, who did the choreography, and myself went to visit Madame Bluebell in her flat and spent an evening at the Lido as her guest. You had dinner first and then the show and you came out to find the queue for the next show outside – extraordinary. I don't think she was anything to do with that particular show but she was obviously respected a great deal by the people who ran the Lido. And she was demonstrating dance steps – there she was, she must have been about seventy-five or six, and demonstrating this as she went to do the splits, terribly easily. Anthony Van Laast's eyes sort of came out on stalks when he saw this.

And then we started work here. I said, "Well, we've got to have somewhere that we can actually have a street outside so we've got period traffic." So we used a part of Elstree and built a proper French café with big glass windows and had the street outside.

But it was a very difficult show to do because we had two rehearsal

rooms, one was for the dance routines and the other one for the drama bits in between. What the people who organised it didn't realise is you've got to warm up to dance – you can't just go straight in to the routines and things. The actress playing Bluebell, Carolyn Pickles, needed time from having done a bit of acting in the morning to join the dance rehearsal. She needed to warm up as well. So there was a lot of time that needed to be built in to the timetable and wasn't. And the same thing when we did the routines for the Folies Bergère and we used theatres like the one in Halifax and the one in Harrogate. The Harrogate one was meant to be the theatre in Germany and the one in Halifax was meant to be the actual interior of the Folies Bergère. And what people again hadn't realised was that you can't strike a set in a theatre in the matter of thirty seconds – you want, say, half an hour.

I did something which I suppose was really very tactless but I got so angry that nobody would listen to me about the amount of time we'd need that I sent a memo to Jonathan Powell, which I suppose Richard Bates was practically seething when he saw it. But I just said, in spite of the fact that I'd actually advised time be built in, no one would listen to me, and that if we overran it certainly wasn't going to be my fault. Which is probably why I've never worked for Richard Bates since.

That was the beginning of the increase in power of producers because up until that time the director really ran things, you know. Very often they did more than one production at the same time, which meant you were left to your own devices a lot of the time, which you wanted to do anyway because that was your job. But 1985 was the beginning of the encroachment of the producer on the director's life, which I think has become impossible now from a director's point of view. Richard Bates, I suppose, was the first person I'd come across who actually thought that he ran everything. And I remember getting angry with him because he talked to the graphics designer for the titles behind my back, which I thought was not on, and naive little me, you know.

I look back on my life now and reckon what I ought to have done then was change track and become a producer. Producers matter now more than anybody. Then, gradually through the '80s and into the '90s it's got worse and worse. And now you're lucky if you ever know who had directed anything.

Inside Story (six-part series, 1986)

It was by Peter Ransley again, about a woman editor of a tabloid. Francesca Annis played the lead and Roy Marsden played the man who apparently gave her the job. He was meant to be an American, like a sort of Murdoch character. He'd made his money in America and he came back to this country and wanted a woman to be editor of this tabloid. Roy Marsden did not want to play an American, refused, said it was against his principles. We couldn't move him. We tried. Harry Andrews, who played one of the leads, said, "Oh,



Moira Armstrong studying the script of Freud (1984) on location outside Vienna.

in America for ten years, why haven't you got an accent?" Roy didn't have an answer for that one.

Roy Marsden was a given. I didn't cast him. The last thing I'd do. Seventeen weeks with Roy Marsden is not to be repeated, because he was one of these people I can't stand who claim they're very feminist and in fact...

After it went out, it was a Sunday night, I remember one of the critics saying, "You'd never have a woman editor of a tabloid and certainly not one as good looking as Francesca Annis." I thought it was a bit stupid. How many women editors do we have now? And how many of them are very good looking?

The Dunroamin' Rising (1988, The Play On One)

That was a very good script [by Colin MacDonald] set in an old people's home in Scotland about a man who had been a sort of red Clydesider landing up in the home. It was so set in sort of Thatcher times – so the idea of the catering staff were going to be privatised in the script. And his character in fact starts a sort of strike, a hunger strike. Meanwhile they actually, you know, kept a lot of spare food under the bed but in fact they didn't partake of any of the meals supplied and eventually they won. They got the local television station to come in and all that. And Russell Hunter played the lead. They haven't repeated that one, either.

Knuckle (1989, Theatre Night)

David [Hare] came in when we were doing camera rehearsal but he didn't come in otherwise. It was one of his very early pieces and I think he felt that, really, he'd rather it weren't done at all. It'd been done in the theatre not all that long before that. It wasn't a particularly happy production for me. It was a very difficult piece and my heart really wasn't in it.

It was quite fun in getting to know Tim Roth and Emma Thompson. Emma I liked and in fact I knew her mother very well, Phyllida Law, who'd been in *Abide With Me* and in a detective I'd done. Tim Roth, I had to teach him how to do a slow foxtrot and then repeat it.

The Mountain and the Molehill (1989)

I enjoyed doing that, that was great fun. Set in wartime and it was based again on fact. I met the man concerned. He had been evacuated to the south coast just before the invasion in 1944. The headmaster of his school was one of the setters of the crossword in *The Daily Telegraph*, and he used to get this boy help him set the clues. Meanwhile this boy got very involved with the Americans in their camp that was set up quite near where he was. And there were photographs on the wall of the coast of France showing exactly where the invasion was. Security must have been terribly lax. He heard them talking about the code name, all these things. When he was with the headmaster

and they were doing clues, he suggested things which eventually landed up in *The Daily Telegraph* crossword. MI5, or was it 6, spotted it and they got really worried because they didn't know whether their security had been blown by the Germans. They sent two men down to question the headmaster. They were not sure until the actual invasion happened that there might have been a leak.

It was a very good script [by David Reid] and fun to do. And I had a very good cameraman [Philip Bonham-Carter] and it was really very enjoyable. Lovely weather. Set somewhere near Devizes. In fact, the school we used was a school in Devizes.

A Safe House (1990, Screenplay)

It was about the Maguires and it went out in August, the year of the May Inquiry into it. Annie Maguire was accused of being a bomb maker in the early '70s in the Guildford bombing and various other IRA things that happened at that time. Annie went to prison for fourteen years. Now if you'd met Annie Maguire you'd no more find a bomb maker than a fly in the air. And her two sons, John and the other one, they were all sent to prison. And it was just a disgrace. She had these very thin surgical gloves because she suffered from eczema since she did work as a cleaner. They claimed she got the gloves because she was handling gunpowder and all that. It was just nonsense.

I cast it. I went to Belfast and interviewed quite a lot of actors who are based in Northern Ireland. In fact, the house that they lived in was in Kensal Road but the local council is Westminster and, as we all know what the Westminster Council's political affiliation is, the last thing they wanted was a film about someone they considered a terrorist. So we found a house that was roughly the same sort of size in Harlesden. We did all the exteriors of the house and views from windows and things like that there, and then we went to Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland and built the house interior in a gymnasium in a school. And we used a courtroom in Armagh. Armagh was a pretty scary place. The police were very jumpy because they knew that with a film company there it was awfully easy for the IRA to come in, so we were guarded from morn to night.

The Bill (14 episodes, 1990-2000)

In the days when Michael Chapman was the head of *The Bill* it was run very much like a television company in that everybody had their own office, you had your own staff. It was exceedingly efficiently organised, I thought. And it was quite nice seeing other directors during the working day. There was a big canteen and the cast all came in and we met the other directors and swapped stories and all the rest of it... a lot of that sort of corporate life you don't have as a director now. It's a very lonely life compared to what it used to be.



Moira Armstrong interviewed on the stage of NFT 1 in 2014.
(Photograph by John Henshall.)

The Countess Alice (1992, Screenplay)

A film with Wendy Hiller, or Dame Wendy as she was called from day one to the end, even when I told her that she'd been my heroine when I was at school and had seen her in *I Know Where I'm Going!* I said, "I used to try to make my eyebrows do what yours do." She wasn't impressed. She didn't become "Wendy" after that at all. And Zoë Wanamaker whom I got to like enormously.

I don't think George Faber who was, I think, Head of Single Plays at that time liked it very much and I think it was the structure that he didn't like. This was about a woman, pre 1914/18 War, who had gone on holiday like a lot of upper class girls did, and had met this German aristocrat and had married him. And when the Second World War happened, she was still in Germany and spoke fluent German and had a daughter. Their estate was in Prussia and when the Russians invaded, the husband was killed by the Russians and she left with her daughter – you found out later, you didn't in fact know that at the time, because the daughter was ostensibly Zoë Wanamaker grown up and living with Alice in a flat in London.

Countess Alice managed to make a little money by teaching German. And Zoë Wanamaker, in spite of her Armani clothes, worked in a library. She insisted on having clothes by Armani. And the budget went on those two people to a certain extent. Eventually you discovered in fact that Zoë Wanamaker wasn't actually her daughter, but the daughter had died and in the flight from the Russians, Countess Alice had actually taken this child of refugees with her to England and brought her up as her daughter. And she discovered the fact that she wasn't the daughter. The piece was really about the reconciliation if you like of the daughter to her so-called mother.

We found a house which looked Germanic in Suffolk, and it was winter and it was cold. Very cold. Lovely cameraman, John Bailey, and a small cast, very small.

Body & Soul (1993, six part series)

Kristin Scott Thomas. A difficult lady, possibly a lot nicer now she's famous. I think in fact that half her problem was she was so ambitious that she virtually trod over anybody who was in the way. And she and Amanda Redman did not get on. The last two weeks of the shoot it was just the two of them and two children and a house in Bradford, which was tough.

It was based on a sort of airport novel, but the basis of it was pretty sound because the writer had lived next door to a Carmelite nun who was actually out of the convent, who was working in the big wide world, and had got to know her. Her name was Sister Giles. And Sister Giles was our advisor on it. She came to my house and there was this so-called nun in turquoise

eye shadow and civilian clothes on. The only thing that indicated that she might have been a nun was a wooden cross on a chain. Great fun, terribly nice and a very, very good adviser because she didn't give you unnecessary advice. Because she'd actually trained as an actress herself at the Central School, so she knew what were the important things. She came on the filming with us and I insisted on having her there all the time, I didn't want to get it all wrong.

I don't know why they haven't repeated *Body & Soul* on UK Drama or something like that, because it got regular audiences on a Thursday night of six or seven million.

A Village Affair (1995)

Village Affair was a novel by Joanna Trollope and it had Sophie Ward and Kerry Fox as the two female leads, lovely Rosalie Crutchley, and Barbara Jefford, Michael Gough. It's an interesting story about a woman who was married and had two children. Nicholas Parker played her husband. And it was about a woman who ostensibly is heterosexual, discovers in fact that she's a lesbian. Kerry Fox is the daughter of the local aristocrat who she likes, seduces her, and that's basically the story. And the character played by Nick had a nasty brother played by Jeremy Northam, which he did very well. There was a very good scene around the dining room table when he actually susses out the situation between the Sophie Ward character, the wife, and the Kerry Fox character. The husband doesn't really know what's going on.

The adaptation was done by Alma Cullen, and the producing company was the Warner Sisters who I haven't seen since. Unfortunately, when it first went out the BBC had just done *The Choir*, I think it was, and everyone was saying, "Why do we have to have another Joanna Trollope?" And we went out on Easter Monday, not an awfully good time to go out. But they did repeat it again, sort of three months later, and got much better viewing figures because it was on a decent day, you know.

