

Tubby Englander (cameraman) 15/7/1915 - 29/1/2004

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1930s - Stoll, Gaumont, Teddington 1940s - Army Kinematograph Service 1950s-1970s - BBC Television (inc. Civilization)

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Interviewer: Arthur Graham

Interviewee: A.A. 'Tubby' Englander

[Tape1, Side 1]

Arthur Graham: ...A.A. Englander. Name of the interviewer: Arthur Graham. The copyright of this recording is invested in the ACTT History Project. Side 1. Okay?

Tubby Englander: Hmm.

Arthur Graham: Tubby - where were you born and when?

Tubby Englander: I was born, officially as it were, in Clacton[?] but when I was a month old the whole family moved to Surbiton in Surrey. And that's really where I spent the first fifteen years of my life. And that was, I was born in 1916. So...

Arthur Graham: What was the actual date?

Tubby Englander: 15th July, 1916.

Arthur Graham: What kind of schooling did you receive?

Tubby Englander: I had a county grammar school education, that's after the primary and that sort of thing, I went to Surbiton County School at the age of ten. And I was there until the age of fifteen. Because that was the school leaving age at that time and as it happened the whole family left Surbiton, we had to leave Surbiton and come up to London. And that was when I'd just turned fifteen.

Arthur Graham: So that's when you actually finished schooling.

Tubby Englander: That's when I finished schooling, yes.

Arthur Graham: Did you receive any specialised training - technical college, poly?

Tubby Englander: No, no way, no.

Arthur Graham: What made you decide to go into the film industry?

Tubby Englander: The fact that the year was 1931 and I had to get a job. I'd just left school and I wasn't going to go back to school again, in fact I couldn't have gone back to school again, I had to get a job because the family finances were in a pretty parlous state and that was really the reason why we left Surbiton and came up to London. So it was just a question of getting a job. And as it happened, as luck would have it, it was purely and simply luck, the first job I got was at Stoll Studios in Cricklewood. And I was living at the time in Christchurch Avenue which was only, in those days, a penny bus ride from Stoll Studios at Cricklewood.

Arthur Graham: What was the reaction of your parents? Was there any connection with the film business before you went into it?

Tubby Englander: No, none whatsoever. What had happened is that, as I said, I had to get a job, and my mother heard that an acquaintance of hers, who was Desmond Dickinson was the cameraman at Stoll Studios, which was just up the road. My mother knew of Dickie, of Desmond Dickinson from Surbiton, purely and simply as an acquaintance, because at one time Desmond Dickinson had lived in Surbiton. And he had known my brother, and that's how my mother came to know about Desmond Dickinson. So she wrote him a letter, she wrote to him a letter and said, "Dear Mr Dickinson, I have a young son, blah blah." You know. And as luck would have it Stoll Studios at that time were looking for a trainee camera assistant and the letter came back and said, "Send him up." And I went up to Stoll Studios and I saw Dickie, Dickinson and that was it. It was just sheer luck as it were that I went into the film industry.

Arthur Graham: I see, so you got in, the way a lot of people do, by actually having a contact in the...

Tubby Englander: Oh yes. And also the luck of...it was just the right time as it were, you know.

Arthur Graham: Well now you have mentioned this, but where were you living and how did you get to and from work?

Tubby Englander: I was living in at that time Christchurch Avenue, which as I said was only a penny bus ride away from Stoll Studios and I used to go up by bus to the studios.

Arthur Graham: So you didn't really have any travel problems of any kind?

Tubby Englander: No, none whatsoever.

Arthur Graham: What was your job and what were your duties?

Tubby Englander: Well I was the clapper boy, which meant virtually the tea boy as well, you know the sort of thing that used to go on. You did...as long as you did your clapper job, which was your official job, you could do anything else. Because everybody mucked in, in those days everybody mucked in, in every department, with everybody else. There was no hard and fast rules about not doing this, that or the other. And that was all part of the training to keep the equipment clean, that was a very important part of the job as you realise. And doing the number boards and the lab sheets, the laboratory sheets, the what do you call them?

Arthur Graham: The camera sheets.

Tubby Englander: Camera sheets, camera sheets that's right. Such a long time ago I've forgotten!

Arthur Graham: Did you have to load and unload the film?

Tubby Englander: Not right at the very, very beginning, but after a while I was allowed to take on that responsibility, that became part of the job. But that really was a sort of forerunner - loading magazines, being allowed to load magazines, was a forerunner to being made the first assistant, the focus-puller. Because you went first of all, in those days, or at Stoll's anyway, you went first of all from the clapper boy to loading and then loading to first assistant, pulling focus and you still did the loading, you did both jobs then.

Arthur Graham: What, as first assistant?

Tubby Englander: As first assistant, yes.

Arthur Graham: So while...

Tubby Englander: And also virtually you did all three, because you did the number board as well, somebody else would dash in with the number board if you couldn't get there.

Arthur Graham: I see. You say you went from clapper boy to loader, you didn't give up clapping at that time, you just extended the...

Tubby Englander: That's right, yes. Because really you see the job of first assistant as it was then was pulling focus, loading the magazines and doing the numbers. It was a three-way job as it were.

Arthur Graham: Ah, I see.

Tubby Englander: Because it was only a very small studio and they didn't have an awful lot of staff, permanent staff. They had a cameraman, who was Dickie, Desmond Dickinson, they had an operator, whose name was Ted Chown and they had, to start off with, they had a hired, a freelance first assistant who in actual fact, then, was Gerald Gibbs. He was the first assistant. And I was the number boy and loader. And it was Gerry Gibbs of course who taught me how to

load the magazines and to take all the precautions for one thing and another, put me through the drill of that.

Arthur Graham: Desmond Dickinson having an operator at that stage, that was very early for operators wasn't it?

Tubby Englander: It was early for operators, but the operator was again a sort of freelance, as far as I can remember. Ted Chown...Ted Chown, and also Alan Lawson, came in as operators to Stoll's. But they were only on a freelance basis. I mentioned Ted Chown in the first instance because he was the first operator that I knew who was on this - it was quite a big production that we started on, that I started on.

Arthur Graham: I merely mention it because operators weren't in general in the industry in those days. What was the working day and the working week?

Tubby Englander: [Laughs] The working day was from when you arrived in the morning and you left the studio, that was the working day. Basically I think the working day was from 8 o'clock in the morning - where I was concerned and where the assistant was concerned - 8 o'clock in the morning, because we started shooting if I remember rightly round about 8.30. So as the assistant I had to be there half an hour early to get the equipment out, get the camera out on the floor and get it in the blimp, one thing and another, and polish it up and that sort of thing, ready for the day's work. Finishing times were purely arbitrary, you couldn't put a finishing time ever, you just went on and on until they said, "Okay cut, we'll see you tomorrow morning." You could go on until 9, 10 o'clock at night. You could finish at 7 o'clock at night, and as I say you could go on to 9, 10 o'clock at night and sometimes you could work all night, you went on all night and half the next day. But working conditions were purely arbitrary then. And of course the same goes for weekends, you could work seven days a week if necessary. More often than not you never worked five, you always worked six. Saturday was part and parcel of the week.

Arthur Graham: Give us a run-down of your career, and your progress in films - you moved into television - and the positions you held and so on. Just a...

Tubby Englander: Well as I say I started off at Stoll's as a clapper boy and progressed to first assistant. I left Stoll's after about 12 months and went to Gaumont's, Gaumont British at Lime Grove. I was there at Lime Grove until the sort of crash came, the general film industry crash in 1936, when we were all - these days it would be called made redundant - we were all fired in actual fact because there was no work for us. And again I was very lucky because I went almost immediately to Warner Brothers in Teddington. That if I remember rightly was due to the fact that I'd worked as a co-assistant with a chap named Stan Pavey and Stan Pavey was working at Warner Brothers and he got me the introduction to Warner Brothers and I went there as a first assistant. Just before the war I was a first assistant and second operator at Warner Brothers. Then the war came.

Arthur Graham: Just to go back for a moment - you say you went to Gaumont? What was your position at the Gaumont Studios and how did it differ from Stoll's?

