

BEHPO139 T Anthony Havelock - Allan. Transcript.  
SIR ANTHONY HAVELOCK-ALLAN

Producer

Interviewed by Linda Wood and David Robson on 23 May 1990

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SIDE 1 TAPE 1

Linda Wood: When and where were you born

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I was born February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1904, at Blackwell Manor, Blackwell, near Darlington in Country Durham

Linda Wood: What kind of schooling did you have

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I went to a preparatory school. By the time I was due to go to my first boarding school, we had left the north of England and were living in London and I went to a preparatory school at the age of nearly 9 in Hertfordshire. And after preparatory school I went to Charterhouse School because my great grandfather was one of the school heroes. And after public school, I was supposed to go into the army, I was due to go into the army. But my brother at the end of the First World War decided to stay on in the Army, so it was decided that there was no point in having two members of the family in the army so I had to earn my own living, which I at the age of 18 set out to do.

The first job I had was with the Crown jewellers Garrards where I became a salesman. I was there for about 2 years, I did that for about two years and then I left it to go into the gramophone business because I thought that was much more entertaining. I'd always liked the theatre and what was generally known as show business, as a child I'd learned to love the theatre. And in my adolescence I went to it whenever I got the chance. So I thought the idea of a gramophone company, it was just before the first big explosion of gramophones, where there were enormous sales in gramophone records. Jazz was just becoming known and this was an American, a branch of an American company called Brunswick. The British company was called British Brunswick. And I went into that first as a salesman of their new gramophones which were electrical reproducing gramophone as opposed to an acoustic one, the first of them and for about a year and a half I sold them from a showroom in Hanover St.

And then after that it was decided we would make some records because Brunswick had a lot of good recording artists, as many of them European, classic and otherwise, and it was decided we would make some records. And I was appointed artist manager which meant I made the contracts for the artists, what should be recorded and then stood by while they were recorded to try and then stood by while they were recorded, and try keeping the artists happy, agreeing with them as to which takes should be printed. That was very enjoyable. I did that for

quite a long time. We had a little recording studio in Leicester Sq of all places, above a nightclub called Café Anglais. And we used to work all night because we couldn't work during the day because there was too much exterior noise.

From that I went on behalf of the same company who bought a German gramophone company, I went to Germany in 1927 and stayed there till the end of 1928. It was the days when Hitler was still a joke. But in 1928 there was the slump and the American gramophone company pulled in its horns and abandoned the German gramophone company, and abandoned their English interests.

And then after that I did several things. I was a stock broker and finally ending up managing the cabaret at Ciro's Club which was booking the artists, choosing the acts, etc. And while there a friend of mine who had become a director of a film company came to me and said this is the business for you, it's the film business, and because you love the entertainment business and know a good deal about the performers in it I think you could make a good casting director. So the company's about to make a very big film. How about you taking the job which I did, grabbed with both hands. And that was 1933 and from that moment onwards till I retired in 1970, 1971, I was in the film business which I loved

Linda Wood: Were you very interested in films before you went into the film business, because you've talked about your interest in the theatre, but were you an avid cinemagoer

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I went to a lot of films too, but I'm talking about, there were very few films because the war interrupted all that and films didn't get going again particularly, certainly not in England until 1921, 1922, 1923. All that time I went to films as well and I saw all the great films, *Intolerance*, *Birth Of A Nation*, all those when they came out. Oh certainly This is another aspect of the entertainment business, and anything to do with the entertainment business was for me I thought. Oh yes certainly.

Linda Wood: So that was your training for getting into the film industry. The equivalent for a producer, as playing around with photographs would be for a cameraman.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I suppose I like dealing with actors, I think that's why. I like being with actors, I like being with stories. I'd always been, whereas a child I collected reproductions of old masters, painters, I have an entirely visual imagination. I can't even remember numbers without being able to see them as it were in my mind's eye. So I suppose that determined very largely for me.

But on the other hand when you say might have been a cameraman, that required it seemed to me a technical knowledge, and, as I've already explained to you, when it came to purely technical matters, and indeed anything which has a mathematical element, at school I was never any good at mathematics, or any of those things. If I was good at anything it was English and history and literature and those sort of things. So I suppose it was more or less natural going for a producer. I think I might have thought of a director, but the only thing about that was I never enjoyed getting up early in the morning much. And the idea of

having to get onto a set at 8 o'clock in the morning, snap my fingers and say now, is something I don't think I would have been very good at.

So it really was the preparation of films, which primarily what in those days was a producer's job, is what attracted me, figuring whether such and such a story would or would not be effecting or could be told in screen terms. Who would be the best actors to realise the story. Who would be the best director for that particular kind of story. If it depended on somebody who needed to be very good with actors that's one kind of director. There are other directors who are technically marvellous but don't really want to bother much with the actors. All these are the kind of elements I found very attractive to have to deal with. To choose what you thought was the right cast, the right scriptwriter, the right director. Because in those days the producer's job, particularly in Hollywood, and it's all changed now, the director is the important man, the producer now is the man who finds money, that's all. And you look on the credits and there are sometimes as many as 5 people with producer credit. That means they've all helped to get the money together to make the film.

In the old days in Hollywood and everywhere else was on a producer basis. The producer chose the subject in conjunction with the studio executives, agreed the budget with them, and then agreed the cast and agreed the director. And the director would come in sometimes only 2 or 3 weeks before shooting. Then it became quite plain it was a very good thing to have him in much earlier, but still it was a producer's world. But after the war all that changed and with the rare exception people like Sam Spiegel who was one of the last of the real producers, because not only did he understand how to get money, but he also understood brilliantly how to make films. Because that kind of producer, he was one of the very last. There is nobody operating on that basis now that I can think of. Anybody who can find the money for a film can call himself a producer.

Linda Wood: I suppose the only name producer is David Puttnam

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: David Puttnam, I beg your pardon, he certainly is one, absolutely. That is the only example I know of today, he is. But it's very rare. We all know about David Puttnam but how many other producers' names can you mention. Whereas directors, we all know the names of dozens of them. I don't know if it's a bad thing. The only thing is the existence of a producer did ensure that there were fewer financial disasters. Because the primary, the secondary object of any producer, the primary object is to get a good film. But the secondary object is to get it at a price that it isn't so big that the chance of it ever recouping its money are negligible or nil. And who can see long before it happens a disaster that may happen.

Because all directors by definition it's their baby, it's really their work and therefore it is very difficult for them to see that it's too long or this or that passage is boring and is going to go on the cutting room floor, it's very difficult for them to see it. They've conceived the whole thing and if by any chance they're wrong, or their estimate of the cost and the timing is wrong, then it's headed for disaster. Whereas if there is a producer, then there are thousands of ways in which an understanding producer who gets on with directors can obviate that happening. If the director wants a set of a certain size

having got a set of a certain size, it needs a much bigger crowd than he thought he needed. Whereas a producer if he knows his job will be able to say are you quite sure that you really need a crowd, make this on the basis of there being 2000 people on the screen, because you know you can pack 400, 500 people on the screen that will look like a crowd. It rather depends on how you shoot it. And then if they're both reasonable people they arrive at a point where the director will say no, no, I must have for this or that reason, and will be either right or wrong, or he will say I think maybe you're right but it never occurred to me. You know whether a walk should be 500 yards long or 300 yards long, whether you can't get exactly the same effect at 300 yards from somebody walking, and not 500 yards. All those sort of things. So that is the only difference it makes, there were very fewer overcosts, overruns that could have been avoided.

Linda Wood: That is one of the talents of a good producer, isn't it, knowing when the director needs to be held back

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think absolutely, knowing when you have a good enough reason to say to your director have you thought, that you can do this just as well a different way, are you absolutely certain that this scene is necessary. And this is again something which happens very frequently, scenes are shot and they're on the cutting room floor. That's wasteful, and if somebody is being objective about it they may see it, whereas the director who is being subjective about it because it's baby, now. He's worked on it since the beginning. He has initiated it. In the old days they didn't initiate many pictures, the producer initiated. And all the studios had a producer system.

Linda Wood: Going back, I think you were just at the point where you joined British and Dominions

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Yes, British and Dominions as a casting director. I did that for a couple of years. Among the casting jobs I did was to cast, Herbert Wilcox didn't need any casting director except occasionally what do you know about so and so, or what's the price of so and so. But these minor pictures made by Jack Raymond and the quota quickies, I was the casting director there when the man who was producing them died and there was nobody to do it. I was asked if I'd like to do it and I said yes and I did it. I did it for two years and enjoyed it enormously. Started off at the B & D Studios and then when the B & D Studios burned down we went to the Rock Studios. And from the Rock Studios we went to Shepperton, and from Shepperton we finally ended up at the new studios in 1936.

Linda Wood: Before we get to, at Pinewood, were you still making quota quickies

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: The quota act ended in 1938 and between 1935 I suppose it must have been, 1935, 1936, I think probably I took over making of quota pictures. When did B & D Studios burn down.

Linda Wood: 1936, or perhaps it was 1935. Pinewood had started

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think it must have been earlier than that, they started building it

Linda Wood: Pinewood definitely opened I 1935, but I'm not sure when B & D burnt down.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think the years I did the quickies, I started in 1935, and 1936, 1937 and the Act changed in 1938. That's what happened. So it was 1935 to 1937 really that I was working full time for 2 years and doing at least 23 films as I remember it in those 2 years of the specified length, at £1 a foot. And in 1938 it changed and we made the first of, I made the first under the new act, *This Man Is News* then *This Man In Paris*, then *The Chinese Fish* with Rex Harrison. And then at least 2 others, then at least two others. I made about 5 or 6 under that Act and then came the war.

INTERVIEW SUSPENDED

SIR ANTHONY HAVELOCK-ALLAN

SIDE 4, TAPE 3

Linda Wood: You've just met Del Giudice and it's the beginning of your partnership, how did Noel Coward get involved.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Noel Coward got in the following way. When Del Giudice, when I made *Unpublished Story*, for Del Giudice's company, Del Giudice had two backers, two individual businessmen who believed in him and wanted to put money into films. And the war was on, it was now 1940, and Del Giudice had been in a camp, because he was an Italian, but he had been excused. This is 1940, and I think we made *Unpublished Story* in 1940. And Del said I want to make a big propaganda film because I love this country and they've been very good to me. And my 2 backers are both very patriotic members of the Cavalry Club and they want to do something and I want to get a very big writer for it. And I know that I can't get Shaw, Shaw is too difficult, do you think Noel Coward would do one. Do you know him. I said yes I do know him slightly, I've met him and I certainly would be able to ring him up and say where we met and with whom, because they're mutual friends. He said well ring him up and we'll see if we can go and see him. I rang him up, he happened to be staying at the Savoy and we went to see him in his suite. And Del said look we want to make a film, a propaganda film a patriotic film on some patriotic theme. And you remember, we both of course, remembered that he had done that wonderful patriotic thing he did at Drury Lane that Fox turned into a film

Linda Wood: *Cavalcade*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: *Cavalcade*. And Noel said I have no idea in my head as to what to do. I mean thank you very much, I think it is a very laudable idea but I can't think of anything. If I ever do think of anything, I'll get in touch with you. Three weeks went by and he rang up and he said, to me I dined with Dickie Mountbatten last night and he told me about his war experiences and I think I'd like to do a story roughly ending up with that, based upon that.

And, we then went to go and see him, and Del arranged payments and how they would be done. And it was agreed that we had to find someone who would work with him and help him

with the writing of the script, or when he'd written the script tell him how it should be shaped, etc. I had said to Del and Del had known David, that I thought by far the best person, the obvious person because he was a wonderful editor, a wonderful idea of story telling which made him such a good editor, to work with him on the technical side of the whole thing. And that was agreed. And he said I want Ronald Neame to photograph it because I've seen a film of his I thought rather well photographed. So that was agreed. And he said now I'll go away and write a script.

And 3 months later he summoned us and not Del, the 3 boys, his little darlings as we became, to listen to the script. And we sat in Gerald Rd I think for 3 ½ hours while he read a script which would have taken about 9 hours to unspool on the screen, 9 to 12 hours. And when it was over there was a stunned silence, and we said Noel the only trouble about that is that it is far, far too long, you know. If we were to film that, the film would last for anything up to 9 to 12 hours. And Noel said rather caustically, well I know nothing about the film business except that everybody tells me that you can do anything in the film business that you like. So we said well you can but there is a limit to how long an audience will sit in their seats watching it. So he said take it away and do what you think is right and come back to me.