Where The Heart Is (2001/6, 14 episodes)

The actual producer is really the line producer because in fact the executive is Damien Timmer who is Head of Drama, London Weekend. Damien is a curious man – very, very shy, I think, basically, never really looks you in the eye. He's very clever and very orientated and focused – is that word they always use nowadays? Like spends half the night watching soaps and tapes and comes back with the most impossible notes. When he first sent me some notes, emailed them to me when I sent him a fine cut, I wasn't rude but I was quite abrupt – if I didn't agree with something I just said, "No, I'm not going to do that" and gave a reason why not. And Damien's actually seen an awful lot of my work and claims to be very much a fan. So I've often said to him, "If you think I'm as good as you say I am, you should let me do this."

So he's actually learnt to trust me. And I trust him. A lot of what he says is absolutely right. But I think he patronises the audience and he makes things too easy for them and he doesn't let the script work by itself. He tends to have things to be spelt out. You have to say you're going to do something, you do it and then you talk about it afterwards, you know. I mean it's just awful.

The Last Detective (2004/5, two episodes)

That's where I met up a very good producer, Deirdre Keir, who's Andrew Keir's daughter. Now Deirdre came up through Granada as production manager, sort of, and she really knows her onions. And she's very good at getting a unit to work together – one of the most important things a producer can do, I think – and an awfully nice woman. I really admired her enormously. And I was very happy doing that *Last Detective*. Less so the one I did the next year – with a different producer – because he's a director and should never produce and he couldn't stop trying to direct. You can't turn round and say, "Look, Dick, push off", if in fact his wife is the actual boss of the company that you're working for.

The future

As long as people want me to work, I'll work, because I enjoy it. People say, "Are you still working?" and you think, "Why, do I look as though I'm not?" ■

Subsequent to the interview, Moira Armstrong directed the "Ordeal By Innocence" (2007) episode of Marple and three episodes of Lark Rise to Candleford (2009/10).

NEWS FROM



BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

(Formerly BECTU History Project)

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We have been using our time during lockdown digitising and transcribing a substantial number of the collection of interviews in our archive. Since I wrote our last VETERAN magazine column, John Harwood, Alec Hall-Shaw and myself have uploaded more than eighty interviews to our website at <https://historyproject.org.uk>. They include: **Teddy Darvas** - film editor on *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), *The Assassination Bureau* (1969) and *The Railway Children* (1970); **Aubrey Singer** - managing director of both BBC Television and Radio; **Karel Reisz** - director of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), *This Sporting Life* (1963) and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981); **Ena Baga** - pianist and theatre organist best known for improvising accompaniments to silent films; **Freddie Francis**, Oscar winning cinematographer - *Room at the Top* (1959), *Sons and Lovers* (1960), *The Innocents* (1961) and *Glory* (1989); **Harry Fowler**, actor - *The Army Game* (1959-61), *The Pickwick Papers* (1952) and *Lawrence Of Arabia* (1962); and **Joan Kemp-Welch** - stage and film actress who went on to become a television director winning the Prix Italia for her TV version of Harold Pinter's *The Lover* in 1963, and in the same year becoming the first woman to receive the Desmond Davis BAFTA for creative work in television.

Interview Transcriptions

The majority of the transcribed interviews in our collection were all laboriously done by hand, i.e. on a manual typewriter. Over the last few years voice recognition systems have become commonly used for transcription work. We've been successfully using a system called Speechmatics. It produced a reasonably accurate transcript from the audio recordings of our interviews. Unfortunately, the company decided to curtail this service at the end of September. We've now discovered a new source in the US for producing transcriptions. The system is called Otter and is being used by many companies to transcribe Zoom meetings. We've discovered that it can also produce transcripts of our interviews with the added bonus of tape timings too. I've just experimented with it on one of our interviews recorded twenty years ago with TV producer/director Ernest Maxin. You can find the results at:

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/ernest-maxin>



Ernest Maxin

Ernest Maxin (22 August 1923 - 27 September 2018) was a television producer, director, orchestra leader, singer and choreographer. Ernest joined the BBC as a trainee producer in 1952. He moved to ABC Television in 1959 but returned to the BBC in 1964 where he spent the remainder of his television career specialising in light entertainment, producing shows for such performers as Dick Emery, Charlie Drake, Jack Benny, Kathy Kirby and Dave Allen. But it was being Morecambe and Wise's producer that bought him the most joy. Maxin brought his love of Hollywood musicals to the show, choreographing some of the duos best remembered song and dance routines including *Singin' In The Rain*,

There's Nothing Like a Dame and *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*. He won a BAFTA for the 1977 *Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show* and the Golden Rose of Montreux Award for the *Charlie Drake 1812 Overture* in 1968.



Ray Harryhausen

One of the most important video interviews in our collection is with the film special effects superstar Ray Harryhausen.

It was conducted by film historian Tony Dalton in May and July 2009. Our interview runs for three and half hours and is a detailed account of the life and work of this legendary filmmaker and artist who changed the face of modern cinema.

Readers of THE VETERAN will know that 2020 would have been Ray's 100th birthday year. In celebration of this special date the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh is mounting an exhibition, *Ray Harryhausen: Titan of Cinema*. The exhibits include storyboards, paintings and scripts, original models, film equipment and plaster moulds. The exhibition will run from Saturday 24 October 2020 to Sunday 5 September 2021.

The History Project interview with Ray can be found at:

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/ray-harryhausen>

We regularly receive requests from authors who wish to include excerpts from our interviews in the books they're writing on the film and television industry. Two recently published books in particular may be of interest. Their common theme is the UK film and television industry in the 1960s.

Ready Steady Go! The Weekend Starts Here - The Definitive Story of the Show That Changed Pop TV is by Andy Neill. Featured in this lavishly illustrated and definitive history of the show are hundreds of

colour and black and white images of the show and interviews with the production team who made the show which ran from 1963 to 1967, including head of Rediffusion TV Elkan Allan, producer Vicky Wickham, director Daphne Shadwell and presenters Cathy McGowan and Keith Fordyce.

The second book is *Shepperton Studios - A Personal View*, written by Derek Threadgall, a member of the History Project. Derek worked in management at the studio from 1960 to 1965. He presents an insider view of film production at the UK's major independent studio from its formation in 1932 to 1972 when Derek returned to run the successful sixteen-month public campaign to prevent the studio being demolished by City 'asset strippers'. Derek has self published the book. For details of how to order a copy contact him at dthreadgall1165@gmail.com

Eastmancolor

We have recently received a major collection of interviews from the University of East Anglia research project *The Eastmancolor Revolution and British Cinema, 1955-85*. Senior researcher Paul Frith wrote an article about this work in the Winter 2019 edition of THE VETERAN. He provided us with a hard drive containing twelve video interviews and transcripts. The interviews explore the story of the colour process by contrasting and comparing the experiences of film practitioners in three areas of industry work affected by Eastmancolor film stock: cinematographers, laboratory staff and archivists. I've just uploaded the interview with cinematographer Chris Menges. The rest of the Eastmancolor collection will follow very soon.

Mike Dick
History Project
Chair



Looking After Sophia

Danny Unger on working with La Loren and combating a pirate



To be honest, I do not feel I have sufficient years or age to be a Veteran – but hey, for the past twenty-five years I have been paying my BCTV dues. Dear Maurice Binder (known for his 007 film titles) proposed my membership and my father, Kurt Unger, seconded me. At the time, I had attained the mandatory thirty years work experience in film business, yet still the nomination came as a sweet surprise.

As a fourth generation, in a relatively young industry, I was brought up with films in my blood. From a young age I remember being taken to film sets. Indeed, I found my way through quite a number of studios – in Rome, Paris, London. Venice in 1957 was my initiation into a Film Festival with starlets being chased, by paparazzi, on the Lido beach in front of the famed Excelsior Hotel.

At the tender age of 16, I began my first production job on *Judith*, starring Sophia Loren. Having had its opening run in January 1966 in New York, this film approaches its 55th anniversary. Sophia had recently received an Oscar in '63, for *Two Women*, and was one of the elite few to command a seven figure salary. Peter Finch and the very amiable Jack Hawkins were also at the height of their respective careers and acted as leading men. What a wonder it was to work with household names on my very first job!

Whilst financed by Paramount Pictures in Hollywood, *Judith* was produced out of London. As sole producer, my father Kurt Unger embarked on his very first independent production. By this time, 1964, he knew his way around as he had run United Artists' production and distribution offices in Italy and later in London. He managed to persuade this Hollywood studio to meet the \$5 million budget for a film that was to be shot *entirely* on location in Israel.

This production served as an important milestone to assist the Israeli film industry as it

developed into the vibrant stage that it has today. The future heads of Israel's industry started their careers as ADs or runners on *Judith*. The storyline was initially devised by the then best-selling, author Lawrence Durrell (*Alexandria Quartet*, *Bitter Lemons*). It was set in 1948 Palestine, during the final days of the British Mandate and imminent birth of the New State of Israel – a State already in peril and surrounded by numerous hostile Arab neighbours' armies.

Judith Auerbach, a Holocaust survivor, is smuggled into Palestine so she can assist the Hagannah to identify her ex-husband, an Africa Corps Tank expert. He deserted his Jewish wife and child at the start of World War Two and is now assisting the Arabs. It is a sort of reincarnation of the biblical story of Judith.

We had a number of recces and, due to a postponement of the production, one potential director, Sir Carol Reed, sadly had to leave us, to direct *Oliver!* The script was finalised by John Michael Hayes, popular with Paramount due to his success with *The Carpetbaggers*. Daniel Mann was chosen to direct as a result of his previous Oscar glory and longstanding professional relationship with female stars like Elizabeth Taylor in *Butterfield 8*.

The production itself was based in Nahariya, a sleepy but prosperous town in the north of Israel, about three kilometres from the then even sleepier border with Lebanon. In today's climate I suspect that no film insurer would underwrite, or even permit, such a production. Now it is a mere five kilometres away from the Hezbollah strongholds of South Lebanon and in immediate range of missiles.

For the location set, an entire kibbutz settlement had to be built. Even though it had only been sixteen years since Israel was created, an old-fashioned kibbutz was nowhere to be found. Under the production design of Wilfred



Peter Finch and Sophia Loren in Judith.
(All black and white images copyright © Screenlife Establishment, courtesy of Danny Unger.)

Shingleton and the superb art direction of Tony Woollard, with Peter Dukelow (*The Bridge on the River Kwai*) supervising construction, a new kibbutz was designed and built in a matter of months. Once the film unit took over one of Nahariya's small hotels, planning began to turn into reality. It was replete with water tower, dining room, kindergartens, cow sheds and, yes, even cows. Its appearance was so authentic that the picturesque hill it occupied was later renamed 'Sophia's Hill'. The real nearby kibbutz of Matzuba



Peter Finch and Jack Hawkins in Judith.



Jack Hawkins and Sophia Loren in Judith.



The landing of the immigrant ship in Judith.



Sophia Loren and Peter Finch in the battle scene in Judith.

provided many of the props and any extras used on screen.

The crew was primarily from the UK, supplemented by Italian gaffers who came with their arcs and gear. Headed by John Wilcox, the camera crew were British. Wardrobe was under the masterful supervision of Yvonne Blake. The crew were housed in Nahariya. The cast enjoyed the comforts of the Dolphin House, a more luxurious hotel, on the sea shores of the Mediterranean at Shavei Zion. La Sophia, on the other hand, stayed in the penthouse suite of the Dan Carmel Hotel situated at the top of Mount Carmel, with the most stunning views of the bay of Haifa, stretching to Lebanon and Syria.

At special screenings, I often tease my audience with the statement that “My first job at the age of sixteen was to hold the hand and take care of all the many wishes of the twenty-nine-year-old Sophia Loren.” Many a jaw dropped, but the desired effect was achieved. In fact, I was called to help many times, as I was the only person on set who could speak Hebrew, Italian and English fluently.