Tubby Englander: It didn't differ from Stoll's, I was a first - I went to Gaumont's as a first assistant from Stoll's where I was a first assistant but there's a slight story attached to that which might be interesting. Stoll Studios at that particular time, and I've never yet found out the reason for it, was the only company, and it was a very small company at that time, it was the only company in the country that possessed a Mitchell camera. They were the first people to have a Mitchell camera in this country and that was the one that I was brought up on. This is the thing that I took over the moment I became a first assistant at Stoll's, this was the camera they were using. Now Gaumont's wrote to Stoll's and wanted to borrow the Mitchell camera to do some trick work on a Jack Hulbert film that they were making at Lime Grove. And we weren't in production at that particular time at Stoll's and Stoll's said, "Yes by all means you can hire the camera but you've got to hire the assistant to go with it because he's the only chap who knows how to put the thing together." So I went over to, I took the camera over to Lime Grove and I think I was there for about a week. And what they wanted to do was they wanted some matched stop-action shots of Jack Hulbert. The film was 'Jack's the Boy'. And he was a sailor and he was doing his dance, one thing and another, and he was changing clothes, visually he would be changing clothes to different types of people as he was dancing on the deck. So the Mitchell, as you know, one could frame-cut the negative, in other words you could cut a frame with a particular frame-cutter piece of equipment, out of the negative and slip that frame into the eyepiece of the Mitchell camera. And you would be looking and lining up your shot through the piece of negative film so that if you wanted somebody to adopt exactly the same position in the following shot to what he was in the previous shot, you could look at this negative and you could see the position which the start of your new shot was. Am I making... explaining myself a bit?

Arthur Graham: Oh yes.

Tubby Englander: And you could say to Jack Hulbert, "Your left arm wants to go a little higher and your leg wants to be out a little bit more" and so on and so forth, so that when eventually you did cut from one to the other there wouldn't be a jump cut. It would be almost exactly - it should be - exactly right, so that the only that would change would be the clothes. And of course you never touched the camera, you must never touch the camera between one shot and the other because otherwise you would get a jump in the camera position and the background, if you jogged the camera or panned the camera or tilted it or anything like that, you would obviously get a jump. So you had to be very careful also that the camera itself just didn't move, kept everybody away from it and that sort of thing. To get the negative of the previous shot, in order to put the negative in for the next shot, you did a hand test, you used the old test box on the floor so that you developed and fixed and dried (very, very quickly this was of course, you had to do it). On the floor there would be hardly any time wasted whilst the change of clothes was going on, so that you wouldn't have to kill the lights, you wouldn't have to touch the camera, you wouldn't have to do anything. You just had to take the magazine very carefully off the camera, put it on the test box, do your test procedure and then take the negative, cut it and put the little frame in the camera. And this is the reason why they wanted the Mitchell camera, they wanted to hire the Mitchell camera because there was no other way that one could, at that time there was no other way in which they could do, very quickly and very efficiently, this jump action framing. So whilst I was there of course I met quite a lot of the technicians from Gaumont's and they used to come on the floor, on my floor as it were and have a look and have a natter and watch what was going on, in the same way that I went into the next stage where the big production - they were

doing 'Jew Suss' at that particular time. And that production was on and I got to know a chap called Roy Kellino, who was then an operator, a camera operator. And one day he came onto my stage and was standing behind and he said, "Tubby would you like to come to Gaumont's? Would you like to join Gaumont's?" And I thought, "Well it's a step up." Because it was a very, very much bigger company, very much bigger company as compared to Stoll. And eventually this is what I did and that's how I got the transfer - not transfer - that's how I shifted from Stoll's to Gaumont's.

Arthur Graham: And after Gaumont's you went to Warner's. Whereabouts was that?

Tubby Englander: In Teddington, Warner Brothers Studios in Teddington.

Arthur Graham: You stayed there until the beginning of the war.

Tubby Englander: Yes, until the beginning of the war. And then at the beginning of the war I joined the Army, I volunteered actually, into the Army with a friend of mine, Tommy Linden-Haynes[?] and we joined the Royal Fusiliers together. Unfortunately we couldn't stay together because Tommy had an accident, the effects of which were with him for the rest of his life actually, he damaged his leg and it never really healed properly. He had an awful lot of trouble with it. But anyway, we were separated and I went off in one direction, in fact I went off to Kent with the Battalion and he eventually went off to Northern Ireland so we didn't meet again actually for about three years. Because I was in the Infantry and then in 1942 I was suddenly transferred, overnight. I was transferred to the War Office from the...sorry, can I just go back? I was in the Royal Fusiliers, and my particular Battalion, in about 1940 - the end of 1940 became the first reconnaissance corps, we started the first reconnaissance corps, so I went from the Royal Fusiliers to the reconnaissance corps and that's what I was at the time when I woke up one morning and found that I was being transferred - this was 1942 - to the War Office. I didn't know what the hell that was all about. Anyway, when I got there, to cut a long story short, I found that I'd been transferred to the AKS, the film production unit of the Army Kinematographic Service which was marvellous in actual fact because here we were for once on our lives, round pegs in round holes, we were in the Army but we were doing our civilian job. Anyway the AKS, that was when the AKS Film Production Unit started, in 1942 and Freddie Young was there as the senior cameraman of course and Carol Reed was there as a director, and lots of other people, I can't remember their names at the moment but it'll come. And Freddie was there as the chief cameraman and I went there, I became Freddie Young's operator to start off with. And after a couple o months I became a lighting cameraman. But Freddie all the time, of course, was keeping his eye on what was going on. There were three others then, there was Freddie Francis, that's right, there was Freddie Francis and...who was the other cameraman? I can't remember his name now, but there were three of us to start off with anyway. Eventually of course that all grew with lots of other people but we all know. People like John Wilcox came, Denys Coop was with us, Bunny Frankie[?] was with us. Oh there were lots and lots more on the camera side. But anyway that went on and right the way through we were making instructional films, military instructional films and secret films as well. And we were based at Wembley, which was the old Fox Studios, then it was the old Fox Studios at Wembley Park. And that went on until - the unit started to break up round about '46...'45/'46. Anyway I was demobbed in '46, in February of 1946. And I immediately went in with a documentary film company, basically, whilst I was in

the AKS and making these military films, these military instructional and documentary films, I found myself in the position of not wanting to go back to the feature film industry. I never, ever wanted to go back to the feature film industry because I felt that the stuff that I was doing, the documentary side and the informational side and the educational side had much more to it, it was much more interesting and I liked it very, very much indeed, much better than all the time wasting that used to go on in the feature film industry and the waste of resources and all that sort of thing. So I joined Basic Films and as really a director cameraman. And I was with Basic from 1946 until 1950 when we parted company for one or two reasons, mainly political, but we parted company and I got a - I think if I remember rightly I got this introduction, actually, from ACT - they contacted me, ACT, about an American unit, an American company called Spot News, an American television news company called Spot News. No, no I'm sorry [laughs] I'm jumping ahead about a year. It wasn't the Spot News thing it was - ACT got in touch with me, that's right, and said that the then Ministry of Works wanted a director cameraman to run a film unit for them. Cut a long story short, I joined the Ministry of Works in the beginning of 1950 I think it was, yes at the beginning of 1950. And there I became a sort of a one-man band. We were doing programmes on allied subjects to the Ministry of Works, the building side of the Ministry of Works - the official way of producing concrete and the way you should put a house up, all that sort of thing. And I would contact the department concerned, get all the information from them, write a rough script, push it back - oh, write a rough shooting script - push it back to the department to have it vetted and okayed and then I would go out, I would be given the contacts in the building industry and I would go out with the camera and I would hire an assistant so that I had an assistant cameraman. And the two of us would go out and shoot according to the shooting script. Then coming back we had a little cutting room of sorts - oh, this incidentally was all 16 mm - 16 mm. colour, on the old, very, very slow Kodachrome wasn't it? It was the old 16 mm. Kodachrome. And I'd take it back to this teeny weeny little cutting room, do a rough assembly, show it to the department and if they okayed it then we hired an editor to come in and to really work on the thing and to put it into correct shape. That went on for just over about 15 months and then there was a change of government then in '52, wasn't it. No, '53 wasn't it.

Arthur Graham: I think it was '52 wasn't it. '51, '52, somewhere about that time.