We took it away and pretty soon decided, the three of us, the only thing to do was to tell the story of the Kelly, to start the film with the laying of the keel of the Kelly and end with saying goodbye to the crew after the Kelly had been sunk off Crete, which is what we did. We took it back to Noel and said, that was the outline that he took back to him, and he wrote the dialogue for the scenes where there was any dialogue. And we had 2 navy advisers, one for the lower decks and one for the upper decks, to tell us the commands and the right language to use when they were ordering the ship to do things, and the gunners to do things, torpedoes to do things. And we sat down and wrote a skeleton script and David went off and wrote the shooting script which is exactly what we shot, except for the opening sequence. The opening sequence we simply agreed that we would shoot the laying of the keel in the **Hawthorn-Lesley's** Yard in Newcastle. And Ronnie Neame and I worked out that and we shot that little sequence ourselves. I mean Ronnie and I did it.

Linda Wood: The film is supposed to have been quite influential at the time because it showed life below as well as about decks, reflecting the atmosphere of the wartime, it was all people fighting together.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I'm puzzled by this, this reminds me of Eisenstein who repeatedly said, I never cease to wonder at the extraordinary psychological depths and motivations in my films of which I was totally unaware. There is absolutely no social content to it. This was a study of a ship being got ready for war, going to war, meeting war and finally meeting its death. If you were going to do that, you had to do it from every angle, you had to do it from the point of view of the crew. And the crew weren't entirely officers and they weren't entirely below decks people, they were a mixture of the two. There was no way you could have made the film without it having both those in. This is what the reality of the situation demanded. There was no social thought behind it at all, simply if you were going to tell the story of the ship from the point of view of the ship as it were, apart from the fact that it had a commanding officer who would obviously have a more important part to play than anyone else, because he'd be the man who gave the orders for everyone else to do. He'd say which way the ship was going if it was going to be sunk, it was going to be sunk after a command from him to go in a certain direction. It was simply whatever was necessary to tell that story. And I'm sure that sociologists will work on it for years to come and say this was the first beginning of the fading of the class system. It had nothing to do with it, it had to do with what actually does happen on a ship when it is commissioned and sent to sea in the war and meets war in two or three forms, gets badly wounded and limps back and goes back on another thing and finally gets killed. And that's what the script was.

Linda Wood: Because the film was made during the war did you have to have it vetted.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: The moment the script had been read by the Admiralty and had been read by Mountbatten we had absolutely every facility that we could possibly have. We had special allowances of steel which was very difficult to get for the scenes of the sinking of the ship, and for the drowning of the captain and the crew. Anything we wanted we got. We had disembarkation at Dover scene, I



think we had a battalion of the Grenadier Guards in the uniforms they wore, we had everything we wanted, no problem. That extended even onto *This Happy Breed*, for the lying in state of George V at St Stephens Hall, Westminster, we had St Stephens Hall, we had four officers from the Life Guards whose uniforms were packed away in mothballs, and whose breast plates were packed away in Vaseline in North Wales, dug out of the place and four officers, the four people in the scene were Lord Dillon, Colonel somebody else, they were all officers from the Life Guards who stood round, they weren't actors at all, in that scene. We had whatever was necessary. *For Which We Serve* did an enormous amount of good in America, that was the thing. It was a huge success in America, and America wasn't in the war remember, but that was shown in America about 6 months before the Japs destroyed or tried to destroy the American navy, and destroyed a good bit of it. So it had quite an impact.

Linda Wood: Do you think British films got a better release during the war in the US

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Definitely. I can't say British films, if it was a propaganda film.

Linda Wood: Certain patriotic

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Yes, all the propaganda films did. And I think probably a lot of our documentaries got shown there which would not otherwise have been shown, those which were thought suitable for the American market. It made the American market obviously much more sympathetic. For example the one about Nelson that Korda made which wasn't direct propaganda but it almost certainly got a bigger release than it would have done. It had of course Vivien Leigh which helped it a good deal, and Laurence Olivier. I would think yes, there was a temporary thing of hands across the sea. It didn't last all that long and of course the moment the war was over and that was the golden period for American films, something like 42 million people a week went to the cinema, it went up to something like 60 million people went to the cinema a week, something like that. They've never had such grosses. I mean if they'd had the same kind, then they had 21,000 cinemas and their cinemas shrank with the coming of television not nearly as much as ours. We had 4,500, 4,800 cinemas, when I went into the cinema business. And I think now we've got 1,250. It's

true that they're split up into small ones but the ones which were split up into small ones were ones which were originally 2000 seaters for the most part, 1,500 and 2,000 seaters which we don't have any more. The Italians still have about 5,000 cinemas, television never hit, it is hitting them now but it initially didn't hit them. The two countries which were worse affected were America and ourselves.

#### INTERVIEW PAUSED

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I'm telling you this now which is relevant to the making of a film called *African Queen* largely because it's interesting about how certain myths about the film industry and about filmmaking come into being. The scriptwriter of *African Queen* was a well known Hollywood writer who was the son of a famous German director and a famous writer, Salka Viertel who worked on most of the Garbo films.

The director of the film *The African Queen*, and the writer of the script was afterwards so disillusioned by the behaviour as he saw it of the director and the way films were made, the light-hearted ways that he wrote a book called *White Hunter, Black Heart*, which was a famous book which was published and which was quite successful. But it was never made into a film until recently when Clint Eastwood decided to play the part, to produce it and direct it. I saw it last night and the burden of the book and the film is that John Huston was a man without any consideration for the cost. That's really what it says, although it doesn't call the character John Huston. And it relates that when they were all ready to shoot on location in Africa with a huge unit, he decided that he wanted to shoot an elephant before he shot the film. And therefore leaving all these people waiting, he went off and weeks elapsed, or a week at least, 10 days, until he shot an elephant, which in fact in the film he doesn't shoot but he's in a position to shoot. Everybody is storming the producer, there were two producers on the film, one was Sam Spiegel and the English producer who found the money for it and also partly as I've learned subsequently partly guaranteed it, was John Woolf.

At the end of this film the lights goes up and a voice says hello Tony. And I look round and I see it's John Woolf. He'd sat there and I didn't realise I was sitting next to

him. He said it's very funny this film we've just seen, because you know *The African Queen* came in £40,000 under budget. He said I made 3 films with John Huston but I never found him anything but extremely conscientious and very pleasant to work with. Of course he had a tremendous personality and he had certain quirky ideas but in 3 films never once did I find any fault with him in terms of wasting money or wasting time or whatever it was.

It's an extraordinary comment because of the book and the film he joined the legend of big directors who spend money like water. There are awfully few of them. I've never known one that did. I've never known one. I've known directors, and David Lean is a splendid example who will go on until he has got the result that he pledged himself when he accepted to make the film and the script was finished that he was determined to get the right result. But I've never seen him waste a minute. It may come very expensive if there are difficulties, if there are weather difficulties, if there are difficulties with the actors, it may be expensive to get the right the result. But that isn't being wasteful, but that is simply doing your duty by a film. So the audience should have the best possible performance and lighting and everything else which is required by the script. But that is a side light on because it is one of the reasons which is always cited why it is so difficult to get money for films because it is regarded as a business where people swan around in Rolls Royces, take helicopters and planes whenever they feel like it. Particularly big films, and once you get a big film it is rather like the Channel Tunnel, it is bound to cost a great deal more than anybody said it was going to cost, it isn't true at all. There are very, very few directors which in my experience which had gone over 40 years in the business who for any other reason they are trying to get the optimum result actually waste time or money. Having said that we can go back to *In Which We Serve*

Linda Wood: Very interesting. John Huston did foster this larger than life image of himself

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Absolutely, but when it came down to it, on the evidence of John,

Linda Wood: And his career

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: When it came down to it, he was an extremely good director and absolutely conscientious and only sacrificed time and money to the result that he'd figured he'd been paid to produce, that is to say the best result he was capable of getting.

Linda Wood: You've just touched on David Lean and we were talking about *In Which We Serve*, I was going to ask you how David Lean came to be involved, what was your connection with him, because you'd worked with him as an editor before.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He came to be involved in the following manner, I had known him from 1933 when I first joined British and Dominions at Elstree. David was then working under an editor called Merrill White whom Herbert Wilcox had brought over from America, a great editor. David always said he learned an enormous amount from Merrill White who was one of the great editors, one of the great American editor, and it was very clever of Herbert Wilcox to have got him to come over to work in England.

And later on when I was producing quota quickies for Paramount I tried more than once to get David to direct one of them. And he said that he didn't want to direct until he knew he was directing a film where he knew there was enough money to get the results, this is a propos to what I was saying about the other thing, to get the results that he was looking for. He said I don't want to feel I can't do the best I can because there isn't the time or the money to do it. He then went on to become the best and most sought after editor in British films. He did all sorts. He did *Pygmalion* and later on *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *French Without Tears*.

Del Giudice, Filippo Del Giudice who had a company called Two Cities with whom at that time I was associated, we made a film about newspapers in wartime called *Unpublished Story* and Del Giudice wanted to make a patriotic film. But he said I can't do that unless I can get a great writer, a famous writer to write it. Because it has to be a patriotic film, a propaganda film, that's nothing, it's got to be a propaganda film written by somebody who has a big reputation particularly if they have one in that particular field. And remembering *Cavalcade* which was a highly patriotic film which ran at Drury Lane for a long time and was a great boost for England and tradition and written by

Noel Coward, he said do you think that Noel Coward would write a patriotic film, do you know him. I said yes I do slightly, I think well enough to ring him up.

Anyway that's how it came about, Noel Coward was going to do a patriotic film. And the question became, he wanted to direct it because he was a brilliant stage director, but he didn't know anything about films so it was necessary to have a technical man with him. And I suggested David Lean, and Del Giudice who had known him from the editing of *French Without Tears* which was a film that Del Giudice had been connected with but not as producer but he knew about him. And we both agreed that would be the ideal man because technically nobody knew better how a film should be shot to make it cuttable, and more important still to make it cuttable well, than David. So David was approached and asked if he'd do the job. And he said yes, he would be happy to do the job.

When the moment came to discuss credits, David said very courageously and very rightly I think but somewhat to the surprise of Noel Coward that if he was to do this job he wanted co direction credit. But Noel Coward was a very intelligent man indeed, and realised how important to him it was. And he had already learned to like and respect David for his views and so he said yes of course, certainly, and that's how he became co-director.

In the end all the technical stuff that didn't involve acting scenes David shot without Coward, Coward didn't even come down to the studio for those shots. In the main, Coward concerned himself only with watching the acting scenes and making suggestions if there was anything in his opinion which ought to be done slightly differently. But all the action stuff, technical stuff, in which Coward didn't figure, David shot entirely himself. Really you could say two thirds of the film, more, four fifths of the film were directed by David. And the other scenes Noel was there but had nothing to say and didn't attempt to have anything, to say where the camera should be, just simply to say I think somebody maybe over doing or under doing it or whatever he thought. If he and David agreed, it would be done that way, but it amounted to quite a small proportion of the film. Similarly he knew nothing about the production of the thing and I was his producer but he still took producer credit. But he had in fact provided the raw material and had decided on most of the casting, well

certainly the principal casting. But all the other casting we did from our knowledge of people in films, many of whom he didn't know about.

Linda Wood: It has a very strong documentary feel to it

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It wasn't really a documentary, it's true it was made in the manner of a documentary. I suppose what we decided to do when we finally decided on the script. It was a very long script that Coward wrote of which we discarded a great deal, nearly all of it. In fact all of it, because he said all I know about films is that you can do anything in films. Well that's true but you can't do it if you're going to ask the audience to sit through 6 or 7 hours of film. The attention span won't stand it. So we narrowed it down to doing the story of the Kelly, the destroyer Kelly. And if you'd done a documentary it would in some respects I suppose, if we'd have made a pure documentary the film would a) have been an hour long and the stuff that we shot we would have used possibly about one fifth of the film in the documentary. All the beginning scenes, the laying of the keel would have been in it. But for the rest it follows the crew, it's a personal story of the people in the thing and that's not documentary. But all the realistic stuff was done as if it was for a documentary but much more fully and much more expensively than a documentary would have been able to have afford.