In essence, my job title was second assistant director of the Second Unit. With Nick Roeg as director and the equally talented Alec Thompson as cameraman, we had a hell of a second unit crew. Back then, I did not realise what a great team I had fallen into. I recall spending most of my days behind the camera, on the camera truck, shooting road scenes. Acting as a gopher, I soon learnt the art of drinking beer. I seem to remember that the local beer was frowned upon by these two film legends. A small admission is that, even though I was too young to possess a driving licence, I was permitted (or more accurately permitted myself) to drive flashy unit cars around the kibbutz set. Given the set was private land, I happily drove around for as many errands as possible. I was a gopher, with a set of wheels, yet no licence to drive!

Apart from filming many second unit scenes and pick-up shots, I was involved in one of the most moving scenes of the film – the beach landing of the illegal immigrants. It was shot on the pristine beach of Atlit, home to Israel’s special navy forces. Assisting in organising the set-ups,

and managing hundreds of extras, a ship, camera boats, and enlarged camera crews was all an eye opener for me. Those very extended shooting days ended with a ‘milk run’, to distribute the daily call sheet to the entire crew.

Every day’s footage from the main and second unit had to be taken on an arduous three-hour journey to Lod Airport, Israel’s only international gateway. The footage was put on a flight to Rome and made its way into the overnight baths at Technicolor Laboratories. The rushes then made the return journey all the way back to Nahariya for the end of the day’s rushes viewing at the local cinema.

After a sixteen-week shoot, filming wrapped with Sophia’s 30th birthday party. Editing proceeded in London under Peter Taylor. The world premiere of *Judith* took place at the Radio City Music Hall on 8th Avenue in New York on 20 January 1966. The film had its release run there with a spectacular stage show with the famed Rockettes. The critics were mixed but, given the subject matter and the environs, the reviewers were not too cruel. Worldwide release of the film



Sophia Loren with walkie-talkie in Judith.



Sophia Loren picking apples in Judith.



Sophia in Damascus coffee shop in Judith.

followed in London. For the premiere in February 1966 at the Paramount and Plaza cinema in Lower Regent Street I proudly came up from my boarding school in Brighton. I was so delighted to host my headmaster and head boy of the school. The opening in Israel proved very moving. I have since learnt that there are many *Judith* aficionados there. Even the President attended a special screening. His gushing telegram hung framed in our office for many years.

□ □ □ □

After two lifetimes, mine and my father's, in the business, this film *Judith* managed, three decades later, to introduce us to a new, seedy aspect of our business, namely piracy. Piracy led us to a then new industry body named FACT: Federation Against Copyright Theft. Former Scotland Yard senior detectives were given the task of combatting unauthorised video copying and film licensing. We had the pleasure of meeting with Patrick Timoney, a wily Met ex-detective, who was fast learning the tricks and lingo of video trade.

The saga began when our solicitor, who resides in north London, asked me the title of the film my

father had produced, starring Sophia Loren. The reason for his query was that he had rented a film at his local video store entitled *Conflict*, and the film did not include my father's name. I speedily got my hands on a VHS cassette of *Conflict*. To my horror, I realised that the pirates had created new artwork for the cassette box and removed all traces of copyright insignia or normal credits of the main contributors.

It was unbelievable audacity, created by a dedicated criminal pirate. His plan was ingenious in its simplicity: get the masters of films which were not on the top roster of their distributors, edit out the credits, change to a suitable catchy title, and bingo, here was a brand new packaged product, suitable for licensing around the world. It was brilliant. Obviously, there was a new video market lapping up these titles.

Through Paramount Pictures and the MPAA, we were introduced to FACT which knew about *Conflict* but had to be informed of its original title – *Judith*. FACT had a very long list of other titles with names of cast yet had no idea of the original titles. This is where my father Kurt's knowledge of films came into play. He helped FACT match and get to the original titles ahead of the pirate's trial

at Guildford Crown Court. The so sophisticated pirate – Mr. R – even had the industry Almanacs and databases list the pirated titles and not the original ones. Mr. R was an Indian pharmacist who had huge banks of video copying machines to churn out thousands of video cassettes, plus licensing packages, of ten titles to video distributors in many countries. He was delivering a master and sleeve artwork against minimum guarantees and royalties.

The MPAA and FACT were only concerned to stop the pirate, something they managed to do in court with an extremely modest fine of £15,000 and the requirement to cancel all worldwide distribution licences. To our amazement, the pirate walked away from Guildford Crown Court with all his liquid capital (£3m in cash) and assets that he had illegally gained, per witness statement of Arthur Andersen, auditor. Mr. R returned to his very comfortable Surrey home to continue his life.

Whilst FACT had won a criminal case, we, as the owners of the video rights of *Judith*, desired to be recompensed for the losses inflicted on our copyrighted title. A case was commenced in the High Court in London, the result of which was that the High Court directed the pirate to pay the licensor (us) \$1 million. We had won, but when we came to collect, the pirate and his Surrey mansion disappeared into thin air. It was a hollow victory.

Probably a year thereafter, good ol' Patrick Timoney telephoned me with news: FACT had traced our Mr. R and his family to Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada. Our ex-pharmacist, ex-video pirate, had bought himself a house and set up in a new business, a retail laundromat. On one of my trips to Los Angeles, I stopped off in Vancouver to reconnoitre the properties and the business; more importantly, to consult lawyers in British Columbia with a view to convert the UK judgement into a Canadian one. In pursuit of justice and 'bottom line', we managed to collect some money from Mr. R, but most definitely not the entire million dollars.

On the occasion of *Judith*'s 50th anniversary in 2014, given that so many of the scenes were shot in Haifa, the Haifa International Film Festival honoured the film by having a special screening. I tried to get Sophia to come to Israel for this event, but she was celebrating her 80th birthday elsewhere. Many old faces surfaced that evening. The event, which was captured by Channel 12



Sophia Loren dancing in Judith.



Peter Finch and the author.



Producer Kurt Unger, Sophia Loren and Peter Finch.



Producer Kurt Unger on the set.



Writer Lawrence Durrell with Sophia Loren.



The author with his father Kurt Unger at the London premiere in February 1966.

Israel TV, prepared a very charming fifteen minute piece from the memories of the kibbutz kids, about the film and especially Sophia Loren.

Whilst I recognise that the thrust of this article is 'My first job', I feel compelled to recount what transpired later in my career. I still consider the film business as my 'day job'. Yet I found that with a young family I needed something else to do, to even out the highs and lows, the peaks and troughs of films. When an old school friend asked me to 'hold his hand' to set up an instant printing and copying business, I was hooked. Or was it every film producers' aspiration and fantasy to have a huge in-house photocopier to churn out the numerous scripts and revisions? Those were the days of typewriters and tippex, pre-word processing. This little print and copy sideline project developed into Kall-Kwik Printing, a leading UK printing franchise, with nearly two

hundred stores around the country.

Another area of communications I ventured out into was magazine publishing. I primarily concentrated in the Consumer Financial area, with monthly titles such as *What Mortgage* and *What Investment*, which are still published to this day. With the anticipated Big Bang explosion in the television market, our AIM-listed company launched a magazine called *Television Weekly*, which brought me full circle back into the film and TV world. The Black Friday crash in October 1987 brought our small public company, with myself as Chairman, to its knees. Titles were sold and from the ashes rose a new database-targeted marketing outfit. With the advent of the internet we took this marketing concept online and created a brand-new media which, in the mid-90s, positioned itself conveniently alongside radio, press, TV,

and billboard advertising methods.

I am telling you a few of the success stories I have had. However, as every film producer, or every business person knows, there are numerous disasters along the way. They are swept under the carpet and one tries to forget that they ever happened. One of my disasters involved a well-known film which I and my father produced. The film itself was not a disaster, like a *Heaven's Gate* saga with runaway budget overruns or out of control directors or actors. It is a story which most industry mavens cannot fathom. It involves a New York based court case which started in 1988 and concerns the distribution and exploitation of a film in North America. It has still not reached its conclusion and so the saga is awaiting its final chapter. It will form part of an upcoming thriller book temporarily entitled *A Kwaing Shame*. [V](#)

Where Did It All Begin?

David Conroy reflects

My career did not have a promising start, nor did it follow a conventional path. It certainly had some unexpected twists and turns and a great deal of luck.

My first exposure to film was when, aged 6, my parents took me to see *Bambi*. I spent a lot of the film in the toilets weeping my heart out after Bambi's mother was killed. This was followed a few years later when, after the end of the war, we returned to London and my parents started taking me to the theatre – the Yiddish Theatre! This struck me as actors overacting and speaking a language I could barely understand.

And so to school. At the age of 10 I wrote to The Astronomer Royal and he replied as if to an adult. Naturally, showing off, I took his reply into my primary school. Unfortunately, it led to my nickname of 'Professor' and the recommendation to secondary school that I should be encouraged to follow a scientific course.

Luckily, once there I had a brilliant English teacher (incidentally, Harold Pinter's mentor), who put on excellent school plays but I never got beyond walk-on parts. He organised regular school visits to the local theatre. The drawback was that the manager/director was Donald Wolfit, another over the top actor. But it did open my eyes to the potential of theatre and a few of us started the grandiloquently named Arts Society. We were quite eclectic: concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, the Proms, queuing overnight for the Royal Ballet and, for me at least, the eye-opening joy of West End Theatre. And that last one led me to branch out on my own and taught me how to impress potential girlfriends.



But I still had this 'scientific' label round my neck so I was channelled into the sciences stream and only science A-levels. This inevitably led me to read physics at Queen Mary College which had a thriving amateur dramatic society and better still owned the People's Palace Theatre – a Grade II listed art deco 700 seater. It was here that I first started putting my burgeoning love of theatre into practice, both as a stage manager and director.

I left university with a desire never to see another physicist again. Which presented career problems. But the idea of the theatre as a career



never entered my mind. My parents (my father was an immigrant) had inculcated in my brother and me the need to have a 'real' career, e.g. doctor, accountant, lawyer. None of your arty, crafty freelance nonsense. My brother was a doctor training to be a neuro-surgeon. What could I do if I didn't follow my scientific training?

At that time, late 1950s, there was a great call from business for graduates to join as management trainees which just about squeezed into my parents' criteria. One of the companies I applied to was Fords and I was invited to join a group



War and Peace (1970). Over the brow of a hill are one thousand Yugoslav army reservists firing their rifles into the air to show their displeasure at the breakdown in the water supply while they're dressed in full heavy army kit, greatcoats and all. They refused to work until it was restored. I don't know if you can see from the look in my eye that I'm calculating how much each minute of breakdown was costing.

of about thirty others to spend three days of assessment and tests at its plant in Dagenham. As soon as I arrived I realised it was not for me. I developed an immediate headache. But I went through the motions. At the end of the three days I was called in to see one of the assessors who said, more or less, that I'd be pleased to know – my heart sank – that I'd come top or close to the top in all the tests but that they couldn't offer me a position. I think he was a little surprised that I didn't appear at all crestfallen but I was too relieved to even question the decision. So he felt obliged to offer a reason – which was that the assessments indicated that I was not management material because I was too 'arty'. Needless to say, I did not pass that on to my parents.

I did odd short-term jobs – a packer at John Lewis, manning an electronics stand at an exhibition at Olympia – but nothing leading towards a career.

Enter my father to the rescue. He had a friend who owned a large woollens company who had agreed to meet me and he'd arranged a meeting, unbeknownst to me. What choice did I have? I went along and the friend was the managing director, who started off pleasantly enough on what he regarded as a chore to please an old friend. During our conversation he asked what I had been doing with myself and I told him that I'd been creating two new rose beds in my parents' garden. He immediately perked up. He was a rose aficionado and we spent a pleasant half an hour talking about roses. He then excused himself and after about twenty minutes returned with another man whom he introduced as the chairman of the board.