Tubby Englander: And of course the department was closed, they had to cut back on expenses, you know one thing and another and this particular film section was scrapped. Then I became the European representative of an American television news company called Spot News and what I had to produce for them, as well as doing the news jobs that they asked me to do, the special news jobs that they asked me to do, they would be either in England or perhaps in Europe, it was supposed to have been "and Europe" but that never materialised. But in England on or two jobs, but at the same time I was instructed to make, off my own bat, five to ten minute little documentaries of things that were going on in England that would be of interest to the American market. It was like a magazine, a sort of five minute or a ten minute magazine, this is what they wanted. And I only did one actually before the whole thing collapsed and that was public speaking in Hyde Park, Speakers' Corner and that sort of thing. I did a little five minute documentary on Speakers' Corner. Then they went bust and they wrote to me and said, "We owe you a certain amount of money which we haven't got, but you've got the Auricon camera," they sent an Auricon camera over to me from the States and they gave me the Auricon camera in lieu of the money that they owed me. But the whole point was that during - when I first got this

assignment from Spot News, they asked me to contact BBC news to work out and to get a liaison agreement between Spot and the BBC. This was in '52. And the BBC then, their newsreel was a magazine programme that they used to produce up at Alexandra Palace and it was the first television newsreel. It was a twice a week thing, it was every night, every day rather but they changed it twice a week, they had two episodes - no that's not the word I want - two...

Arthur Graham: ...sequences?

Tubby Englander: No. Um - Issues [laughs], issues. Two issues every week. So I went up to Alexandra Palace to try and arrange this agreement and I contact - the chap I had to contact was a chap called Phil Dorte who was in charge of the whole of the film department up there. Well now Phil Dorte of course I knew, I'd worked with at Gaumont's. Phil Dorte was a sound recordist at Gaumont's and we worked together on - he was in the sound department, I was in the camera department but not in the same relative grades obviously, we'd worked on many films together, we knew each other. And this of course was a great thing when it came to. We met again for the first time for donkey's years, we knew each other anyway and it was an easy thing to arrange an agreement between the two companies that if there was anything that Spot News wanted from the BBC or vice versa there would be an interchange of the material. Well, when Spot News collapsed, one of the first things I had to do was to go up to see Phil Dorte and to tell him that it's all off, they've gone bust and that's it. And I went to Alexandra Palace and Phil Dorte and I had a chat and I told him what was happening and then he said, "Well what's going to happen to you?" So I said, "Oh I don't know, I'll get a job somewhere or other." And we parted and that was that. And about a week later I had a phone call from - what's his christian name, I've forgotten his christian name...George Rotner[?]. George Rotner who was in charge of the actual camera department of the newsreel division there at that particular time. And he asked me if I would like to be a freelance cameraman for a month. So I said yes and I went up there and I had a month's contract and that was in June of '52 and I remained with the BBC for 25 years. It started on a month's contract and it went on from month to month and month for about I think 14 months actually, before I managed to get a staff job, a staff job came up as a cameraman and I got that. So that's how - that was the transfer from the film industry and documentary industry, into television. Because the newsreel at that time the newsreel magazine was a relatively very small film department but it was the nucleus of the film department that is now actually in the BBC. It all started with about two feature cameramen, they called us feature cameramen. The other cameramen, the other newsreel cameramen were trained by the BBC, they were brought in and trained by the BBC and did the ordinary newsreel stuff. There were a couple of newsreel cameramen, official newsreel cameramen from Wardour Street there, they had gone to the BBC. But where the actual - what shall I say? - film for drama or documentary or that sort of programme, there were only about two. No, at that particular time they weren't really doing anything like that, there was no film sequences as such then. When the film sequences idea developed and we were really producing film in the true sense if the word, for documentaries or topical programmes, it wasn't really until that particular department was formed and moved down back, believe it or not, to Lime Grove which was a strange transition for quite a few of us actually, to go back as it were in a different context, back to the studios that we'd known before the war, to Lime Grove. And that was really where the real film department started, from Alexandra Palace and the move to Lime Grove. Up until then whatever sequences were wanted, and they were very, very few because it was all live television then, as you realise. And they

hadn't yet got it to the phase whereby you could cut film sequences into live productions. The equipment had come in then - it hadn't come in yet, rather - so that there was very, very little call for film sequences. But when we got into Lime Grove of course the department expanded quite considerably and filming for television really took off from there. And that I suppose was about '53 I think it was, '53 when they moved, '52 Lime Grove...yes about '53. But prior to that one of the first jobs that the BBC gave me, apart from the magazine work up at Alexandra Palace, the BBC made a series called - a series that was to explain the coronation that was coming up the following year in '53 wasn't it - the coronation? Yes, '53. They made a series of films to explain the coronation to the public, to the British public, to tell them all about the background to the coronation, what has gone on before and the meaning of the jewels, the crown jewels and all this sort of thing. Interviews, we did interviews with various people, including the - oh, what do you call them? [Pause] The people that control the... Oh dear, can we cut please?

Arthur Graham: Yes, by all means. Cut there...

[End of Tape 1, Side 1] [Tape 1, Side 2]

Arthur Graham: ...Talking about getting ready for the coronation and you were searching for the name of, I think it's the College of Arms.

Tubby Englander: Yes, yes that's right. It has come to me, it was The College of Arms. We went along, amongst other places, to The College of Arms and we interviewed the Lord Lion or whatever the official titles are of those rather strange gentlemen. But this was the sort of thing that we were doing and we went all over the country interviewing a couple of dukes and earls and duchesses, that sort of thing. One particular one that I can remember was we interviewed Lady Darnley at - in just outside Rochester at the - it was then their family home. Cobham Hall I think it was called, Cobham Hall. Again, strangely enough I had been to Cobham Hall before. Before the war, when I was an assistant at Gaumont's where we had made a film in Cobham Hall, in the grounds of Cobham Hall which was a it was a Cicely Courtneidge film which we had made there. So it was rather strange going back again under these circumstances to situations that one had experienced before the war. Anyway this was virtually the first big film production that the BBC had ever done, it really was a big production for the BBC standard anyway. And it was the first one. Then of course, after the coronation everything really began to take off in the film department and all the big productions and the expansion took place.

Arthur Graham: Were you working on 16 mm or 35?

Tubby Englander: No, no, no, no. It was 35 mm. all the time. And in actual fact we kept 35 mm. right the way up until the BBC decided to go over to colour. When they went over to colour and started to do filming for - when they continued to do filming for television, in colour, we started it off again with 35 mm. We kept on 35 mm. And then of course costs became apparent, the cost of shooting film on 35 mm. on colour started to become prohibitive. And as the 16 mm. equipment had really improved beyond all bounds or was starting to improve beyond all bounds, that was when we went over to 16 mm. colour and went over completely to 16 mm. There was no more 35 mm. after that. But we never, ever touched 16 mm. black and white, not where production was concerned. And it was only when the equipment was available, the better

equipment was available that we went over into 16 mm. And it was basically, purely and simply a question of cost because 35 mm. would have been absolutely prohibitive, bearing in mind the amount of material that the BBC were shooting at that particular time. I think at that time, when we really reached the zenith of film production in the BBC, the BBC had the biggest film unit that there had ever been in the world. I mean, we had, as far as I can remember, this is what, twelve years ago now, at that time we had about 40 static camera crews, which is bigger than MGM or Paramount or Universal in their heyday, either before or immediately after the war. It was a fantastic number of people that we had down in the film department in Ealing. I don't know what it is at the moment but I shouldn't think it's any less at the moment.

Arthur Graham: You referred to Ealing, you'd moved from Lime Grove?

Tubby Englander: Oh yes, I'm sorry. Yes we moved, after about, I think it was about two years at Lime Grove, the film department did take over and move into Ealing Studios, they had bought them from er, Ealing Studios they were weren't they? Or ATP was it?

Arthur Graham: Balcon wasn't it?

Tubby Englander: Oh that's right, yes, yes. And the whole of the film department apart from the newsreel, the newsreel was always kept separate. At that time it kept up at Alexandra Palace, it was still up at Alexandra Palace and it was a proper newsreel then, it wasn't the magazine programme that had been. But we moved to Ealing and that's where they still are now, at Ealing Studios.

Arthur Graham: And you stayed with the BBC until when?

Tubby Englander: I stayed for nearly 25 years, until 1976. And I was then, well I had been actually ever since we went to Ealing Studios, their senior film cameraman. And the productions that we did at Ealing of course were absolutely superb, from a personal point of view by virtue of fact that one worked on them. They were so interesting and the range of work that one did, the departmental range of work that one did, was quite fascinating because you worked on every single type of production that the BBC was doing at any one time. You worked on children's programmes, you worked on religious programmes, you worked on documentary programmes, you worked on drama programmes, the whole range was yours to sample. And life was absolutely fascinating really because one never, ever had a chance of getting bored because you were changing around from lines of thought so many times during the week that it really was, it was unbelievable actually. I can honestly say that I was with the BBC for nearly 25 years and I enjoyed every single minute of it. And I think also I can honestly say that I've now been in the film industry, and its allied parts for, what is it now, 55 years I think, and I can still say that I've enjoyed every minute of that time too. It's been a marvellous time, fascinating time.

