FORMAN

TAPE 1 - SIDE 1 - RECORDED ON 11TH MAY 1989

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DF I was born in the lowlands of Scotland in Dumfrieshire in the Parish which had the remarkable name of Kirkpatrick Joxta near the Village of Beattock. The house was a biggish country scottish house called Craigielands, and I grew up there in a very remote kind of society enclosed in a family circle. I was taught by my Grandmother, my Father and Mother. I did not go to school until I was fifteen and we had eight children in the nursery and in the schoolroom, I suppose four or five servants in the house and a small Scottish estate. It was a closed community and a very strange life compared with what we have today.

JT Was your Father the Minister there?

DF Off and on throughout his life he was a Minister but never really seriously, he went into Holy Orders after he left Cambridge. Just to go back a little he proposed marriage to my Mother when she was fourteen and he was eighteen. Her Father thought this was a little premature, so he sent him off to America, San Francisco for some years and when he came back he decided he would go into Holy Orders, went to Cambridge by this time he was about twenty-seven, then they were allowed to get married.

DF I think it was nearly ten years after they had been engaged and he went to Loretto School as a Chaplain. The whole family went through Loretto School, one of my Uncles was Headmaster and the Loretto ethic was very deeply embedded in the family. My Father was mildly clerical during his school period.

After that not so much - he preached occasionally in the Church of Scotland and he was a Clerk in Holy Orders in the Church of England but he didn't really feel too choosy about which religion it was.

JT And you lived at Craigielands, Beattock all your young life?

DF Until I was fifteen. I didn't go to England until I was fifteen. Hardly went out of the valley much, went to Edinburgh, dentist and things. I then went to school at Loretto, so I was very much a Scots lad and was brought up to speak the l Scots and had some difficulty in learning the sort of approximation of English that I use now. When I was eight or nine I couldn't speak English at all.

JT You say there were five or six of you in the schoolroom, was that your own family?

DF Five brothers and sisters and two who were adopted. They were cousins and their parents were killed in a car accident so they simply joined into the family, there were eight of us altogether, quite a lot.

And you were born about 1917, were you the first or the middle?

DF Middle, well about the middle, near enough to be comfortable.

JT A wonderful time and place to be born I should think.

DF Well it was so different from today, I mean some of the things that went on were relics from the past. I went out with my Grandmother in a carriage for exercise, she took one child with her each day and conducted a sort of improving conversation with the child, and I was tremendously interested in her and as a teacher she was very good. She had been a school teacher, in Charlotte Square in Edinburgh her Father ran a school which closed when his son ran off with one of the girls.

My Grandmother got her basis as a teacher in Charlotte Square and she taught me things like Hebrew which I didn't really learn much of and Greek which wasn't very successful but scripture, Old Testament history, she was terrific at that and she used to give us a hard time too. By todays standards it was very strange.

JT Was that her family as well?

DF Yes she had lived there since 1880, and she brought up her family between Liverpool and there. Her husband was a farmer's lad from the Lowlands and he went to Liverpool and made a pile in cotton. When he was about thirty-five he had made enough money to buy this house in Scotland and in those days he could leave his office in Liverpool, Bold Street at 4.30 in the afternoon and he could get to the house at Beattock for dinner which he did on Fridays and then went down on Tuesdays and continued to make a lot of money, which the rest of the family gradually spent until I arrived. There is not much left now.

JT Was the place at the bottom of Beattock ?

DF That's right. Beattock station was a place of tremendous interest to us as boys because it had a fleet of tank engines and if a train going North had more than eleven coaches it had to have a tank engine on. If it had all that it could just struggle up on its own. As boys of course, we were very keen to jump on to these engines and get a ride up to the top and come whizzing down again. It took just over forty minutes, so you would get three in a day, if you were lucky.

JT Was your early life a great influence on the whole of the rest of your life or influences that brought you into Film and Television that were going ahead, come

DF I think probably by reaction it did. I mean it was a very holy atmosphere which I didn't find congenial and by the age of eleven I was a raging atheist and the only one in the household. That was a stimulating position to hold. I got hold of the Golden Bough, Frasers Golden Bough and found in there all the attributes of the religion that my elders and betters believed in, in different tribal societies and from then on believed in tribal societies gradually coming to the sensible view that there wasn't any god at all. This was not in tune with the general mode of thought at home.