We went for lunch and talked some more. Apparently, they had – on short acquaintance – cooked up the most extraordinary plan. They were both childless and were looking for someone to take over the company when they retired in about ten years. They thought I might fit the bill so could I start my 'apprenticeship' the following Monday learning to be an assistant manager in one of their stores, and after a year or so take over as manager and then say, in five years, become an area manager if all went well and then take over from them with the two of them obviously retaining some form of control of the company through their shareholding? Those who know me will be surprised to learn I was speechless and agreed. Needless to say, my parents were delighted.

But the Friday before the Monday start date I realised the path they had laid out for me would go against my whole personality. I telephoned the MD and explained the situation and he was very understanding and, flatteringly, said he was most disappointed. My parents – to do them credit – backed me although they were concerned for my future. In parentheses I watched the share price of that company for a few years – it quadrupled!

I decided that I had to use my scientific background and within a few weeks got a job as sub-editor at The Physical Society (physical as in physics and not gymnastics). To my surprise, I found that I enjoyed it – partly, I suppose, because I could fool myself that there was some element of journalism as well as science involved. But I still did not feel I had found my life's career.

My girlfriend at the time suggested that I try to get a job as an ASM in television (she was a

stage manager). A year later my umpteenth letter landed on the desk of an organiser at ATV on the Friday before an August Bank Holiday. An ASM due to start work on the Bank Holiday Monday had broken her leg. That was my start, my first job in television.

My second job came about a month later, again with ATV. Wilfrid Lawson was rehearsing a play and not returning from lunch. (Wilfrid was a fine actor and a lovely man who'd suffered severe brain injury during the war and had a metal plate in his head. He'd always liked a drink but now he drank to dull the pain and spent lunchtime in the pub.) My job was to baby-sit Wilfred and ensure he came back from the pub.

So now with two jobs under my belt I could claim – on paper at least – to be an experienced ASM. I started to get more work and graduated to stage manager. What I hadn't anticipated as one of my tasks was for the producer to come on the floor and point out certain of the female extras and say, "David, that one, that one, that one ... Party at yours tonight." I wonder how many of you recognise that! Or can identify the producer.

After a couple of years as an SM I joined the BBC as a production assistant when they were recruiting for the opening of BBC2 and I began to feel as if I was on my life's career path. After eighteen months as a PA I told my supervisor that I didn't want to follow the traditional path of director's training course, then years of directing, but would like to become a producer. (At that time – mid-'60s – that role was usually filled by superannuated directors.) I said I realised I'd have to go down the directing route for a few years but then I'd like to move to



On location in India for *Kim* (1984).



Clive Donner with me on location for *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1982).



On location for *Magic Moments* (1989), a film for YTV with Jenny Seagrove and John Shea, directed by Lawrence Gordon Clark.

producing sooner than might be expected. He duly noted that and four weeks later I was called in and told that in two months I would be 'it'. The slot was BBC2 Classic Serial where the producer was retiring and the audience was diminishing. It was rumoured that, unknown to me or to the public, they planned to close the slot. As it would fail under my auspices, they could stem the tide of discontent among the many young people they had recruited for BBC2 and who had no route to advancement by saying that they had given a chance to one of them, i.e. me, and it had been a failure.

But first I had to be checked out by Sydney Newman (then Head of Drama, a formidable man). My path was smoothed by our discovering that his father and my grandfather had both deserted from the same army at much the same time (the Russian army during the Sino-Russian war of 1900).

By dint of slaving away, losing a girlfriend, and a lot of luck, I managed to turn a failing slot into a success. And I'd achieved my goal. I was doing something that I really wanted to do.

But in the seven years I was at the Beeb I had a ball. There were many highlights – for me, not least the 13-part dramatisation of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Roads To Freedom*, directed by Jimmy Cellan Jones, and a left-of-field 1969 look into the future, *For The Greater Good*, which is beginning to come only too true – devised and directed by Wolf Rilla. And I know many of you will have read John Davies' interesting accounts of directing *Nana*, *Germinal* and *War and Peace* in this magazine – well, I had the pleasure of producing those which led to our life-long friendship. And I was fortunate enough to produce the first drama to open colour television broadcasting – *Vanity Fair*, directed by

David Giles. I was lucky enough to be able to produce some worthwhile serials and as such gained a reputation as a successful producer – so much so that, when the BBC hired McKinsey to make its organisation more efficient, they asked to interview me. What they wanted was to build a punch card system of what made a 'successful producer' (this was before the days of the computer) and match that against potential applicants. It gave me great pleasure to decline – explaining that such things as instinct, feel and so on could not be categorised.

After leaving the BBC I joined London Films as MD of London Films International and then formed my own company working mainly in Europe with various French, German and Italian (including Berlusconi) companies. And the rest is, as they say, history. [v](#)



23 Years in Soho

Memories of working in Wardour Street and filmland by **David Edwards**

Certain areas of London have a very rich history but sadly many companies have moved to newer locations or in some cases vanished entirely. Here in the capital we had areas that were once historically famous and well known for their particular trade or industry, very much like Fleet Street for newspapers. We all knew Wardour Street was once the heart of the British film industry and people who worked there would have thousands of stories to tell. These are some of my recollections.

The southern end of Wardour Street runs down very close to Leicester Square and several cinemas. Wardour Street was named in 1686, as shown by a plaque formerly on a house on the corner of Broadwick Street. Some of the land in that area was previously owned by Sir Edward Wardour along with the tiny part of Broadwick Street that now links up with Wardour Street and was then known as Edward Street.

It's on record that the first film company to move into Wardour Street was owned by Charles Urban when he moved into number 89 in 1908 where he became the producer of the world's first successful motion picture colour system. By 1914 we had more than twenty film companies renting space in the street and then by 1926 around forty-six film companies working there. Nearby Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road also found many film companies, but Wardour Street seemed the favoured place to be. Warner Bros. and Rank both opened in Wardour Street in the 1930s and it's amazing to find by 1950 there were well over one hundred film companies trading in the street. We

also saw Exclusive Films and Hammer Films open at 60/66 Wardour Street in 1935 and, nearby, Twentieth-Century Fox opened in Soho Square in 1938. Our film industry was obviously thriving and of course Wardour Street became famous for being the beating heart of the British film industry. Whilst the street has gone through many changes over the years, it still retains a very special place in the hearts of people like myself who worked in Soho. Today it's a massive growing industry of restaurants, bars and trendy cafes but, for me, it still remains a very important Soho street because of its rich film history.

People sometimes ask me how I managed to start work in the film industry. It was complete luck. Early in 1969 I was bored working as a clerk for Eastern Gas and I took a day off and visited the West End. Walking up Shaftesbury Avenue from the London Pavilion, I looked up above where the Rainforest Café now stands. The sign said New Era Agency and I went upstairs where I registered and someone asked me if I would like to work in the film industry. Well, an interview was quickly arranged and I secured the position as a cashier with Central Casting. At the time of receiving my acceptance letter from Central Casting I had also a second acceptance letter from a local company called Polypenco to start work with them. It was not difficult to choose between working locally in plastic piping or with a film company in Soho!

During the time of Wardour Street and its strong link with films I can still vividly recall those very busy and bustling days up and down those very narrow pavements where one would have to avoid bumping into people pushing trolleys

around containing those large cans of films. Vic Gallucci informs me that those old trolleys had steel wheels to take the heavy weight of those film cans. However, with the arrival of magnetic sound they had to change the wheels to rubber as the steel wheels contributed towards demagnetising the sound on the film.

There was so much activity amidst Soho's sleaze and sex industry, but it didn't really matter as we all got on with our work and lives. It was all part of everyday life, walking through Meard Street and passing many 'working girls' who would be out for lunch time trade. It certainly never was the cleanest of areas, but it had a very strange blend of cultures and styles rubbing shoulders throughout each busy and bustling Soho day and I really do miss it. The amount of cutting rooms and editing suites that must have been around then was enormous and they too are gone now.

Meard Street was, of course, a wide walkthrough alley linking Wardour Street and Dean Street. A well known Soho character owned one of the basement flats. That man was Charles Mansbridge who worked for the very famous James Garrett & Partners in Mayfair and Charles was well known in all Soho pubs and bars. We worked on a lot of TV and cinema commercials with James Garrett that were all down to Charles who put a lot of work our way. I shudder to think how much that basement flat would be worth today. Even throughout the depressing financial times of the Seventies it was still a wonderful time. One of the private bar/clubs that Charles would frequent was Gerry's Bar in Dean Street that had quite a large membership that included several celebrities. I am not sure if the club still exists, but it was accessed through a doorway in Dean Street just up from Shaftesbury Avenue and was then run by Brian Hammond and Dee Lynch. On the opposite side to Gerry's Bar in Dean Street was a brilliant shop named 58 Dean Street Records which specialised in film soundtracks and show cast albums. Some of its stock was rather costly, but they had a wonderful selection of LPs that were difficult to obtain elsewhere. It was always a great pleasure spending an hour in there just browsing and being tempted to purchase a rare imported LP. Sadly, the shop closed and I'm not sure where they went to, but the staff were full of great knowledge and a love for their records.

I also have very fond memories of Stanley Productions in Wardour Street where one could purchase so many items and equipment for film making and which was a most interesting shop to gaze into the windows. We also had The Ship public house opposite Warner Bros. where many film people would down a pint or two throughout busy lunchtimes and evenings. It was also very popular with the rock music fraternity in the Sixties and Seventies that frequented the famous Marquee club a few doors down the street. Other well known watering holes I remember were the Intrepid Fox that later became a heavy metal/bikers music pub but is now leased by Byron hamburgers. The George was further up the street and was yet another popular pub and it was very likely that you would bump into someone you knew any lunchtime. The Marquee club did, of course, become most popular as it moved from Oxford Street to Wardour Street in 1964 and switched over from being a jazz club to a rock venue as acts like The Who, David Bowie, Jimmi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and The Yardbirds all attracted large amounts of young fans who would queue a long way up Wardour Street. I can recall



Film references remain in Wardour Street in September 2020. On the west side, going north: Urbanora House, Cinema House, Hammer House and Screen House. (Photographs by Allen Eyles)

one evening waiting in line for well over an hour to see The Who and finally being told that the Marquee was full and feeling disappointed. We then walked directly into The Ship for a drink.

One of the new radio stations and possibly Radio Caroline would also hold great Saturday afternoon shows in the Marquee where various singers and bands would perform and I recall speaking to the lovely Lulu there one afternoon as some fans were asking for her autograph. She asked if I would like her autograph, but I had nothing for her to sign and she offered to sign my forearm. Her signature lasted a couple of weeks as I avoided washing that part of the arm. Dusty Springfield also appeared along with a lovely young singer named Greta Ann where she had her single promoted titled "Sadness Hides the Sun" and we all thought it would be a big hit and give Greta a huge career, but sadly this did not happen. Greta signed my copy of the single that I still retain. Just up Wardour Street from Coventry Street is where the Flamingo Club was located at number 33/37 and was another famous Sixties club that eventually became the Whisky a Go Go.

My Soho journey started at 5/6/7 Carnaby Street in 1969 when this was still a very busy and bustling street and at times during summer very noisy. It was no surprise when the street was pedestrianised since it was impossible to avoid walking in the road as the narrow pavements were so packed. We would often have an ice cream and cold drink from the seller banging his trolley and yelling 'Ice cold! Ice cold!' so loudly that that often we had to close our windows. Our company had a large unused room that we sub-let in 1970 when the tenant was Dennis Davidson, who then went on to become Davidson Dalling Associates (DDA) and expanded into a very successful PR company with offices in Los Angeles.