Linda Wood: It looks so good. What were the problems of filming during the war

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: The problems of the war you would have thought would have been insurmountable, but the moment it was accepted by the Admiralty and it was thought to be a good idea, and I'm sure that the government must have known about it, if they knew about it from nobody else they knew about it from Mountbatten whose personal story it really was. So we never had any problems at all, we got a special allocation of steel for, we built in the studio about two thirds of a destroyer on the largest stage at Denham, we built it on rockers because it had to behave like a boat. So that required steel for the mechanism on which it was cradled and which went this way and that way. When the sinking scene, we needed a huge xxx from which to deliver a great quantity of water. Whatever we needed we had a battalion of household footguards regiment, I think

the Grenadiers for the disembarkation scene, I can't remember. They were put at our disposal and we had no problems about, all we had to do was say what we wanted, why we wanted it and how it was going to work when we had it and we got what we required either in terms of services, of equipment, of steel, any other thing that was needed which was in short supply, wood for example, even that, we got everything we needed, there weren't any problems.

And shooting we had only one problem, one of the explosive charges went off too soon, and unfortunately we lost an extremely loveable and liked by all chief electrician. And there was a lighting cameraman had his ear blown off. That was a terrible thing, it was in one of the battle scenes, while they were laying the charges, something tripwired, one of the charges that had already been laid, and it blew up in the studio and there was one man killed and 3 or 4 injured in the sense that they lost either an ear, not an eye I'm happy to say, but were wounded. But only about 2 or 3 of them, and very seriously burnt of course. It started a fire but apart from that I don't think we had any problems. Naval equipment we got, Carley floats and things like that that they navy used for ships that were sinking.

Linda Wood: People didn't find problems getting out to Denham, because of wartime restrictions.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I can't think so. I lived in Gerrards Cross and went by bicycle most of the time. As far as possible people lived close by. Otherwise the tubes still ran. It was before the bombing started. I don't remember we were impeded by the bombing at all. Later on it became more difficult and there were occasional alerts and things like that. I think there were occasional alerts. I'm trying to think what period, I think we made it in 1941, and 1941 was, the bombing had started. I don't understand it, I don't remember anyone arriving late because they'd been bombed out or because they couldn't get there. I don't remember any handicaps of that kind. Later on I do but not then. So we must have done it early in the year of 1941 and I think the bombing started at the end of 1941, in the autumn of 1941. It was the end of that summer was when we had the battle of Britain and I think we started it at the end of 1940 and we finished shooting it by February, February March and therefore the bombing hadn't started. We had of course advisers seconded from the navy, a technical adviser on the gunnery, a technical adviser for the upper

deck and another one for the lower ratings, to advise us on behaviour and salutes and general drill.

Linda Wood: I read a story that when the film was released in America the censor took out words like hell and damn

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Oh yes, sure. They did. I think somebody said bugger at one time, and that came out. Oh yes, certainly. Extraordinary when you think what happens now. Literally, I saw a film the other day, Eddie Murphy's films *Harlan Nights*, the first scene is between Eddie Murphy and four black men and runs for about 5 minutes, and not one of them ever opened their mouths without using the adjective fucking. They never opened their mouths. It was quite unnecessary, you begin to think this must be a joke, this meant to be

David Robson: Boring

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Deadly boring and maybe they do talk like that, but if they do they shouldn't advertise it. They talked about a sofa, they talked about a person, they talked about a book, always it had that adjective in front of it. And they were having a jolly friendly chat about life, they weren't cross about anything, they weren't angry about anything, they weren't scornful about anything, they were just having an ordinary chat telling you who they were, what their business was. You better edit that word out.

Linda Wood: The lighting cameraman on *In Which We Serve* was Ronnie Neame, again was a central character at Cineguild, how did he come into your orbit.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Coward at seen a film which he'd lit for Ealing. And he was the only person that Coward said I'd like to have the young man who did a film that I saw for Ealing called Ronald Neame. And I knew him because he'd photographed one of the Paramount quickies for me. I don't think David did know him at that stage. So he joined as the cameraman. And then we all three worked together as you know on the next one which was *This Happy Breed*.

Linda Wood: *This Happy Breed*, that was made in colour, it was your first film,

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It was



Linda Wood: And it was made at a time when I would have thought it was very difficult to get colour stock.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It was difficult because the camera was much bigger and much less mobile, but it was, it didn't call for, it played mainly in small interiors. It wasn't a difficult one. We couldn't have done *In Which We Serve*, well we could have done but it would have been enormously more costly and to our way of thinking, because we were still wedded to black and white, it was much more realistic. If we'd done it in colour it would have looked like a picnic instead of looking like grey and austere as it was meant to, as circumstances were and the sea looking grey which it was most of the time, and the sky looking grey which it was most of the time, if we'd had the occasional blue skies the whole thing would have looked like a picnic. So it never occurred to us one moment to have done *In Which We Serve* in colour. But *This Happy Breed* was a play and was going to be however we extended it, something of a photographed stage play and we thought this was something which must be done in colour, because otherwise it is going to be small and grey play about a small English family and it's going to look like a small film. And so it was very good to do it in colour in my opinion, as we then sort of reproduced the colours which had existed on the English stage.

Linda Wood: It was very close to the stage production

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It was fairly close to it, it was not all that close to it but it was fairly close to it. It was quite easy to open it up a little bit, but it wasn't opened up to a very large extent and the meat of the thing is all played in small rooms by the family. That's what makes it. And I'm happy to say it's become a cult film. I was told this the other day, the man at Rank who is in charge of selling all the old films, he said you'll be interested to know that *This Happy Breed* is now a cult film and we get orders for it from all sorts of countries.

Linda Wood: I always think the title would probably put off contemporary audiences a bit. They wouldn't have realised what it was about.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I would have thought it might too. When he said it's a cult film, it's for people who are interested in cinema, the history of cinema. And it's got

some very good performances by some very good performers by some very good performers who weren't at the time particularly famous. Robert Newton, who became more famous. Stanley Holloway who became more famous because of *My Fair Lady*. And Celia Johnson who by that time, and Johnnie Mills who became much more famous because he's done a lot of things. It's people who are interested in the history of films, and actors and all the rest of it. It never was a blockbuster in terms of the public, it never would be. But it did make a profit and it continues to add to the profit.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It is a film which everybody can identify with at least one of the characters in the film. It was again based on a Noel Coward,

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Coward wanted to go on, and I think he was delighted, any playwright would have been. The first job he'd done to films turned out, largely due to David and to some extent to us, was enormously well done and enormously successful. And any writer who suddenly sees three young men who appear to have the ability to make efficiently and rather well almost anything he chooses to write would be very peculiar if he didn't think hey this is wonderful, now I've got suddenly an entirely new world, a new market for my ideas and my plays. He said look I hope you three will do something else. And we were still doing it for *Two Cities*, I'd done a deal with *Two Cities* for us on *In Which We Serve* and we went on with *This Happy Breed*.

But during the shooting of *Happy Breed* we decided we didn't see that there was any reason for *Two Cities* to take a percentage of the profits for doing nothing except have us. We were all perfectly capable of doing it without *Two Cities* and therefore I formed Cineguild and the three of us became equal partners in the company and we decided to go on. And after *This Happy Breed*, the next thing we did, we did as Cineguild.

Linda Wood: Do you remember what year it was you formed Cineguild

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: If you know when *This Happy Breed* finished shooting, on the finish of that I said let us form a company, and I thought of the title for it, let's form a company, Cineguild, really because the thing in America was very big the theatre called the Theatre Guild, that's what gave me the idea for me to call it Cineguild,

and that we decided to do, and Cineguild will be the company in the future which takes on the business of making the film. And the next one I think was *Blithe Spirit*.

Linda Wood: I think it probably was. I have *Brief Encounter* and *Blithe Spirit* both listed as 1945

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well no, in that case *Brief Encounter* first, because still in black and white. *Brief Encounter*, still black and white. That arose because obviously we then had to look at whatever work Noel had done to decide what we would do, after *Happy Breed*, which was a full length appropriate play, also propagandist in its way. So we had to look and there wasn't anything. *Private Lives* had been sold, not that I think we would have wanted to have done it anyway. Some of the other successful plays hadn't been written. *Tonight At 8.30* didn't arise at all. And on looking through the *Tonight At 8.30* plays, we came across *Still Life* and we thought that could be made into a film. And did a sort of rough outline of how we would make it into a film, and Noel said fine, lovely, just let me know what dialogue you want, if there is not enough dialogue in the play, or there is too much, whatever it is in certain scenes, you write the script the three of you. I think it was David and I, Ronnie went to America actually at that time. We wrote the script and Coward simply put in dialogue wherever we needed it.

Linda Wood: Did you enjoy writing the scripts as well as producing.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Yes, I did very much. I don't think, we thought that we were making just a rather nice emotional film, we didn't think there was anything particularly luminous about it, we just thought it would make a nice film. *In Which We Serve* had been a major operation obviously, wartime or no wartime. *This Happy Breed* had been quite a big, it has a big cast. *Brief Encounter* we thought well this is a nice, quiet film, we can do it fairly inexpensively. Noel didn't own the rights actually, he'd sold them to Metro sometime before and the Rank Organisation had re acquired them from Metro. We said we'd look and see and we came back and we came back to him and said of your *Tonight At 8.30* plays we think we can do something with *Still Life*.

And we shot that while he was out of England, he wasn't in England at all. He just saw the first draft script, and from that moment he was off entertaining the troops in India and in Burma and during the shooting of the film he wasn't in England at all. In fact he didn't come back until 6 or 8 weeks after we'd finished shooting, and so we edited the film and everything without him, put on the music, which was his idea.

Linda Wood: That was going to be one of the questions I was going to ask

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It was his idea. It happened to be one of my favourite pieces of music at the time so it worked very well for me, I liked it very much, and received the idea with enthusiasm, and then we showed it to him. He had with him his American partner, and we thought oh he is going to say this is alright but he was very enthusiastic. He said I think you've done a marvellous job, I don't know how you could have done it better.

SIDE 5, TAPE 3

Linda Wood: We were talking about the music of *Brief Encounter*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: We were showing the film to Coward and a group of his friends including his business partner from America, whose name was Wilson, and they were all very enthusiastic which was really, really nice. And they said they didn't know how it couldn't have been done better. And I must say I think if we had to do it again we wouldn't alter what we'd done to make it any better than what it was. It was what it was which was quite simple but not very important or earth shaking, it was a nice touching little film. We also thought that the only country which might receive it with some enthusiasm would be France. We thought it was rather a French sort of film. It was sent to France to the Gaumont circuit who turned it down flat, who said it was absolutely the reverse of anything which French audiences would like. No French audience would understand how it was that nothing really happened. It was sent to the Cannes Festival and won the critics prize, after which Gaumont decided they would give it a second chance and it took off in a mild way and has been playing in France and Italy and Germany and Spain and elsewhere ever since and still is.

Linda Wood: How did Trevor Howard come to be cast

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I'd seen him in *French Without Tears* and thought he was very good, and David had seen him play one short scene in *One Of Our Aircraft Is Missing* or in an airforce film made by Tolly de Grunwald,

Linda Wood: *Way To The Stars*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I'm not sure if it was that

Linda Wood: The one with the poem in it

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's right, that's the one, if it was called *Way To The Stars* that was it. And he played a brief scene in that and David thought he was very good in that. And we suggested him to Noel and we did a test of him and Noel said yes, fine.

Funnily enough Celia Howard's daughter raised the point did it never occur to any of us that he was in fact about 8 years younger than Celia. And I said it didn't occur to any of us because he always had an old face, he never had a young face. And in the film he looked 2 or 3 years older than she was, or the same age. And he certainly doesn't look younger

Linda Wood: They say they're supposed to be a middle aged couple they say themselves

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Never for one moment did anyone suggest that he didn't look middle aged. That's how that was. Noel was enthusiastic about his performance.

Linda Wood: You can believe in him as he is the doctor

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: One of his great characters as an actor was that you could always believe him, you could believe that he was a straight forward honest man. That was his great quality, of sincerity and honesty and trustworthiness, and Englishness too, very, very English.

Linda Wood: Watching the film also gives you an insight into a certain type of living style, Celia Johnson going off to the library once a week to get her books,

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I suppose what makes it good is that it is rather like both the actors, both Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard, I think the quality that makes it last, that has made it last, is its honesty, its straight-forwardness. You have a feeling that this is exactly the way English people live, not city people, English people are just not city - smaller towns, villages. This is an absolutely accurate picture of the simple English life and how into it the same dramatic problems can occur as occur in the cities but they occur in a different way. And people behave in them slightly differently, and that this an absolutely honest picture of how two people who were married and had a reasonable sense of honour and a reasonable sense of what was right and what was wrong would go through if they suddenly found themselves in madly in love, madly and seriously in love. You don't for one moment think that this is a question of a momentary passion, you know that they would make a wonderful couple together, if they could it would be alright. But that honour and convention and ethics somehow make it not possible for them

to do what far too many people now all over the world do like smoking a cigarette, and I think that's what sells the film, it's honesty, its truthfulness.

