

THE ACTT HISTORY PROJECT

EDWARD CARRICK

INTERVIEWED BY SID COLE WITH ALAN LAWSON.

The copyright of this recording is vested in the ACTT History Project Edward Carrick, Art Director/Designer, recorded on 30th January 1991. Interviewer, Sid Cole.

S.C. Teddy, it's lovely to see you after all these years. In these interviews we start at the beginning which as Alice was told was the right place to start. When were you born?

E.C. 1905.

S.C. And of course you were born very much into the theatre weren't you?

E.C. Absolutely.

S.C. Tell me a little about your father.

E.C. Well my father was what they call a revolutionary. Oh, he had terrific theories about the theatre, and strangely enough even though he used to fight against the cinema, you know, he really couldn't stand the cinema, on principle. But he had certain films he loved to go and see again and again with Harry Bower in it for example. He didn't like the films and when I went into the films he was absolutely furious.

S.C. What education had you had?

E.C. I never had any education whatsoever.

S.C. Were you taught at home then?

E.C. Oh, well, I always wanted to do wood engravings like he did. So he said "Well you can watch me, but don't ask any damn fool questions" So I said well that's alright. And later on in life he was the same about photography because I wanted to photograph, and I found an extraordinary old Sinclair camera, about 18" by you know...that was all made of mahogany and I used to love this thing and I used to look at it. I didn't know how to use it, but one day I think it must have got on his nerves and he said "Take this drawing and photograph it" I said "I don't

know how to photograph it" and he said "Well damn well find out" and that was the end of that. So I went to the local chemist, in Italy this was. We all went out there when I was three. There was this dear old Chemist , lovely man. When anybody died in the neighbourhood, this Chemist had to go up to the place where he had died and take a photograph of him. All these peasants wanted a photograph with your arms crossed on your breast you see, vignettted. Lovely vignettted photograph. He showed me how to photograph. He said "I will show you how to photograph if you will do a favour for me." He said "Do a favour for me, any time anything is beyond such and such a place, which was up the mountain, you'll go and take it for me. I am getting too old"

S.C. Is this in Italy?

E.C. Yes, Italy

S.C. Where about?

E.C. That was on the coast near Rapallo. Actually it was near a village called (sp?) Ritzoali but as they hadn't actually got a Post Office it was useless to put it as an address. We used to live next door to Max Beerbohm.

S.C. Oh wonderful. You met him?

E.C. Oh, every day, pretty well. I used to run about there with no shoes and socks on or anything like that. I loved it.

S.C. You must have come back to England did you?

E.C. Once or twice to see odd members of the family.

S.C. Did you see your Grandmother?

E.C. Yes.

S.C. When did she die?

E.C. In 1928 I think it was.

S.C. Oh then you had quite a long experience of her.

E.C. Oh yes. Because we used to live with her during the war.

S.C. Oh, did you, where would that have been?

E.C. It was in 215 King's Road, Chelsea. Mother acted as

Grannie's companion, do all the odd jobs, you know.

S.C. She was no longer playing then was she?

E.C. Oh yes. In various charity matinees. One particular one which somebody wrote, it was a very good one I can't remember his name now, we appeared with her, myself and my sister

S.C. What were you doing on the stage?

E.C. Acting.

S.C. Yes I know, I put that rather foolishly. What parts?

E.C. Oh well I was acting myself then. But I remember acting a Page in "Merchant of Venice" in fact once or twice in the "Merchant". I remember I had a special cue. This is the sort of thing we all encounter, and I think is devastating. I was waiting in the wings, and at a certain word, I was standing just beyond Portia, I was to run in with a scroll of paper and hand it to her. I was standing next to a lady who was supposed to follow shortly after and I was really intent on getting on at the right time and she said "I knew you when you were a tiny wee". You know, when you are small anyway, it is absolutely infuriating. I couldn't remember when I had to go on until I saw somebody on the other side of the stage going like this. I rushed in out of breath - probably a very good entry, but it wasn't what they wanted.

S.C. So did you really not have any formal schooling at all?

E.C. Nothing at all. Oh yes, I did. My Mother had a very old book about 4" by 3" with wood engraving and it was for children, published in 1820 and there was an illustration I think probably by Buick, of a Robin and a crow and this that and the other. There was one that fascinated me. The Common Robin builds a rude nest in the hedge and as I had always been told not to be rude, and I wasn't to be common, I thought this was fascinating. I'm sure it must have surfaced all sorts of wicked thoughts in my mind.

S.C. You must have gone to some sort of school to learn to read and write, or did you learn that at home?

E.C. Well, I learned in that book. It said "Rude" and "Common" etc. That's all I did have, honestly.

S.C. Was your Mother professional at anything?

E.C. Yes, my Mother was a violinist. She was what they called a virtuoso violinist. She would practice over the weekend

4

something by Paganini and play it from memory on the Monday. She was a lovely person. She owned the cottage just behind. The thatched cottage. Somebody left her some money, £700. She was so excited. She had never been left anything in her life before. She said to me "What shall I do?" I said "Buy that little cottage up here" I didn't live anywhere near here. But she said "All of the £700?" I often think of that. When she died she left it to my Sister and my Sister left it to Helen who is also an artist in the family. All of my children are artists.

S.C. What was your first contact with the cinema. Welsh Pearson wasn't it?

E.C. Welsh Pearson, yes. By sheer luck - I have found that life is nothing but luck. When you go over the edge with a fixed bayonet you hope you don't have to kill anybody, and if by chance he kills you, well that's luck, but it's not good luck for you, but it's jolly good luck for him. I think life's very much like that.

S.C. Talking of bayonets, you weren't in any way involved with the First World War?

E.C. No, no, no, no.

S.C. How did you get into the Welsh Pearson Elder outfit.

E.C. Well, this is where my life really began. I came over to England from Italy where we had joined father in 1917 because there was all the War still doing things. He said he had arranged with the Ambassador, Reynold Rodd to get us special exemptions for this that and the other. We went on a lovely trip and there we are in Rome. That was very nice and we soon found it was very expensive living in Rome. We thought "Where shall we go" and studied guide books and things and finally decided on Rapallo, because it said it was very good for the health. We went there and there again it was an extraordinary piece of luck. We didn't realise that Max Beerbohm lived in a villa just outside Rapallo but we kept on asking people the way and in dialect chaps would say "Up there, up there" and they would point, just straight lines. As the crow flies it was 'up there' but otherwise it was a heck of a long way.

We found the place and next to it was Bellino Caro. Father said "That's where Max lives". We got this place and with the rate of exchange at the time, he had to sell only two or three prints to pay the rent for the whole year. That was nice wasn't it?

S.C. Wonderful, but you came back from there to England

when?

E.C. 1927 I think it was. There was a strange man whose name I have got to find out, because I am making notes for myself to write my life with. Not for me but for the kids, because they have got to have something. They don't know that it hasn't all happened by magic. And this man opened at 199 Piccadilly, a sort of film company and he got together "English Author's Association" or something like that and he was going to get anybody of any importance to say that they would work together and they got down Edward Gordon Craig. He said, "You go over and see what he is doing". Because there was some underhand business going on because Father had just received from England, a letter written in very awkward writing. Somebody was trying to disguise who they were. A picture of Gordon Craig who had recently been made a Knight of the Order of Dannebrog in Sweden, and was being knighted in England by the King for his films "Ypres" and so on. And who sent this was actually his oldest friend. He got somebody else to write "Dear Gordon Craig, There are only two copies of this photograph, one I possess and the other one which has obviously been reproduced here, I gave to my fiancée many years ago. Will you please explain something about it."

Father was absolutely infuriated about this and so while I was over in England, I had got to watch this house and he signed himself "Robert Mothersoul". So while I was in England, doing this job for him, finding out about this strange film company who wanted everybody in England to sign. Anybody who had any good ideas on theatre or films. I thought I must go off and find this man. So I found here he lived and watched. He came out in the morning, obviously in a hurry to catch a bus or train or something. He had to get down to a place called Westerham in Kent. I thought this seems extraordinary, he does it every time. So I thought well, I am going down to Kent next week to see Father's best pal, Paul Cooper, a lovely fellow. They said "What are you doing over here Teddy, I thought you were busy with your Father out there printing all his wood engravings"? I said, "There's a strange man called Mothersoul" and Mrs Paul Cooper covered her face and pretended to cough. I said, "He comes down this way and I have traced him." Suddenly Mrs Cooper and Paul couldn't go on listening to this story about this mystery man. They roared with laughter, and of course it was Paul Cooper who had written the letter. He had seen this ridiculous thing about the other Gordon Craig being knighted and saw that there was a mistake. It was just too funny to be true. I said

"Why did you sign it 'Mothersoul?'" and Mrs Cooper said "It was the name of the Butcher in our village when I was a little girl".

S.C. That Gordon Craig became very important in Pathe News.

So now, how did you get into films?

E.C. Oh well, by that time I had tasted liberty, because you may have thought that Basil Dean was a bit stiff, he was a child in arms compared with Father, who wanted things created, like only God did them

S.C. But how did you connected with George Pearson?

E.C. There was a very important architect called Alastair Macdonald. Now he, I should think is the same age as you and me, he was very very keen on building film studios. He had never seen a real film studio, because there weren't any. Stoll Studios down at Cricklewood was only really a very big empty factory. They used to do Smith's Clocks.

He and I met. Now he was Ramsay Macdonald's son. He didn't take to politics at all. He seemed to be very friendly. He said "I am going down to Stoll's Studios, to see a chap called Tony Asquith. He's doing a film down there. They are just finishing off "49 Steps" and I think it will be jolly interesting". And so we went down. I was rather bitten with the idea of doing something in films. Now on my way over to England to see this Mr. Mothersoul, I went via Berlin because I had to deliver some of Father's drawings up there to a man called Klaus Richter. Klaus Richter was a very very fine Art Director and I was only there for about three days, and one of the days Klaus said to me "Ve vill today go to the Oover Studios where I vill show you how the film is made". I said "How lovely" so I saw how it was done and I saw all over his floor, his studio in Berlin, hundreds of drawings He said "Now you see the film starts over there" All these things were pretty well a continuity run of the whole film. I thought this was absolutely magic. Just the sort of thing I longed to do. And lo and behold I was doing as soon as Alastair Macdonald took me to this place at Stoll's Studios. We came back and I thought about it and thought about it. I hadn't even got proper digs. This friend of mine in Hammersmith said "You can sleep on the floor in my studio. I slept on an armchair actually and by putting four or five books under the front legs, put it back at a good angle and I could sleep quite well. I was staying there and suddenly Alastair

Macdonald to whom I said "Oh I'd love to do a job like this" said "Have you seen the advertisement in thesomething to do with films." Because he was keeping tabs on it all as he wanted to find a client for himself. They said they wanted an Art Director. I went along.

Now to me luck is the only thing worth bothering about. Well, there I wasRalph Hanbury rang me up and asked me to come along to his office in Wardour Street, but I think it was right down the other end just before it gets round the corner into Lyon's Corner House. You know where I mean. He had an office a quarter of the size of this room. A big room sort of cut up into partitions and there I went and he said "Oh, have you brought any drawings with you"? and I said "Yes I have some" because I had a little portfolio with me because I was going round to various publishers to see if I could illustrate books for them. And I showed him some and he said "Oh, that's nice"

Two important questions he asked me got me the job "Do you know anything about film studios"? And I said "Well, the UFA (sp?) studios I know about" "Oh you do" he said. Because at that time it was much more important to say that you knew the UFA studios than it was to say that you knew MGM, which was only working at some piddling little place. No importance in America.

Then he said "Can you make models?" I didn't know why he should ask this, but I found out later, nothing of any importance at all. But there was some young man who had recently been to see them and instead of showing them sketches, showed them little tiny models of the sets which was brilliant, because it allows for the camera to pan around. You can't do that.....makes six drawings. He said "Have you got any?" I said "Oh, yes I can make models, and he said "Have you got any?" And I said "Yes I have." I said, "There are two in the Victoria and Albert Museum". Ralph Hanbury was impressed. Not only had I been to UFA, but I had my models in the Victoria & Albert Museum. They were two models. The Victoria & Albert Museum wrote to Father and said they would like two of his models to put amongst their theatrical models on display. Father said "I'm damned if I have got time to go fiddling about with models" he said "You make it". "Make them from these two sketches", you see and I made these two models and they were sent off.