During my working time in Lexington Street with Central Casting, we were involved with a stills shoot for Michael Joseph where we supplied two men to act as cameraman (Robert Reeves) and a sound man plus a few to play market shoppers. The market was meant to be in France and the company had Gallic signs placed above a few stalls in Berwick Street market when we shot at the rear of Broadwick House, just off Berwick Street. I happened to visit the shoot and was asked if I

could get another young man very quickly to be a third crew member to hold the light. I could have returned to the office to arrange it but time was of the essence so they asked me if I would quickly fill in and be the lighting man. They placed a blue cap on my head assuming it made me look French and I remained until they completed the shoot. Michael Joseph were most grateful and sent champagne up to our office a week later.

This was only the second occasion on which I was actually used for filming. The first time occurred when I had to visit an Italian film to collect a deposit when the unit was shooting in a pub near Trafalgar Square. We had provided twenty or thirty extras for the pub scene and I had to arrive very early prior to shooting in order to see the accountant and secure the deposit before cameras turned over. I arrived at the pub around 7.30am, but the accountant was delayed. As I spent time chatting with our crowd inside the pub, I was unaware that they had actually started filming. When the accountant eventually arrived, I was told by our shop steward Tony Castleton that as I was in one of the scenes I should get paid for my services. I was very new to the business and felt uneasy accepting any payment, but both the accountant and the shop steward insisted I was paid and so I signed a chit and took the £6 cash. The news got back to our extras union and a complaint was made that I prevented another paid union member working that day whereupon I immediately offered to either repay the cash or donate it to the union's benevolent fund. Following discussions, it was agreed that I should keep the money but never to accept any future payments.

Streets very close to Wardour Street also have very strong links with the film and television industry. The famous name of De Lane Lea is still present in Dean Street. The company was purchased by Warner Bros. in 2012 and it will move from Dean Street in 2021 to a brand new, purpose-built studio in Charing Cross Road on the old site of Foyles bookstore. Just further up Dean Street beyond De Lane Lea we find the Nellie Dean public house, yet another pub frequented by film people and also perhaps others from *Private Eye* magazine just round the corner in Carlisle Street. Very near De Lane Lea was Royalty House where the CTBF resided for many years

and I recall meeting their company secretary, Mr. Hughes, many times.

One quiet Monday morning in October 1969 my general manager asked me if I'd like to go to a press show. I naturally said yes without realising really what it was and that it also started that same morning at 10.30am at the Casino Cinerama in Old Compton Street. I could not believe that films were shown to the press at that time of day and proudly went to see the Paul Newman film *Winning*. This was my very first press show. It was just amazing to have a morning off work and watch a new film – I thought I was in heaven.

Soho contained many small preview theatres that remain close to my heart as I saw well over four hundred films in those dark cosy venues. I mostly recall the Wardour Street preview theatres of the Bijou, Baronet, Crown, Columbia-EMI, Coronet, EMI, New Crown, Paramount, Rank, Warners and Cannon as well as the nearby Columbia-TriStar in Wells Street and the British Board of Film Classification in Soho Square along with Fox. Mr. Young's was in Falconberg Court. They all featured heavily in my film viewing. I was extremely lucky to know several press officers and publicists that would allow my admittance to hundreds of evening press screenings that would often start at 6.30pm or 7pm and thus give me enough time to hurry from my office to the preview theatre. Upon arrival, I would very often grab a quick sandwich and a glass of wine before taking my seat along with many film critics that were always in attendance. They often included Tom Hutchinson, Alexander Walker, good friend Alan Frank, David Quinlan (*TV Times*), Philip French, Ken Ferguson (*Photoplay*), Kim Newman, Barry Norman, Margaret Hinxman, Derek Malcolm, Dilys Powell, Mariella Frostrup, Marjorie Bilbow and Peter Haigh (*Film Review*). I did, of course, have to sit through many lousy films, but it was my choice to attend and I certainly saw many brilliant ones as well. The film critic's job sounds wonderful, but they have to suffer some pretty dire films.

For ten years, Central Casting's offices were in Paramount House in Wardour Street and Paramount were then very active in film distribution and also on a production level. Paramount held staff screenings in its Preview Theatre usually once or twice a

month where they would show a film before it was presented to the press and I remember Les Beard of Paramount saying to me not to miss two big ones that would be coming up. These were *Crocodile Dundee* and *Beverly Hills Cop* and indeed were both very enjoyable and of course made a lot of money upon release. Ray Pascoe was the Paramount projectionist throughout my time at Paramount House. We both had a great love of cinema and films and for me it was fascinating to visit a projection room and see how things worked. Paramount's comfortable theatre was on the first floor immediately above our own offices on the ground floor so I could easily attend screenings. Ray would kindly let me know when he had prior notice of any future screenings. He is now a fellow Veteran.

One of Ray's regular visitors was a German named Wolf Wince who ran a small local editing room and during quiet times would often drop into Paramount for a chat and put the world right. On one afternoon I happened to be upstairs in the Paramount offices when Les Beard called me over and opened this tall cupboard. Standing inside was the seven-foot model of the scary monster from the Paramount picture *The Keep*, directed by Michael Mann. The film was shot on location in Wales and then at Shepperton Studios where it went well over schedule and budget. I think the film bombed but the book on which it was based provided rather a good read.

Also upstairs in Paramount House, offices were leased out to producer Otto Plaschkes, Ed Victor CBE (American literary agent) and Duncan Heath Associates. Plaschkes was a quiet man whose work was most varied. I spent some time chatting to his charming PA, June Rose, who was the mother of assistant director Chris Rose. Duncan was an agent for many popular actors who would often call in for meetings. I would sometimes be having a chat at Paramount's ground floor reception and lobby area with Len on the security desk when personalities would come in. Prior to going up to see Duncan, they would sometimes chat freely. Billie Whitelaw

was very lovely to talk to, as was John Gordon Sinclair who used to leave his bicycle in a room at the rear of the reception. Another delight was Adam Faith who sometimes asked for a cup of tea. Michael Crawford would also drop in and he was really great to chat with.

One afternoon I was in the lift coming down from the 5th floor offices and we stopped at Duncan Heath's floor when actor John Altman stepped in and said hello to me. We continued chatting in the reception area. John of course was 'nasty Nick' in *EastEnders*, but his personality and warmth was very different to his character on screen. On another day we were told that a very young and beautiful young actress called Elizabeth Hurley had gone upstairs and an hour later when I was in reception Miss Hurley came out of the lift and smiled at me and said thank you. She might have assumed I was a Paramount employee. Jimmy Nail was also a frequent visitor and would often ask Len on the front desk for a swig from his whisky bottle that was kept under the counter. Jimmy always came over as a very friendly visitor even though it was often difficult to catch everything he said in his strong Geordie accent.

The fifth floor was occupied by the British Film Producers Association (BFPA) where Ken Maidment was the President with friend and ex-actor Andrew Patrick as Deputy CEO. Back in those days the BFPA were a vital cog within our industry. Andrew left the association when he became CEO of the new British Film Commission, based in Baker Street, working with the highly respected Sir Sydney Samuelson.

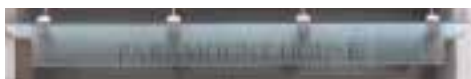


The author barely visible at top right corner holding a light on the "French" shoot for Michael Joseph in Soho. Robert Reeves with the camera.

Down from Paramount on the other side of the street was Rank Films where I became very good friends with the Press Officer – Brian Burton. The screenings that Brian would put on, together with his Director of Publicity, Mike Wheeler, were extremely welcome with the press as the sandwiches were always plentiful and the wine provided compensated greatly should the film be poor. I always felt Rank provided the best food and drink. The Rank Preview Theatre was also very cosy and comfortable and there I spent many hours watching well over sixty films, thanks to Brian, Mike, and also friend and film critic Alan Frank. United Artists/UIP, where Rosemary Goodfriend and Patrick Scott were in charge of press and publicity, would often hire the Bijou or Rank for their screenings and I have spent a lot of time watching films with their kind permission. United Artists were then based in Mortimer Street where I sometimes had to visit to see producer Bernard Coote and I can only assume that UA did not have their own theatre.

These were very happy days for me working in Wardour Street and at the time I thought they would never end, but even when I left the film industry and worked with a firm of lawyers in Grays Inn and then Lincoln's Inn Fields, I could never have imagined Wardour Street changing so much as the film companies departed this very famous street. For us that were there, it was an exceptional time and we were extremely fortunate and privileged to have that opportunity and I certainly look back with immense pleasure.

Even today, walking up Wardour Street, I can still retrieve some of that magic when thinking of those glorious and more simpler times. All those famous names on buildings have disappeared, but I can still feel their presence as I walk past Tigon, Hammer House, Rank, Warner Bros., Columbia and Paramount. I must quote a meaningful line from Mary Hopkins' number one hit from 1968 – "Those were the days my friend, We thought they'd never end".



More cinema names on the east side of Wardour Street: Film House and Paramount House. (Photographs by Allen Eyles.)



The Man With Two Streets

Allen Eyles finds a memorial to The Man in Black

It's common enough for a well known and respected local celebrity to have a road named after him. But two roads? And why Valentine Dyall in Mid Sussex?

The roads are next to each other, off Howard Avenue in Burgess Hill: Valentine Drive RH15 8UE and Dyall Close RH15 8UD. I appreciate that Valentine Dyall Close would have been a bit of a mouthful but cutting him in two? If that seems a bit gothic, I suppose it fits the tall, saturnine actor most remembered for horror and mystery as The Man In Black.

Valentine Dyall was born in London on 7 May 1908 and passed away on 24 June 1985 at the age of 77 in Cuckfield, a few miles distant from Burgess Hill. Like Claude Rains and Boris Karloff, he had one of the most distinctive voices of any actor – resonant, sepulchral, commanding.

Following his father, Franklin Dyall, into the acting profession, early in his career he played

Germans in *The Yellow Canary* and *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (both 1943) (and towards the end of his career was heard as a German radio announcer in *Night of the Generals* [1967]). He had small roles in three 1945 classics: as a Hebridean in *I Know Where I'm Going!*, the friend who lends his flat to Trevor Howard's doctor in *Brief Encounter* and the police inspector in *Pink String and Sealing Wax*.

His most famous radio role was narrating a series of chilling tales – “This is your story teller – the Man in Black” – for a BBC Radio half-hour series *Appointment with Fear*. This featured many famous horror stories including *The Pit and the Pendulum* and *The Tell Tale Heart*. It ran for nine series between September 1943 and August 1955. Valentine Dyall narrated all but the second series (where he was replaced by his father). He also starred on radio in another series of short story adaptations actually called *The Man in Black*

(1949) that included *The Beast with Five Fingers*. Hammer made a film version using the title *The Man in Black* and Dyall as the story teller, released as a B feature in 1950. He was Sweeney Todd, the notorious Fleet Street barber, in a 90-minute 1947 BBC TV production. His sinister demeanour made him a likable Jack the Ripper in Hammer's *Room To Let* (1950).

Later he was The Black Guardian in thirteen episodes of *Doctor Who* in 1983 opposite Peter Davison. He was happy to parody his image in comedy. I first encountered his voice on *The Goon Show*, playing The Man in Grey due to a laundry error. He was a foil to Tony Hancock, Marty Feldman, and Rowan Atkinson in an episode of *Blackadder* (1983).

