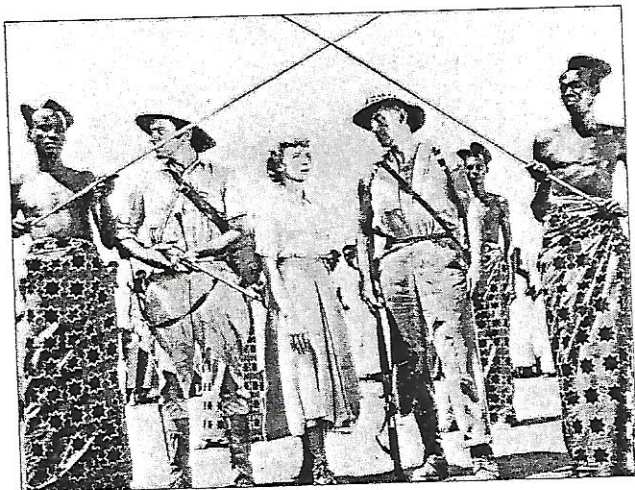


Tony Sloman

Tony Sloman, born in 1945, works as a film editor and has arranged seasons at the National Film Theatre. His memories are also recorded in *Being There*.

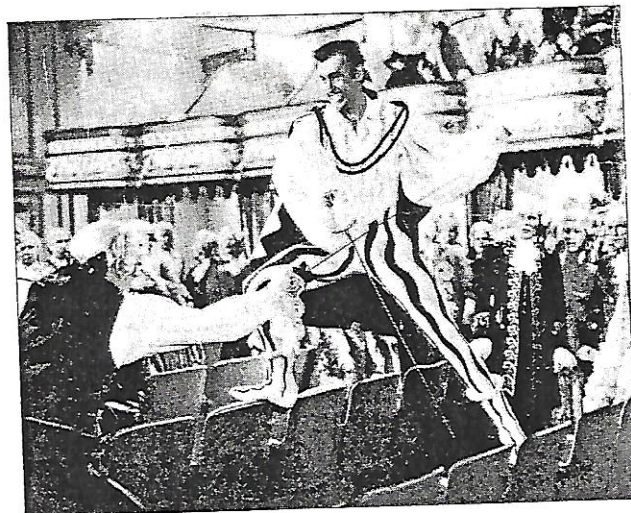
I was five when I moved to Streatham. The first film I remember seeing in Streatham was *King Solomon's Mines*. It was just wonderful. I discovered a hero. I wanted to be Allan Quartermain. I wanted to cavort in the jungle, not so much with Deborah Kerr, but I wanted to dress like him and have white sideburns and be that bronzed. He was absolutely a



"Absolutely a hero figure": Stewart Granger (right) in *King Solomon's Mines* (1950) with Richard Carlson and Deborah Kerr

hero figure. And, as luck would have it, since I was only taken to films which were considered "suitable", I ended up seeing most of Stewart Granger's films of that period. He was my favourite film star.

As a special treat for my birthday or in school holidays if I'd done well, I was taken up West to see a film and I used to get *What's On* and see what had opened. And, of course, the biggest treat, as you can imagine, was an "A"-certificated film starring Stewart Granger. *The Last Hunt* was what I wanted to see for my birthday, May 6. And that was the beginning of



"Marvellous scene": the fencing climax of *Scaramouche* (1952) with Stewart Granger

seeing two films a day: that was when I saw *The Last Hunt* in the evening and *Richard III* during the day. I went to see *Richard III* at the Astoria Streatham and that terrified me, it really terrified me: the ghosts before the battle, the only time I ever remember cowering under my seat.

The revelation of my picture-going years was *Scaramouche* in 1952. I didn't know the story. I saw *Ivanhoe* and I'd read *Ivanhoe* as a *Classic Illustrated* so I knew the plot. *Scaramouche* I wasn't ready for. I wasn't ready for the style, the humour, what I now perceive to be wit but then I just thought very funny. I didn't know at the time it had the longest fencing scene ever, and it was just this marvellous scene with Stewart Granger and Mel Ferrer. So my hero was involved in one of my own favourite films.

You can imagine my delight when I discovered that Stewart Granger's birthday was May 6, same as mine. I saw all the Stewart Granger films that were considered suitable: *Young Bess*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*. It seemed after a while that he was the only one I was taken to see, apart from Richard Todd. Having seen *Robin Hood*, I saw *Rob Roy* and that was the first time I went to a cinema on a Friday night. I badgered and harangued my parents. My mother wouldn't go. My father took me to see *Rob Roy* and I remember vividly that it was a Friday night. I thought I would be awfully punished for not being at home on Shabat evening.

FROM "ENTER THE DREAM-HOUSE"