Linda Wood: It must have been an issue which was quite topical at the time as well, with people being split up during the war for long periods, you're bound to be attracted to other people, and seek warmth and affection when there is a long separation, but maintain the original feelings for the person you've left behind. I'm sure it was something the audiences must have identified with very strongly.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I'm sure, I think so in the sense even if they don't live by those sort of rules themselves, realise that there was a certain value, putting not everything in front of your own personal desires.

Linda Wood: The film was a huge success, your second one

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It was, it was a success d'estime. It's gross is laughable, if you think it has been going for 45 years or 46 years, the amount of profit it has made is very nice and very nice in relation to its cost. But if you put it beside the profit of *Batman* or those sort of things, it's peanuts. But it does go on.

Linda Wood: You were making films then under the patronage of Arthur Rank

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: This was the beginning and out of these films and one or two earlier films, made by people like Launder and Gilliat. This is how the whole idea of Independent Producers, which was the organisation that Rank founded about 1946 founded or something like that, we'd had so many successes in America. You see after *Brief Encounter* David felt he wanted to get away from the overarching coverage of Coward, that he'd done enough Coward, he'd done four Cowards, and it was time to get away and do something else. Moreover there was nothing of Cowards that we wanted to do.

And he, David, had always wanted to do *Great Expectations* because he'd seen a production of it at the Rudolf Steiner Hall which had impressed him very much in which Alex Guinness had played Pip and he'd also been impressed by Alec Guinness. So he had him, he was too old to play Pip in

the film, not too old, not quite right for it so he played the young gentleman. I'm not sure that he did play Pip on the stage, he think he may have played the pale young gentleman on the stage too. I think he did. So that is how we got into Dickens, and as a result of those successes, *Great Expectations* played at the Radio City Music Hall, the biggest theatre in America for 6 weeks to packed houses and only came off because in those days a house like that could change its programme every week if it wanted to, with the cream of all the films in America. Well to run for 6 weeks was something like 3 weeks longer than any film ever had except I think *Gone With The Wind*, and it came off still playing to packed houses because they simply couldn't keep it any more. They had a backlog of films that, they were beginning to lose all their films because people would say I'm sorry, we can't hang on for ever, you made this deal with us. Also they could be sued. So it came off while it was still playing to packed houses. As a result of this Arthur Rank founded Independent Producers and out of that came, I think Independent Producers came before *Great Expectations*, I think that was the first film we did for Independent Producers. And then *Oliver Twist*. And then Powell and Pressburger made all those marvellous highly imaginative films. And this was a golden moment, it was a moment when we really thought, when everybody thought we were going to have a solidly based industry which was always going to have enough money to make films and if we went on keeping up as good an average of successful films to unsuccessful films, we were going to be in business and the British film industry was going to prosper because of it.

Linda Wood: You certainly did your fair share.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well it was luck. Who knows what would have happened afterwards. But I think the sad thing was that Arthur Rank who had this vision had to direct his energies and his attentions to the family firm which was the foundation of his fortune and his brother's fortune, and the very big fortunes which they all had, which had been founded by his father, if not his grandfather, because the only available brother died, who was the head of the business. The younger brother was in quite a different business. He had gone into quite a different business. Arthur had to take over the family interests and the family business. And I think John Davis who was his right hand man was less interested in



production than he had been, didn't quite share the view that he had. I think he took a more accountant's view of the film business which was that it wasn't a serious business, it was too risky, I think.

Dave Robson: You're right because I worked for the Rank Organisation during that time and he was a terrible man, he would sack you like that

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He hated anything that he couldn't absolutely control or understand. And he could only control figures, that is what he could control. I hope that's not on the thing, I think we should take that out. It's alright when he's dead but not before.

Linda Wood: Going back to *Brief Encounter* it was nominated for a number of Oscars which was quite unusual for British films and one was for the set design by John Bryan. Did you build them

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: *Brief Encounter*

Linda Wood: Sorry, *Great Expectations*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Sure, because *Brief Encounter* I think the sets were by David Rawnsley. That was, it has been done again and it will be done again but it will be a very strange day when anyone does a better one. And that was almost entirely David. Beautifully, beautifully directed, beautifully, and wonderful performances, and wonderful sets, and a very good script, because we got script nominations and sets; and what did we get for actress, we got a supporting actress I think, I'm not sure old Miss Haversham didn't get supporting actress. That was made because David said let's do Dickens and I'd like to do *Great Expectations*.

Linda Wood: Again it has a marvellous cast. You cast it so well, every single character is just perfect.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Our next Dickens film, *Oliver Twist*, didn't have the success that it should have had, which had nothing to do with its box office receipts. But there was in America and elsewhere that the portrayal of the principal character played by Alec Guinness, who looks after the children, who rules the little boys who steel

handkerchiefs, I've forgotten his name. Not Shylock, that's the only name I can think of.

Linda Wood: I can't remember either.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Extraordinary, one of the most famous characters in literature.

Dave Robson: It will come to us.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Because of what had happened in the war, the Holocaust, there was some sort of drawing back by some exhibitors in some areas, and of course in Germany you couldn't show it at all because it was felt the part was too anti-Semitic. You might just as well say Bill Sykes was too gang leader, it's a character. It so happened to be. In fact when they remade it, it was remade for America for television, they altered the story and put in a big repentance scene, when you see him in prison he repents and becomes a sort of hero, ends the film absolutely exonerated as a hero. Quite different, absolutely nothing to do with Dickens at all, it was for NBC, because they were afraid that it would be thought too anti-Semitic by the New York population, by the Californian population. So it never did as much, in some places it was not even shown at all because they feared. So it came into profit much more slowly. Now, when some balance has been achieved, it shows well and in a lot of places but it never made as much as *Great Expectations* because of that factor. I don't know why, they thought he should have been played with less of a nose or something, anything that would have made him less obviously what he was. And none of us have still remembered his name.

Linda Wood: No

Dave Robson: I ran that film for 6 weeks at the Odeon Leicester Sq., I should know it backwards but I can't think of it.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: But he did modify, Alec did a test in a much grotesque appearance even than the one he did in the film, but of course the trouble is that he is such a very, very good actor that he did an absolutely splendid caricature even down to a lisp, most wonderful.

Linda Wood: He was very frightening, I can remember being terrified when I first saw the film.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He was very scary, particularly because the more gentle he became, the more scary. The more smiling and the more he rubbed his hands, the more frightening he became.

Linda Wood: Going back to *Great Expectations* did you actually do the casting for that because there were so many small parts

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No we did it together

Linda Wood: It was a team effort

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Although the principal parts we decided from the word go. And the smaller parts we saw people or David did tests. Ronnie actually produced that. I was the executive producer, I just looked after the money and the sets and all the rest of it, the schedule and that sort of thing, but Ronnie was the producer of the film. But we did the basic script together and then David and Ronnie did a shooting script together.

Linda Wood: Did you have to get the project approved by Rank before you started on it.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Oh yes, approved in the sense that we'd said what we were going to do and then when we got put up money for whatever was needed for the script or go to places to look at things we needed to do for the film. And then a script would be presented and it was purely a formality, it went before the Independents Board. And theoretically any other Independent Producer could say they didn't like it, it shouldn't be done. It never happened obviously. We were all perfectly delighted to be self-contained and stand on our merits as they emerged. And we weren't going to tell Launder and Gilliat they couldn't make their film whatever it was they wanted to make. We could on paper, the idea was we would discuss each other's scripts but it didn't work out that way at all. The theoretical idea was that each thing would carry the approval, but the only approval, we knew that Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat were first class filmmakers and that Emeric Pressburger and Michael Powell were first class filmmakers and we hoped they felt the same about us and we

certainly weren't going to interfere. But there was a board and there was a managing director who was George Archibald who had been with United Artists, one of the directors of United Artists. And we put forward a budget and if the budget was excessive we would be asked whether we would make it any different. But even that didn't happen because they weren't excessive, the budgets, any of them.

Linda Wood: Did you do some shooting on location

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: We shot on location on *Brief Encounter* at the railway station at Carnforth. We went to Rochester for the marshes. Yes there was a certain amount of shooting on location on both those films, but not very much.

Linda Wood: I was thinking particularly of the river scene because the houses looked so typical Victorian, I just wondered if you'd managed to find them or had you actually

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No as far as I can remember, apart from the scenes on the water which were shot on location and I think the houses coming down to the water were built, I don't think we found those. And the hulks we didn't find them either. We did find something mocked up as the hulks but there was no sign of the original prison vessels

Linda Wood: Did you have your own little company of technicians at that time.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Usually the camera people, but we used the ones at Pinewood, we knew them all by that time, or Denham, according to where we were shooting the film. It was a sort of splendid thing happened in the film business then that doesn't happen now, everybody who worked on a film felt it was like feeling any kind of a project, working on a relief project after an earthquake. Everybody was concerned only with the film, and the hope that it would succeed, it was part of their product and we always used to have photographs at the end with all the people who had worked on it. And that they had seats at the premiere, but that's rather gone now. It used to be a very nice thing. There were stirrings then of because the bigger it got, one had the feeling that the activists in the union were saying that well this is going to be big, there is going to be money in this so perhaps we better start making

some difficulties, but up to way after the war, and in the small studios there was still a great feeling of team work and camaraderie and feeling we were all working to one end.

Linda Wood: You seem to have been very successful in picking out a lot of talented people

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: There are an awful lot of talented people around always. And one of the sad things about not having a proper industry and the thing being hand to mouth, an awful lot of people who might be very talented get fed up and either go elsewhere or go into other businesses. Some of them go into television, but it is a different medium, television. It is not one that encourages, very peculiar talents and personalities. It's not a medium Celia Johnson ever did much in. She didn't fancy it. It wasn't for, a lot of actors didn't like it all that much. Bobby Newton would never have been brought out by television. It produces a high class standard of acting, of the character actors but it doesn't make stars. The stars it makes are the men who do quiz shows and the stars of television are very rarely in this country the actors and actresses, they're the anchor men, the quiz shows, the interview shows, Wogan is a perfect example. That's what television makes a star of and Johnny Carson in America and newscasters but it is hard to think of a television actor who you know there is going to be a new series and everybody says oh my god, I must go and see him, like in the case of certain film actors and actresses, People say oh I see there is a new film that Garbo's in, or Robert De Niro's in or Robert Redford, I must go and see it. It doesn't happen in television. It's not somehow for those special kinds of talents. I don't think Martita Hunt ever did much television. The people who did work with us. Finlay Currie never did much television. They were always enormously valuable character actors. I think it's a question of scale I think. Television doesn't really cater for the big scale personality and the big scale acting talent. It's for high class, first rate competence. The big personality in acting doesn't seem to do well on television.

An awful lot of people I worked with didn't do television. Rex Harrison didn't do much television, once in a blue moon. The old ones come back on television, the ones that have ceased to be stars come back and it's nice for them

that there's work for them to do. But I can't think of anybody who came out of

Linda Wood: There was always the West End waiting if film wasn't giving so much work.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think if they were theatre actors they were happy with that. They settled for the theatre and the theatre in New York, which they could do. The period after the war when the Americans were making a lot of films here, they used a lot of stars, they used Trevor, they used Johnny Mills, everybody they could lay their hands on they had in their films. It is only in the last really four or five years that it's become desperate, and the number of films made I think was 27 last year down from 90 or 80 the previous years. And the years we're talking about there were about 100 made every year.

Linda Wood: That was already a big drop because in the 30s at one stage they were turning over 200 in some years out. But by the 40s they were more quality films,

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: You can't really count the ones in the 30s, because an enormous number, at least 100 in a year were quota films, maybe more. For me 23 in two years, and that's just one company. And Columbia were making them and Paramount were making them, I mean Fox were making them and Metro were making them, all making the same amount. So altogether we must have been making 80 or 90 a year, quota films of one kind or another, quite apart from what Herbert Wilcox was doing or anybody else, the actual English films.