Arthur Graham: Did you find any particular requirements for filming for television? Or was it just filming as filming?

Tubby Englander: Well yes, no particular requirements at all as far as I could find. It was just a question of carrying on quite normally. And of course you were learning all the time. Obviously

you were learning all the time, things that you could get away with and things that you can't do and you tried and sometimes they came off, sometimes they didn't. But you never tried anything that would land you, or land the production, into a disaster or anything like that. They were only little finesses of lighting and trying this, that and the other that you could learn exactly what you could get away with for television. I don't think you could do that sort of thing so readily if you were in the feature film industry. Although if you wanted to make adjustments, if you wanted to try anything out in the film industry of course you would get the facility of being able to test, time for testing and testing it properly. But in filming for television you have to accept - or I thought you did and I'm sure, I think, I'm right - you have to accept the situation as it stands at that particular moment, you can't alter a given set of circumstances and this is what filming in television, I think, is all about. You haven't got unlimited amounts of money, you haven't got unlimited amount of equipment and you haven't got unlimited numbers of people. You have to accept what you've got and make the best of it and this, I think, is one of the things that is so marvellous about filming for television, or being in the BBC and filming with television. It's different outside, I realise that, because there's more money outside. But in the BBC you have to accept sets of conditions that are presented to you and make the best of them. And this makes you use your brain as it were and your own ingenuity and things like that, which makes the job a damn sight more interesting than having everything presented to you, or the availability of everything.

Arthur Graham: Well you finished at the BBC. Did you do anything further?

Tubby Englander: Yes I became a freelance lighting cameraman and in the last three years - or the last four years - in the last four years as far as I'm concerned, and in the type of work that I'm doing, and have been doing since I retired, the type of work I do now has gone completely over to video. The type of work that I'm doing, industrial work, industrial documentary, industrial training, in-house productions for various companies, all this stuff which used to be done on film is now being done on video. And as far as I'm concerned, again, it's another, it's almost another world but the expertise that one has learned in film is quite easily brought into lighting for video, lighting in video studios. And in actual fact of course it is a little bit easier doing video than doing film, because you see immediately in front of you on your own VDU, you see immediately what the picture is like and what it's doing and you can make your minute-to-minute adjustments and see the adjustments rather than hoping for the best the next morning when you see your rushes after they've come from the laboratory. So you're seeing your rushes immediately that you're doing your lighting. And this in itself is quite fascinating, the different changes that you can make before your very eyes.

Arthur Graham: What were production techniques like when you first started and how have they changed?

Tubby Englander: Production techniques. I don't quite know what you mean by that. Do you mean camera equipment?

Arthur Graham: No, not necessarily...

Tubby Englander: ...the camera side or...

Arthur Graham: ...not necessarily. I mean, is filmmaking today as filmmaking was in the days when you started or have there been any great differences?

Tubby Englander: Well no I don't think there are any great differences at all. I mean it's gone on virtually in the same way, I think. I can't think of any - immediately I can't think of any drastic change in the way one was operating, yes operating in the industry 40 years ago to what one would, or how one would operate now.

Arthur Graham: Which studios have you worked in, and are there any great differences between them?

Tubby Englander: Well, before the war was the only time that I worked in studios as such, you know film production studios which was, as I've said, Stoll's, Gaumont's and Warner Brothers. After the war there wasn't any studios. I didn't work in any studios because it was documentary and then virtually BBC which was not a film studio as such.

Arthur Graham: Though you worked in the old Ealing Studios.

Tubby Englander: Yes, in the old Ealing Studios but they were obviously transformed, they were transformed by the BBC.

Arthur Graham: I see. Was there any great difference between Stoll's and Gaumont's in the old days? You said Gaumont's was a bigger company.

Tubby Englander: Only in size and facilities of course. When I went to Gaumont's, for the first time in my life I really saw what a real first-class production set was like. The sets at Gaumont's compared to the sets that were built at Stoll's obviously were quite fantastic, to my mind anyway. I'd never seen anything like this. I went on the stage - at Gaumont's when I took that camera over from Stoll's to Gaumont's I went on the stage for the first - their had a big stage - for the first time where they were doing 'Jew Suss' and there was an enormous set, if I remember rightly, it was a medieval square in either central Europe or it could have been Jerusalem or something like that, which filled the entire stage, this enormous Stage Four. Then it was an enormous Stage Four at Gaumont's and it was like another world seeing it for the first time, and being very young of course. Because even then I - what was I? - I was just 16 I think it was, 15 or 16. And of course it was quite a startling effect, quite a startling effect. But otherwise I think it's only in size that there was any real difference between Gaumont's and Stoll's. And then Warner Brothers of course, was exactly the same as Gaumont's really. Maybe a little bit - no, no, it was a little bit smaller in size than Gaumont's was. They had two stages, they only had two stages at Stoll's - sorry - they only had two stages at Warner Brothers, whereas of course at Gaumont's they had, at that time five stages of varying sizes of course.

Arthur Graham: How many stages did Stoll's have?

Tubby Englander: Stoll's really only had one because Stoll's was a converted silent studio. You see when I first joined Stoll's in 1931, they had only just changed over from silent to sound. And the stage that they had, the one stage that they would use, would be the only stage that had been

soundproofed. The other silent stages, which were glass-topped, some of them were glass-topped and unsoundproofed, those could be used for silent shooting, inserts, that sort of thing, but any sound sequences, any sound shooting had to be done on the one stage that they had at Stoll's. And the soundproofing of course was quite rudimentary, it was basically this looped seaweed packs on the rafters, looped in the rafters, although the walls of course had been covered in, I think it was asbestos or something like that. Highly dangerous these days apparently. But that was the - there was only the one stage that was soundproofed.

Arthur Graham: Have you worked on overseas assignments? If so, where?

Tubby Englander: Yes, a lot, a hell of a lot actually, and mainly with the BBC. I reckon that I've worked in every country in the Northern Hemisphere, other than Russia. I have never worked in, believe it or not it's quite extraordinary because I've travelled literally hundreds of thousands of miles for the BBC in the twenty-five years and never once have I crossed the equator. It is quite extraordinary when I think of it. I don't know why it is but I've never crossed the equator. I've worked in practically every country in the northern hemisphere, all the way from Iceland over and down to Japan and I've worked in Africa and I've gone down to Kenya, that's the furthest south that I've ever been. But I've never yet crossed the equator. And whilst at the BBC one reckoned that you would spend, or I would spend about 6 months of the year abroad and it's worked out that way and I have a list actually of, throughout the years, of every country, every foreign country that I've been to and what production, and the productions that I've done. For 25 years I've got a list actually, I always kept a list.

Arthur Graham: Oh well. Was there anything, anyone that was particularly outstanding or that had any particular special problems involved?

Tubby Englander: Well yes. The most outstanding one obviously was 'Civilisation' with Kenneth Clarke. All in all that took nearly two years, it took me nearly two years. We weren't actually shooting for two years but it took me two years because I was allowed to do the shooting and then work on the planning for the next break. We shot it in sections, obviously because we couldn't all go away for two years. And we would shoot a section of about a month or six weeks abroad and then the whole unit would come back and the unit would go on to other things but I would go with the two producers, work with the two producers on planning and receiving the next stint. And then I'd get my unit together and then we'd all go across and do the next stint and come back and then carry on quite normally again. So as far as I was concerned I was on it virtually for two years and that, without a doubt is the finest production I think I've ever worked on, without a doubt. After a while I always thought that it was my *raison d'être* if you like for entering the film industry in 1931. Everything had worked out in such a way that it had lead up, as far as I could see, it had lead up to 'Civilisation'. It was the biggest and the finest thing that I'd ever done, and the most interesting thing that I'd ever done. And it took place where? - all over France, Germany, Western Europe anyway. It took place all over western Europe and America. So we had a terrific amount of travelling to do. And it was interesting too because I worked in a self-contained unit and I took not only the camera equipment and the camera crews, I took my lighting and my electricians as well. And it was only when I found that we needed - we didn't have enough light for a particular - like a cathedral or something like that [laughs] that we were working in, then we would hire lights. But otherwise we were a completely self-contained

mobile unit. And we worked off four vehicles, no three vehicles sorry. Three vehicles and we had the complete unit - electricians, sound, camera, grips - one grip actually, and we took our dollies with us and our tracks so that we were completely mobile. And it was a fascinating production it really was, not only from the logistical point of view but from the technical point of view as well.