When they called a meeting at the end of that week, who should be there but Pearson himself because he was making a film and they were on location and had just come back from location in Spain, and he said

"Teddy Craig?. I know his father well, oh yes he is alright". And I got the job.

S.C. Can you remember what that film was called?

E.C. What, the one in Spain? I can look it up.

ALAN
LAWSON. Coming back, Tony wasn't making "49 Steps" at Stolls.

E.C. Well,"Underground", thank goodness you remembered.

S.C. Then what happened? Were you taken on by Hanbury?

E.C. Yes and they were doing a thing called "Broken Melody". No "Yellow Stockings" I think it was. and I had to design for them. The resident Art Director was called Wally Merton and he asked me if I had ever done any designing for film sets and I said "No" and he laughed and gave a wink as if to say "I bet you got this through being well related".

S.C. Were you what was called a Draughtsman?

E.C. No, no, I was an Art Director. You were your own Draughtsman, you went out and found your own furniture. You checked it in and you checked it out and the whole thing.

S.C. Can you remember, Teddy what your opening salary was?

E.C. Yes, £10 per week.

S.C. That was very good in those days.

E.C. It was and I must tell you one thing. The Porter at the little entrance was Kendall and he had a waxed moustache.

S.C. Yes I remember him.

E.C. Lovely man and nobody got past that door without Kendall's permission. Well of course when I got back from this meeting when they told me I was to get £10 per week, I had nothing, because when I wrote to father and I said I was not going to come back he said "Well that's the last you'll hear from me". And I wrote to my sister at once giving her authority to go to the bank in Italy and get out any money that I had left, and send it to me in pounds. So she sent me £6. So I started in England with £6. Of course Father had given me an allowance in England to get his job done, and find out where this crook was and here I was with £6, but it was very interesting

9

because I found this room in Hampstead in Well Walk. I don't know if you know Hampstead and Well Walk. 6/6 a week and the use of the bath was 6d and you had to put your 6d in a slot and it went clink, clank clonk and out came hot water. And of course I went back and saw my artist friends, who had put me up on a chair, and I said "I have got a job at £10 per week" "Good God" he said, "Have you got it in writing?" "Yes" He said "This is astounding". My whole attitude to myself was different. There was a very nice chap called Stafford Leek, an Art Master at St Martin's School. He said "My dear chap, I get..... a week for teaching them to artists."

And I remember a girl just down in the pub, around the corner of the bar, she was talking about being an Art Director. She said, "I understand you are in the film business. Could you take me down to the Film Studios?" I said "Oh of course, come down any day you like" It was magic.

S.C. Tony, tell me something about George Pearson. You worked with him on two or three films didn't you?

E.C. No. I was with his company, but I never worked with him. No George was a man I greatly admired and..

S.C. He was a top Director then wasn't he?

E.C. Oh yes, oh a lovely man. I had met George before when I came over to England for about four or five days much earlier. We went to have a meal at the Cecil Hotel. He had invited Father to a meal and I went with him. He asked Father if he had every thought of making a film and Father said "Oh no no no" Then Pearson said "Have you ever seen a good film?" and Father stopped and thought and I forget the film he had seen, I had seen it with him, it was a German film, a silent film, a very exciting film. I don't remember what it was called, something like "The Woman of the World". There was a scene in it where these two travellers got lost. They went over a mountain range and on the other side they looked down on what I know now was a terrific model shot of this giant city, everything running around and they walked down to this city and they were received as if they were people from another world, which they were of course.

Now these two men together decide they must get in touch with the other world, that they had come from How to do it. "We must get in touch with the Fatherland or the Motherland" or whatever it was. But we have got to have power. The practical man says,

10

"We shall have power" and the next shot says "Power"
And they built a centrifuge thing made out of giant
scaffold poles and to each pole about six to eight
natives, black chaps. I mean the place was seething
Father said "This is terrific" because it was just
right up his street.

S.C. How old were you when you saw that?

E.C. Well I suppose I must have been about 14 I should think.

S.C. It is surprising how one does remember individual
sequences like that.

E.C. Yes, but the first film I ever saw was at the age of 4.
In Italy.

S.C. Can you remember that?

E.C. Yes. I remember it so well, it is so implanted that I
have often thought of making it with amateurs but in
those days this film theatre was a booth really.
During the day there was a shop there and in the evening
they had taken the shop things away and a curtain was put
across it and the man was shouting (in Italian).....
and all this sort of nonsense and you went to it.
Now there was a piano there that played when you dropped
pennies into it, and this went on playing until the
room was full like an underground lift. When it was full
he knew that he could stop the rest coming in. We went
up two stairs to rigged up benches upstairs and looked
slightly down and it was projected

S.C. They were very short films.

Going back to George Pearson, somebody else you might
have met was Thorold Dickinson.

E.C. Oh, yes, I knew Dickie very well.

S.C. Because he was editing for Pearson then.

E.C. He was. He was doing this very film they were doing the
rushes on, and of course another thing in my favour which
was sheer luck, James Carew was acting in it. Now James
Carew was Ellen Terry's last husband. James said "What
the hell do we have to get married for" and she said
"I have to think of my public, if you are escorting me
around the place"

S.C. How many husbands did she have altogether?

E.C. Three.

S.C.: And your Father was.....?

E.C.: No 1.

S.C.: Who was the second one.

E.C.: A very nice man. She found it very awkward going around with two kids. They were always being asked "Where's your Daddy"? Well anyhow, it was shall we say. And so she went to a very nice Irishman who'd fought in the Crimea I think. Anyway he had always said "Ellen, if you ever want anything done for you just count on me." So she told him. That was Granny all over. She said "Look it is very awkward, what am I going to do?" He said, "Marry me of course" She said "Well I am not going to have any more children or anything like that you know". That meant a lot in those days.

S.C.: So you knew James Carew.

E.C.: Oh, very very well. It was James who was telling me the story of how it all happened.

S.C.: So how long did you stay with Pearson?

E.C.: Until something called "Talkies" arrived. And on the strength of £10 a week I got married. I got married to Helen Godfrey, an architect's sister. Lovely fellow and she was a marvellous woman. She rather thought I was O.K. She used to type everything for me and all sorts of things like that. Jolly good thing she did because, we went away for a honeymoon, paid for by an Italian restaurant owner in London. Leoni's. I was his third customer when he started. I started putting up these pictures and I started this thing called the "Glub" Group, put pictures all over the walls. Anyhow he knew I was struggling and he said "Senor Craig, you bring anybody you know here and treat them to food, they will get to know the place I will stand by my kitchen. If they don't like it it serves me right, but if they do they will come again and again and again. So I said "What do I do for the meal?" "When the bill comes," he said "you just sign....." And I did that for a whole year. I got so used to it I never thought one paid for food.

S.C.: And meanwhile you were bringing guests.

E.C.: And they all stayed. He was absolutely right. I had had a particularly lovely evening, and suddenly the waiter said "Mr. Leoni would like you to come and see him in his office" and then he said to me

"I think it is because of the bills". My stomach sank. "Oh, my God I had forgotten all about this" So we went in. It was snowing outside. So I said "Hello, Pepino, what is it" and he said "Things are going well with you now aren't they?" he said "From now onwards, you are just an ordinary client. You would prefer it that way wouldn't you?" and I said "Of course I would". Which was quite true. I was capable of paying. And he said, "Well, look at your bills". And he had a large piece of wood with a great spike sticking out of it. It was chock a block. You couldn't put any more bills on it. It wouldn't take it. He said "It is snowing outside, we will make snow inside too." And got these things tore them up and threw the all over the office All my bills for the last year.

S.C. You had a brief excursion into theatre at about this time I think because in your biographical notes to that Academy later on, you credit yourself with directing a production of "Macbeth".

E.C. Oh yes

S.C. Tell me about that.

E.C. Now that there were no films to do, in between jobs, the next job was with Basil Dean. I went down to see the old Countess of Warwick, she was a wonderful woman. You know she was very left wing and she somehow heard in round about ways that I was on hard times, so she said "Do come down and stay a week at this place near Dunmow, Eastern Lodge". Off we go and there was Basil Dean being ever so nice to her because he was trying to raise some money for a film studio. Only the other day I was looking at some old letters and there was a letter from Basil Dean saying "I would like to remind you that I met you at Lady Warwick's the other day and that you were very interested in films and that you had worked at Stoll Studios and would you like to come and see me next time you are in London." So off I went.

SIDE 2 OF TAPE 1.

S.C. You were saying about this letter from Basil Dean.

E.C. Yes and so I went off to see him, and he said in his rather pompous way "We're starting a film studio. Perhaps you would like to go down and see it, it's at Ealing". So I said "Oh yes I would like to". He said "Well go down and look at it, it's not open

13

yet and when we start, perhaps you would like to be the Art Director there." He said "Pemberton is there finishing off a film" I think it was something to do with barges. Or something like that.

S.C. It was too early for "Three Men In A Boat"

E.C. No.

S.C. Was it W.W. Jacobs.

E.C. No, no, I did one of those for him.

S.C. I thought Gracie Fields was in it.

A.L. Bit early for Gracie Fields.

E.C. Well anyway, they were finishing it off at Beaconsfield. and as soon as this new studio was ready for them they would go. So off I went and this time I was able to take Alastair Macdonald. I said, "Do you want to see a studio being really built?" He said "Goodness gracious, that's just right" Now, it was as far as I know, the first studio that was built in England with everything thought of for picture making.

S.C. Yes that's right

E.C. I think the architect was Anderson, a very nice man who was an expert on anything to do with acoustics. Anyhow he was going all over the place with a boy and saying "Now, Johnny, run up to the end of that thing now and when I blow my whistle, say something to me."

WHISTLE

"Can't hear you".

WHISTLE

"Not so far, come back to half way"

and so on.

Anyhow, Alastair Macdonald was very excited and went off to America very shortly after and he was hoping to get something there but he never did.

S.C. When did you start at Ealing?

E.C. As soon as they opened and Pemberton came in with him He had been at Stolls when I was there, because in those days we had three or four productions going on a stage.

S.C. So what was the first film you actually worked on for Dean?

E.C. I think it was a thing called "From Nine Till Six". That was, really, as far as I can remember Carol Reed was the Assistant and he was doing most of the work. Obviously Dean didn't think much of the film and he was just passing it on to Carol and I, he didn't think much of me, was being given to him, you know. Throw all the kids into the playroom and see what they can do.

S.C. So that was actually your first film you designed?

E.C. For Ealing, yes. The other one was "Yellow Stockings" I don't know which one came first.

S.C. Tell me something about Basil Dean.

E.C. I would rather not.

S.C. No, no, come on.

E.C. Basil Dean, I used to loathe him and I gradually got to loathe him more and more and his secretary, who later became my secretary, Eileen Farrell, I said "Where is Basil" she said "Oh, he's gone to London to have his stomach swabbed out" and I said "Why, what's the matter with his stomach?" she said "He has terrible trouble with his stomach" and I suddenly thought, "Poor man" You know you can drop a spoon normally, and nobody can even hear you, but when you have got a bad stomach I mean a spoon sounds like plate glass. Crash. But he was so unnecessarily cantankerous, finding fault, telling you how to do your own job and when he said he wanted a flight of steps to go up as high as that, and then to lean over the banisters and look down here, I said "But, Basil we could do the flight going up but doing the banisters looking down." I said, "Well his head will be in the gantry." "Oh, I see. Perhaps you're right" You both have known him. Of course you have. I remember once sitting in a cafe at about 4 o'clock in the morning. I had my studio in Soho Square, which is still there. There was one little cafe which used to keep open all night. Special licence or whatever it was, and they were lovely people. They often had a man with a harmonium whoused to play and sing songs rather quietly for fear of waking the people up in the rest of the road. We used to go in there and have eggs and bacon and things like that. Well I was in there one night with Peggy Jick. She was my first assistant, first female assistant anyway. That was at Ealing when we were doing "Lorna Doone".

She came along and I said "This is where it all happened" you see and we were sitting down and I was talking to Peggy about Basil just like we are now and I said "That bastard, he came in and he said....." and I didn't mention 'Dean' and one of these chaps, a labourer type said "'Ullo, 'Ullo, 'Ullo who's talking about our Mr. Basil Dean?" What a recommendation without his name being mentioned.

S.C. Were they people who worked at the studio?

E.C. No I think they were removers or perhaps furniture deliverers, or something like that.