He remained active to the end: as Mercade in a BBC TV production of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1984) and after his death in a *Doctor Who* episode (voice only) and as a grave butler in the *Miss Marple*



(Street photography by David Bishop.)

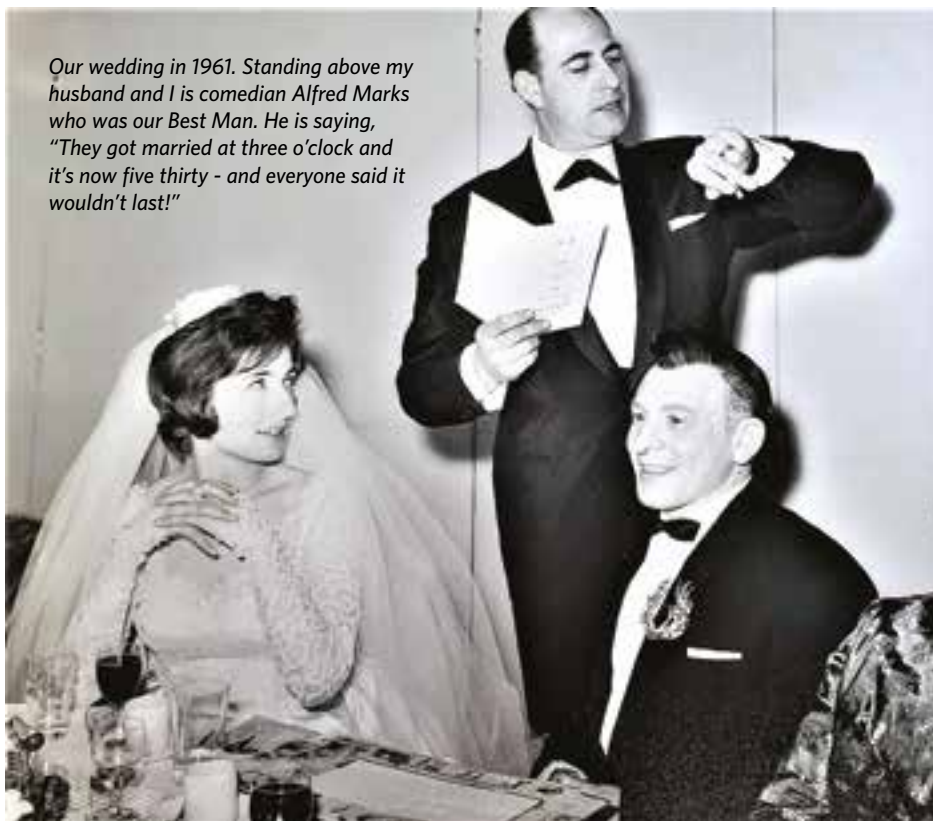
adaptation of Agatha Christie's *The Body in the Library* (shame – he didn't do it).

Married three times, he had three children. One son, Christian Dyall (1944-1998), was a costume designer. Another, John, had a non-theatrical career. His youngest, Sarah, was an actress and dancer and now resides in Cuckfield. She recalls: "We lived at 34 Station Road, Burgess Hill – next to the Post Office – from about 1966 to my father's death in 1985. The house was pulled down to make way for Waitrose. Dyall Close and Valentine Drive were named after him as a local celebrity. My mother – Kay Dyall, an actress under her maiden name of Kay Woodman – was invited to open the roads in approximately 1990. I remember her saying that she had to cut the ribbon." By a strange coincidence, Sarah married the doctor who had carried out the post-mortem on her father at Cuckfield Hospital after meeting him years later at a local dramatic society. [v](#)



Honeymoons Don't Last

Valerie Ashton reflects on being married to a comedy scriptwriter



Our wedding in 1961. Standing above my husband and I is comedian Alfred Marks who was our Best Man. He is saying, "They got married at three o'clock and it's now five thirty - and everyone said it wouldn't last!"

Somebody once said that a wife laughs at her husband's jokes not because they're clever but because she is. And when you're like me, married to a comedy scriptwriter, it's just part of the small print in the marriage contract – "Thou shalt love, honour - and laugh at every line."

I knew what Brad was when I married him. In fact, that's why I married him. Life, I foolishly thought, would be one continuous laugh. It is. But the laugh's on me. It's now fifty-nine years and

three visits to the maternity hospital since Brad put that gold tourniquet on my finger to stop my circulation. He promised to keep me in the style to which I wanted to become accustomed.

Our two-day honeymoon in Bournemouth was a real eye-opener. It showed us up as total opposites. I like music, Brad's tone deaf. I like modern dancing; he's just catching up on the Boston Two-Step. I like sunbathing; he painfully burns just looking at a sixty-watt bulb. I'm quite

sensible with money; he spends it like it's going out of style. This trait impressed me when we were courting, but annoys me now that I'm a partner in the firm.

At first we rented a two-bedroom flat in West Penge. That's a name that never fails to get a laugh in a comedy script. For us to actually live there seemed like poetic justice. I kept my secretarial job and we saved together for a proper honeymoon. A year later we were able to afford four glorious weeks touring some of the major cities in North America. We had tea with Bob Hope in Hollywood and met dozens of stars in Las Vegas, New York and San Francisco. This is the kind of life my friends thought I would have. So did I. But for more than four weeks in nearly sixty years.

They say the pen is mightier than the sword. In Brad's case it also proved mightier than the screwdriver, the hammer or any other handyman's tool that requires a modicum of skill. My man can thrill with a quill, but he's just a fool with a tool. Any repairs he does invariably need bigger repairs.

Watching Brad fix a fuse is like Charlie Chaplin at his zaniest, except that with Charlie Chaplin it's intentional. I bought Brad a do-it-yourself kit and ended up doing it myself. But my spouse does have principles. He never starts anything he knows I can't finish. It is, to be fair, a two-way system. While I'm attending to the electronics, Brad does all the needlework. As an ex-tailor he can sew with the best of them, making short work out of reducing the length of every pair of trousers I buy.

Brad is a man of quick decision. But that quick decision is usually deciding to leave things to decide on tomorrow. Or, if he can get away with it, a week after tomorrow. If I press him for a firm answer he'll say, "I leave it all to you." I asked him what school we should send our kids to. He says, "I leave it all to you." "What colour wallpaper should we have in the dining room?" "I leave it all to you." "Where do you fancy going on holiday



THE GUINEA PIG (1948)

BFI. BFIB1381. 98 mins. £19.99.
Pilgrim. Directed by Roy Boulting.
Produced by John Boulting. Screenplay
by Bernard Miles and Warren Chetham
Strode in association with Roy Boulting,
from the play by Warren Chetham
Strode.

Reviewed by Ian Johnson

To begin a film with a pre-title sequence was quite daring in the 1940s, but the Boulting brothers were nothing if not confident. The short intro which opens their 1948 film *The Guinea Pig* depicts a schoolboy gazing beyond the camera with such devotion we could think he stands before the pearly gates. But no, it is a monument to the founder of his public school. Bending low he makes obeisance. So, before the action even starts, we know where this film is taking us.

The schoolboy is the "guinea pig", fourteen-year-old Jack Read, a tobacconist's son. And the experiment? Would, could, a boy of such humble origins succeed at a public school?

It's a condescending fancy, germinated by a 1944 recommendation to give a quarter of all places at public schools to children from the state system. The proposal was never taken up, but it inspired a three-act play which forms the kernel of the screen version. Its author was Warren Chetham Strode, a playwright sometimes derided by post-war theatre critics for his stilted dramas set in the sitting rooms of privileged people with cut-glass accents and cut-glass whisky decanters. To help develop the screenplay, the Boultings brought in the actor and writer Bernard Miles. He found

Chetham Strode "a difficult man who didn't want his play altered", so the two writers typed away independently, passing their scripts to Roy Boulting to select the best version. It can only have been Miles and Boulting who opened out the plot to let it breathe, though much of Chetham Strode's stiff theatricality survives. Cunningly, Miles saved the best stretch of dialogue for himself as Jack's tobacconist father.

The film was financed by Filippo Del Giudice, and he appears on the titles as "Filippo DEL Giudice", his middle name in capitals, an acknowledgement that in the industry he was known simply as "Del". His Two Cities company had been responsible for some of the best British films up till this time, including *Henry V* and *Odd Man Out*, but Del had lost control to Rank, and in 1947 he formed a new company called Pilgrim Pictures. *The Guinea Pig* was the first of three films by Pilgrim, all box-office failures, and afterwards Del returned to Italy. Financing the film proved troublesome. The City had promised £1,000,000 but backed out, and after turning down an offer from Rank, Del finally found a benefactor in a Birmingham business man. Halfway through production Columbia Pictures offered £100,000 for the American rights. The Boultings were keen to accept, but Del rejected the offer believing he would get twice as much when the film was finished. In the event he got nothing.

The Boulting twins, producer John and director Roy, were themselves from a privileged background — their love of film is said to have originated in outings with their nanny to the local cinema. At Reading School they set up the film society, and then worked their way up through the film industry. Never afraid to approach social and political issues, they consolidated their reputation after the war, with *Brighton Rock* and *Fame Is the Spur*.

this year?" "I leave it all to you." It's not funny.

Last year he made out his will. When the lawyer asked who he wanted to inherit his money he said, "I leave it all to you."

Brad's constant vagueness is utterly frustrating. Once I spent hours at a Bond Street hairdresser getting a new style baked on to my crowning glory. All my husband noticed was that I was sprouting some grey hairs. On another occasion I sported a new dress. His comment, "That dress looks nice. Have you just had it cleaned?"

His lack of awareness is something I have come to accept. At least, it's easier to take than the stream of insults I have to endure when he tries to metamorphosise himself into whichever comedian he is writing for at the time. During his fourteen weeks as Head Writer for Groucho Marx I suffered lines like "My office is so untidy I'd be ashamed to take you there. Mind you, the way you look I'd be ashamed to take you anywhere." Or, "Hey, I've just tasted your cooking and I have a serious complaint. I think it's food poisoning."

In the early days of our marriage I was Brad's laugh barometer. He'd use me as a guinea pig for every funny thought that ran havoc in his fertile mind. I always tried to laugh. Even at the risk of cracking my mud pack. Later I managed to dodge that choice and pass the audience-duty to our three offspring. Mind you, he cheated. He made funny faces. And they cheated too. They learned the louder they laughed the more pocket money they could wheedle out of him.

Brad's jokes are funny. They must be. He's worked for just about every top name comedian. But when he tells his own jokes at a party, I die with embarrassment. No one's ever died laughing at one of Brad's jokes, but a few may have felt unwell afterwards.

My green-eyed friends still think my life's a barrel of laughs. I would remind them of the old saying "Laugh and grow fat" and that I've always managed to cut a pretty slim figure. If I had to look back on my fifty-nine years of so-called wedded bliss and select the funniest incident, it would be what happened on our wedding night. We spent half of it in the lobby of the Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane shouting at the manager because they hadn't reserved for us the honeymoon suite Brad insisted he had booked.

It was well past midnight when it dawned on my moronic spouse that he had mistakenly phoned the much-less-grand Grosvenor Hotel in Buckingham Palace Road where we finally ended up at 2.30am the worse for wear and much too weary to woo.

When I remind Brad of it, he says it's the second biggest mistake he made that day. I wonder what he means by that? I'll laugh anyway, like I dutifully do at everything he says.

Brad recently has his fifth book *Stand Up And Be Laughed At* published. I refuse to read it in case I think it's great and have to praise him. And that would be breaking the habit of a lifetime. **V**



Richard Attenborough in
The Guinea Pig. (BFI.)

They were well fitted to tackle *The Guinea Pig*.