Arthur Graham: Was it just one camera crew or did you double up in any way?

Tubby Englander: Um, it was one camera crew but we took more than one camera with us, obviously, mainly for safety, you know for spare, that sort of thing. But if we wanted to use two cameras, we could quite easily do it because there were enough of us to grab the second camera. My camera crew was an operator, an assistant and myself, that was the total camera crew. We had one grip who in actual fact, if it came to a pinch, could have operated a static camera in as much as he knew all about focussing and switching on and switching off, that sort of thing. We were a completely self-contained mobile unit.

Arthur Graham: You didn't take your clapper boy with you.

Tubby Englander: [Laughs.] No we all did clappers, even K. Clarke, even K. Clarke did the clappers [laughs].

Arthur Graham: Well that obviously is your most impressive location. Was there any other, any particular country that struck you as...

Tubby Englander: Well the only one I suppose really was, I did two of the series of 'America', Alistair Cooke's 'America'. And on that particular occasion we were in America, we started on the east coast and we had our own vehicles and we drove ourselves from coast to coast. We finished up in Los Angeles, um San Francisco. And we drove ourselves from coast to coast and we worked all told up and down in about 14 states, 14 different states. And that sort of cinematographically was pretty run-of-the-mill as it were. But it obviously was a fantastic experience to be driving for two months, driving and working right the way across America and visiting all these different states north and south. It was quite something, but not of course on the same scale as - it wasn't as startling as 'Civilisation' was - no way. But it was, from a personal point of view, it was a very, very interesting and er, very interesting production.

Arthur Graham: Did you have any contact or use with American film units on that production or were you just self-contained again?

Tubby Englander: Er, not with film units no, but with equipment. We were hiring lights and that sort of thing obviously in different situations. Because we didn't take lights with us on that, apart from a couple of hand bashers, that sort of thing, battery lights. But not actually with production crews, we didn't come in contact with any production crews.

Arthur Graham: When you say you travelled lights about with you normally, what was the lighting equipment like?

Tubby Englander: What, on which production?

Arthur Graham: Well you were talking about 'Civilisation', or in general, you obviously...

Tubby Englander: Well on 'Civilisation', being a mobile unit, we were relying on picking up an electrical supply wherever we were, so that we tried - and because of the weight and space and one thing and another - we kept all lighting equipment down to small stuff. We started off on 'Civilisation', we started off with that Colortran series. If you remember it. It wasn't one of my best types of equipment actually. I didn't like it very much because it was not all that readily controllable. Then we managed, it was the time when the redhead came in, the redhead and the blonde. And we had a combination, we always kept the Colortran but then we added to it, blondes and redheads which gave us much more power and much more controllable power. We always carried with us of course, one 5k and one 2k, just in case we managed to get enough juice from somewhere or other that we could use. But basically the whole thing was done on redheads and blondes.

Arthur Graham: Well what cameras did you use?

Tubby Englander: In general or on...?

Arthur Graham: Well in general and in particular.

Tubby Englander: In general, we started off at - I'm talking now about the BBC at Ealing.

Arthur Graham: Yes, yes.

Tubby Englander: In general we started off with Mitchells, we had a couple of Mitchells. And then we went over to Arriflexes. We had blimp Mitchells to start off with which were...it was the...and also a couple of double cameras, Mitchell double cameras, which were the old newsreel type, you know the old newsreel type of camera. Then we went over to 35 mm. Arriflexes in the blimp, and also the BBC developed a system which was fine to start off with. It was an interesting development of the silent Camiflex, because we had lots and lots of Camiflexes then. Camiflexes were, apart from the Arriflexes, the blimped Arriflexes which were the studio cameras or any exterior sound shooting, everybody had a personal Camiflex, or if they wanted it they could have a personal Arriflex, a silent Arriflex, all 35 mm. Um, but then the BBC 'P and ID', that particular department in the BBC which does - did - that sort of thing, they developed a Perspex blimp in which was a silent Camiflex and a 35 mm. magnetic tape recorder - um tape feed that would run side by side in the blimp, side by side with the camera. And all the works for the 35 mm. magnetic were also inside the camera and the sound recordist would work, he'd be piped in, lined in to do it, to do the working of the sound recording. The problem with this was you see that both the camera and the tape recording were only 400 feet and 35 mm 400 feet doesn't last very long. And that was the first problem with it. The second problem was that it was a little bit on the weighty side, the blimp which contained the camera and the recording apparatus as well, the sound recording. It made it a little bit heavy and a little bit immobile. But the great thing was it was something which you could take out on location and use and shoot small sound sequences without having all the business of the Arriflex in a blimp and then the sound recording

all separate as well, you know and synching the whole thing up and one thing and another. This was already self-synching and very convenient but that didn't last all that - that lasted actually until we went over to 16 mm. shooting. And up until then it was the combination of either the 35 mm. Arriflex or the 35 mm. Camiflex in this perspex blimp.

Arthur Graham: What 16 mm. cameras did you use?

Tubby Englander: The 16 mm. camera, we started off Arriflexes and we continued right through to the BL Arriflex and the SR. And also we had the - was it called the clair?

Arthur Graham: There was an clair, yes.

Tubby Englander: What was the French - there was another French 16 mm - what the hell was it called? [Long pause.]

Arthur Graham: Well so basically you were using Arriflexes and Eclairs then.

Tubby Englander: Yes it was the clair, that was the other one, yes.

Arthur Graham: Well now, to go way back before the war - what was the equipment like when you first of all started in then business?

Tubby Englander: Well to me of course, at that particular time, it was all an extraordinary world and the equipment itself was, to me, quite extraordinary. But we were using, as I say, the Mitchell, we had the Mitchell camera at Stoll's. And we had - Dickie Dickinson had developed, or invented if you like, a special type of blimp for the Mitchell camera because we didn't, at that time we didn't have these enormous metal, terribly heavy metal iron blimps which the Mitchell camera did, in fact, demand. Because it wasn't a quiet camera - no way. But Dickie had invented, or designed, not invented, designed a blimp which was in fact made of balsa wood. It was the shape of a very large shape of the Mitchell camera, all made of balsa wood and covered in rexine. There was a base-plate, a metal base-plate inside the blimp, with one small layer of thin lead, which was the only real soundproofing of the camera itself. The camera bolted onto the base plate. There was a complete gap in the front, through which the Mitchell front bars and front protruded and then - you could get at the lens for follow-focussing from the front, from this gap. And the whole thing was enclosed finally with a piece of black velvet, a large piece of black velvet which was wrapped round the front and stuffed into the gap to make it as near soundproof as you possibly could. Well it wasn't bad at all and in those days it was quite an extraordinary situation, or set-up rather. Quite extraordinary set-up. But of course it was terribly light, that was the great thing. And I, as an assistant was able to pick up the complete unit, that is the tripod, the blimp and the camera, complete and on my shoulder, balancing it back on my shoulder and I could march across the studio and on location I could march along the road with that and it was terribly mobile. Of course mind you, I have one shoulder now which is slightly lower than the other, but it was possible and it made it very, very mobile. The other camera that we had at that time, which we couldn't use on any sound shooting, was the old Bell and Howell clappergate camera, which was - obviously, everybody knows - a marvellous camera, it was a super camera. But it was so damn noisy you could hardly hear yourself think when it was going. And this of

course you couldn't use on sound shooting but it was still used on exteriors and it was always used if you had to do back-projection plates because at that time the clapper gate of the Bell and Howell camera was I suppose the perfect registration gate. Once the film was in the gate, on its transit, when it was clapped into the gate, onto the registration pins by this back clapper, it was absolutely rock steady. And bearing in mind in those days you could also buy special negative stock which was called 'B and H Punch' stock, so that the perforations of that stock fitted virtually exactly onto the registration pins. And that plus the clapper gate behind made the picture absolutely rock steady. This is the sort of stuff, this is the sort of camera that one always used when you were getting back-projection plates.

Arthur Graham: All right, cut it there then.

[Tape 2, Side 3]

Arthur Graham: ...the name of interviewee: Arthur Englander, side number three. Now Tubby we're talking about the Bell and Howell at Stoll's.