S.C. Technically speaking you must have found that Dean wasn't very good about films? He was a man of the theatre and knew little about films?

E.C. Oh, yes. Of course he found Carol so useful for rehearsing because Carol was such a delightful character. He could stroll over quietly and say "Now, when you get up could you keep behind him because if you go in front you will blot him out". Basil would say "DONT YOU KNOW HOW TO....."

S.C. He was like that wasn't he?

A.L. You knew when it was the day for him to be swabbed out.

E.C. Yes and I was very lenient then. I remember I resigned once in the middle of a film, which is unforgivable. I said "I am going to leave, Basil, I can't stand it any longer". "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?" I said "You have just come out of the studio and said 'WHY HAS TEDDY LET THE S..... FOG IN?' I am not Jesus Christ. I can't organise the fog and where it is going to blow. You shouldn't have opened the doors".

Somebody had opened the doors and the fog had come right in.

S.C. And you were accused of it. What did he say to that?

E.C. I said, "I don't suppose you engaged me because I have got blue eyes and yellow hair."

He said 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT'.

I said "If you'd stop and think a bit sometimes about the people you expect to work for you, you might find out".

Do you know what he did?

S.C. No.

E.C. Next week he called me up to his office. He said "We are going to do the big take on so and so and we are going out on location (It was Lorna Doone) in Devon." He said "Go away and have a week's holiday". All ever so nice. And when he said it I thought "Poor bugger, he has built up all that bile, and now he feels a bit better and he has suddenly stopped and thought about it. Poor old Teddy

S.C. Reverting to your experiences, during this time you must have learned a lot about being an Art Director.

E.C. Oh, yes, the technicalities.

S.C. What were the main things you think you learned?

E.C. Well I gradually got to know other Art Directors That didn't do me very much good though. The Art Directors were very few. There was the most important one was Alfred Yunner over at Gaumont and there again, remembering my friend Klaus Richter, went over to meet him, and he was very pleased to see me and talked about Klaus and things like that and I saw the first crane ever built in the country built out of tubular scaffolding. It went up and down and ran backwards and forwards. Goodness gracious, I thought, this is something worth thinking about. Those sort of things occurred to one.

I also invented a snow machine for "The Silver King" Then a young man in the property room who was mechanically minded, did the same thing, only he was cleverer than me. Instead of doing what I did, he got a hot plate and putting it on a stool, got an electric fan behind it and a piece of chicken wire in front of it to break it up a bit and some dry ice. First of all when I tried it there were great flakes flying out all over the place, but once I got the chicken wire it was alright. Then he did a very good little thing which was to put a little thing in it and it puffed it out. He charged ever so much for making a snow storm for you. In "The Silver King" he says goodbye to his darling wife and they are living in a slum somewhere and he is going off to South America And the next shot is so many days, weeks or years later. There he is in his office. In come flunkeys with letters on silver salvers to hand to him, and in the middle of a take suddenly in the middle of a take some snow came down. And of course what had happened was that this snow had been flying up and collected on the rafters. You know Stolls? And some sparrows, out courting

kicked all this stuff down on his desk. Then we had to finish shooting that day and scoop it all up with vacuum cleaners or whatever.

S.C. So the next picture I noted in your biographical details was "Autumn Crocus".

E.C. Oh yes, but before that was a Harry Lauder film of which Thorold Dickinson made a brilliant effort to dub a record. And that was great fun.

S.C. They managed to make not too bad a job of it.

E.C. Yes. I went to see it. I thought it was brilliant considering they hadn't got any sound equipment and they were able to do it through the theatre by synching it.

S.C. Did you meet Lauder?

E.C. Oh yes.

S.C. What was he like?

E.C. Oh a delightful man. Made a great show of tipping the boys who brought him his lunch.

S.C. Because he was supposed to have a great reputation for being mean.

E.C. Oh he knew that too.

A.L. I thing that was supposed to be a Scottish trait.

E.C. So there he is. He had no reason to tip him so he gives him 6d.

Niether of you ever worked at Stolls did you?

S.C. Yes both of us.

E.C. I don't remember ever seeing you there. However do you remember this awful thing of going up and going down into the stairs into the Dining Room? And the curtains that divided the Dining Room into two?

S.C. Anyhow what happened?

E.C. You went up there and there was a curtain and as you were coming down the stairs on the other side, there was a curtain that came right in the middle and one side we, the technicians ate our stuff and on the other side the scum, in other words, the people who built it all and painted it all, including the Master Carpenter

Fred Holt, and I didn't know about this and I thought obviously they liked being in their own side and didn't want to be in our side, never thought about it the other way around. I said to Fred, "Now look, I want to tell you a lot about this next set we are going to build, come and have lunch with me". He said, "Oh I can't do that Ted because you see we are supposed to be on the other side of the curtain". It really was an affront to me. I couldn't understand that in a country like England there was such a thing as a division. Anyhow, we didn't. I said "We must change all this". Next time I met him I suddenly got a brilliant idea. There were three or four productions going on at the time and the Art Department....there was no such thing as an Art Department, you got a room somewhere and the rooms were all full. They built me my own Art Department on our stage floor that we had rented and I worked in this little room with a stock door on one wall and a stock window on the other. So I said, "Look, Fred why don't you have your lunch in my room. You needn't come over that side at all. You can do it like Sir Harry Lauder does it. Have it brought to you on a tray". Dear old Fred. He really grew bigger and smiled and radiations came out. He said "Oh thank you, Ted, that's a lovely idea." And he did and he had his lunch brought to him and he felt no end of a fellow.

S.C. So you saw the birth as it were of Ealing Studios?

E.C. Yes. I think I told you that I took Alastair Macdonald with me.

A.L. That's right, before he went off to America.

E.C. That was very very interesting and then I took over as Art Director.

S.C. You did "Nine to Six"

E.C. Well I didn't do it. I arranged for the setting up of the shot, because I was officially the Art Director so I was in charge of the Carpenter's Shop, the Painters and so on and they were still doing this film which had been finished at Beaconsfield, which we call Beaconsfield and the locals call BEECONSFIELD, because it was the last beacon to be lit on the way to London for the Armada. Then we went straight into "Loyalties"

S.C. Which Thorald Dickinson cut.

E.C. I enjoyed that, very good fun, and I had to do the Law Courts in that and I went down to the Law Courts. You aren't allowed to take a photographic machine with you, so I had to make little sketches of what it looked

like. I evolved a group of arches which you could push any way you liked and they all seemed to fit into each other, sort of semi-gothic architecture. You can play around with it, - inside or outside. Put the sun on it and it's outside. Take it away and its in the cloisters.

S.C. You found your background, particularly from your Father's theatrical approach very helpful.

E.C. No, no, because you see he was absolutely against realism. No, it was just sheer love I think. I have always been terribly excited about something strange that I have never seen before. Lived in Italy and in Germany and so on. You can't help absorb it. I mean the grand tour three or four times over.

S.C. So what did you do then? "Loyalties" was a very interesting film.

A.L. There was a Gracie Fields film with Dickie Dolman

E.C. "Love, Life and Laughter"

A.L. That wasn't her first, "Sally" was her first.

E.C. "Lorna Doone" was a very exciting film, and Basil Dean was very good on that because he was very bad on history. When I showed him anything, you know I learned how to show it to him. When they had this big party, I said the table wouldn't be a table which everybody sat at, I said they just had it loaded with as much loaves of this and that and a great big jar full of rosemary. He said "What's that for?" I said "It's for stirring the beer". "What the bloody hell do they want to stir it with rosemary for?" So I had to tell him. I said "You bash it on the side of the table to make the oil run and then you stir the beer with it" "Oh that's good' we'll get somebody doing that". You know these books I did, have you seen many of them. Unluckily I have sold nearly all my film stuff. First of all out in Texas they were very very keen and I let them have it very very cheap. The University of Austin, Texas. They have even got my cost sheet from the very first film that I ever did. Scribbled all over bits of paper. If anybody ever gets interested they will know where to go to. Austin, Texas, the Gordon Craig collection.

S.C. Just a personal question. How do you come to be Carrick rather than Craig?

E.C. Strangely enough, this is one of the reasons why Carol and I were so close to one another. Because

Carol Reed, his mother's name was Reed, but his father was Beerbohm Tree, and he changed it to his mother's name. Well, my name was Craig, but I was damned if father was going to get any credit. The people talking about it generally say "He didn't want to(something) on his father's name and I said, well a lot of good that would do me in films, simplifying four cubes - "That's the detective's office". It might have been very good in certain films in Germany.

S.C. Teddy, where did you get the name Carrick?

E.C. I picked it up just like that and it stayed with

A.L. Not to be confused with Garrick?

E.C. No, no nothing to do with that. Once when I was in the office of a studio of a friend of mine, Boyd Morrison, an Irishman, the phone was here, and I was sitting here, and he was talking to somebody on the phone, so I leant over and picked up a book from the bookshelf. It was a dictionary of Irish names and I thought I'll look up Craig because we always thought that Craig was an Irish name, because father took the name Craig, so Craig became Cragg ...no started as Carrick - Carrag Cragg and Craig so I thought "Goodness, I have got it.

S.C. So back to Ealing and Basil Dean and all that you were talking about," Lorna Doone" How did you get on with Dickie Hopper ?

E.C. Well you see I had introduced her to Basil Dean and had taken her down to Dunmow where Basil had his place and she asked me on the way back "Do you think I impressed him well?" So she got the job. I was trying to get the job for Maggie. I never thought Basil would put Hopper in. This dark haired girl. Lorna was supposed to be raven haired. Oh no he got it the wrong way round.

S.C. Dickie Hopper made an instant impact did she?

E.C. Maggie was waiting in the Canteen and I said I was going to see Basil. She said "Oh good". She was sitting at this little table having a cup of tea and she said "Have I got it?" and I said "No, I am afraid not." She was very disappointed, but she became very famous later on.

A.L. Who are we talking about?

- E.C. Maggie Lockwood. But she would have made a very good Lorna.
- S.C. Of course you did work with her later on, on a picture which I was on too, called "Midshipman Easy".
- E.C. Yes we were both on that.
- S.C. And you built that ship.
- E.C. Basil said, "Most of it takes place at sea. What are you going to do to make the clouds move and the sea to go up and down etc etc. You have got to think up something very clever. I don't know what you have got up your sleeve. And I said "Oh, I can tell you right now. We can't build it in the studio at all, because the long shot would show the grid and you can't have things like you have flies in the theatre, so I propose to build it on a scaffold on the lot. He said "But there are houses all around". And I said "There won't be by the time I have finished the scaffold" And I showed him a model with a little view finder. And he said "Oh, oh, well I hope it stands up". When it was going up it was great fun because everybody getting out at the station looking towards the studio saw this thing growing higher and higher. Then when we got the mast up and of course only bits of the sails just enough to lead up into the sky. The name of the fellow who did all this was Ryan. A marvellous fellow.
- S.C. Yes, I think it was the first time anything like that had been done. I suppose people didn't do sea pictures.
- E.C. Well yes, and that followed on "Lorna Doone" and of course in "Lorna Doone" (I will show you a photograph in a minute) you can see Lorna's farm was built exactly where the scaffolding was.
- S.C. Of course that was Carol Reed's first solo direction.
- E.C. Yes. Oh Carol and I got on very well.
- S.C. Tell me about Carol.
- E.C. Well, just a very lovable character. Had he done "Java Head" at that time?
- S.C. Yes I think he had.
- E.C. I had a lovely picture of Carol on the Stage and only a few months ago and it is just Carol by himself, standing there like this looking at the scene that I had laid out of "Java Head" with a smile on his face. And I gave it to my son who is an Art Dealer, that's lucky. And said "You know Reed don't you?" and he said "Yes" and I said "Don't you

think he would like this?" and he said "Good God is that his father" he said. I said "Give it to him" and the boy was delighted. He said "I have never seen father look so merry". That was "Java Head" , yes.

S.C. With "Java Head" was an American director.

E.C. We had a lovely shot with this ship coming in, a model. I managed to get a ship a few years earlier than the period in the film, because it was a period film. A beautiful model it was, absolutely glorious.

S.C. Is that what you call a hanging miniature.

E.C. Yes, only it rolled on wheels. As that came in and the voices over it and you hear the commands given to the chap "Belay there on the blah blah blah."

S.C. Then you went away from Ealing didn't you, after that?