The part of Jack Read was given to Richard Attenborough, straight from his roles as the sinister Pinky in *Brighton Rock* and the grubby Percy in *London Belongs to Me*. Contemporary audiences must have been surprised by the refreshing contrast of a cheerful, spunky, Walthamstow teenager. It's a winning performance, though the sight of a twenty-five-year-old stuffed into the uniform of a fourteen-year old is initially something of a shock.

The action takes place at the imaginary school of Saintbury. For the location shots the crew filmed at Sherbourne, Chetham Stode's *alma mater* — which may have involved some string pulling. The plot shows how Read's school career is scarred by his housemaster, Mr. Hartley (Cecil Truener), a tight-minded snob whose loyalty to Saintbury resembles a religious persuasion. "How are you going to mix a boy whose father's a general with a boy whose father keeps a grocer's shop in Pimlico?", he declares. Of course, Read is also bullied by his schoolfellows, fagged by the prefects, and unjustly caned for burning the toast. Never mind, the years pass quickly: he finds support from his house tutor Mr. Lorraine (Robert Fleming) and becomes sufficiently brainwashed by the system for Saintbury to finance his further education at Cambridge. In the final reel — indebted to James Hilton's *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (filmed in 1939) — Hartley becomes a hero in the eyes of the entire school on the eve of his retirement, and the film ends in cheers, tears, and sentimentality.

Lorraine meanwhile has fallen for Hartley's daughter Lynne, played by Sheila Sim, Attenborough's wife in real life. Sim gets a top billing, but like all the women in this enclave of suffocating masculinity she doesn't get much of a role. She knows her place: it's called docility. Our hopes are raised when she declares her intent to find work in London, but dashed when Lorraine declares he has a different job for her — to marry him, and presumably continue her round of smiling, pouring cups of tea, and polishing the whisky decanter. Still, having spent her entire life in an institution for which she declares an undying love, her experience must be stunted, and we should not have hoped for anything different.

Nor should we have expected this film to demand any radical change to the public school system. Because, although *The Guinea Pig* reeks of privilege, condescension, and snobbery, Chetham Stode and the Boultings believed in the benefits of private education. At the time of its release, the most controversy the film caused was its use on screen of the word "arse".

Educationalists may find the film of interest, but £20 would be a lot to ask were it not for the other half of this BFI package, a delightful pot-pourri of eleven documentary "extras" dealing with schooldays and war-time home economies. Whether it be the march past of children from the Leeds Road Board School in 1901 — heads high, chests out — or Tommy Handley inviting us to join in a "bouncing ball" community sing-song, they are fun to watch and the perfect antidote to lockdown blues.

THE GOOD DIE YOUNG (1953)

BFI. BFIB1388. 98 mins. £19.99.

Romulus Films. Directed by Lewis Gilbert. Screenplay by Vernon Harris and Lewis Gilbert from the novel by Richard Macaulay.

Reviewed by Allen Eyles

This entertaining story of a robbery has an astonishingly strong cast (especially in hindsight) if not quite "Ten famous names" as claimed in classified advertising for its London West End run. It is a much bigger crime film than the controversial X-certificate *Cosh Boy* (1952) which came from the same director (Lewis Gilbert), writers (Gilbert and Vernon Harris), cinematographer (Jack Asher) and production company (Romulus/Remus) (and both feature Joan Collins).

The Good Die Young is based on a novel by Richard Macaulay who had been a busy Hollywood screenwriter from 1935 to 1947 (*The Roaring Twenties*, *Brother Orchid*, *Across the Pacific*) with only a few 1950s American television series credits after he was snubbed by Hollywood in the McCarthy era for being too rabidly anti-Communist ("reverse blacklisting"). I have been unable to discover the year in which the novel was published but *Cinema Retro* (Vol. 7, Issue 19) asserts that "The film's screenwriters changed the setting of Richard Macaulay's original novel from America to 1950s England. The British bank financing the film also required that the novel's bank robbery be switched to a post office in the film version." Two of the male characters are Americans, played by Richard Basehart and John Ireland.

Like *The Asphalt Jungle* and others, *The Good Die Young* introduces us at length to the members of the team that carry out the robbery. Here, though, they are not career criminals and but decent men down on their luck and there is no detailed planning and rehearsal: three men are persuaded by the fourth to commit the crime which takes place almost immediately afterwards.

The first hour of the film describes how the four men came to be in need of money: Stanley Baker as a boxer who loses a hand; Richard Basehart as a war hero who throws in his civilian job in America to find his British wife; John Ireland as an American soldier on leave who deserts; and Laurence Harvey as the wastrel son of an aristocrat (Robert Morley) who openly despises him. All four have troubled relationships with women: the boxer with a loving wife (Rene Ray) who has spent his savings bailing out her crooked brother (James Kenney); the war hero has a wife (Joan Collins) with a domineering mother (Freda Jackson) who won't let her go off to live in America with him; the deserter can't overcome his obsession with an unfaithful actress wife (Gloria Grahame); and the playboy has an older wife (Margaret Leighton) who tires of supporting him in his lavish life style any longer.

The four men are seen arming themselves in a car at the start of the film, then

it is rather a long wait for the robbery as their background stories unfold. Characterisations are rather crude and heavy-handed but the stars try hard to make their scenes convincing. Joan Collins, though, is miscast and boring while Gloria Grahame deserved a more challenging part after winning an Oscar for *The Bad and the Beautiful* a few months earlier. Laurence Harvey comes off best with his consistent deviousness and his almost comic scenes with wife and father.

The first hour is brightly lit and conventionally photographed. The introductory shot of Harvey is one exception, the camera moving round his head from the back to show his eyes delighting in the brutality of a boxing match. The camera is briefly tilted during an intense argument between the boxer and his wife but this is merely distracting. The messy robbery and its aftermath, taking place at night, are presented in darker, noirish images with nice touches such as the cats leaping about the graveyard with its falling leaves, and some effective location work on the London Underground. Georges Auric's score ably reinforces key moments (as well as the opening credits). The outcome is bleak, with a final sequence at Heathrow airport, banknotes in the wind, that prefigures the ending of Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956).

The Hollywood players made the film more appealing not only to American viewers but to British audiences as well. Richard Basehart was on an extended spell in European pictures — for artistic reasons and/or the income tax advantages that many other American stars were tapping. John Ireland starred in another British crime film, *The Glass Tomb* (1955), while Gloria Grahame returned for a rewarding role in *The Man Who Never Was* (filmed in 1955).

The BBFC demanded cuts before awarding *The Good Die Young* an A certificate on 18 February 1954, meaning that under 16s had to be accompanied by an adult. The film had a standard three-week premiere run at the Odeon Leicester Square from 4 March 1954. It went out on the Odeon circuit in April 1955, up against two Hollywood films in the London suburbs: the musical *Three Sailors and a Girl* on Gaumont and the 3D western *The Charge at Feather River* at ABCs, both in colour. Despite its Hollywood cast members, *The Good Die Young* did not obtain an American release until February 1955 when United Artists put out the uncensored version (100 minutes).

99 minutes of varied extras on the DVD that include Lewis Gilbert talking at the NFT (but not about this film) make a good "Full supporting programme".

Stanley Baker, Richard Basehart, Laurence Harvey and John Ireland in *The Good Die Young*. (BFI.)





Letters can be sent by post to *Editor – The Veteran, 13 Tennyson Court, Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath RH16 1EZ* or by email to bctv.veterans@btopenworld.com

FILMATIC

I was interested to see the photograph of smiling Filmatic technicians in the summer issue [page 12]. I worked at the laboratory in 1966 – an easy year to remember as Yoko Ono turned up with her then-husband Anthony Cox with several cans of rushes for her film *No.4*, which featured naked bottoms walking on a treadmill. It was also the year England won the World Cup, so the lab was almost taken over by several hundred 8mm copies rolling off the production line.

Can anyone update me on what happened to Filmatic, which was then based in Colville Mews? When it closed? What happened to the technicians, and the building itself?

BOB HARVEY
By email

DIAMOND JIM

Interested to read Bob Harvey's piece on the changing face of commercials [*last issue*], and particularly his reference to James Garrett and his company which was predominant in the field from the mid-Sixties on. It was not unusual for them to have up to five units out shooting per day, with not only Richard Lester directing, also Sidney J. Furie, Philip Saville, Nicolas Roeg and other distinguished names apart from more regular appearances by the likes of Joe McGrath and Peter Duffell, Bob Fuest and Terry Green.

One of the above once said in an interview, when asked why he made commercials: "I'm lucky if I get to make one feature film a year. In commercials I get to meet all the new talent, use the latest equipment, pay the mortgage". For me it was an education to be working in the Garrett office in Bond Street and eavesdropping telephone conversations between Joe McGrath and Charlie Feldman or Peter Sellers, working on a deal to direct the original *Casino Royale*.

I worked there from 1966-69 before leaving to join Brooks Baker Fulford, one of the young companies that were beginning to challenge the Garrett hegemony, as were directors like Alan Parker and Adrian Lyne. But Garrett continued to prosper, both in the UK and with successful companies in Germany and the US.

Through the company's association with David Puttnam who was then still an agent, Richard Avedon, who was probably the most famous photographer in the world, was to direct a series of cosmetic commercials through Garretts. The ad agency thought Avedon's fee included taking stills, Avedon did not. I then witnessed the extraordinarily persuasive talent of the young Puttnam, who convinced Avedon that it was in his interest to throw in the stills for free.

The US company filmed many other major campaigns, with directors including John

Schlesinger and Karel Reisz. Jim Garrett had earlier been closely involved in making political broadcasts for Ted Heath's Conservative Party for which he was never recognised.

The company continued well into the current millenium when Jim eventually decided to retire. He is with us and in good health – a remarkable man, "Diamond Jim" and his contribution to our community is unique.

Regards to all Veterans
MARTIN MCKEAND
By email

LIFE IN A MULTIPLEX

During this extended Coronavirus lockdown period I have been wallowing in nostalgia, reading some of my old VETERAN and *Picture House* magazines. In *Picture House* no. 43, 2018, there is an interesting and comprehensive article by Allen Eyles on the rise and fall of Virgin Cinemas, followed by a piece on the Megaplex.

I wonder if any former or current manager of one of these multi-screen cinemas has written an article on all the complexities of running one of these businesses. If not, I'm sure it would make a fascinating read.

DERRICK L. TODD
Penryn
By email

(An extended version of the Megaplex piece appeared in THE VETERAN, issue 159, Summer 2018, pages 15-19. – Editor.)

NAME OF THE CRANE

I refer to page 5 of our Spring edition and the photo of Freddie Young together with Victor Saville, gazing at a young Liz Taylor and Robert Taylor on *Conspirator* (1949). They are standing beside the camera which might be a blimped Newall mounted on a crane.

As a recently retired operator, what intrigues me is the camera appears to be on an inverted head similar to our modern Lambda head. So what was this crane called and how did the operator actually manage to pan and tilt such a beast of a 'heavyweight'?

If there's a retired DoP, or Operator, or Grip of a certain vintage familiar with this behemoth, I would be very interested to know.

ROGER PEARCE
By email

(According to IMDB, the camera operator was the well known Skeets Kelly [1913-70]. – Editor.)

I PROTEST

The BBC wishes me, at 82 years old this year, to pay a tax of £157 to allow me to view its programmes. The BBC is not the BBC I grew up with and it never will be again. The BBC's slow slide into mediocrity and, in today's media climate, irrelevance, started in my humble view with the appointment in 1987 of Michael Checkland, a Chartered Accountant, as Director General of the BBC. Checkland preferred to save money rather than spend it.