Dave Robson: Who was the director of *This Man Is News*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: David Macdonald. He'd done a Paramount film for me and he had some experience in America, and I liked him very much. And I thought he would do very well and he did.

Dave Robson: It had fantastic pace, beautifully edited

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's the point, that was what was needed. It was not only pace but a sort of swing, it goes fast but it also goes fast rather smoothly. They still do that kind of thing marvellously, however much you don't like the film in America, if it has been made by good people it is a very beautifully crafted affair. It cuts beautifully, it moves beautifully. You may be hating it but you're rarely bored by it. You never say oh dear I wish

this would get on, it gets on like that all the time. Anything they can do to grab your attention technically they do and they do superbly.

Linda Wood: Another film you produced around this time was *Take My Life*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: *Take My Life*. That was after, I suppose after *Great Expectations* I think Ronnie thought he wanted to be a director. I know Ronnie thought he wanted to be a director. We were beginning by this time, we'd made some films together and they'd been reasonably successful and we began to think that maybe all of us had, all this amount of talent if it was talent, whatever it was, there seemed to be rather too much, this seemed to all of us. Ronnie wanted to be a director and so we found a little story and I produced it and Ronnie directed it. I can't remember anything about it at all except Greta Gynt was in it. I remember nothing about it. I don't even remember who wrote the script. But looking back it's a film I remember nothing about. It came up not long ago on television

Linda Wood: I saw it

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Did it seem alright

Linda Wood: Yes, it's very good. Marvellous performance from Marius Goring.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I don't remember him in the film. I remember nothing about it except that we shot it, it cost more money than it should have done although we shot it on schedule, I don't know why. Things had begun to go up a bit then, it wasn't very expensive but I do remember that it did cost just a little bit more than *Brief Encounter*

Linda Wood: Really

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well things had started already to go up. What year did you say that it was made in.

Linda Wood: 1947

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: You see the war is over and we're having a success in America and people are beginning to say that all salaries in England and all everything in

England is so much below what is paid in America, and Americans were beginning to come here and were happy to pay much more than we were paying because it was still less than they had to pay in Hollywood. So things were becoming more expensive, that's the difference between 1944 and 1947, already things are going up. It didn't have an enormous success, it was quite a pleasant picture. It was one of those pictures that if you have an industry you make several of them. They aren't disasters but they don't make any money. You hope to make some that do to balance the books.

Linda Wood: For a first film it is pretty good.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He is a very good director. The next step away. I thought I'd do something, I thought I'd make a film like the films that Gainsborough was making but much more seriously. Instead of making it not really very believable, rather high fa la la stuff, people wore wigs and costume clothes but didn't really look like they were people of the period. But I would make that sort of a film for real as it were and made *Blanche Fury* which was too hard, there wasn't one likeable person in the film, that was the problem I suppose. And that didn't make any success. I keep on meeting people, it had a curious thing, *Blanche Fury*, I was in the lift with Sam Zimbelist who was one of the big Hollywood producers for Metro, he was then producing either *The Robe* or one of those big pictures. He said you made a picture that I saw, I said oh really, you saw it. He said he saw it in Hollywood. I said an awful picture, I'm very disappointed with it. It just didn't do any good. He said don't knock it, it's the picture on the strength of which Metro took Stewart Grainger under contract and thought they were going to turn him into a second Clark Gable. It didn't work. But that was the picture that made them say ah ha, this is our new Clark Gable. He then behaved I think rather unwisely and it didn't work out that way.

Linda Wood: Of the Gainsborough actors I think I preferred James Mason

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He was a much more subtle actor, he could do much more. Stewart Grainger wasn't really a good actor, he was just a good hunk of manhood. A nice hunk of manhood with a nice voice, but not a very



skilful actor, not a very big range as an actor, whereas Mason had, Mason could do lots of things.

Linda Wood: As you said *Blanche Fury* is very bleak. I suppose in the post war period when you've been going through so many years of suffering, the cinema audience isn't normally inclined to accept films which don't have happy endings, it would have been less inclined to around the time that was released. But it's a lovely film to look at.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It is, that's John Bryan. I rather hoped he would get something for it, because he did a beautiful job, lovely to look at. And very nicely photographed too.

Linda Wood: How did you happen to employ Marc Allegret

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Because, I employed him because he'd done 3 films that I liked very much indeed, he did *L'Orage* with Boyer and Michele Morgan, who he discovered, who was one of his discoveries. He did *Gribouille* with Raimu who was another of his discoveries. He was a very, very bright young man. Alex Korda had had him on contract to do *Elephant*, no not *Elephant*, *Thief Of Baghdad*, to do *Thief Of Baghdad* when the war broke out, but he had to go back to France. He was a very talented up and coming director, but the war in some curious way really sort of ruined him. All he did during the war and after the war was he discovered Vadim, Vadim was one of his proteges, and he did do the first film with Bardot, who was also another of his discoveries. But during the time he was making *Blanche Fury* he was having terrible marital problems and was very, very unhappy. Grainger didn't like him and he didn't like Grainger much. And of course Grainger was, there was nothing one can do about it, Grainger didn't like much that the title of the film was *Blanche Fury* and that irked him a bit. We didn't have at all a happy picture and we never got the script quite right. I'm surprised when I see the film now how well it did work out because we had the most awful rewrites. It wasn't a happy picture at all. He was a miserable director who wanted of course to hop off and did whenever he could hop back to Paris to see if he couldn't save his marriage.

Linda Wood: It doesn't help things, does it. That was the end of costume drama, no, you did one later on, for the

time being you decided that was enough of costume melodrama. I'm afraid my notes aren't that well organised. The next title I have listed is *Interrupted Journey*.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No, the first film, I formed then, then I acquired a film company called Garrett and Clement who had made a film with Cary Grant believe it or not in the 30s, and someone else. Mr Garrett was a very nice man who had been in the diplomatic service, and Mr Clement was one of that enormous army of gentleman from the Continent like Max Schach and Alex Korda in a sense who came here and made contributions of varying value to the film industry but who were entrepreneurs really. And they made two pictures and they didn't succeed, either of the pictures. And I bought into the company with Garrett and we changed the name to Constellation and made first *The Arrival of The Empress*, called here, it was a remake of a French film. Again it looked absolutely beautiful, wonderful clothes made by the Italian dress designer called Novarese who then went to Fox and was their principal wardrobe designer, dress designer for some years. We shot it in wonderful locations but it wasn't a great story, with Richard Greene and Valentina Cortese. That's the first one

Linda Wood: That's *The Shadow Of The Eagle*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: *Shadow Of The Eagle*. It was called in France originally Tarakonova but didn't mean anything here. It was actually based on historic fact. Then the next thing we did was or did we do *The Small Voice*

Linda Wood: I've got *The Small Voice* first

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Yes *The Small Voice* first with Howard Keel. *The Small Voice* first which got very good notices, I was in New York when it came out and got the notices. I really thought I was going to make a lot of money but I didn't and now I can't find my contract or any of the details. I know I'm entitled to a profit and it's been shown in America, I discovered after 20 years that it's been showing in America for the last 20 years. I didn't know what's happening, it now belongs to Mr Weintraub and they can't find. They've got the first and the last page of the contract.

Linda Wood: They've conveniently lost what's come inbetween

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's what they say, they've lost everything inbetween, that's all they can find.

Linda Wood: I don't know if it's a misprint but the cast list I saw said Harold Keel

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He was called Harry, Harold Keel in those days. And he appeared in the first company of *Oklahoma* at Drury Lane and I had seen him and thought he would be very good for films. And signed a contract with him and made the film. And then Metro wanted him for they were looking for a replacement for xxx.

Linda Wood: It must have been one of his first straight dramatic parts, because the next part of his career was really as a singer

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well he was a singer originally and a very good singer

Linda Wood: But now most people think of him as an actor rather than a singer because of his part in *Dallas*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: He's a very nice man and he is still a very nice man and I love seeing him in *Dallas*. He never became a very big star, but you've no idea how much money they can make, particularly the singers.

ANTHONY HAVELOCK-ALLAN

SIDE 6, TAPE 4

Linda Wood: We were just talking about *The Small Voice*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I can't remember who put the money up for it. Who distributed it.

Linda Wood: If Weintraub distributed it perhaps it was EMI or British Lion

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: British Lion maybe, I never made anything for EMI. I'm sure it was British Lion.

Linda Wood: How did Independent Producers and Cineguild come to an end.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: It just petered out. There was no longer, when Arthur Rank went back to the milling business I don't think there was any, the funding went I think when the funding was in hands on the gentleman who's name we are going to erase from the tape, I think there was no funding. I think that was it. As far as I remember, Launder and Gilliat went on making films for British Lion. I don't think Powell and Pressburger made any more.

Linda Wood: Did they go to Korda. *The Elusive Pimpernel* was certainly made for Korda.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Pressburger came from Korda, it was Korda who brought him over as a writer originally. But if they did go to Korda I don't know what they made.

Linda Wood: I know *The Elusive Pimpernel* was for Korda but I'm not certain about any of the others.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: By that time David, Ronnie wanted to do *The Passionate Friends*, started to do *Passionate Friends*. And then ceased to direct it after a few weeks because I think a relationship was building up between Ann and David who was nominally producer on the film. So then David took over and Ronnie went off on his own. And David after that did *Madeleine* paid for by Rank and then he went to Korda. And Ronnie I think went on his

own with a man called Sasha Calperson who had been the business manager and producer for Paul Czinner and Elizabeth Bergner. He had been the business manager and found the money for their films. *Stolen Life* I think was made for British & Dominions. And the next one was called xxx and made for Rank, at Pinewood, but not for Independent Producers. Then there was some sporadic production including *Pygmalion* and that sort of thing, but then there was no longer any Independent Producers, and George Archibald retired I think and some time later John Davis installed a nice American who used to be with Paramount, squashy features, as a kind of whipping boy but also in charge of whatever they were going to make.

Linda Wood: Was it Earl St John

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's right. Earl St John. And that was under, the filmmaking business was now firmly under Sir John Davis, well he wasn't Sir John then, John Davis.

Linda Wood: About that time Rank quite substantially cut back his operation. He closed down Gainsborough and Islington. Were you now making films for American distributors again

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I was then what was so wittily called an independent producer, and indeed I represented independent producers on the Producers Association

Linda Wood: Which distributors were handling your films

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I went to whatever distributor that would put up the money. In the case of I think it was British Lion, you're right with *The Small Voice*. In the case of *Shadow Of The Eagle* it was half Italian and half British Lion I think. *Interrupted Journey* I have no idea who put up the money. I only know we made it in desperation because we had a publicity department and an office in Hanover Sq and a lot of money going out all the time and we weren't doing anything. And the third one, there was a third one in that, after *Interrupted Journey*

Linda Wood: There's one called *Never Take No For An Answer*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: *Never take no for an answer* was part John Woolf and part an Italian company. 50/50. And

that did very well, but it was sold to a distributor in America with the best possible of intentions and without any way of knowing otherwise but it so happened that this company was going bankrupt. So what he did was to sell the film flat rate wherever he could raise the money and still went bankrupt, so we never saw anything. But we had wonderful publicity in America. That was a nice film, that still has some life, it has been remade, disastrously.

Linda Wood: Was that made in Italy

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Made in Italy entirely, shot in Rome and at Assisi, the bulk of the film, 3/5s of the film take place in the town of Assisi. It was shot entirely on location, we didn't go into a studio at all. Everything was done in real houses, and when we went to Rome we used a large house in a thing called Pallazo **Brancacho**, to do one or small interiors, which we had. But the actual interior of the place where the little boy kept his donkey was a real one and all the scenes in the monastery in Assisi were shot in the monastery. We shot scenes in room where St Joseph of **Compatina** was supposed to be able to fly, so fervent was his faith that he was able to levitate. He was supposed to float around on a high ceiling from time to time. It was a very sweet and very dear man and of course so was St Francis.

I'm trying to get the rights to put it out again because we had quite a nice income from schools for years, and then our licence expired in 1970 and in 1970 the remake was made with stars in the film rather than real people as it were, almost a documentary, the little boy made one film after with a famous actor who played Pasteur, Paul Muni. The boy made one film with Paul Muni in Italy afterwards and then retired from the film industry.