E.C. Yes

S.C. In 1936 there is a film called "Jump for Glory" which was with Douglas Fairbanks wasn't it?

E.C. Yes, soon after that I joined Douglas Fairbanks and he took over Walton Hall Studios.

S.C. That was directed by the famous American Director, Raoul Walsh

E.C. Raoul Walsh, "Jump for Glory" Yes. That was great fun. You see there was a beautiful bed, in which Valerie Hobson (we always used to call her Valerie Horseface) Dear Valerie, she was very nice, and I don't know why. Somebody said it, but she was very beautiful. A very nice horse.

S.C. Lovely eyes.

E.C. Anyhow, there she is and I made this wonderful bed with swan's heads doing this that and the other and Raoul Walsh came on and he said "There are three things about this set that are good, one you built it on time, two, so and so and three it's just what I want." He was just the opposite to anything Basil Dean could have done. And then, finally there she was, sitting in the bed and he had climbed the drainpipe outside the window, he looked around with his torch and he switches over to the secret cupboard where the jewels are. He goes to it, looks around, opens the door up, gets the loot, goes back and has to step over the window sill. It looked a bit dull, and Raoul said to him "Dougie, look, when you get that thing, you bring it over here and you look at her. She is lying asleep in the

23

bed and when you see her up goes your boom". "You know, that's what you've got to register". Oh dear, it was good fun.

Side Three

- S.C. Teddy, last time we got as far as your Ealing career in the Dean period up to Burnham Grove in 1936 and what happened after that. Because it was many many years after that that you worked at Ealing again. Where did you go?
- E.C. Well I was doing a lot of theatre stuff and I mean I was doing stuff like "Henry V", and "Night Must Fall" in the theatre you see.
- S.C. That was the original Emlyn Williams
- E.C. Yes. It was directed by a lovely chap, Miles Malleon. He came along with a script you see and he said "I want you to read this and after you have read it, no matter what time it is ring me up and let me know what you think of it." I couldn't put it down. I had a studio in Soho Square then and I started reading this thing and got to the end and I rang him up and I said "I should think it would run forever". It was a marvellous run.
- S.C. What did you do apart from that. What did you next do in films?
- E.C. Then Douglas Fairbanks Productions.
- S.C. What films did you do with him
- E.C. Sergei Orbandoff (sp?) was working with him. Preparing scenery for "Henry V". That's the theatre again. I then went out to Egypt, preparing a whole lot of material for a film which featured Paul Robeson.
- S.C.. What was that called?
- E.C. I can't remember, but I left before they finished the film because it was one of those ones with awkward backing. I was very lucky to get home and I got all the sets ready for them at Pinewood, and they came in and did it, but I never saw the rushes because I was doing something else and then another film came up. And then, if you please only two years ago"Jericho" it was called, and I said to Mary "We have got to see this. It will be the first time I have seen even one foot.

- S.C. Was it shown on the box?
- E.C. Yes. Never seen a thing.
- S.C. Did you see Robeson?
- E.C. Oh yes. I had met him before. Awfully nice man. Charming man. He was very good to young artists. Not that I was a young artist, but he was interested in the fact that I had started this film school and young chaps were given a chance to learn something.
- S.C. Who directed "Jericho"
- E.C. Thornton Freeland.
- S.C. Oh yes, married to a very nice lady.
- E.C. Yes, wasn't she a sweetie. There is a lovely photograph of all of us, all three and Jimmy Boyle the cameraman. We are all standing on the steps of the plane that was taking us off to the ship. And that was a very nice photograph. We all looked so happy.
- S.C. So by the time they were ready to go ahead with "Jericho" you were already busy with something else?
- E.C. "Johnson over Jordan" - that's the theatre. That was one of the nicest jobs I ever did.
- S.C. Why?
- E.C. He was grand to work for, but of course Basil Dean was there too.
- S.C. Did Dean direct it?
- E.C. Dean directed it and half way through it they could see that there was considerable unrest on the stage because Basil was getting at everybody, you know, niggly. Did you know him?
- S.C. Yes, also knew Priestly.
- E.C. Yes well Priestly had a lot of money in it. Suddenly we were told we were wanted in the front circle. You know the play hadn't started. This was still in the rehearsing period. We all went up there. Benjamin Brittain was there and Elizabeth Haffenden who did the costumes and anyhow, Priestly very quietly suddenly stood up and said "Basil, as you know I have got a lot of money put into this thing, and I have to look after it

haven't I, otherwise nobody will have any salaries. Now it seems to me that everything is slowly grinding to a halt and I don't think this is a very good idea. The interesting thing is that you have managed to find for me some of the best people in the country to work for me. There's Teddy here, and Benjamin Brittain and Liz Haffenden and we are paying them these vast sums of money." We were being paid very well considering it was a theatre job. He said "It's because they know the job and of course if you are going to check up on them all the time they are going to feel that you don't think they know their job and that will stall everything. So now we have got to get together and decide, is there anything outstanding that you can think of at the moment that we can clear up now with the heads of these departments." Basil couldn't think of a single thing. If he had been asked unofficially two or three hours earlier he would have said .."Bloody set's not up etc. etc.

S.C. So did it go better after that.

E.C. It was marvellous. It was as if somebody with constipation was relieved. You know I was always worried when I found out Basil suffered from this terrible stomach trouble and had to go and have his innards swabbed out regularly, I began to have sympathy with him. Anything like a dicey set up acts on your innards, and if your innards are acting up you suffer.

S.C. What was the film you did then?

E.C. No, no more films, because that funny chap called Cavalcante , God Bless him. He came to see me at Stoll Studios when I did my very first film there. A silent film and there was the interior of a studio in Paris. I made this studio and I was very pleased with it. It was a very simple set, quite big and very tall. The cameraman was making an awful lot of fuss. He was saying "There's nothing there. You are supposed to decorate it, make it look like a studio." I said "What the bloody hell do you think I am doing I am from an artist's family and I am making it look like it should look" and he went storming off and Cavalcante was watching all this and I never realised it and when the war started he got me in to look after the Crown Film Unit.

S.C. He remembered all those years back?

E.C. Yes. He said I was the only Art Director he had met who really believed in realism. This was perfectly true. It is a realistic medium.

S.C. Unless it's Caligari or something.

E.C.: Yes. Absolutely. That was one of the ones we used to talk about a lot. I have got some of the original stills for Caligari down here.

S.C.: So you went to Crown. That must have been just before the war started.

E.C.: Yes. Suddenly the war was there and I was into it up to the neck.

S.C.: That was down at Blackheath. How was it there. Tell us about that.

E.C.: Well the studio was a school. You came out of the train across the road and up the hill and you couldn't go any further because there was an old school there and it had been converted into a studio. I say converted but they designated a large classroom as a stage and any stairways were parts of any step going anywhere. It was great fun though. I loved these sort of moments when they would say "Look, here's sixpence, what can you give us". It is always an exciting challenge and you pull all the stops out and rush around and borrow things for nothing. It was a very nice atmosphere. Unluckily the carpenter who they employed, was a very nice chap, but they must have asked him "Can you do carpentry?" and I think he was something to do with the school and he said "Oh, yes that's alright". I suppose any man in the country would say "Oh yes, I can do carpentry" you know. But he couldn't

S.C.: So what did you do?

E.C.: Well I just had to the best I could. Give him the simplest things and instead of making measured drawings, make sort of pieces of perspectives with measures marked on them. He was a nice fellow.

S.C.: Presumably he learned something from all that?

E.C.: Oh, yes and of course there was Frank the Electrician. He was marvellous. I don't know his other name. I must say he gave me more laughs than anybody I had ever met in the film industry. He said "Ted, I don't want to butt in but there is nothing for me to do for the next couple of days is there." I hope the Censor doesn't hear this story or he will cut it out. So I said "No, Frank, why?" "Well" he said "I could do going home a bit you know". I said "Fine, well cheerio". He said "Fine, well I'll go back and bury the old pork sword".

Colloquial English. You can't imagine where you are

going to pick up bits can you? I had to work for a moment, .. click click and my computer put out a reading that I was quite surprised at. He was a dear and just the opposite of the Carpenter because he could really invent things. He could make bits of machinery out of nothing.

S.C. What about the Cameramen who were there - Chic Fowell.

E.C. Chic Fowell, God bless him. I loved Chic. A most imaginative man and the other one was Fred Gamage. He considered himself Chief Cameraman.

S.C. Rather a Civil Servant looking chap?

E.C. No. I should think rather the opposite. His father was a fireman. When we went to Pinewood he got his father a job checking on the cameras and things like that. That was very good because he was one of those chaps who really check. First thing he used to say to anybody, when they used to say "Are you Mr.....?" He used to say "Yes, I done 'Target'" and we used to call him "Where's 'I done Target?"

S.C. He was a Cockney.

E.C. He was a jolly good cameraman, but compared to Chic Fowell...Can I break in to tell you about Chic Fowell and our friend Humphrey Jennings. I had known Humphrey Jennings before the war because he was a painter, a young painter full of very exciting ideas and he used to come and see me in my studio in Soho whenever he came up and he would pop up and have a chat. He knew I lived in the heart of the country in Essex in a place called Wethersfield, a place which nobody could ever find, which was just what he liked. He was doing this film called "Offensive" and my little daughter said it was called "Spring Offences" He wanted a chap to lean out of a window whilst he was shaving and my local thatcher did it.

Chic had to go off and do one job and Humphrey said "Teddy, where can I find, down your way, I want an isolated tree on a mound, you know like something out of Shakespeare - gaunt." So Humphrey said, "Never mind, I'll take Gamage and find one ourselves." He said "Make a suggestion as to the way to go". and I said "Go as far as Castle Headingham and turn left".

So off he goes. In those days we had to get all sorts of permits through a lovely chap called Nunn-May at the M.O.I. and I was supposed to see

Humphrey that evening and I said "That's funny he hasn't even rung up" so I said "I have finished so I will go and see what has happened to him. I'll go and see Nunn-May" So I went into Nunn-May's little office which was a sort of little sanctum it really was too small and I said "Do you know where Humphrey is?" He said "I should imagine, provided that they have given him something to put his feet up on that he is in Colchester Prison, with his feet up."

I said "Colchester Prison, what on earth has he done?" He said "Well, if you will go around the country, popping up here and popping up there asking people whether there is a gaunt tree, you get noticed."

"What do you think Humphrey has done? He has suddenly seen this thing and he turns to Gamage and says "There it is", and points directly to this gaunt tree standing directly on the top of a hill. He said "Come on Gamage, where's the camera," and they get down into the ditch nearly got tipped up two or three times by the barbed wire that's all around everywhere. I heard this from Gamage afterwards, and he said "We started walking when suddenly four or five soldiers with fixed bayonets appeared."

He said "We are only going to take a photograph of that tree" It turned out to be a magnificently built radar system. Gamage said if you stood still you could see it turning around and the camouflage people had built a beautiful thing which linked up with holes and they could talk to de Gaulle in France.

S.C. Have you any more stories about Humphrey Jennings?

E.C. There is no end of stories about Humphrey. I loved him. Whereas Basil Dean had no sense at all at what he used to go off the deep end about, Humphrey was so good he had brilliant ideas and he must see them carried through. The one I enjoyed doing with him most was "Fires were Started" and that was terrific. Do you know we had to get special permission from Port of London Authority and God Almighty as far as I could make out to set fire to the whole of this warehouse. They were only small fires, but they looked big. It was big enough to melt the lead on the roof.

S.C. It was a very good film.

E.C. Yes, and nice people doing it. Do you remember Pat Jackson? He did "Western Approaches". He was over here the day before yesterday. He was one of these

people who used to laugh at Humphrey. It was very good for Humphrey to have somebody to laugh with him. He had no vicious feelings, he had only absolute determination.

S.C. What other directors did you work with?

E.C. Harry Watt.

S.C. What did you do with him?

E.C. A thing about balloons. I did every one of the films from then on. From "London Can Take It" to the end I had to look after it all, and the Army Film Unit

S.C. As well?

E.C. Yes.

S.C. They were based at Blackheath too?

E.C. No, no. You see one of the things that pleased Humphrey a lot was the fact that I was a professional. They didn't give him a young fellow who 'was very fond of art', or something like that, so he was able to chat about it and say "we have got to have this and we have got to have that". So they sent me off to go and have a look at all the film studios near London and write a report on it. I have got it somewhere. It must be pretty foul in some places, because I found that some film studios were terribly badly organised. Anyhow, I came back and I said "Well there's only one as far as I am concerned and that's Pinewood." We went there but the thing I hadn't realised although I had been there and looked all over it was that the Mint was already there, round the back, making threepenny bits or sixpences. It was good fun, but then I had to staff the place with Plasterers, Carpenters and everything. And then came a question in Parliament.