Tubby Englander: Er, yes, this camera as I say was being used for back-projection plates, for taking back-projection plates. And there were two of these cameras and the other one - one was always kept for doing the plates and the other one was adapted by Dickie, by Desmond Dickinson, this really was his invention. And I rather think that this invention could have been the first time in England that we had a back-projection process, which was at Stoll's. What he did, he got an old camera booth - when sound first came in, cameras were all put in booths which were for soundproofing, which were trundled across the stage for the various shots that were wanted. He got one of these old booths and in it he set up a Bell and Howell camera, on a firm iron, static base out of which had been - and he'd had the back of the clapper gate cut away so that there was no metal portion. He cut away, he had cut away the back of the Bell and Howell camera and he had cut away the back of the booth and had a large piece of plate glass inserted in its place. Behind the plate glass an old type 150 amp Kleinwort[?] arc lamp with a parabolic mirror and this was focussed through the glass at the back, through the aperture at the back of the camera, through the non-existing clapper gate, onto the film that was in the Bell and Howell gate. There was a lens of course in front and the picture was projected out through the front of the booth. Now the amount of heat, of course, that was being generated by the 150 amp arc with a parabolic mirror, onto the back of the film in the camera gate, and this of course was nitrate, it's nitrate film. The heat had to be dispensed with, and he organised a flask of liquid oxygen with a pipe which sprayed onto the gate aperture and when the valve was opened of the liquid oxygen of course it atomised - vaporised rather - it vaporised and you had this ice cold, literally ice cold, jet of air playing onto the gate area in order to keep it cool. Now the negative - the positive rather - was fed in the normal way from the top, into the gate, a direct pull-down actually, into the gate. And the film had to be man-handled after it had passed through the gate, into a film bin, because there was no way, at that particular time, that you could take up the film in a spool beneath the gate, which would be the classical way of doing it. And also it was because the film itself was still so hot after it had passed through the oxygen - the liquid oxygen - it was beginning to, sort of, buckle a little bit with the heat. And that would have impeded the take-up if you had an automatic take-up. So there was all this equipment inside this booth and the door was shut because it had to be soundproofed and one thing and another. And the person who had to stand

beside this ghastly machine, feeding the film into the bin, was me because I was the assistant. And there were times, I must admit, when I thought, "I really don't know whether this right or not." Because the film, when it was coming down and I was man-handling it into the bin, was warm, it really was warm. And there's this colossal heat - light, beam of light - going thorough onto the gate area. But it worked and I forget what the type of screen was, I suppose in those days it was just an ordinary...

Arthur Graham: The early screen were ground glass, weren't they?

Tubby Englander: Oh this wasn't ground glass - no. Oh wait a minute, yes of course it was, you're quite right it was a ground glass screen, that's right, yes. All the grain of the ground glass screen was always apparent on the back projection. But that was one of the things that Dickie invented and did and I'm sure that at that particular time we were the first studio to do back-projection, or be able to do back-projection.

Arthur Graham: Well that leads into the next question. Have you worked on any specialised processes?

Tubby Englander: Not really, not other than the normal specialised processes that were brought into ordinary drama productions, er, film studio productions like the 'dunning' process and of course the, Schufftan the Schufftan shots, the glass process, you know the painted glass process. But I've only worked on them because I happened to be on a production that was using them, not because I was in that particular department that was producing them.

Arthur Graham: The Dunning process didn't last very long, did it?

Tubby Englander: Er, no I think it lasted up until the time of the travelling matte, didn't it?

Arthur Graham: Ah.

Tubby Englander: I think. Because it was the original blue background wasn't it...

Arthur Graham: That's right.

Tubby Englander: ...that everything else stemmed from. Most other things stemmed from. But the Schufftan process of course, the painted glass, was fascinating. And the one thing I always remember was in one of - where the Schufftan process was concerned, was in one of Hitchcock's productions at Gaumont's and I can't remember exactly which one it was, I think it was 'Sabotage'. But the set that had been built was the base of a big dockland area and the top part of it was the Schufftan shot, the glass, painted glass. But the whole thing was done in perspective, in as much that, it was an extremely long shot of the dock area and they had men rolling barrels along the dockside. And what they had done, what Hitch had done was - everything was done in perspective - barrels had been made to be miniature, miniature barrels and he had got in very young children and dwarfs to roll the barrels along the quayside so that everything was in perspective, the barrel was in perspective, the people, the men that were pushing the barrels or rolling the barrels were all in perspective. And I can always remember this particular shot by

virtue of the fact that - this Schufftan shot - by virtue of the fact that the perspective was so marvellous, was so good that he had got the idea of getting the barrels made and then having dwarfs and children come in dressed up as men, to push the barrels along.

Arthur Graham: The Schufftan process involved a silver mirror didn't it?

Tubby Englander: Um, yes. No wait a minute, no it didn't. No, no. No the Schufftan shot was a plain glass, the bottom half - you shot through the bottom half [pause]. No, I beg your pardon, yes you're quite right. It was at an angle wasn't it? The Schufftan, yes the glass was at an angle, you shot directly onto the set, but the glass was at an angle and the top half was painted, was painted so that you didn't shoot off the top of the set, you shot onto the glass.

Arthur Graham: Which technician that you've worked with gave you the most help would you say?

Tubby Englander: Well I suppose really it was the first technician that I ever knew - Dickie Dickinson, because he started it all off and he - I was apprenticed as it were to his crew and he was the one that gave me the immediate information. But, like so many other people, as from then you picked it all up. You kept your ears open, you kept your eyes open and you asked questions and you developed everything in your own way. I don't think I can honestly say there was any particular technician, not on the camera side anyway. I mean one picked up - No, not on any side I don't think because it was entirely up to you to pick everything up as it was presented to you, not wilfully presented to you but you had to, you had to keep your ears and eyes open.

Arthur Graham: Did you have any in-house training to raise your technical skills?

Tubby Englander: No. No. Not other than talking to people, you know, as one did.

Arthur Graham: Did you take any evening classes at all?

Tubby Englander: No. Not in any subjects.

Arthur Graham: Now which film director or television producer that you've worked with has made the most impression on you?

Tubby Englander: Er, film director, I think without a doubt Alfred Hitchcock because when I was at Gaumont's I was - as an assistant - I was lucky enough to work on every single one of Hitchcock's productions actually at Gaumont's. And um, I think without a doubt one learned by keeping one's eyes and ears open, one learned more from Hitchcock in a month than you would have learned from, or picked up from anybody else in a year. Yes without a doubt, Hitchcock in the film industry. In television I think the producer or director that I would pick would be Rudy Cartier[?]. Rudy Cartier was, I always thought and again I worked on practically every production that Rudy Cartier made over the years in television. We worked together extraordinarily well. And I always looked upon Rudy Cartier as the Alfred Hitchcock of television. They were very much alike, they - in as much that whatever they said about the

production or whatever they were doing in that particular production, was very, very much worthwhile listening to and watching. He was a fantastic character as well, Rudy.

Arthur Graham: Um...is there any particular way they worked that impressed you? I mean was the - how did they differ from other people perhaps?

Tubby Englander: I think very briefly, both of them had the same sort of faith in what they were doing and what they were saying. They knew more - yes, they knew, more than hoped, that what they wanted would come off. And if they said they wanted a particular shot and you would think, "No, no, it's not on, it can't work, it won't work." But time and time again it ruddy well did work, it could work if you approached it in the way that they wanted, the way that they were approaching it, that it's got to work, it's going to work. And it was this attitude I think, I mean it was well known in the Gaumont days that Hitch, Hitchcock very, very rarely looked through a camera, in spite of what other people say. In Gaumont's he very rarely looked through a camera but he drew every single shot that he wanted. And he would give that drawing to the operator, in this particular case in Gaumont's it was Steven Daid[?] because I was Steven Daid's assistant then. And Steven would look at it and he'd say, "Mm, no, no, it's wrong, that perspective is not right, you can't get that." And he'd look through the camera and he'd work on it, he'd adjust it and he'd get the shot and he'd get the shot absolutely correctly to how Hitchcock had drawn it. Um, I mean, not every time obviously but enough to be as near as dammit, there, that's it. And the same sort of thing would happen with Rudy, Rudy Cartier. Rudy Cartier would say, "Tubby, I want the shot like this you see." You'd say, "Well no, you've got to be off the set and can't get it as long as that," that sort of thing. But you could, if you tried you could. And you could make your own adjustments to it so that it did work as well. There's a terrific amount of liaison between directors of that calibre and an operator I think. They're almost talking the same language, they're on the same wavelength and each one knows what the other one really can do and wants. And by virtue of trying like mad and trying very, very hard, you'll get it, you will get it. The other thing of course that Rudy Cartier always used to do, if it was impossible not to keep on the set, and you were always shooting off the set, the whole of the top of the frame dramatically would have been filled with smoke, you know, the smoke machine was always in operation. You couldn't do it in drawing room dramas or anything like that, obviously but if you had nice, terrific long shots of quaysides and night exteriors and that sort of thing, the smoke machine would always cut out the top of your frame so you never, ever saw that you were shooting off the set. You had the gantry in some instances, yes.