INTERVIEW PAUSED

Linda Wood: We were in the 50s and you were once more an independent producer away from Rank and you were setting up projects, and I think the last film we talked about was *Never Take No For An Answer* which was filmed in Italy.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That was before, the Rank thing, I think we got it wrong. *Never Take No For An Answer* belongs to the period of *Small Voice*, *Shadow Of The Eagle*, *Interrupted Journey*, they all belong to a period when they

were financed and made by Constellation Films which I had formed when Cineguild broke up as far as I was concerned. And financed, in different ways. John Woolf was in *Shadow Of The Eagle* and *Never Take No For An Answer*. *Interrupted Journey* was I think was British Lion, *Small Voice*, do you have that

Linda Wood: No

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well they were all financed by individual distribution organisations. John Woolf, I don't know what he had by way of distribution, but he made a lot of films. Whether he was with GFD his father's company, no I don't think so. I think GFD had stopped.

It's about 1955 that Jimmy Laurie of the National Film Finance Corporation persuaded with some difficulty the Rank Organisation that they couldn't really opt out of filmmaking as they were thinking of doing or confining themselves only to making Norman Wisdom films and Carry Ons. If they'd started, I'm not sure that they had, Norman Wisdom had because I found Norman Wisdom actually for the Rank Organisation, and he was about to sign with Elstree, and I persuaded him not to sign with Elstree but with the Rank Organisation. And I think he was a very successful investment for them. But they were doing not much else, and somewhere around 1955 or 1956 James Laurie of the Film Finance Corporation persuaded them to go into a deal in which they would, they would take a group of producers, they would pay them an annual salary and that they would during the period being paid the annual salary suggest projects of one kind or another.

That's were *Young Lovers* came in and *Young Lovers* was sold by Rank and directed by Anthony Asquith. I wanted an American star for it but they wouldn't go for an American star so we had a young actor, an American actor who was living in England played it but he didn't carry much weight.

And then Asquith asked me to do *Orders To Kill* which was done for British Lion. But in the 50s I think that was about all I did. *Never Take No* was done in 1952, or 1953. 1951 and came out in 1952, I think.

Linda Wood: There was *Meet Me Tonight*, the Noel Coward play

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I did those with Pelissier also under this arrangement of Jimmy Laurie's.

Linda Wood: In the 30s and 40s most of your work was in the studio, by the 50s were you finding that you were having to make arrangements for filmmaking on more location

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No I don't think there was any trend. I think in the 30s, certainly in the early part, sound was still something quite new and there was a sort of prohibition about going on location if you could possibly avoid it. If the studio could do it around that period, you will see a lot of exterior scenes which are clearly shot in the studio. The reason being that the sound people didn't like going on location if they could avoid it because there was practically nowhere in a small country like England where you could get away from exterior sounds. And at that period post synching was nothing like what it became 30 or 40 years later when post synching became perfect. I mean you'd never know it had been post synched.

All Italian films even when we went there after the war, for films like *Shadow Of The Eagle*, all Italian films were always post synched from beginning to end even if they were shot in the studio. Just to save time, they shot guide track, they regarded anything they shot as guide track. Afterwards they post synched it, so they were never bothered even if the studio they were in wasn't well sound proofed which in the case of some Italian studios was true, they weren't very well sound proofed, they'd all had been put up fairly hastily, there was a great boom in production and a great longing to get back to it when the war was over so they shot in all sorts of conditions. But *Romeo And Juliet* even the scenes we did in the studio were all post synched, the whole picture, and they were used to it. We still don't like it much, don't do it as much as all that.

But in the 30s to go out on location meant a tremendous amount of problems with the sound, the sound of the wind, the noise of animals, the noise of motor cars, noise of aeroplanes, noise of distance trains, if it could be avoided on low budget pictures, you never went on location except perhaps at midnight, a shot taken at 2 or 3 in the morning. That sort of thing.

But of course when we got to Italy they had no such inhibitions about location because they always naturally



post synched. We post synched on *Shadow Of The Eagle* and we post synched nearly all of *Never Take No For An Answer*. We were a bit luckier with *Never Take No For An Answer*, because Assisi is a very quiet place and it's very much off the beaten track and we were able to shoot a good deal of natural sound and having a small young child to deal with it was much better. Strange things can happen sometimes post synching, some people's performances get better, some people's performances suffer. It makes slight differences from the sound point of view though, you can now post sync practically anything.

But the more location thing, certainly during the war we could never go on location because the air was full of aeroplanes. And from time to time full of noises of gun fire, anti aircraft, if there was a raid or anything like that. So practically everything was done in the studio. The destroyer, two thirds of the destroyer we built in the studio. We built in the studio just for that reason, it would have been easier if we'd had some sky, except that we would have been subject to the weather, but that wouldn't have matter a great deal because most of the stuff was in sunshine, the Mediterranean.

Linda Wood: How did you come to be working in Italy

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Somebody, an English producer, no an English, Robert Garrett who was my partner and the founder of Film Finances Ltd which was the first guarantee of completion company in the world. He founded it as a business, no one had thought that it was a business. Guarantees had been put up of one kind or another of course, but to make a business of it, Robert Garrett founded it in 1952 after we had made 3 films backed by a group of City businessmen all 3 of which had come in under budget. And he persuaded them that this was going to be a business and founded Film Finances. And Film Finances have guaranteed to date the completion of something like 1,000 or more films. And it was a very successful business. I didn't think it could be because I didn't think anyone would accept the clause on which the success or failure of the business entirely depends, which is that if in the opinion of the guarantors is likely to exceed its budget, they have the right to take over the film, appoint their own director, their own production manager and finish it in whichever way they feel best suited to their interests. And I thought no one would ever accept it.

And in a sense I was perfectly right, because what happened always when that situation arose was that the people who invested by that time half the cost of the whole thing were not going to have their product spoiled by somebody coming in and taking over the film and finishing it in the quickest and least expeditious manner and without any necessary caring about quality or anything else, because they never had an interest in whether the film made profit or not. That was the concept and always, the backers said alright we'll release you from the guarantee, we'll take it over. That hadn't occurred to me. I hadn't thought that far. I'd thought no one would sign it thinking how can I afford to have somebody ruining my picture if we go over and they think we're going over too much. It didn't happen. It happened but when it happened they were always let off the hook, until quite late, until the last one which ruined them of course. Finally at the end they did go for a picture which went monumentally over budget and nobody would rescue them and that really put an end to Film Finances and it doesn't exist any more. That was only about 5, 5 or 6 years ago. I've run off at the mouth

Linda Wood: No, I hadn't known that about Film Finance

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I was an original shareholder and I sold my shares after a time because I thought sooner or later they must have a risk. I could have got a lot of money for them if I'd kept them, but foolishly I sold them thinking it was always a risky business, but it never was until after Garrett had left the business and was retired, they took one gamble and the gamble went against them.

Linda Wood: That's fascinating.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: What was your question.

Linda Wood: How did you come to be working in Italy

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Garrett came to me one day and said look there are some people in Italy who'll put up half the cost of making a film based on the following story that they've acquired from a French company. It was made before the war, they acquired the script of the man who made it before the war, it's based upon fact, it's based upon history and it's rather a good story. And I read it and I thought I don't really know anything about Italy and I

don't know any Italian. I'm very happy to go there but. Anyway there was nothing else and finally I agreed, I said alright, let's do it and went to Rome and talked to the people who wanted to be concerned with it. There was a distributor and a man who came from a family of very successful antique dealers who wanted to put up the money and be the producer at the Italian end. And finally we agreed to go with it and we got Valentina Cortese and we needed a leading man, and we got Richard Greene and that's how it happened.

Linda Wood: Did you find any differences working in Italy

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No

Linda Wood: The job's the same wherever you are

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Absolutely, it's like miners, even if they don't speak the same language, other film people are the same way, it doesn't matter if you speak the language or not, once you're talking about the film both sides know what the other's talking about. And you pick up the key words very quickly. The film was to be made in English and then post synched into, dubbed into Italian because Italian audiences always accepted dubbed pictures and post synched pictures and the British didn't give a damn, subtitled they were used to it, unlike the distributors here who kept on saying the British public will not stand for a subtitled or post synchronised picture.

And the Americans say the same today, it's their great defence against the language problem. They don't ever have to give a big release to a picture in a foreign language because their argument is, their argument against us was that nobody understands your English accents. There may have been some justification for it, but not as much as I think they made of it, but it was a great argument for years for not showing out films outside the eastern seaboard, I mean Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, was that nobody understood English.

Linda Wood: Although they talk about the accents, they were quite happy to take any attractive British star, accent or no accent, such as Vivien Leigh or Cary Grant.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's true, but it didn't alter their argument. Ronald Colman who spoke very nice English. It wasn't that they didn't understand, it was all part of the defence, they didn't want anybody getting into their markets if they can help it. If you've got a very successful monopoly, and it's worth millions a year, anyone will protect it. And somebody else can make a product like yours and may one day make a pair of shoes that Americans would like to buy, the American shoe companies don't want somebody coming into their market. It's perfectly normal. It's much better now because they've made money with some English pictures, it's not dead easy now

Linda Wood: The 50s seem to have lean period as far as filmmaking in England was concerned.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: We were beginning to come up against the thing that the war over, that excuse had gone that got some of our pictures in. The cost of making pictures rose steadily, I mean the difference between the cost of making pictures in England and in America before the war is a perfectly well understood anything, that everything in England, because it was a smaller country with a smaller market, that everyone got, no matter where the picture was being made, much less money than they'd get in America. Nobody dreamt that English stars got the kind of money that Cary Grant or Gary Cooper got, it was a ludicrous thing, it was understood. And that was true of everybody.

After the war it began to get a bit more expensive because more and more American companies came here and brought their technicians with them. When they began to look around for English technicians, the English technicians began to ask for money that was more like the American technicians who would have been brought otherwise. So that bit by bit we began to have a more expensive industry, and it began to cost, and inflation had something to do with it. The big motive thing behind too, you must remember by 1956 films follow people who want to make films and have an access to money. Rank had, Alexander Korda had, but by 1955, I don't know when Alexander Korda died but he began to do less and less and he was dead by the end of the 50s. Rank went out for reasons we've discussed earlier, because he had to take over the family business. So there was none of, immediately after the war and immediately before the war there had been these two big stimulators, Alexander Korda who built Denham

with money from Prudential Insurance Company and had made big pictures. And then because of this Rank and Lady Yule built Pinewood. There would have been no Pinewood if there had been no Denham. And these studios, both studios produced some pretty good pictures.

But by 1955, Korda was doing much less and Rank had gone out. So there was nobody, what happened at BIP, at Elstree I can't speak for, but it was never one of the big players in the game. They played, if we assume film was a poker game, Elstree came in occasionally and went out again, because they had the theatres, that's the chief reason. But the big movement towards making films in production depended on Arthur Rank and Alexander Korda. And so long as they wanted to make films, films would be made. A lot of people when Independent Producers finished, which it did when Rank went out the business, Powell and Pressburger went to Korda, David Lean went to Korda eventually, by 1954 he was working for Korda, Carol Reed went to Korda. And then bit by bit Korda went out of business, complications and one thing and another.

And when that went, it was fragmented, it was a question of who could gather money, who could get a distributor, and another distributor from abroad for somebody for a studio to put in some facilities or something and it became ad hoc filmmaking. And when it's ad hoc filmmaking we know where we are now, we're back to it, making whatever it is, 28 films. But towards the end of the 50s there came the big move, I think I'm right in saying, for Metro coming here. And they bought the studio at Elstree which had been built which had been built only because Denham had been built and Pinewood had been built, and a man called Soskin whose nephew was a film producer decided this was going to be Europe's Hollywood and built another studio and pretty soon was only too glad to sell it to Metro Goldwyn Meyer who did decide to make pictures here and for some years made pictures at the studio.

So there was another reason for making pictures, backed by money. There was no individual case as in the case of Korda or Rank but there was a studio, whose home base was Hollywood who had plenty of money, who made pictures here. So that did cause a little bit of a revival. And that went on backed by American money until, really until, almost until the time when the advantages of making films here, the financial advantages were removed. And then we went

back to ad hoc picture making and there was Goldcrest came and made some pictures, found some money in the City, but that's all. Oh, and EMI suddenly became picture makers, EMI bought Elstree with the idea of making and they became major picture makers. So for a time suddenly the Elstree studio had a lot of production going, because EMI wanted to make films. EMI doesn't want to make films any more, Rank doesn't much want to make films but it has going to fill the studio and if it's not going to cost too much they will. But there is no great wave of people with money wanting to make films. That is why it declined.