S.C. What was the question in Parliament?

E.C. I think Mickey Balcom started it. Anyway whoever started it said that the Crown Film Unit was stealing the labour from the existing film studios. Now,...

S.C. And were you?

E.C. Yes. I had the most wonderful carpenter ever. I could tell you a whole film about him. He was a wonderful man, an Irishman. Came from Newry. Very very clever. I have never met anybody so clever in films. I said "Ted, we have got to get the best crew ever. Who can we get and where are they?"

He said "Yes, now I'll tell you something. Write to them a little note saying I am offering you a job and please write on a POST CARD saying "I'm so glad to hear that you are starting again. If there is any chance, do bear me in mind." Send it on a post card. Everyone will answer yes, so you will be alright".

So I said "What is the use of it. Why can't I write them a letter and why can't they answer?"

He said "If anybody can put something in an envelope and pretend it was written on such and such a day, but with a post card you stamp it on the thing they reply on. And so they can see that that man on that day had heard that you were going to...and you hoped to be remembered, and the date was....."

So I got the cream, including one man of 75 whom nobody would want to have. I wouldn't be pinching him from anybody and he would have been no good for the war effort. He was quite the most wonderful carpenter ever and he worked with Henry Irving.

S.C. That was at Pinewood?

E.C. Yes and we stayed at Pinewood until the end when the Crown Film Unit had to move to something smaller, I proposed that they went somewhere nice and handy, to Beaconsfield, and they went there for a sort of trial period and it worked very well. I sent them a marvellous master carpenter to go with them so they were well looked after.

A.L. Did you go to Beaconsfield

E.C. No, that is an important point. So off they went and in came Peter Proud with "Green For Danger".

S.C. Did you know Peter before the war?

E.C. Yes, very very little though. Popping in and out of Gaumont.

S.C. Crazy character.

E.C. Yes, completely crazy. Very very funny man though. He only died recently

S.C. Yes a couple of years back.

E.C. He came down here and I think I saw him only the once. While they were getting ready to do "Green for Danger" in came Frank Launder and started "Captain Boycott"

31

and was delighted to find me and I was delighted to find him, and together we worked on "Captain Boycott". We went off to Ireland, but couldn't find what we wanted there. I said "I can build you what you want out on the lot including a hill over which the Cavalry comes in one of the scenes. There is a bulldozer left from the Army Unit to push the earth around. Oh, it was grand to be back with a professional man.

Did you ever work with Frank?

S.C. No, but I know Frank.

E.C. Poor chap, I think he has got some nasty form of paralysis, and he is still out in the South of France. I rang up his wife and she said "Oh, Frank will love this" and I spoke to him and I could tell he was very very bad because although I could hear her clearly, he was very garbled. Oh, it hurt. I said "Oh, Frank, it is marvellous to hear your voice again. I wish to God they would get these phones mended. It's awful. I rang a friend up just the other day and just the same thing happened. Anyhow it's lovely to hear your voice and I'll get in touch" and I cut off. And then I tried to get him again back in France. They lived in Monte Carlo or something like that. It was evening so I thought it was about the right time. She said, "Oh, Frank's just getting ready to go down to dinner, but we have got to rig him up in his chair and so can't speak to you now. I'll get him to ring you as soon as we have had supper." I never heard from him.

It's the worst of it. We all get older.

S.C. So was "Boycott" the first one after the war?

E.C. He's good as a Chairman isn't he. He brings you back.

S.C. Well I did the job for ACTT you see. But it is important to keep a track of things.

E.C. Oh, you're absolutely right

S.C. So what did you go on to after "Boycott"?

E.C. "London Can Take It", "Target for Tonight", "Western Approaches", "Fires Were Started" "Desert Victory"

S.C. "Desert Victory" that was the Boultings wasn't it? How did you get on with the Boultings. Or not? Funny I should ask that question.

(Laughter)

A.L. It wasn't a Boulting film anyway. Roy Boulting didn't make "Desert Victory".

S.C. He thought he did though.

E.C. He came in and said "I've got a scene with some pipers seen from behind. They are going in to the battle. We will rig up some bang bang bangs with the lights and all I want you to do is to give me a black knight right around the place and a few hummocks here and there. He came down about half an hour later and said "Why isn't any work going on?" I said "Because it's tea break". He looked at me and said "That shouldn't stop it" I said "Oh, don't be bloody silly" He said "If you were in uniform I'd have you on a charge". I said, "Well rush off and get a uniform and I'll put it on and you can put me on a charge." I have never seen a man in such a rage. They said "You're in for it aren't you? Properly upset the Army Film Unit." I said "I should think they are absolutely delighted".

Ayhow who should turn up, but Alec Brice who was going to shoot it. Now, Alec and I had already chatted and we knew exactly what we were going to do, and I said "There's the black knight going up there and he looked at it and it was all canvas, brown. He said "It's got to be a knight, it's black". I said, "Black is caused by the absence of light. Don't put any light on it and it will be black." I think he would have murdered me if he had had a handy machine gun. Oh, what a silly little man he was.

Oh, who was it who won the war for us?

S.C. Montgomery

E.C. Montgomery came down two or three days later to see what was going on. It was something he was rather keen on, this thing, and he said, "Who is that funny little man running around in imitation khaki. Tell him to change into proper garb." He had had special corduroy khaki made for him.

Now Hugh Stewart was the one we went to when we wanted anything done. I said "I'm sorry if I have upset anything." He said "No, do him a lot of good."

Anyhow he had to change his clothes.

S.C. Did he actually have to change his clothes?

E.C.: I had to arrange with the Canteen that they could put the stuff up in another section for model work and turn it into an Officer's Mess. Oh what fun.

Some of them did take it terribly seriously, the whole of the war depends on this one shot. It was a very good shot and it was so simple to do.

S.C.: What about Dave Macdonald. How did you get on with Dave?

E.C.: Oh, yes, he was grand. A nice man. He had a sweet daughter too. She had something to do with the Army Unit too, I think. She came and saw me later on after he was dead.

S.C.: Anything else about the Army Film Unit.

E.C.: Oh, yes. They suddenly realised, all these chaps coming back from the Front. I mean it was wonderful stuff they were doing. There was one thing, where they had to cross a wadi. The poor chap who had got the camera and was following them on this thing got blown up complete with the camera and it was a very important piece where they had to see them coming up over the edge. So Hugh managed to find me a bulldozer. A chap came along and managed to make me a wadi in the gravel. Get a couple of twists in it to make it look longer. The stuff they were throwing up I added to with plaster. Did you ever see it, the wadi?

S.C.: Yes, yes.

E.C.: Well the man who came to do it, a nice young fellow, he said "This is a bloody treat, this is wonderful." He couldn't believe it.

I said "Don't you believe it, you've got to have your lunch in the Canteen." And when he got it he said, "But there's nothing wrong with the lunch". I said "Well you must be in an awful place where you are." We thought the food there was awful. You weren't with the Army Film Unit were you?

A.L.: Yes, yes.

E.C.: You were! You saw me?

A.L.: The funny thing is I can't remember seeing you there.

E.C.: Well you know where the Canteen was. Well we were above the Canteen.

S.C.: You were probably both too busy.

E.C.: Yes. Well one did. One went in and out all the time.

A.L. Yes, I didn't actually work on "Desert Victory". I worked on the thing that was to follow, which was "Glory".

E.C. What fun. This was nothing to do with the Army Film Unit or the War or filming but all the drains got blocked. You know that great piece of concrete all around there that we used to use as a car park. It suddenly clogged up. I went to see Hugh and he put me on to a chap who was to do with Engineering, who said "Absolutely the stuff for us". They went over the area with some sort of geiger counters all over the place. I said well we will dig in the middle. Anything will do. Couldn't find anything. Dug, couldn't find anything. Then my marvellous Irish carpenter said "I'll find it for you" I said "How?" He said "There's a man that comes up to the pub where I have lunch. So up he went and the next day down comes the man from the pub. And he said "Where have I got to find it?" and they said "Somewhere in here." He said, "Well is there any place around here where there is a standpipe or anything just to start me off? So we said "Over there there's a standpipe." He got a little piece of twig from his pocket, bent it double started walking backwards and forwards...."Mark it""Mark it" and laid not six different routes, but one only

End of side 3.

SIDE 4.

S.C. I was going to ask you about some other directors Although you told me that you admired Basil Wright, particularly his writing on film you had never actually worked with him.

E.C. No, I didn't

S.C. Did you work with Arthur Wilton?

E.C. Yes, dear Arthur. A very pleasant person.

S.C. Beard and all. What about Grierson himself?

E.C. In my days Grierson wasn't there. He left.

S.C. He had gone to Canada hadn't he?

E.C. Yes, and when we went into Blackheath, Cavalcante

was there and he said "How nice to see you again, Teddy". And that was that. As one went in the other went out.

S.C. I tell you who else was there as a sort of Studio Manager, Ralph Bond. Do you remember Ralph?

E.C. Yes, vaguely.

A.L. He was lame. He had a lame foot.

E.C. Yes. But I can't remember.

S.C. Cav was very important there wasn't he?

E.C. What a nice man wasn't he?

S.C. Yes. Lovely. Of course he did then go to Ealing. He didn't stay at Crown.

E.C. No. No.

S.C. 1942 I think he went to Ealing, as I remember because I cut a film called "Went The Day Well".

E.C. Yes. Yes.

S.C. So what did you do then after the war? We really jumped a bit ahead to "Green for Danger" and "Captain Boycott".

E.C. Well after that we did one called "School for Danger" That's the last one I did and that of course was a secret film.

S.C. Oh the last one for Crown.

E.C. For which we went out to France just before the Falaise Gap and as far as I am concerned it was absolutely marvellous. I was back in Europe again.

S.C. It was a rather sad Europe at that time.

E.C. Sad Europe as it was, they still had all sorts of extraordinary things. There we were, we were billeted with a group of Maquis up in the hills

S.C. Did you have a nice time?

E.C. Yes. The chap who was in charge of the Maquis group was ex-Navy. I don't know why he should have charge of a whole lot of land troops up in the hills, but he was a very nice man and I know that I was ranked. I didn't have a particular one but I had to have one for rations and paying and things like that.

- S.C.: But you weren't officially in the Army.
- E.C.: No, so I got a Major's allowances and I used to hitch hike quite a long way down to the coast and then I would get piles and piles of Camel cigarettes. I didn't smoke. I don't like it, but I used to get a knapsack full of cigarettes on my back and come back and chaps would come from up in the hills. They could see me for miles and miles. They would start coming down to exchange their Caporals for Camels. It was nice in a way.
- S.C.: If they exchanged Camels for Caporals, what did you do with the Caporals?
- E.C.: I didn't mind smoking a few Caporals, but I couldn't stand them. I have never been a good smoker. You see the thing with the Caporals was that I was now in a position with all the rest of the stuff that I could buy what I liked with cigarettes. But there was one lovely moment. When we got into Avignon, the Germans had only just left and but like the French with everything, they didn't want to make it look dirty and nasty, because there was a war on. There was this very lovely Parfumerie and a nice piece of velvet went up on the top there and a lovely bottle on the top of it. Chanel 5 you see. There was one girl. I belonged to an Artist's club and I said "I may be going abroad, what do you want?" to the barmaid. She was a dear. She said "I want a big bottle of Chanel No. 5, thank you very much". And that was all. Everybody else would start thinking but she just wanted something that was ridiculous and impossible. And here it was, so, ah here it was. I could just see her eyes pop out. I got this perfume, but the price I said "Combien?" She said "What have you got?" I said "Well there is this and this and this. I have got all these Luckies and Camels and she said "Look" and she drew back a little curtain and she had stacks and stacks of them. The Americans had left the day before we came in. She started looking in my knapsack and in the bottom was a tin of cocoa. M.O.F. and I thought it was 10 1/2d and she said "Cocoa!" Everything was solved for me.
- S.C.: So you got a big bottle of Chanel No. 5 for a tin of cocoa.
- E.C.: Yes. There is something interesting about that. The real value suddenly comes and find the person who wants it and there it is. I mean I passed a shop a little later, another shop in another part of Avignon

37

in glass containers were marvellous nuts, which they got for nothing, sugar and put together it was immediately something that everybody would like to have.