The disastrous tenure of his successor, John Birt, forced the BBC downhill to its

present unsavoury position of embracing political correctness, news bias and wasting £100 million of licence fee money encouraging diversity, equality and inclusiveness, a trio of social sacred cows undermining every aspect of our lives today. I now understand that BBC bosses are to get diversity lessons in how to avoid giving offence (to whom? As if we didn't know).

I abandoned BBC One some time ago as I did eventually BBC Two and BBC Four. My simple viewing diet is now provided by Netflix and Amazon Prime. Occasionally I use BBC i-Player, but I can do without it. I never listen to my local BBC radio station and only listen to Radio 2 for the hourly news headlines. I never watch daytime television and I am not interested in the myriad of repeats suffocating Britbox. I do not wish to have a Smart phone, although I do have an ancient Vodafone mobile phone which does as I want it to do, or to be on social media. I do have several outside interests to keep me happy – some voluntary, others paid for – as I am a retired writer.

For many Over-75s, a television is also a companion. My late widowed mother kept her television on all day although she rarely watched it. The sounds from the programmes helped her to believe that she was not alone in her home and also helped her to combat loneliness. The BBC side steps the social importance of that.

Despite the above, the BBC wishes me to pay £157 tax each year (where are the free licences for the over 80s and 90s?) even though I have abandoned BBC programmes in favour of Netflix and Amazon Prime. Something is amiss here.

Furthermore, should I not pay (and I will not), it appears that I could be jailed or have bailiffs enter my home to take away £157 worth of my goods and chattels as a penalty for not watching BBC programmes. I also could be fined for not having a licence. I am now in cloud cuckoo land.

DEREK THREADGALL
Chelmsford
By email

(Over-75s were granted free TV licences, funded by the government, in 2000 when Labour was in power. The charter agreement between Conservative ministers and the BBC in 2015 required the BBC to take over responsibility for funding the free TV licences from 2020. Maintaining this was a Conservative manifesto pledge in 2017. A BBC spokeswoman stated: "It was the government which decided to stop funding free TV licences for the over-75s, and Parliament gave responsibility to the BBC to make a decision on the future of the scheme. There was no guarantee that the BBC would continue to fund free licences for the over-75s." – Editor.)

FYI

I am writing as an active member of the camera department – during lockdown all filming stopped, of course, and so I took the time to build Unitbase – a marketplace for buying and selling camera equipment. It is free to register on the site, and free to list items for sale. As a lover of cinema and television, I am very pleased to be sourcing some

interesting historical items (including a photo camera owned by Jerry Lewis) – but all items, however specialised and odd, will find a home and a new owner on Unitbase.

We are also conducting interviews with crew members about their work and I would love to solicit any members of the camera department to come forward and share their memories. One particular project is focused around the films of Stanley Kubrick, interviewing crew members who worked on his films over the years at Shepperton, Elstree and Pinewood. Would anyone who would like to share get in touch on admin@unitbase.co.uk.

The site is at www.unitbase.co.uk

DAVO McCONVILLE
Digital Imaging Technician
By email

TWO FRANK HARVEYS

I am contacting you about a mystery I am trying to solve. Frank Harvey Jr. is celebrated for the screenplays for films such as *I'm All Right Jack* (1959) but he also did some acting. How much? His father did a whole lot more.

In December 1938 my father Denis Johnston directed his own play *The Moon in the Yellow River* on BBC Television. This production is notable for including James Mason in the cast. Also in the cast list is one "Frank Harvey". Was this Frank Jr. or Frank Sr. or someone else? Frank Jr. was 26 at the time and the character is in his 60s. IMDB assumes it was Frank Sr. but he was in Australia at the time. So who can it be? I attach a photo of a scene from the play. James Mason is second from the left, and "Frank Harvey" is second from the right, in a tweed three-piece suit.



James Mason (second from left) and Frank Harvey (second from right) in *The Moon in the Yellow River*.

SCENES IN THE SQUARE

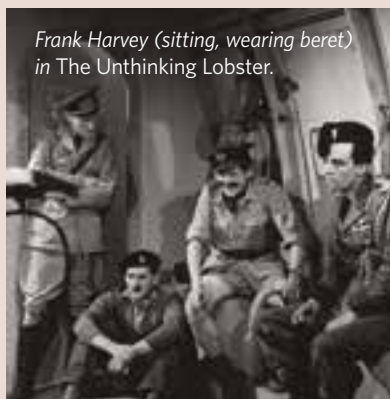
A statue of Daniel Radcliffe as Harry Potter has joined the collection of famous characters from cinema history in London's Leicester Square, featured in the last issue of THE VETERAN.

The bronze statue depicts the moment the fictional wizard first took flight on his Nimbus 2000 broom over the Hogwarts quidditch pitch in the first instalment, *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*.

The statue was due to be unveiled at the end of September, on the square's north terrace close to where the film had its world premiere in November 2001.

The council has granted permission for the statues to remain in Leicester Square until at least July 2023.

Frank Jr. acted in a broadcast of my father's play *The Unthinking Lobster*, in August 1948. Junior played a tank commander as he had been in the war. Radio Times lists him as "Frank Harvey Jr.". In this photo he is the character sitting on the floor in the black beret. There are several other photos of this production and the man in those does not seem to me to bear any resemblance to the man in the 1938 pic.



Frank Harvey (sitting, wearing beret) in *The Unthinking Lobster*.

There are numerous photos of Frank Sr. but I can find no other ones of Frank Jr. Any other biographical information would be useful.

There are two documentaries for which "Frank Harvey" (presumably Jr.) is credited, either with "narration" or "commentary": *Road to Moscow* (1944) (Movietone News) and *Burma Victory* (1945) (Army Film Unit).

He played a small part in a film he scripted, *High Treason* (1951) but, because the part was not credited, I can't tell which of the characters he was. His half-sister was also in the film.

He had two sons. What happened to them and to the half-sister, I wonder. The sister has a short entry in IMDB.

I would be very grateful for any information.

RORY JOHNSTON
rory7@sbcglobal.net

London's Burning (1995, 4 episodes) and *Midsomer Murders* (1997-2016, 71 episodes) as well as TV films *Cream in My Coffee* (1980) and *Scoop* (1989) plus cinema feature *Letters from the East* (1994).

DEREK COLLINS, Stoke Poges

Working for Technicolor as a pos developer from June 1989, he became a printer there from April 1991 and account manager/lab contact (Disney) from January 1995. At Deluxe Laboratories he was senior account manager/lab contact (Sony) from October 2002 to March 2014, then a producer at Deluxe Digital London until November 2015. He then joined Cinelab London as neg cutter and lab contact in December 2015 and continues there.

CAIUS JULYAN

His credits as an edit producer include *I Shouldn't Be Alive* (2010/11, series), *Infested!* (2012, 3 episodes), *Bad Ass Brides* (2017, 4 episodes), *Great Alaskan and Canadian Railroad Journeys* (2019, 3 episodes) and *Steam Train Britain* (2019, 4 episodes). He has also been a director of TV series *Film 1989* etc. and documentaries *Southern Italian Feast* (1998), *Sophie's Weekends* (2002), *From Hollywood to Borehamwood* (2003) etc. He narrated TV series *Four Rooms* (2012) and *Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords* (2018). He wrote TV film *Race to the Death: Rome's Charioteers* (2019) and one episode of *The Battle of Britain: 3 Days That Saved the Nation* (2020).

In Memoriam

DAVID DOWLER, Great Missenden
3 February 1944 – November 2019

ALAN JONES, Loughborough
8 April 1950 – 18 April 2020

JIMMIE KING, Orpington
8 December 1928 – 17 July 2019

BRENDA LEYDEN, Newbury Park
11 August 1933 – October 2019

TONY MANDER, West Byfleet
25 December 1934 – 27 May 2020

WILLIAM REAY, Kingston-Upon-Thames
27 November 1935 – 5 May 2020

JAMES REEVES, East Barnet
15 February 1934 – 24 April 2020

New Members



These are the latest members to have been approved by the Executive Committee of the British Cinema and Television Veterans to join our ranks and they are warmly welcomed. The following short profiles have been compiled from details on application forms and supplementary research where necessary.

DEREK BAIN, Chesham

This returning member is an editor whose TV credits include *Bouquet of Barbed Wire* (1976, 7 episodes), *Enemy at the Door* (1978, 12 episodes), *Whoops Apocalypse* (1982 5 episodes), *We'll Meet Again* (1982, 6 episodes), *Jeeves and Wooster* (1993, 12 episodes), *Poirot* (1992-6, 16 episodes),

Newsletter

Autumn 2020

SUPPORTING LIFE BEHIND THE SCENES

In March, the whole industry was hit hard with the outbreak of Covid-19, forcing production to shut down and cinemas to close. With the government outlining their plans for financial support, it became clear that not everyone in our industry would have the support that was needed to help them through this crisis so we stepped up to help the industry in one of its greatest times of need.

Responding rapidly to support the industry

We created two new grant schemes to support people during this crisis. The Emergency Relief Fund, created in partnership with the BFI provided one-off grants from £500 to £2,500 to active workers in film, TV and cinema to enable them to get through immediate financial hardships faced by job losses in the wake of Covid-19.

The Repayable Grants Scheme was designed to provide cashflow to those waiting for payments through the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

We raised more than £3m, with donations from Netflix, the BFI with funds from the National Lottery, BBC Content, BBC Studios, WarnerMedia and Sky. We've also received individual donations from 150 people and we're also grateful for individual donations from over 150 people during this crisis, and the creative

and energetic community fundraising participating in everything from half marathons to Doctor Who watch-alongs, receiving donations from over 1,200 in total.

We've now processed 3,000 applications to the Emergency Relief Fund and have now awarded £3 million in grants to 2,000 people in urgent need. We've also distributed £140,000 of support grants of up to £500 to 400 individuals. We're incredibly grateful for the support of the 55 volunteers who gave up their time to help us make this happen.

We've launched a Community Grants scheme for people in the industry who have an idea for an activity that could help friends and colleagues during the crisis. Applicants may apply for a small grant of £150 – £250, up to a maximum of £1,000, to cover set-up costs and expenses. During these difficult times, it's so important to try and stay connected and support each other.

Whilst financial support is key to so many people right now, we're still pushing forwards and offering more support for people's mental wellbeing. We've launched video therapy and specialist bereavement counselling and developed tailored mental health advice, working with our partners at Mind. We've also launched an online community platform, delivered by Togetherall, where people can chat online as part of a supportive and



Trevor Green

caring community, and take part in courses to help with mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, PTSD and bereavement.

Trevor Green remembered

We are deeply saddened by the death of our former Trustee and giant of the UK film industry Trevor Green.

Trevor ran the highly successful Entertainment Film Distributors with his brother, Nigel, launching such multi-Academy Award-winning titles as Gangs of New York, Gosford Park and the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Several of his titles were also showcased as Royal Film Performance™ films to raise funds for the charity.

He was always a popular figure within the industry, held in great affection by a large circle of friends and colleagues.

His kindness, charm, and generosity will be remembered by Trustees and staff at the charity.

We will commemorate Trevor's enormous contribution to the industry and the charity later in the year.

Your support

With so many developments, particularly with our work around wellbeing and mental health, it's more important than ever to raise awareness of the charity. We really appreciate the loyal support of our friends at the Veteran's Association. We hope you are as well as can be at this difficult time.

Don't forget to visit us on Facebook at facebook.com/FilmTVCharity, Twitter @FilmTVCharity or Instagram at instagram.com/filmtvcharity/



COVID-19 LEICESTER SQUARE AUTUMN 2020

See last issue (correct date this time!)