Arthur Graham: Earlier on you gave us some information about what you did during the war years. Can you amplify a bit on the work of the AKS and - you say you knew - no one obviously approached you to actually ask you if you wanted to join or anything, it just came out of the blue.

TE: Um, yes it did come completely out of the blue. I think what had happened was that they had decided, they - the powers that be, had decided that there was going to be a film production unit. They wanted a film production unit and they set about forming it by finding out who - which film technicians were already in the Army, established film technicians, pre-war film technicians. They, I think they had already set up the organisation with key technicians who were not in the Army but were brought into the Army. People like Freddie Young and Carol Reed and that sort of thing, those sort of people. They weren't in the Army at the time but they were

brought in when the unit was formed. They were commissioned when the unit was formed. Obviously they were asked, although of course there was conscription then, so they - but I'm sure that Freddie and Carol Reed weren't conscripted, they were asked to come in and in they came. And I think they brought names with them as well, were checked and if they weren't in the industry they were in the Army or in the forces anyway. And I think that's how it happened. Because when I first came down from my - I was based with the Recce Corps in Bury St Edmunds at that particular time and when I came down from Bury St Edmunds and reported to War Office as instructed, War Office at that particular time didn't even know what it was all about and where I should go. In fact, on that particular day that I reported they sent me home for a week, until they'd found out what I should be doing and why I was there anyway. And it wasn't until I er, well I was at home and I got a telegram, "Report to Wembley" that's right, "Report to Wembley Studios." The telegram came from the War Office and I read this and I thought, "What the hell is all this about?" And that's the first I knew of it.

Arthur Graham: What was life like at the Wembley Studios?

Tubby Englander: Well, when you say life, you mean living conditions?

Arthur Graham: Well, you were in the Army, yet you were making films as film technicians. That must have been a peculiar combination.

Tubby Englander: Yes, well first of all we were all - there was no accommodation for us at Wembley, we all had to live - those of us that could, Londoners, we had to live at home, which was marvellous to start off with. And we were working, although we were in uniform, we were working virtually in exactly the same way as we would have been working if we'd all been in the studio. One of the problems that came up eventually was the fact that everybody was calling themselves by their christian names, even the officers and the men and one thing and another, because this is the way that one worked, you know. Everybody knew everybody else anyway, or most of us did. We all knew each other so always christian names were used. And one day a War Office representative came own to the studios to see what we were doing and how we were working and one thing and another. He was up in the gantry with the CO and everybody else, and one of his complaints apparently to the CO was the fact that everybody was calling everybody else by their christian name and not corporal or private or sergeant or whatever it is. And we were told to adopt a more military attitude but that didn't really make much difference, we still all continued to call each other by our christian name. But we were all working exactly as if we'd been in a studio.

Arthur Graham: Did you have anything to do with the film units of the other - film units in the services?

Tubby Englander: Not myself personally, except that I did represent, I did sit on a board actually, sit on a War Office board now and then, which was convened at Pinewood Studios in order to pass out some of the FPU newly trained cameramen. I sat on the board actually with George Hill, which was again a strange sort of throwback to the past, George Hill who was the chief camera mechanic at Gaumont's before the war.

Arthur Graham: You told us what you did after the war but did you find it hard to get re-started?

Tubby Englander: I was one of the fortunate ones, no I didn't. I don't quite know, I can't remember exactly how it happened, how I happened to join Basic Films in the first instance. I just can't remember that at all. But I had no difficulty, obviously of getting back. I had no previous claims to reinstatement or anything like that from before the war. Because Warner Brothers, after the war, weren't in existence and Warner Brothers at Teddington went out of existence during the war, or just before the war in actual fact, just before the war. So I had no claim to reinstatement. I was just damn lucky to fall into, with Basic Films.

Arthur Graham: Have you ever worked on film or TV commercials?

Tubby Englander: No. No.

Arthur Graham: Ah. In what way would you say your work has changed since the end of the war if at all?

Tubby Englander: Since the end of the war, well I hope to think that I've become much more competent [laughs] and efficient. I don't - I can't say that my style has changed because I don't think I had a particular style when I first joined the documentary. It's one of these things that, as I've said before, you accept, the great thing is you accept a given set of circumstances and you make the best of it, you've got to make the best of it.

Arthur Graham: Now your experience since the war has been confined to documentary realist type of films and so on. Have they changed in any way over the years, their sort of approach, their attitude or would you say they're still the same?

Tubby Englander: Oh, I think from a technical point of view, from a cameraman's point of view, I couldn't see much change actually. Any change I think has been in the presentation of the content rather than anything else. I don't think anything has happened in that field that would affect the cameraman.

Arthur Graham: How about the presentation, in what way do you think it might have changed?

Tubby Englander: Um, I think that [long pause] these days the whole concept of filmmaking has changed in as much that you're not technically so explicit. By this I mean, in the old days, as one laughingly says, you had a long shot, you had a medium shot, you had a close-up and then you had a medium shot and then you had a big close-up and then you faded out or dissolved. And the attitude today is that you don't use that sort of a rule at all, or those sort of rules at all. Not now. You can - you cut from one thing to another, you don't dissolve and you don't have quite as logical a sequence of shots as one would have in order to produce the effect that you wanted. To my mind, at the moment, everything is a jump cut. There is no real connection and there doesn't necessarily have to be any connection between one shot and another or one sequence and another. I think this is probably, I don't know, a difference in upbringing of people that they can sort that sort of thing out for themselves and if they can't sort it out for themselves

well hard luck, you know, too bad. But I don't think in general I don't think things are quite as explicit, they're not as explicit as they used to be. And of course there's the tendency I think to go for shock tactics, shock-horror tactics, more than in previous times, in previous years.

Arthur Graham: Turn to a different subject. How did you first get involved with the ACTT? And who recruited you?

Tubby Englander: [Laughs.] Well it's... I maintain that the ACTT was starting in 1931. And I was signed up in 1931 at Stoll's, by this Captain Cope, who came round one day to Stoll Studios, and it must have been either December '31 or January/February '32, that sort of time scale. And he came along and we all joined, we paid our half crown to Captain Cope and Dickie was one, Ted Chown was another, there was myself and I don't know, but it could - no, no, I don't think Alan Lawson was there then. But he could have been there, and it could have been him. Because originally I can remember that my membership number, originally was number 8. But when the re-establishment came along, I became number 271 instead. But I'm almost certain that that's where it took place, that's where I joined and I was number 8 and the ones previous and following me were also members of Stoll's. I think he came along to Stoll Studios almost first. I know there's a difference of opinion about this because I've read it. I don't know, I'm sure it's not a figment of my imagination.

Arthur Graham: Well, you've answered. What are your earliest recollections of the ACTT?

Tubby Englander: Er, my earliest recollections were that we - I was a committee member and we used to meet first of all in a little - upstairs in a little night-club - not a night-club, a drinking club in Old Compton Street. And from there we transferred our meetings to another drinking club in Denman Street called the Kinema Club, the Kinema Club in Denman Street. And this must have been - this was in actual fact, in the '30s, the middle '30s because I was at Gaumont's at the time and I was going around - we were both going around together with Tommy Linden Haynes. And he was a shop steward of the sound department, or the representative of the sound department at Gaumont's and I was the representative of the camera department at Gaumont's. And that was until we were sort of warned off by the establishment because ACT was not recognised at that time and there was - the company didn't want representation. But anyway we were both on the committee and in one year the - right at the very beginning the ACT had their offices in a building at the end of Shaftesbury Avenue didn't they? Overlooking Picadilly Circus in a triangular room.

Arthur Graham: Picadilly Mansions.

Tubby Englander: That's right yes, Picadilly Mansions, that's right. And I can remember going up there and it was up there, at that particular time when for some unknown reason I found myself the treasurer of the ACT for one year. I can't think what I was treasuring, I don't think they had anything at that particular time. Anyway, I was the treasure and because it was such a long way from Gaumont's and I was away on location and one thing and another, if I wasn't available to sign cheques or a cheque or whatever it was, the Ken Gordon was deputed to sign it on behalf of the treasurer. I think Ken Gordon at that time must have been the sort of assistant treasurer or something like that. Anyway, he was up there. I mean the people that I remember at

that particular time, through that period, would be George Elvin of course, Ken Gordon, Ralph Bond - no not Ralph Bond, um - the vice president, um...