S.C. So how long were you in France?

E.C. Oh quite a bit. I had to leave before the rest of them. I have still got my pass. I had to keep it because it said I was to be given top priority and that I am carrying secret film.

Oh there was a lovely man who came with me called Marcel. He was marvellous. He had such a sense of humour. He had been dropped five times into France. "The last time they are so keen to see me that every dog in France came to see me. And my parachute tangled in the telegraph wires and I dangled". And he said the only thing to do was to keep on bouncing. One dog started and then another and they all tried to catch his legs. Whenever anything went wrong he used to think it was funny.

S.C. So then what did you do when you came back?
You wouldn't be demobilised in the military sense.

E.C. I was at Pinewood and we were doing "Boycott"
"South African Story"

S.C. What was that?

E.C. It all took place in a great mine somewhere.

S.C. Where was that shot?

E.C. In Pinewood.

S.C. Who was in it?

E.C. I can't remember.

A.L. It wasn't the thing that became "Diamond City" was it?

E.C. No. But there were some very good people in it who were very pleased to be in it.

S.C. Who directed it?

E.C. It is somewhere about April 1950. That could lead you to it.

S.C. The background was South Africa was it?

E.C. Yes and mine in South Africa.

Now, Art Director on "Sunset at Morning" for the Mayflower

Company. That was February.

A.L. That was Pinewood too was it?

E.C. Yes definitely. I can see it on the smaller stage.

S.C. What sort of sets did you have to do for that, do you remember?

E.C. There were a lot of pileups with bits and pieces of rock and things that they had been shooting in Africa.

S.C. What was the next one.

E.C. The next thing on December 10th 1951, Rank Production "Fanfare for Fig Leaves" was one of the titles and the other was "It Started in Paradise". That I enjoyed very much

S.C. Any names.

E.C. ?Sergei Albandof? producing with J. Lewis. He walked out on it. We all said we wouldn't work with him any more.

S.C. Was he so very difficult?

E.C. Oh, he was quite intolerable and he called a meeting and he did a dramatic thing, and walked out and said something like "He who loves me follow me".

A.L. The thing is did he run out of money?

E.C. I think that's part of it. They came down to see me. It was "The Gift Horse".

S.C. That was completed wasn't it?

E.C. Yes, but without him.

S.C. Who came down to see you, the money people?

E.C. The money people. The National Film Finance Corporation. Such a nice man. He asked me how I came to my conclusions and I said "I didn't come to any conclusions, it would cost a damn sight more." "Oh, that's very interesting. What did you think it would come out at?" I said "Oh £3,000 to build the side of a ship." He said "Well that's funny because here they said you could do it for £1,000." He said "I think perhaps there's some mistake there". I looked at him rather quizzically and said "I think there has been a rather obvious mistake."

S.C. It actually turned out to be a rather successful film I think.

E.C. Yes. There were some very nice people on that.

S.C. So then what?

E.C. Then Warwick Film Productions, "Red Beret".

S.C. That was still at Pinewood?

E.C. No. Now the "Gift Horse" was at Shepperton and so was the "Red Beret".

S.C. That was quite a successful film too if I remember rightly. That was wartime stuff you had to do, still on the same track as when you were with the Army Film Unit.

E.C. Warwick Films of course. He was very interesting. I liked talking to him, the man who ran Warwick. He used to work in the Property Room somewhere in America and then he got a job and got a little bit of money and somebody said "Why don't you make a film with that pal of yours you are always drinking with". Wallace Beery. So this chap told me a wonderful story and I believe it. He said "I have got to get some money. I got to get some money behind me, so I got hold of Wallace, who said to me once, if ever you want me to give you a hand.." and he said "Well I want you to give me a hand. I have found a cameraman and I want to go up in the hills and do a whole days' work for me for nothing. If there is any profit out of it I will give it to you." He said "Fine, I like that". Went up into the hills and, I thought this was rather clever, He said "I want you to look to the left, you see something you crane forward, fine, now do the same to the right. Now I want you to turn round suddenly and see me and start firing. All stock stuff to hand specially to you because you would know how to make a film out of it."

S.C. That's the whole theory of editing.

E.C. And there's this - what does he see? He sees a man coming down there that he can shoot any time later on because he is no star. So he got Wallace Beery who was an old pal to help him and it was just a day off for Wallace. I thought that was a marvellous story, because it does explain a lot doesn't it?

S.C. Irving Allen.

E.C. Irving Allen.

S.C. How clever of me. I just set the computer to work and it took a little time.

E.C.: Oh, I can see the lead.

S.C.: What did you do with Warwick Films?

E.C.: "Red Beret" and now in 1953 "Kidnappers"

S.C.: Paul Leacock. Oh what a nice man.

E.C.: It is tragic to think he is no more. I really think I could have cried. I think I did.

S.C.: I went to his funeral.

E.C.: Was it over here?

S.C.: Yes.

E.C.: I didn't know.

A.L.: He had an asthmatic attack.

S.C.: And there were some very nice things said of him at the ceremony.

So that was a nice film to work on I should think.

E.C.: Oh, it was an absolute joy and a lot of fun. Tell you funny stories about that.

S.C.: Oh do.

E.C.: One of the stories was that wonderful woman.

S.C.: Maggie Thompson?

E.C.: Oh, yes. She was going around all these schools and she had a list of schools where they gave drama classes and she found down south there was nothing worth bothering about, but up north was different. She sent back a message saying "At last I think I have found him". Everywhere she went she had to give these boys a little piece to say and these boys had to say their piece. So on to the next town and there was a little boy there and they asked him to say "Twinkle twinkle little star" and he said "No". He said "I can do The Owl and the Pussycat" and they said "Good", but he said "I must have a pee first".

She said "I knew then that he was the right one". How right she was, he was a natural. He came down with his mother and father and I built them

61
a lovely set.

S.C. A set of their home?

E.C. Their home, yes. I built it in Pinewood studios at the back there. I had never been to the studios until I did that. I had been to Glen Afric to get tons of shots up there which we did and then I thought "What's Pinewood for?" Then I said to Sergei Albandof, I think, "I found it" He said "where?" I said "Out the back. You can come and have a look after lunch". He wouldn't come because he thought it was a leg pull.

A.L. Well, Mickey Balcon was part of that set up wasn't he? He was part of the board down there.

E.C. Well I never came in contact with him, I only did the Art Direction.

S.C. It was a highly successful film. A dream to work on. Oh, yes, on the first day, I remember the mother and father and the little boy were billeted at this rather nice place "The Barn" on Denham Road, and they came in every morning by car and the press were there. "Little Boy Discovered to Play Part" etc etc. And I have never seen such a canny little boy. He looked at everybody. "What do you do?" He says to me, and I told him what I did. "Show me how so and so happens" "How does it work?" etc and then he was called around to the front again "Oh, come here Johnny, this is the man from the Daily Express who wants to see you" and he gave him a very quizzical look." The reporter asked him "How do you like it down here?" "It's alright" he said "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" because it was the early morning call. "Beer and kippers". Everybody was shaken rigid. And his father was there with a big grin on his face, because this was probably what his father ate every morning. He was a Merchant Seaman. And his mother was horrified.

S.C. 1953. What's the next one?

E.C. It was called at one time "The Sinners".

S.C. What is this one "The Lamp Is Heavy"?

E.C. Ah, I might have started work for "The Lamp is Heavy" but didn't do it. That's quite likely. I had too much to do then. But then I had "High Tide at Noon"

S.C. Who was that for?

E.C. That was for Rank

A.L. Where was that?

E.C. At Pinewood

S.C. What was it about? What were the sets like? Was it anything to do with the sea?

E.C. Yes. All to do with a Nova Scotian background and fishing.

S.C. Like "Kidnappers".

E.C. Well no, that wasn't sea.

S.C. But that was Nova Scotia wasn't it.

E.C. Yes, they thought of doing it in Nova Soctia. Then came "The One That Got Away".

S.C. Was that Rank.

E.C. That was Pinewood. "The One That Got Away" was that one with the young German in it. Crossing the ice. The Germans found that once the chaps came down here that life was far too nice for them particularly if they were officer types. They didn't want to come back. They had to send somebody over to be an example and definitely escape, and the others thought that if he could do it they could do it too. It was very good, he did do it very well.

S.C. Horst Bucholst.

E.C. Yes. You're marvellous. How do you do it.

It was a very good film. He jumps out of the train and rolls down the embankment. That was great fun. Then '54 "The Divided Heart", Art Director at Ealing The "Divided Heart" had a young German actor names Borges and Yvonne Mitchell.

S.C. That was Charlie Crighton. How did you get on with Charlie?

E.C. Oh, very very well. I liked him.

S.C. A nice man. He was a great friend of mine. I worked with him.

E.C. Oh, I think it was impossible not to like Charlie Crighton. The one I found it difficult to get on with was Charles Friend.

S.C. I worked with Charles Friend, but I quarrelled with him.

Very stiff upper lip, Charles. I think the trouble was with that kind of Englishman, is that they are very tight but there is a much more extrovert person trying to get out.

E.C. I must say I thought everything was going very well and then he started picking holes in this and that and behaved, I thought not very well. He went away and I thought "Oh, sod this" the staff had all gone away and I thought I would work on this thing quietly by myself. I was up in this little art department there and suddenly I heard somebody coming up the stairs and I looked down, it was Charlie Friend. He said "I was telling my wife what we were talking about and her comments made me understand that I behaved like a pompous ass, and I came over to tell you so". And I thought "What a nice man".

S.C. Exactly the same thing happened to me when I working with him on a picture called "The Loves of Joanna Godden". We had a little squabble on that particular occasion Later that evening when we got back to the hotel, old Charlie came to me and said "Sid, I have to apologise My wife tells me that I was very rude to you". So I said "Well I'll have another pint".

But we are leaping ahead a bit. That was "The Long Arm. That was '56. In '55 you did "Touch and Go" with that nice man Michael Truman, with Jack Hawkins.

E.C. Jack always liked working with me because the very first film he ever did at Ealing "Constant Nymph" I was the Art Director on it. Something bonded us together and I liked him and every time he came into a studio and I was there he would say "Hoorah, this is going to be success. Every time I work with you it is successful".

S.C. I wondered if, at Ealing, that it was a reaction to Basil Dean that bound you together.

Then there was "The Feminine Touch" with Pat Jackson That was '56. "The Long Arm" was '56 which was with Jack Hawkins too.

E.C. "Divided Heart" I've got is '54 at the Questors, Ealing

S.C. My local theatre

E.C. A lovely little theatre.

S.C. They have a very good standard too.

A.L. Who directed "The Feminine Touch"?

S.C. Charles Friend.
But you worked for those couple of years at Ealing?

E.C. I was doing a lot of theatre stuff.

S.C. Not films?

E.C. No.

S.C. Nice to have two strings to your bow.

E.C. It was I was doing something for Hammer Film Productions. as Art Director. But it doesn't say what. "The One That Got Away" was '57. Now then we get "Tiger Bay"

S.C. Not the original one, that was 1933.

E.C. Oh, Anna May Wong, I wasn't on that one.

S.C. Yes you were.

E.C. No.

S.C. No? Well why is it down on my list. You marked it in the book.

E.C. In that case, you see this is where I'm caught out. I have to have this thing because....

S.C. You mixed up the two "Tiger Bays"

E.C. I know who was Art Director on it, Wills.

A.L. He directed it.

E.C. Also the Art Director wasn't he.

S.C. But you know in that Ealing book you gave me, you did mark that 1933 "Tiger Bay" as the one you worked on.

E.C. In that case I have got to re-mark it.

S.C. Because I think it is printed that you did it. Is it not? Have you got the book?

E.C. Yes.

A.L. It's in that book.

S.C. Do you think it was a mistake..

E.C. Well I remember that film being made, but not having anything

to do with it.

S.C. Well that was in '33 and would have been the same time as "Loyalties".

E.C. Well, perhaps we can work backwards. Year of production of "Tiger Bay" was with Hayley Mills. 1958 and that was made at Beaconsfield.

End of Side 4.

Side 5.

S.C. Well we have now got as far as '59. Tell me about '59.