As I say it picked up again when the Americans decided it was good to make pictures here. And then when they decided it wasn't any good any longer we went back after a slight burst, it was rather like the flowering that happened under Rank with Independent Producers and the flowering that happened with Korda and then the flower wilted and died again and we're back where we are, because there is no one to water it and no one to re plant it.

Linda Wood: Can you talk about Anthony Asquith

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I don't know what I can say about Anthony Asquith except that he was an absolutely darling man and very talented director. But a talented director but essentially such a gentle character, such a sweet gentle and really universally loving character, he loved everything, the flowers, the animals, and human beings. It was very difficult for him to make a tough picture, a hard edged picture. And more and more in the 60s and particularly in the 70s pictures became harder and harder edged and more and more violent and more and more cynical and more and more rough in every way because the audience gradually became younger and younger, required less and less sophistication, were less and less educated so that an extremely educated man like Asquith who really only wanted to make films that were for educated people, for gentle people like himself as it were, became more and more of an anachronistic figure. Films like, which were very good, *Mona Lisa*, that was much later, 1984 or 1985, is a picture that would have left him absolutely breathless. He would have admired it but it would have been something that he couldn't remotely make but that was the kind of thing, the only kind, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, the only pictures that came out the last 10 years, that came out of England, were pictures that captured some of the hard

edged, some of the toughness. The only example of people who still remained in a sort of special niche but I don't think they've ever made colossal money in America is Merchant and Ivory. Those are the kind of pictures that Puffin Asquith could also have made but there was not much of a market for them.

Linda Wood: I much admire Asquith's work, as you say his films are thoughtful and gentle and sensitive.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: You look at a list of his pictures, they're all about caring issues for the most part. And when they're not, the two pictures he made with De Grunwald for Metro, the *VIPs* would have been much more successful if it had been a harder more cynical, rougher thing. But somehow the gentleness touched the films, and nobody ever could behave too atrociously badly, that he wouldn't know how to direct anybody behaving in an inhuman way, he would be so utterly out of sympathy in my view. But within that capability he was an extremely good director, and a absolutely heavenly human being.

Linda Wood: He was nice to work with.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Yes, but that is slightly different, I had know him. I had been at Mr Gibbs's school with him in Sloan St and my uncle was chief whip of the liberal party under Campbell Bannerman, and when Asquith became Prime Minister he was in the Cabinet until 1916, when Asquith was dethroned by Lloyd George. And he'd been a lifelong political associate and they always kept, because he was such a nice man my uncle, and he made a wonderful chief whip, he was a wonderful trouble shooter, what the Americans. So I'd sort of know Puffin and known about him all my life. And my father's brother was also a Liberal member of Parliament, my grandfather was a Liberal member of Parliament, so I was steeped in the Liberal tradition.

Linda Wood: That's very interesting.

After *Orders To Kill*, the next film I've got for you is *The Quare Fellow*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well that was brought to me by an extraordinary American director who directed in rather like von Sternberg had and Von Stroheim had but I'm afraid he didn't quite have the talent they had, he always wore Mexican boots and carried a riding whip when he directed.

He was very short and he had acquired the rights of this through some American woman that he knew. I thought it was an interesting story and wouldn't be very expensive to make. Obviously because we'd make it in Dublin, it's quite a simple story. All we needed was the interior of a prison and I knew there was one available, the **Kilmainam** Gaol was available in Dublin, so that's how that arose. It didn't work out quite as well as we hoped because we had a bit of a problem with the leading man having read the script and accepted the script, accepted to do the script, then decided at a given moment he wouldn't play a certain scene. And so the scene had to be changed at the last moment which rather took the guts out of the picture. But what can you do when you're on a low budget and a short schedule. It's very nice to say well we'll sue you, but who is going to wait for months with an unfinished film and sue. I think it was part British Lion and part Ealing, it was distributed by Ealing. By that time Ealing had gone.

Linda Wood: That I thought was a very Asquith type film. Then the next one I have is *An Evening With The Royal Ballet*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: This really ends the film stuff, because in about 1961 or 1962 I was very caught with the idea that cable television which was then being discussed for the first time, I'd long had the view that there was no reason whatever why television should be the only form of entertainment in the world for which the customer does not pay, because of the accident of there being in every country a national television network, financed out of taxation and then subsequently as in America, although the customer did have to pay without knowing it, advertising paid for the whole schmeer. And it seemed to me that there was absolutely no justification for this whatever. If you wanted to watch television, there should be a price range. If you wanted to spend £80 a year or £100 a year watching television you could. If you wanted to spend £1000, if you had it you could. But it was like any other entertainment, if you went to the theatre, if you went to a football match, whatever it was, and cable television, or any kind of system which would bring television to the screen and you paid, you pressed a button and paid 3d, 4d, 6d or whatever the programme was, you watched what you paid for, like you do with every other known form of entertainment. And I thought this was the only solution for films because you would then have a box



office financing automatically. You wouldn't have to pay 25% to a distributor, you wouldn't have to pay 50% to an exhibitor first, then 25% to a distributor. At that time I think it was estimated that of the money a film took, once you'd, handed it over to a distributor, and he in turned was booking it [end of side]



SIDE 7, TAPE 4

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I was saying the amount of money that came back to the producer after he had handed in his finished film, he knew the price, what he'd spent of the film, he handed it to a distributor who in turn went around and got exhibition, of the money the public paid to see the film that you had made, 14% was all you got of what they paid. Now firstly if we take television, your film would go direct to television, either an advance against what you were going to get but it would go direct, there would be distribution fee. You sell direct. There might be a 5%, 10% commission if somebody took to the television company overseas, but in your own country the producer would go to the office of the BBC or ITV or whatever it was and said look, here's a film, put it on and you would have to agree what they would charge. And of course you can check on television very easily what you got for a film, but you don't know, from exhibitors you don't know. One of the great arguments has always been, actions have been taken innumerable time. As far as exhibition is concerned there are many ways, in which even the 14% taken by the distributor, after the distributor has taken his percentage, there may have been some deal between the distribution company and the exhibitor, or the exhibitor may have a position about which the distributor is unable to do anything.

For example in America I was told that all cinemas in Florida belong to one man, and if you wanted to get into Florida you got in on his terms or you didn't get into Florida. In Boston, the very best circuit there was, which was twice as good as any other, if you wanted to appear there, you had to accept, whether it was spent or not didn't matter, but that there would be a given allocation for advertising which would come off the top of the receipts and that there would be a given amount for expenses of exploitation which would come off the top whether it was spent or not. So that you knew your receipts had a reduction before they ever started.

All that went out the window, you would have a direct relationship and people would pay and you would get a percentage, you know what the percentage was, and it was an accurate percentage of what people pay. Unless they fixed

the machine, or owners of the machines fixed the machines. And this seemed to be the ideal way of having a running fund, which is what you have to have if you're going to have a film industry, it is not good that it is dependent on hiccuping from one group of films, or what one film is going to do, you have to have cash flow and this way we would get it.

And I found that John Brabourne who I didn't know, but I knew him and I'd known his mother in law slightly, was thinking along the same lines. And so we had a meeting and both agreed that we felt exactly the same thing and what we must do would be to start a cable television company in conjunction with, we must find a cable company which we did, I can't remember what it was called, it was the one which became CO Stanley's company, began with an R, can't remember

Linda Wood: Was it Rediffusion

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think that was it, if they would play with us, whether they thought it was a good idea, and they obviously to some extent were thinking that payment was going to get over some of the problems that come with television, they're coming now. We took the view, and again we were about perhaps 30 years ahead of our time, the BBC fee which was then £25 would be £100 within 25 years, well I think we're going to be 5 years out on that. It is £70 now, it will certainly be £100 by the year 2000 if it stays financed that way.

And John Brabourne when to the city where he and his family, really his wife's family have some influence and persuaded a number of people through one of the institutions there to put up a given sum of money to test out the view as to whether or not, to find out how viable it would be, at what level it would become viable and then to go to the government and say look please, cable is coming, and it exists already, even then it existed in quite a few areas, because of interference and things like that. But there were people pushing to lay more and more cable to get what is now happening.

And so we decided to form a company and John Brabourne said I'd like to bring in Danny Angel. Because he knew Danny, I knew Danny too, he is a very nice man, but very much an individualist, and I thought he might be a bit of a

problem. And so the 3 of us, there were 3 original directors of a company which was formed and called British Home Entertainment. And from 1962 till 1969, 1968 or 1969, I devoted myself to that.

We had a pilot scheme in South London and pilot scheme in Sheffield. And we notified our shareholders as to the kind of things we intended to do. And we made a lot of programmes, one of which was *An Evening With The Royal Ballet*. We also did the National Theatre *Othello*, the National Theatre *Uncle Vanya* for television only but not for film. We did *Othello* for film if anyone wanted to see it, with the help of Warner Brothers. We did *Romeo and Juliet* with the help of Paramount. And we did one of the D'Oyle Carte opera company. We did a programme on fishing. We did programmes on xxx, exactly the kinds of programmes of which we thought there were insufficient on television. And which would enable people if they were paying, it would enable you to make programmes about things maybe if only on your whole network you only had 500,000 people, or 200,000 people who were interested in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Harpsichord music, if you charged half a crown, there would be enough people out of the 200,000 people who were interested to afford. You would make what there was an audience for. You would know what your audience was, you would find out beforehand. You would find out how many people would like to watch a programme on snooker for example. And think of the response we would have had. It's extraordinary. But whether they would have been prepared to pay, assuming that their television was on a pay basis, either because they'd agreed to hook into it, or because all television which is what we hoped would happen eventually was on a pay basis, how much they would pay to see a film about their specialist subject. It was great fun.

We had the most distinguished board of directors you possibly have imagined. And we had every possibility of bringing it off. But it did depend on the government in the long run. And we went to the government and we showed them the results and said if we had 250,000 subscribers we would begin to make money. And the more subscribers, the more money we would begin to make. At the present moment the maximum that we could reach through Rediffusion and the other networks, I'm not sure about Rediffusion, I think we better say one of the companies that were interested in cable, were 120, and it meant more cable. And the government said no, this is inflationary, people don't pay

for their television, or they think they don't at the moment, and if we gave you permission to push ahead with more homes, that would mean A) you're building to produce nothing more than what is being produced already, it would be inflationary. We can't give you a licence to proceed, but stay on doing what you're doing. We said we've been doing it for a year and we've spent nearly a million pounds and all you're saying get another million, is spend another million and see what happens. But unfortunately the City is not that soft hearted, so we closed it down.

And precisely that moment I ran into David Lean, who was an old, old friend. As you know I'd known him since 1933, and he said I'm going to make a picture would you like to produce it, the picture was *Ryan's Daughter*. That was the end of the saga

During the course of those years from 1962 or 1961 or whatever it was until 1968, the biggest film venture we did was *Romeo And Juliet*. But even that only cost \$1.8m. It went nearly \$200,000 over budget on a totally unrealistic budget, it was a very large film, and the budget I think was \$1,680,000 or something and we did it for \$1,870,000 and it grossed a huge amount of money, of course. That's really the end of the story as far as I'm concerned with films.

Because then I went to Italy to live in Italy because David went to live in Italy and we were when we ended *Ryan's Daughter*, the idea was that we should do *Gandhi*. And I went to India and saw all the people about *Gandhi* deal, and when I came back David said I really can't face it. He had difficulties obviously. He still had an Indian wife with whom he wasn't living and hadn't been living for some time, who was formerly the wife of an Indian politician. And I think he felt that if he went there that in addition to the normal difficulties of making a film about *Gandhi*. And particularly a film which would have gone a little more into depth about *Gandhi's* life than *Dicky Attenborough's*. The script, I think there would have been more in it that might have been thought to have been controversial both from the point of the Indians and the point of view of the English. It was not just a record more or less of what he did. It's a beautiful, very good film, very well done, beautiful, but you don't really know any more about the man *Gandhi* at the end of the film than you did before. I think David's film would have been a little different. But that

as far as I'm concerned is all I know about the film business. The only other thing I know about it is what I've told you just now, a film was made where the legal costs were greater than the costs of the cast.

