

It was about 1930 that I started on my first film as an extra; it was "Carmen" starring Tom Burke which was made at British & Dominion Films, Elstree. During that period I worked on several films at Elstree either at B.&D. or B.I.P. (British International Films), two of which stand out vividly in my mind; I played an undergraduate in 'Men of Tomorrow' which starred Bill Freshman and was, I believe, Alexander Korda's first film as a producer in England, directed by Leontine Sagan. At B.&D. I also remember dancing in the chorus in a Jack Buchanan Film 'Stand Up And Sing'.

After many years as an actor in the theatre and films I moved to a different branch of showbusiness when I was taken on as an assistant at the Irving Harris Casting Agency; this was quite hectic as they were involved in all the crowd casting for 'The Shape Of Things To Come' and 'The Ghost Goes West'. From there I progressed as an 'Goffer' to eventually becoming an assistant director at the Blattner Studios, re-named, The Joe Rock Studios soon after I started there. The film was 'The Cotton Queen' with Will Fyffe, Stanley Holloway, Mary Lawson, and Jimmy Hanley. The studio manager was Jerry Blattner, The director Bernard Vorhaus and among the technical crew were Ernie Palmer (lighting), Erwin Hillier (Camera Operator), Skeets Kelly and Ted Moore (focus pullers) and Bill Sweeney, Head of Sound, and Len Shilton on the boom. Things were very different in those days as I distinctly remember in one week in a ballroom/back stage sequence, I played a small part, pulled focus on the third camera and the next day operated the second boom. I stayed at Rocks for several years: they were involved mainly in inexpensive comedies, many of them starring Leslie Fuller of the then well known Margate Pedlars Concert Party. We did our share of the British Quota Quickies which were shot in about ten days and in which Ernie Holding, the production manager made quite sure that the first day's schedule of the next picture was always on the same set as the last day of previous picture. It could be guaranteed to be an office set. It was on these quickies that I was lucky to work with two great old timers Graham Cutts and George Pearson. After that I became first assistant to Albert de Courville on 'An Englishman's Home' with a large cast headed by Edmund Gwenn and Paul Hrenreid. Then back to Rocks for two Harry Roy Musicals ~~Everything is Rhythm~~ 'Everything is Rhythm' and 'Rhythm Racketeer'. On one of these I also did a stunt doubling for Harry, where I jumped from the top of a large piano which was the set on to the keyboard, about a depth of six feet for which I received an extra ten shillings at the end of the week. At the same studio I was first assistant on another musical 'Stardust', again a large cast with Lupe Velez, Ben Lyon, Wallace Ford, Jean Colin, Harry Langdon and Albert Whelan.

After several months of working at odd jobs in the theatre such as a prop man in a panto at The Golders Green Hippodrome starring Anne Croft and Shaun Glenville I returned to Rocks to do a picture with Maurice Elvey with Bessie Love and Noah Beery. I followed this with a Leslie Banks picture which I had to leave, as being in the Auxiliary Air Force I was called up about ten days before the war broke out. This put an end to my production activities until the last eighteen months in the R.A.F. I was able to get a transfer to the No. 1 Film Production Unit. Six weeks before my demob: came a stroke of luck and thanks to Teddy Baird, our Commanding Officer, I began as first assistant to Wesley Ruggles on 'London Town' with, to me one of the greatest of them all, Sid Field and a wonderful cast which included Petula Clark, Jerry Desmond, Kay Kendal, Mary Clare, Claude Hulbert, Sonnie Hale, F.J. McDermot and many more. From that epic I became first assistant to Walter Forde on 'The Master of Bankdam'. Here I had my opportunity to direct as Walter and Culley, his wife refused to come to the studio on a Saturday and Walter told me to get on with it; thanks to the cast there were no re-takes; they included Tom Walls, Nancy Price, Stephen Murray, Anne Crawford, Jimmy Hanley, Herbert Lomas, Linden Travers and Nicholas Parsons, the latter became a good friend thanks to our working together on many of the Arthur Haynes TV Shows. We became regular Squash opponents.

I then did two pictures at Riverside the first as assistant to Cavalcanti, who taught me so much, with Sally Gray, Trevor Howard and Griffiths Jones followed by 'Daughter of Darkness' directed by Lance Comfort with Siobhan McKenna, Anne Crawford and Maxwell Read.

The early fifties found me back at Pinewood working as first assistant on two Independent Frame pictures 'Prelude to Fame' directed by Fergus McDonnell and 'Stop Press Girl' directed by the then head of TV Drama, Michael Barry. In February 1954 I started as a trainee floor manager at Alexandra Palace. Six weeks before Independent Television went on the air I joined ABC TV later to become Associated Television where I remained as a producer/director, which is another story, until I retired in 1976.