E.C. Nothing. Things were falling apart. Paddy Carstairs suddenly...he said "Teddy you need a break". He said "Do you want to come to North Africa with me and... (one of England's oldest cameraman no name) an awfully sweet man. We had a story, I can even remember what it was, but the finance was very doubtful, and they had an office next door to where the Duke of Wellington used to live. That sounded alright. Paddy Carstairs sounded alright and the cameraman. Mary was going to be Production Secretary and it was rather a joke because my marriage had collapsed etc etc. The result was that suddenly Eric Gray started eyeing the place up and down and said "How many typewriters are there?" "One, two three. One for me one for you and one for you". They are never going to be able to pay us so we had better see where the moveable stuff is". Suddenly Bonk! it all fell through and I always maintain that I am the only person, and Mary's the only person who profited out of that production, because she got me and I got her. Nobody else got anything. Eric Gray was a stills man. He used to ring me up every year about Christmas and Mary would say "It's Eric".

S.C. Was it on that picture that you met Mary?

E.C. On this picture that never came off. Yes. And I would go to the phone. "Hallo little harbinger of doom". Because he always said "Hello Ted, did you hear, so and so is dead". "Oh I am sorry to hear that". "Yes he died 3 or 4 months ago. And didn't you hear about so and so, he's dead too." You know, you had to put on a special black hat when you spoke to him on these occasions.

Dear old Eric Gray. He was the first man that I literally ran into in films at Stoll studios. Mr. Reynolds was on the gate, and I went in and everybody was breaking through to the Canteen at the top end and Eric was one of them, and I was told to ask for a man called Thorold Dickinson and he wasn't there just at that moment but was sure to come up because it was the tea break. As we went along, Eric looked at me with a sort of wicked look on his face and he put his foot out. Well I was fairly spry in those days, also there had been a revolution in Italy and I had been tied up in a lot of street fighting, and I was always ready for anything. I put my foot out before he put his and he went and fell over and he said "My God, that was a clever one". And we became instant friends. Poor bugger, I was able to pay him back.

He said, "There is no studio here, could you rig me up won?" I got hold of two or three 10' flats and I said "A couch eh?" "That's it he said, "That's a brilliant idea". I got a couch with some grey silk satin sheets.

S.C. It's nice when you have to improvise something like that.

E.C. Oh, it made such a difference to his life. He was so bucked that he turned up some lovely shots. One of them was used in the Spotlight Annual.

S.C. Reverting to '59 now. There was a film that collapsed with Paddy Carstairs. Now he was always a cheerful chap.

E.C. Oh, it says here "Marries Mary".

S.C. That was your next most important production.

E.C. It was a very good subject. We have been on it for years.

S.C. "I Married Mary" a good title.

What was the next actual film though? If you were getting married, you needed to earn some money.

E.C. Yes, but I think I was doing theatre stuff then, a bit more.

S.C. But theatre wasn't very remunerative in those days?

E.C. Well, in some ways it was more.

S.C. In what way Ted?

E.C. Well you got a big chunk for a set of designs. I also did all the costumes that went with it.

S.C. There was another payment for that was it?

E.C. That's another thing, yes. Hours were very...rehearsals were....."Will you be wanting me...no,... well I'll go down to he scenic studios. Do you know, when I was painting scenery, when I was really out of work, I used to go down to Delaney's, Edward Delaney. When silent films went, I went to him. "Do you remember me,... Oh yes...Well can you give me a job?" He gave me a job at once. We were bosom pals for years. I loved Edward. And we had a wonderful time. Dear old Edward. The last time I worked for Edward Delaney I was paid £10 per hour. I mean looking back that was money, wasn't it? Well today it is even.

S.C. So there you were married but not yet doing another film

E.C.. No, I didn't do any more. I haven't done any more since then. Venice, then I wrote my father's life which was quite a big job, Gordon Craig, the Story of his Life.

It was published in 1968 and it took me all that time to do it.

S.C. I was surprised that it was your last film that you mentioned was 1959-60 and no more films after that.

E.C. Not that I can remember.

S.C. Because you were still quite young then. Well 56 is no age, is it?

So did you do some theatre?

E.C. Oh I did some theatre and I have been doing an awful lot of writing. There is another book which I did which was quite good "Baroque Theatre Construction" When I started I was working with my father. I was working in the Archives of Northern Italy collecting together material, photographing it and bringing it back, and he published a magazine called "The Mask"

S.C. So when you say Baroque is that people like Palladio?

E.C. That's it, yes. Very much so. I used to cart around a full plated camera. It was an old Sinclair and it had four stops in the brass. This lovely slow eye

penetrating into the depths of this plaster work.

S.C. So you kept very busy with books and theatre.

E.C. So far I have been able to keep going on those subjects.

S.C. Tell me something which involves going back a bit. You had in Soho Square this studio which was in fact retirement and you had a school for not only designers but teaching about the film industry, the making of films.

E.C. Yes.

S.C. When did you start that. It was before the war wasn't it?

E.C. Yes. Very much so. I think a couple of years at least.

S.C. About 1936-37. You see we have a letter you sent to a schoolboy called Stephen Peat dated February 1938, and the school was well going by then. Anyhow tell us something about it. How long did it last?

E.C. It went up to the war. Do you know the place? Have you seen it?

S.C. Whereabouts was it in Soho Square?

E.C. The only one building that has great big windows.

S.C. Oh is that on the opposite side to where ACTT was? Near the corner where the Billiard place was?

E.C. That's it. One night they dropped something in the YMCA and that took the whole of the glass from the back and pushed it right out through the glass in the front. And that was the end of that.

S.C. How did it do while it was actually alive?

E.C. Well, I was feeling rather well off at that time. I don't know why, I must have been getting money from some source or other, but I felt I was doing something that was necessary.

S.C. There wasn't anything of the sort at that time was there?

E.C. No. I thought I would devise a method of teaching them which was sound and sometimes it went astray because the people were strange. There were one or two boys who were awfully good. Two of them got killed. It was very very sad, but I'd sort of tell them the night before almost as if we were making a film. I'd say, "Now you go down to the local Law Court in Marlborough Street. Now you are not allowed to photograph inside. Make notes but make sure

you are not seen. Make quiet little notes and then you come back and you make a drawing of it. Then show me the drawing and then I'll make a few comments and then you go back again and probably things that you didn't think were important, were very important. Where did the Judge come in from, where did the policeman stand. All these things and then I want a little story about a session in the Police Court and then another time I'd send them off or one of them to do something completely different. See if you could find a place up on Hampstead Heath, such as the Ponds. I'd say "That's a nice little background for for a love scene". Pick a girl and a boy and an umbrella and it would be rather nice reflection down there or find out what time of day there will be a reflection. They don't think of that do they? The way we walk around with a watch and a compass, people wonder what the hell we are doing. They don't realise what important instruments they are.

S.C. How many students at a time did you have?

E.C. Oh never had more than six at all. I think six was the lot. One man came down from the Midlands. He put it fairly bluntly when he said "I want my son to be able to say that he has worked for this studio" I forget what the fees were, quite cheap really. But he said "I'll pay the two years in advance but I'd like him to leave in two month's time and I'll pay you the whole lot plus so much." "But" I said, "He may not be able to take it all in." He said "Oh that doesn't matter". God Almighty! As a matter of fact I was learning a lot myself. Is that how it's done? You get your son in and then he has got a job. Doesn't know how to do it.

S.C. So you had a brief but interesting existence at the school.

E.C. Oh, yes. One of the boys was so good. He did beautiful drawings.

S.C. What happened to him?

E.C. He got killed. And one called Eden. I reproduced some of his stuff in one of the books that I wrote.

S.C. There a number of points that need clearing up, Teddy. We knew when you went to Italy when you were four, but when exactly did you come back. Can you remember?

E.C. We were travelling around with father. We were in Zurich one moment and then we were in Paris then we were back in Italy where he had a lovely great open theatre as his studio. When I say it was an open air theatre, it had

been built in about 1816 and alot of these theatres for light entertainment are made open for the simple reason that it saves the money building a roof. And nobody would want to go to the theatre if it was raining.

A.L. But you finally came back?

E.C. Oh, the final time was 1927-28.

S.C. 1927 I should think because of your silent films.

E.C. Yes. I had translated a book just before then, so it was '27 and I was 22. And I had a room in Sunderland Terrace at 15/- a week.

S.C. That was quite expensive in those days.

E.C. And then when I went up to Hampstead, of course out in the sticks there, I got a place for 6/6d.

A.L. Fairly basic?

E.C. No. First floor. A woman with great appreciation of life and everything. She was a very nice woman. Mrs. Boon. Mrs. Boon said she only looked after gentlemen. And I was one of them.

S.C. Meaning that she didn't take in women.

E.C. Yes. She said "By the way I don't mind you having your girl friend up in your room, but there is a nice sitting room downstairs if you want to but mind it is always the same one." She said this very sternly. And I said "Oh, I promise!" How sensible. There was one of her gentlemen down on the ground floor who worked it out that she always did shopping on Friday and that she would generally be out for two or three hours. So he went out one Friday and brought in a girl of his and so on. I knew he was doing it because I saw him coming down the road and he said "Don't tell the Dragon". I said "No". And anyway when he came back in the afternoon his bags were packed and the room was already let to somebody else.

Oh, there was a bathroom. You paid extra, 6d.

S.C. Money in the meter?

E.C. Yes and it would go pooooohhhhhh!!

S.C. Those terrifying heaters.

E.C. Weren't they? Extraordinary noise.

S.C. Very dangerous too because they could sort of explode.

E.C. Still when we did "Tiger Bay" and a man had to hide in a bathroom I designed the whole thing exactly as I remembered this one . I found a heater which was an exact copy of the original.

S.C. We wondered if you had anything else to say about Max Beerbohm?

E.C. Well Max Beerbohm and father knew each other when they were young men, and then when we joined father in 1917 or about that time, we moved up from Rome. The war was still on when we went down to join father in Rome and then we moved up to Genoa and went up the coast there one hotel and then another one looking for a cheap villa that we could rent. Finally somebody said they knew of a place and we went and looked at it and lo and behold it was this place next to the Villa Chiaro which was Max Beerbohm's place. Max Beerbohm and father were absolute opposites. They were great friends but Max had a terrace on the top of his villa done over in tiles and in the middle of this terrace which was twice the width of this room and three times the length and orange trees all over the place round there. But it was very very simple surroundings. I suppose it was about a mile down to the town of Rapallo. I of course ran about with no shoes and socks, but I had always passed Max Beerbohm who had his straw hat at a special angle. I have got photographs of him walking up and down.

S.C. Was he tall or short?

E.C. Oh, just normal....same as you. Shortish. I mean I can't say anything.

S.C. Did he ever draw anything specially for you?

E.C. Yes, all sorts of things and I was always doing things for him. Messages and so on. I had a whole lot of drawings by Rudyard Kipling. I remember went to a party when I was quite a young lad, about 14 or 15 and Rudyard Kipling was there and I was taken by somebody who was always referred to as Auntie Crownie. She was a very old friend of the family. And there was this man with a big moustache. After a while I could see that he was feeling very embarassed and there were lots of other people. They were all people, as you can imagine who had come either to see me because I was Gordon Craig's little son .."I didn't know he had a son, how many sons has he got" and things like that. Or else, obviously to see the great man and I got bored and disappeared behind the sofa, just like that one now

I was lying on the side making drawings. I always used to make drawings and suddenly Kipling came from the other side and said "Hello, do you like parties?" I said "Not very much". He said "I can't stand them". He said "What are you drawing?" "Rabbits". "Oh, I'll draw some rabbits". He got out a whole sheaf of visiting cards and started drawing on them. At the end of it he gave me three or four of these visiting cards with rabbits doing funny things on them. I wish I had them still.

S.C. He actually did some illustrations for his own books didn't he?

E.C. Oh yes, the Just So Stories. We all knew the Just So Stories and he was very bucked because we all knew them.

S.C. You know you talked about the Harry Lauder film, a silent one which Thorold Dickinson was designing. Was that "Hunting Tower"?

E.C. No but I have put out "Flash Back" by Pearson because it refers to "Auld Lang Syne" being shot.

S.C. Oh that's the title of the picture? "Auld Lang Syne"?

E.C. Yes.

S.C. It wasn't "Hunting Tower" then?

E.C. No. I believe that was just being made, or just been made.

S.C. That leads on very appropriately in a way. You know that Rachael Low wrote several books of the history of British film.