Linda Wood: Can I just ask about *Romeo And Juliet* because it's one of the most, I know the Olivier films were popular, but *Romeo And Juliet* was popular with young cinema goers, it reach an audience which

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: For the simple reason, the story of *Romeo And Juliet* was that I knew Franco Zeffirelli, I'd met him 2 or 3 times and he brought the project to me after Columbia had turned it down. I took it to Paramount and the head man at Paramount then was a very nice man but he was very socially minded and he turned it down. And I said to John, he won't do it but it seems to me a great mistake, see what you can do. And John went to see him. In the meantime he discovered who John's father in law was, and that made a big difference to him and so he accepted it. And John got the money for it and John handled the money end of the whole thing and I was there in Italy on the production, on the scripting stage, and then on all of it. But we both got producer credit. John didn't produce it, he found the money, but if he hadn't got Paramount to do it, we never would have made it.

Linda Wood: Whose idea was it to have the two young people

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Franco Zeffirelli from the word go, there's no question, he had done the production with two very young people at the Old Vic. The whole reason he wanted to do it was because he said this is a story about two young Italian children and it never on the stage can it be played, except as a freak can it be played by two children. And if it is played on the stage by two children, it probably won't be very good, but in films it can be marvellous. And his whole approach to the script and everything was, this is exactly the world doesn't change that much, this group of children in Verona are exactly like the kids on the streets now, howling and yelling for the pop singers, spending money nobody knows how they got it, their families not knowing where they are because they're out at a pop concert and won't get back until 5 o'clock in the morning. I mean it's part of teenage revolt. And this is what *Romeo And Juliet* is.

And when *Romeo And Juliet* opened in America, because no film makes money except in America, as you know, you can't make very big money, when it opened in New York, the queues round the block were teenagers and they were going in and saying, you see how stupid parents, are you see how they do it to us. They were having at that moment rows with their families because they were staying out too late, because they were in love with a girl and they were afraid she was going to get pregnant, the girls' parents. The boy's parents thought he was spending too much money and not getting on with doing what they should be doing, etc. It absolutely hit them where they lived. And all over America teenagers for the first time in their lives went to a Shakespeare film, with the result that the Shakespeare film worldwide grossed about \$35 million, which is something like 10 times more than any Shakespearean film has ever remotely thought of taking.

The kids liked it, it's the same as, it's like the Beatles, United Artists had the idea, their music man in New York had the idea of, the Paramount music man in New York had the idea, no it was United Artists at that time, heard their music and said maybe we can make a little cheap film with them, and they told their man in London to find out about them and said yes, apparently they'd be glad to make a film. Yes, if they can find the time in their schedule. Now the man who was the head of United Artists at that time was the same man who was later the head of Paramount, had a great friend, an American friend, who had been with Columbia, cabled him, he was in Hollywood trying to arrange something, he was based here but he was trying to arrange something, he had made two good films and he said would you like to make a film with the Beatles. They came back and cobbled up a story such as it was, made the film for peanuts and proceeded to gross \$50 million with it, made a fortune.

Linda Wood: And still making it

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well I don't know whether it does, because this same man is a great friend of mine, who produced the film, found by one of those wonderful flukes that very rarely happens in the film business, that the contract was so drawn that after a given length of time the pictures didn't belong to United Artists any more but belonged to his personal company. And when he got this news I was in California and I thought he was going to get at

least \$20 or \$30 million, strangely enough it's made some more money but he hasn't made so much money that I thought he was going to be nearly as rich as Spielberg. They've been taken up on television, they've been on in certain cinemas but no great release. He's made a lot of money and they're very good, but I thought they'd make maybe twice as much as they made when they first came out. But that didn't happen.

Linda Wood: I would have thought they'd have sold very well on video.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Perhaps exhibitors perhaps didn't think that. There was no general release. And I think the videos were out by then.

As a matter of fact, now I think of it out of the videos, one of the biggest video men in Chicago put up the money for a film he made. So I suspect some of that was from the videos. He was an extremely nice man.

And that is literally the end of the entertainment as far as I'm concerned. I can't think of anything else I can tell you about. That is me up to the end.

Linda Wood: There are a number of set questions which everybody is asked towards the end of the interview. The first is do you have a favourite film director.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I suppose my favourite, I think that David Lean is unquestionably for the big epic by far the best director I know of alive. In that genre of epic story, no one has equalled *Lawrence of Arabia* or *Doctor Zhivago*.

Linda Wood: Marvellous, or even *Brief Encounter*

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: There are other directors, particularly Frenchmen who have made films of the same kind, and I think in some cases perhaps even more touching.

Linda Wood: I think it's people you've actually worked with

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Then certainly David

Linda Wood: What has been the most difficult project you've ever worked on



Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's a very difficult think. I suppose I would have to say *Ryan's Daughter* because it was the longest and the biggest and we were making a picture entirely on location with a tremendous amount of the action played out of doors in an English summer, and as it happens an English winter and an English spring, you know as well. So there is no way if you make a picture that's practically all of which, as the people who made *Revolution* found out, if you make a picture that requires a great deal of light and sunshine and it's a picture that is going to run just under 3 hours, maybe a bit more before it's cut, it cannot be anything.

We had a storm in the picture that had to be a real storm, nothing, no studio storm about it. The actual storm we had that you see in the picture is cut together 5 storms, the first of which took place in February 1969, the last of which took place in March 1970. The very last shots in the film were taken in March and a bit of storm was added one year later, the second February. And one or two sky shots were taken in March

Linda Wood: Did somebody have to phone the local met office every day

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: No, no, no, it was a lot more complicated. We had every single evening the weather reports from New York, from London, from satellite, from Valencia Island and from sea, every night. We had every one and none of them could ever be more precise than saying there will be we think, should be sunny in the morning and rain later. Or rain but should clear early in the morning. So we would have to decide on this, on this very flimsy evidence what we would do. But of course when you're a big unit on location and many of the locations were 15, 12, 20 miles away, maybe even 30 miles away from where we were staying. So we would set out at 7 o'clock in the morning, a cavalcade looking like Barnum and Bayley's Circus on the move. And not infrequently they would be right, there would be sunshine, but by the time we were set up and got the shot, it was looking a little cloudy. By the time we got to 12 o'clock, it had clouded over and there was no more bright sunshine. Or conversely we would set out ready to do rain shots because the script was written to give as much variation but once you start a sequence in sun you have to finish it in sun, once you start a sequence in rain you

have to finish it in rain. You can't suddenly in the middle of the sequence have the sun come out, you have to cut to cut. This is a frightfully difficult problem. This is why we were left in October with no hope of there being any usable sunlight with 20 minutes worth of beach scenes left to be done. So we had to find somewhere to do them. And we ended up in South Africa. That I think must be the most difficult, involving the largest amount of money and the largest amount of people too.

Linda Wood: You must have felt you were on a reunion, you have Trevor Howard and John Mills

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: An awful lot of them are dead. I think John Mills is obviously a survivor but a great many of the people I've worked with aren't here any more.

David Robson: Which film has given you the most pleasure in producing.

Linda Wood: That again is a hard question, I think *Brief Encounter* because we enjoyed it very much. I very much enjoyed *Never Take No For An Answer*, because by that time I knew Italy fairly well. I spoke a little Italian and I loved Assisi and we spent 3 months in Assisi and then we were in Rome and I knew the little boy was wonderful, whether we got it right or not, but I knew he was beguiling us altogether and a wonderful natural actor. So I think I enjoyed that very much. I would think those would be the two. Also it was very nice, it opened in that cinema which doesn't exist any more in Coventry St., I remember sitting in the theatre, we had a lot of difficulties, and we had difficulties with the Italian partners and squabbles, we had an English director and a French director, so it wasn't a very happy atmosphere from that point of view, but the places we made the film in were very nice and happy and I had a very nice sort of right hand man, an Italian, I liked very much who had been with me on *Shadow Of The Eagle* too. So all in all I liked that very much, but then sitting in the theatre I suddenly realised for the first time, much more sharply than any other picture, how much the audience was liking it. And how they were ignoring some of the mild technical crudities which we were stuck with. And they were really loving it and really moved. And I suddenly thought how nice, it had come off, it is alright despite all our problems and all our difficulties and not frightfully good sound in certain places, and one thing and

another, they are interested, they are loving it, it's come off.

Linda Wood: Did you have a favourite studio

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I suppose on the whole I would have to say Pinewood because I lived there, it was my home as well for two years. And also I met my first wife there. So yes, I think Pinewood be my favourite.

Linda Wood: Just one final question, if you could have your time again would you change course at all

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think the only thing if I had to have it again, I would be very reluctant to have it again I must say, but that has nothing to do with the question you're asking, I think the only thing that I would do, I would be less slothful than I have been in the years from 1952 until today. I would have tried harder to work, I would have given up some of the things, I liked Italy very much, in the end I got to like it enormously and we lived in great comfort, during the first years of the 70s I had a great frightfully romantic castle outside Rome which was very nice, which I enjoyed very much as a sort of weekend house. So all those things, and it is a lovely climate, it is the kind of climate where you rather give up. I always said to myself there is no reason why I shouldn't make films in Italy. But I never did, I never got an Italian, never tried to finance, find the finance for it, I was too happy enjoying myself. That is the only difference I would make. I would be less slothful than I was. The happiest long period I had in films was making the quota quickies. Those two years were the most satisfying and the happiest because I learned I could do it. I was of some use in a business that I loved, that suited me down to the ground.

Linda Wood: I think you've produced some marvellous films.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I've been very lucky, I've worked with some marvellous people, that's the essence to being a producer. Today you have to find the money.

Linda Wood: During the 50s money was very tight, so it wasn't surprising that you weren't able to do

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: Well, that is partly so, but it is also I don't understand the business of, I think I have one great difficulty, I never could solicit money for a

film without saying the one thing that would mean I wouldn't get the money. You must face the fact that the film business is a total gamble. Nobody knows until the film hits an audience the extent of its success or failure. It is simply your guesswork, it is simply, it is really what Noel Coward said to us at the very beginning, he said I write what will please and entertain me, you see. If I'm wrong I will have failures, and eventually if I have enough I'll go out of the business. But it is no good trying to make what you think an audience would like because you've seen something they did like and you're going to make something like it. It is no good doing that. You have to do what you yourself would like to see in the cinema, would be pleased to see and would welcome and would be enthusiastic about. And if you're right, often enough you have less difficulty than most people do in raising money. But if you're wrong you'll have great difficulty in raising money. And I think that I never tried hard enough.

Also I think I had a slight handicap, I don't think that the Americans think that an Englishman with a voice like mine can know anything about their market. It is a curious fact, as far as I know in all the years I've been in and observed the film industry, the Americans in the days when they had producers, not when producers went to them and said I've got some money, will you give me some more, they never had an Englishman under contract as a producer except one, Tolly de Grunwald. And Tolly de Grunwald took with him, and they knew he took with him, the playwright, Terrence Rattigan. And that's one of the reasons they took him. And he was with Metro but he never made a picture in Hollywood. He only made pictures over here for them. He is the only person, English person. They will take English directors, they didn't for years unless they went to Hollywood and had been there from the beginning like Saville and Hitchcock and people like that who were taken there for a special reason, until Carol Reed made his pictures after the war and David made his pictures, the Americans wouldn't ever take an English director. Eddy Goulding was an Englishman, he was an Englishman who lived in Hollywood all his life. That was alright, he was one of them. But that somebody from England, and I think producers I simply think they thought there was no way that they could know. I was never able to get money from American companies with any ease at all. Paramount turned me down for *Romeo And Juliet*, we got it for quite different

reasons. So it has been more difficult for me to get money.

Linda Wood: Also your films have tended to be quality films.

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: That's another thing. I never could make a film that didn't have something, some sort of a something to say. And what I wanted to do all the time was to make films, my idea would have done would have been only made films that in some way did something to enlarge the minds or inform the minds of the people who saw it. When I first started in the films, and in the 20s before I was in them I hoped that films could, when they found a voice could do for human thinking what books had done. And on that score they haven't done very well. But they have certainly made some films that have made some difference. But I thought we might have a much better informed, much better educated, much better understanding public because of films, it hasn't quite worked out that way.

Linda Wood: Perhaps things may change

Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan: I think there are signs. What could be more wonderful than *Driving Miss Daisy*. It gets the Oscar. It couldn't have happened unless there was some feeling.

*My Left Foot* got the best film and the best actress and they're both admirable films and they're both about two aspects of the human condition, they have something to say about people and about race and about handicap. Wonderful films for that reason, so I think there is a sign that it's happening. That *Driving Miss Daisy* won over *Born On the Fourth of July* is to me little short of a miracle because on paper *Born On 4<sup>th</sup> July* was absolutely everything that America would want to hear. A very well made film too. Fine

Linda Wood: Thank you very much.

[END]