Arthur Graham: Asquith?

Tubby Englander: ...no, lives in Ealing.

Arthur Graham: Sidney Cole?

Tubby Englander: Sidney Cole. Sidney Cole and Cave Chinn, who used to be up at the meetings. Ivor Montagu of course used to come up. Yes, that's all I can remember of the people there you know. But we used to meet quite regularly, I can remember going to meetings at least once a month anyway, I'm sure they had meetings once a week I think, something like that. But whenever we were available, Tommy and I used to go up to the meetings anyway.

Arthur Graham: What do you think the ACT's standing was like up to the war years?

Tubby Englander: Up to the war years?

Arthur Graham: Yes.

Tubby Englander: I don't think in the industry - you mean in the industry or amongst its members?

Arthur Graham: Well both.

Tubby Englander: I think in the industry, I don't think it was looked upon very highly, put it that way. This is only a personal opinion, you know. I don't think it was. And there was a lot of argument also amongst the technicians I think, whether it stood very highly. You see one of the problems I think, starting at the formation of the ACT was that a lot of people thought that the ACT was a damn good thing and obviously it was a terribly necessary thing because conditions at that particular time were basic to say the least, even if you could say basic. But I think a lot of people thought that it was going to be more like the ASC in America, in other words a technical organisation rather than an industrial organisation. This is I think a lot of people rather hoped that or they rather hoped I think that it was going to be a combination of the two, that it was going to be technical and also industrial. And I think there was this division probably at the very beginning and up until the war, shall we say, that a lot of the people, a lot of the technicians in before the war thought that the ACT was what is termed 'bolshie', a little bit 'bolshie', you know and then they weren't too happy about this. Although I'm sure that most of them, most of us really did appreciate the fact that we needed the ACT for protection because things, as everybody knows, the conditions under which one was working were not good - no way. But then of course they weren't good in most other industries. I think it was all relative.

Arthur Graham: Did you find recruiting difficult or didn't you go in for active recruiting?

Tubby Englander: No I didn't go in for active recruiting. Only up in Gaumont's in the early years and then of course that was squashed anyway, so recruiting became the responsibility of the individual as it were. I mean if he wanted to join he'd join, but he didn't talk about it, well not officially anyway.

Arthur Graham: You said you were treasurer for a year - what other positions, if any, have you held in the ACT.

Tubby Englander: Well, after the war I was a shop steward at Basic, Basic Films. I was Basic Films' representative. And yes, that's about all because being a Basic's representative I was always on the committee anyway, the general council.

Arthur Graham: You didn't hold any position while you were at the BBC?

Tubby Englander: No because the ACT was not recognised at the BBC. In fact we were - all of ACT members in the BBC had their membership - not waived - we didn't pay any subscriptions to the ACT but we were still members. That was an arrangement that was brought in, oh, quite early on actually because the ABS was the only sort of union that was recognised by the BBC. And because the BBC wouldn't recognise ACT, ACT said that we could all still remain members but we would not have to pay any subscriptions because they couldn't represent us anyway.

Arthur Graham: So you still remained a member.

Tubby Englander: Oh yes. Also it was a very good thing because if we worked outside...if we were in the BBC and we had to work with other ACT technicians or ETU technicians there was no inter-union denominational problem as it were because we were still members of ACT, which all these other unions recognised anyway and vice versa.

Arthur Graham: Do you think that the Association has played a useful role in shaping the industry?

Tubby Englander: Oh obviously it has, it must have, in the same way that every other union has participated in the development of their own particular trades or professions. Obviously it's been of benefit not only to the technician but it's been of benefit also to the employer. Where negotiation rights or methods are concerned, it must be, each side knows exactly where they stand.

Third Voice: Arthur, stop you there, one minute.

Arthur Graham: Oh, that's going to be a bit awkward.

[End of Tape 2, Side 3] [Tape 2, side 4]

Arthur Graham: Name of interviewee Arthur Englander, side number 4. Now tell me, you've been talking about the ACTT and your role in it. What do you think is the future for the ACT and the film and television industry? Things are changing very rapidly.

Tubby Englander: Well yes, very briefly I think it all depends on how much longer the film industry lasts. It's not going to be very much longer by the looks of things, but where the ACTT goes from there, I really don't know, I wouldn't like to say. I wouldn't like to say. I mean they've got their foothold into television, not with the BBC but with the other television companies so presumably they will or they could or they should go on in the television industry as if they were in the film industry. I mean there's not an awful lot of difference between the two, they have virtually the same problems and the technician has the same problems in television as they have in the film industry.

Arthur Graham: Now, to go back onto a technical question that you were discussing a little while ago. You have lived your life shooting in film and you say that nowadays you shoot in video - how would you say that your experience of video compares with your technical life as a film technician as such?

Tubby Englander: Well as far as I'm concerned I can see no change whatsoever. I am doing the same things in video that I would do in film. I'm not making any differences in approach where lighting is concerned and now, in video, this is the only thing that concerns me because I'm not concerned with equipment or operating cameras or anything like that, not now. That's the main difference from the film, from the film approach. But where lighting is concerned, I am - when I'm lighting I'm not making any difference at all for the fact that I'm now shooting on iron instead of shooting on celluloid. The one good difference of course is that I can see immediately the result of my work. I don't have to wait 24 hours to see rushes the following morning. I can see it immediately so that I can make immediate adjustments and get it into the format that I really want. So in that respect I find it very much easier than working on film. That I think is probably the - oh the only other difference of course is that when I'm working in the studio now I work sitting down and that's the first time in my life I've ever worked sitting down [laughs] because normally in the studio you're wandering round all over the place and you're standing up behind the camera anyway. But working in a control room, with your own VDU in front of you and your own lighting board, you can make your adjustments, even very minute adjustments during the shoot. If something is not going quite right you can do all these adjustments right there and it makes life very, very much easier.

Arthur Graham: How does video, in your opinion, as a technical medium, compare with film?

Tubby Englander: Well it depends on what you mean by video and film. If you're talking about the cinema, then without a doubt the cinema comes off tops. The big screen, the big picture, the quality and one thing and another is absolutely super now in the cinema. Now that you've had these marvellous film developments, the fine grain and the definition and the quality is absolutely super. But if you're talking about television as against - ah you said video compared to film. The only difference really is that your quality is good enough, it's good enough, the film quality is good enough as opposed to video. Video tends to be slightly too good in quality and the film stocks now are allowing you to produce a very, very good picture of the television screen size, a very good picture indeed so that the two are becoming compatible, very much so I think, they're becoming compatible. But you could not of course compare the television screen with the big screen in film. I think the big screen in film and also the 35 mm. really in film is highly superior to video or television. Highly superior.

Arthur Graham: Now you've mentioned the series, the programme 'Civilisation' which obviously is the highlight, in your estimation, of your career. But beyond that, what particular film or programme gave you the most satisfaction, and why?

Tubby Englander: Er, I don't think I can answer that off the cuff. I can't think of anything that has made such an impact. I think - no wait a minute. Maybe - I think the 'Colditz' series probably was very satisfying indeed. When I say the 'Colditz' series, I only did the last seven, the last seven of those series. Although I did do the very, very - the filming right at the very, very beginning when we went to Colditz and did a little bit of filming there with artists and also a lot of background stuff. But I think perhaps the last of the 'Colditz' series, probably because of its content, it was a very interesting and thrilling, quite a thrilling sort of series to work on. Especially doing just those few as it were, doing the last six or seven - six I think it was. Yes I think that probably.

Arthur Graham: If you could start your career again, would you change course?

Tubby Englander: No way. [Laughs.] I'd stay exactly the same.

Arthur Graham: So you've been very satisfied with what you've done.

Tubby Englander: Yes, yes. I've been lucky because I've enjoyed my work. I've enjoyed every minute of it, really have. It's always been worthwhile doing, very much worthwhile.

Arthur Graham: Well thank you very much Tubby. Thank you.

Tubby Englander: Thank you.

[End of interview.] A. A. "Tubby" Englander
Cameraman

1930s - Stoll, Gaumont, Teddington
1940s - Army Kinematograph Service
1950s-1970s - BBC Television (inc. 'Civilization')

Tubby Englander - to be checked
Tommy Linden-Haynes (in the Royal Fusiliers)
Bunny Frankie (in the Army Kinematograph Service)
George Rotner (BBC TV Newsreel Camera department)
Rudy Cartier (TV producer)
Steven Daid (Camera operator at Gaumont-British with Hitchcock)