E.C. Yes.

S.C. They were lists of films as much as anything. In there you are credited as the first film you actually had a title on was "Broken Melody" directed by Fred Pauls.

E.C. That's it, yes. Though I did work on one called "Yellow Stockings" before that. Now I can't even unfathom it myself because you were coming I undid all sorts of things not so long ago. Here we are "Cabaret Show Beneath the Arc Lights"

S.C. Which was first.

E.C. "Yellow Stockings"

A.L. Who directed it?

- E.C.: Kominsyeski (sp?)
- S.C.: A very fine director
- E.C.: Nice man. And at the end of that I helped him on the floor and I was just standing around but I was able to help arrange people at tables.
- S.C.: Where was that?
- E.C.: At Stolls. I think he was very impressed when he realised that he was Gordon Craig's son because father had done a very revolutionary production of Hamlet in Moscow and he said "When your film is over, come and be my Assistant." I thought about it but I said no because it is almost like going back home. I was trying to get away from home.
- S.C.: So you never worked with him in the theatre.
- E.C.: No I never worked with him, but I liked him very much. Now the funny thing about Fred Paul, in early, early days, a lady called Ellen Terry, who by chance happened to be my grandmother, was asked to do a film by Ideal Films and we got in a taxi and we got to Ideal Films She did a thing called "Her Greatest Performance" and I and my sister both went into the test. It was the first time we ever went into films. It was quite nice. When the show came on it was great fun. Paul was the Director. He must have been a very much younger man.
- S.C.: Of course Paul was one of the pioneer Directors.
- E.C.: Was he? What did he have in his favour?
- S.C.: He had something to do with camera mechanisms. He was one of the early pioneers of Cinematoraph. That's how he got to be a Director.
- E.C.: You were asking the other day about "Auld Lang Syne" because it comes in here.
- S.C.: I remember Thorold Dickinson telling me about it.
- E.C.: There was one ghastly moment when Harry Lauder comes down from the north to see his son, he books in at a hotel and he has a big brown paper parcel with him. He wants a place with a balcony. So they find a room with a balcony. Puts this parcel down, and of course it's fish. In the picture he goes to bed and when he wakes up in the morning, his nose twitches and he looks and you see through the window, he sees the cat

54

at the fish outside. Now this man who used to be very good at publicity thought it would be rather fun to get a little notice put in the paper, The Cricklewood Gazette or whatever to say that if anybody had a little cat who wanted to appear with Sir Harry Lauder was to bring it along. All I had to do was to put this imitation glass window there which didn't have any glass in it, but there wasn't going to be anything to stop the cats coming in. Then, I got a bit of grey net at the back and a bit of grey net as a backcloth with a few clouds on it. There we are, that's the set up Eric Gray was there ready to photograph it. There is a wonderful shot of it which is now in America, when he opens the window the cats fly in and Eric had got his camera at the side they really made a streak across the still camera, because it wasn't fast enough to move with them. But when they tried it the first time, the cats just looked rather frightened. There was a chap who had just left the Navy. He was the sort of Floor Manager. Anyhow, nice little chap and he said "Leave it to me". He came round to me and said "Teddy, make sure there is a flat shut once the cats get in. Shut the cats off there turn the lights on and leave the rest to me. Simple enough. Found a 10' flat. And he suddenly produced a naval revolver and discharged it into the ground with a BANG! Those cats fled and there was only one place they could go which was through Harry Lauder's bedroom, which they did and nearly took him with them. But then, evening came and little girls and boys came to get their pussies back. There were no pussies to be found. You remember all those roof trusses and girders there were. Down came all the dust that had been accumulating for years, because the cats were crawling along it to get out. Oh dear oh dear. They said, "You go off, it will be alright". And then of course irate mothers came in and asked what had happened to their cats. And we explained that it was a technical thing. I never heard what happened in the end. I do know that when we did "The Silver King" as a result of one thing and another, right in the middle of one of the takes, from above came feathers. One or two of the cats had decided to stay in Stoll. They were eating some of the birds they had caught and dropping the bits down on to "Silver King".

End of side 5.

Side 6.

S.C.

The suicide scene in "Loyalties", do you remember that? Why I ask this is because apparently Basil Dean claimed credit for that scene. I know that's not true, because

I heard the story about how the hammer was dropped, and in any case, Alan was on that, and I heard the story from Thorold Dickinson and I think it was very largely Thorold's idea.

E.C. Thorold, me and the cameraman, Bob Martin. Yes I can tell you exactly what happened.

S.C. Yes, do.

E.C. Basil Dean is on the side here and there's the door there and now the police come. He is apprehensive, and runs towards the window, meantime the police go bang, bang, bang with their fists. Old Basil said to Mr. Marlow a very bad master carpenter I'm afraid. He said "Oh it's the very thinnest ply." Well it may be thin, but one thing about ply is that it is very springy. Mr. Marlow said that the Inspector didn't hit it hard enough so he came up to prove it and he said "It will be alright if I push my hand on it" Bang! Ow!!! and it only splintered then. Anyhow we scored the thing and filled it up with stopping and then painted it over and then came in and it went away in three or four different pieces. The beginning of the shot, there is whatsisname waiting there. Runs towards the window, looks over his shoulder and then looks down and jumps. End of that. There were mattresses down there. We hadn't learned about cardboard boxes in those days. Much better. Then we got him in a corner where I had a bit of old backing left and it was a few rooftops, but nothing of importance. So I just put a thin wash on it. We put a horizontal bar. Well he was on the horizontal bar, standing up and we got a nice angle with quite a big piece of tubular scaffolding with a wire up there and he had to fall backwards and then fall forwards. The double did it any way. So he had two for the cutter to play with. Then there was the shot from the top which we rigged up at the Dorchester Hotel, exceptionally high I thought and the camera came down on three wires, and then the people rushed in and that was the shot and I thought it was absolutely brilliant. I remember Dickie saying "Well I'm pretty sure that's going to be it" and he was dead right.

S.C. Yeah sure. But I thought it was improbable that Basil Dean could think this up.

E.C. He couldn't think like a camera anyway. I think that was one of the chief things that was wrong with him. Well I mean there were lots of things that were wrong with him, that was one of the reasons that his films were so dull.

S.C. Mm. They needed peppering up with things like that suicide shot. Tell me something about a film which wasn't a Basil Dean film, but on which I worked, "Perfect Understanding" with Gloria Swanson.

E.C. Oh yes. We prepared all the sets. The Art Director was Oscar Verndorf (Uncle).

S.C. What did you do?

E.C. Nothing.

S.C. Oh, you didn't work on it?

E.C. I worked on it to help him. But I mean to say he was a visiting Art Director and he was such a nice man.

S.C. So what did you do to help him?

E.C. Sort of personal assistant. What happened is that he had come over and they had come up from the South of France and we had in his absence, but on his plans, put up this Baronial Hall thing. It was typically what the Americans would consider to be an English gentleman's Baronial Hall, half timbered things and with Oscar Verndorf being a German and thinking the same sort of thing. The day they arrived the little girl who was playing the part, Genevieve Tobin had 'flu or something bad so this is where I came in and they said, "What can you do?" and of course there was only one thing to do. If we clear all that and that away and leave all the walls and I'll see some reinforcement is put in there and I picked out two little sets with some small characters in them. We will put them inside the Baronial Hall. He said "What a brilliant chap you are". So we did that and then when her cold had gone, or what ever it was, they threw an extra set in, because after they had left France to come over. They didn't fly her over, I think in those days, they found that one of the things on the seashore was no good. They had to have a closeup. They gave me a photograph of the back wall and I arranged for two or three lorry loads of sand and lots of lights were put up. Kurt Couron was the cameraman. Who was the Director?

S.C. It was Gardiner, Cyril Gardiner. He had been a cameraman and he suffered from his gut too which was appropriate working in studios with Basil Dean. He used to go around bending double in the cutting room, working with Thorold Dickinson.

E.C. Who was the Producer then?

S.C. Farmer. Do you remember that Thorold had a problem. There was a boat race, on location in the South of France and it was won by Farmer but by the time they came back they decided to change the story and make Larry Olivier win the race. They had lots of bits and pieces shot to make the man who lost in Cannes win in Ealing. So you were probably asked to make up bits of sky.

E.C. Oh, yes, any old thing. I was the resident so I was the only one who knew where the stuff was. And in it there had to be a portrait of Swanson, an oil portrait. It was supposed to hang up in the Baronial Hall like this and I got a very competent man, a portrait painter. I gave him a photograph, and he looked at it and said "Oh yes". And then he turned up with it. And she wanted to see it before it was hung up and she looked at it and she said "The lips are terrible". She pulled out her lipstick and said "It should be more like that." Right on the top of the lipstick that was all still wet and he looked at her and said "And who are you?" That didn't do much good.

S.C. So what happened to the picture?

E.C. They didn't use it in the end. I wouldn't be at all surprised, but she was snooty about it all and he wasn't going to do any more and he went off and she went off and they probably did what they do so often which was to photograph it and put a few dabs of paint around to make it look good.

S.C. Well, you could do tha in black and white days, yes. I think in the list of films at the end of the book you put what I think are exclamation marks against the names of Art Directors on certain films and Alan and I couldn't make out what they meant. I tell you for instance, against Verndorf's name called "The Gaunt Stranger", as if there were something you meant to say about it. It's in the Ealing book.

E.C. I had a lot of Verndorf's original drawings. It was probably something I was going to check on again. It doesn't mean anything to me now.

S.C. And also against Wilfred Shingleton's name on "Young Man's Fancy"

E.C. I wanted an assistant and he came in from the School with a little model beautifully made, about that size of a pavilion on the side of a bay or shore and it was beautifully made. He came in in the evening into the Art Department and he held this thing up

36

and he said "I made this with my own hands". I shall never forget that and I employed him on the spot. And later on when I left they tried to keep him on at the salary that I had engaged him at as an Assistant. Hal Mason was in charge then and I said "You mustn't put up with it. Just say I'll walk out. Oh, he said I couldn't do that I might lose the job". I said "Oh, no you won't. They couldn't get anybody under that price".

S.C. You have got a note under three other pictures that another Art Director worked on. "Black Sheep of Whitehall" "Foreman Went To France" and "Next of Kin". Tom Morohan. Was there some story connected with Tom Morohan?

E.C. No. Tom Morohan was a great friend. I loved Tom.

S.C. And then there was a similar mark by a picture called "Undercover" which Duncan Sutherland did. I know you had nothing to do with that because I was supervising Editor on it.

E.C. Well I have always liked Duncan. I have always had a soft spot for Duncan.

S.C. And the last thing was a mark against Alan Withy on a film called "Davey".

E.C. Well, Alan Withey, I was so glad to see his name that I made a note against it. He came out of the Army and came around to the studios to see if he could get a job and I thought, "This is a shame" he had no push at all. He really is top notch. I said "When did you do this?" and he said "Well I had a job in Berlin" and he said "I rigged up myself a little room with a drawing board and made an imaginary perspective of a staircase that went round and round, an imaginary one". I mean the setting up of that alone. I said "Fine, well I will take you on" and he said "When do I start". I said "Tomorrow" and he nearly fainted, because all the people then who were applying for jobs you had to say "Sorry I can't help you".

S.C. To finish off as a routine thing, we always ask people if you hadn't had your film career, what else would you have done? If you hadn't had these several different lives what other lives would you have lived?

E.C. I would have been a book illustrator, pure and simple. I rather went for the scenic work. It

was big and great fun and films excited me tremendously because the moved. The theatre is so static. I mean you make a set and there it is ...Act 2...Oh it's the same set...Act 3 it is still the same set except that there is a new window put in it because something has been written into the playOh it's so dull. No, quite simply, I am the son of an artist and the grandson of two artists and so got a natural desire to ...I think it comes out of my hand...to draw. If I have a piece of paper and nothing else to do I start off with a line and then I add another line to it. No, I think I would have been a book illustrator and made a lot of money illustrating books, with wood engravings. That's a very skilled craft.

S.C. But that area of art is coming back, because paintings have become so expensive. Modest individuals who would like to buy a few original things can afford prints or possibly engravings but they can't afford to buy £1000 picture.

E.C. And the poor artist who paints it can't afford to charge less. The vast majority of people want photographs but they have to look as if they have been painted.

Finish of side 6 of Interview with Edward Carrick by Sid Cole and Alan Lawson.

7.2.92