So I think in that way I became mentally rebellious against convention and then that helped in later years, certainly in journalism.

JT What about going to Loretto School, was that a bit of a shock, I mean as an ignorant Southern man tell me a bit about the school.

DF It was tremendously hardy, it was the first school where you had to wear very few clothes even though it was freezing and have cold baths at six o'clock in the morning and run across a golf link before breakfast. It was murder. But no it didn't bother me because I was very strong and I think a very confident boy by then and I thought it was a terrible school but it didn't bother me. I had quite a good time there I didn't do any school work, but played games and wasted my life with the other boys in an enjoyable fashion but it was not a good school for learning.

JT Can we go back to your family. Was it a tolerant household of your atheism?

DF Well there were different societies and the top society which was my Grandmother and Parents and lots of Uncles and Aunts who kept floating in and out of the house, not tolerant no, I mean they believed in a very stringent form of morality and even in the smallest things you weren't allowed for instance to say "damn" that was a bad word.

Then there was the sort of middle society which was the nursery and the schoolroom where you had your peers, people of your own age and that was a lot more liberal, although the older ones were a bit sniffy, I mean they tended to sort of suck up to the adults by being monitors and prefects but the best society was the servants hall where they were about five or six Scots women and girls and they were quite uninhibited and I had the most agreeable time really, in the servants hall and the chaps that worked on the farm they were my friends and I peeled off from the rest of the family, particularly when my one of my brothers went to school, who was the closest to me, and then I was on my own and spent more time with the estate workers and the servants than I did with the grown-ups and found that on the whole they were more amusing and more congenial.

JT What kind of farm was it?

DF It was 640 acres of mixed arable with a little bit of hill, a very little hill and about 200 acres of woodland. We didn't have any cash crops except animals, we grew beef and blue greys, that is a cross between a Galloway bull and a Ayreshire cow and the sheep we had were Cheviote with a Border Leicester cross and latterly we introduced some Guernseys but they didn't work very well. Every crop was grown to feed the animals, there were six work horses and four or five milk cows and the usual pigs and chickens. But the cash crop was the lambs and the beef animals and your fortune depended upon how good the prices were for lamb, sixteen shillings in those days was okay, 18 shillings was terrific and fourteen shillings was bankruptcy.

It was knife edge stuff, not for us because we were a fairly rich family. It was knife edge for a farmer who was a tenant farmer and his lambs were a few shillings too low, bad, bad news.

JT Was there a bothy?

DF There was a bothy and we had lads down from Glasgow. They came down from the slums of Glasgow, how they were recruited I don't know, it could have been the Salvation Army, it could have been some other kind of beneficial agency of that kind. They turned up, they were

scrubbed, they were given a bath in disinfectant and given fresh clothes. They slept on straw palliasses in the bothy, usually two of them. They lasted perhaps a year or two each and then they disappeared, they didn't last long.

JT Did you go into the bothy?

DF Yes, I spent quite a lot of time in the bothy with the boys, I was not allowed to sleep there I had to sleep in the house, but I did spend quite a lot of time with the boys. There were a bit older than me, they were about sixteen, seventeen and I was about twelve and thirteen.

JT And you had shepherds as well

DF Well the Farmer's family, the Farmer himself did a lot of shepherding, Tom Quiggley, and his son was the head horse keeper. There were in those days eight men working on 640 acres and when I was there last which was about ten years ago Tom Quiggley had died, and his Grandson was running it, but two men were running as much ground and getting a better return on capital employ than eight men got when I was a boy. Of course there was no machinery, it was all horses.

JT Was it a very rough climate there, I mean with the winter and so on?

DF Wet but soft, I mean on the whole the west coast of Scotland takes an awful beating in the way of precipitation the high hills start about where the rain drops. We had one or two hard winters, 1929 we had eight weeks unbroken frost and that was terrific news for us because we were all very keen curlers. But normally it wasn't a hard winter, we had a couple of gales one which cleared a lot of trees down and we had perhaps three really hot summers until I was fifteen but it was usually drizzling, the average was a warm wet drizzly day.

JT Were there a lot of entertainments in the family like curling and skating and so on?

DF The commoner entertainments were, curling was not only the family, curling was the whole community, there were two rinks at Craigielands. My Father skipped the rink number one and the Gamekeeper was back-hand that is the third player, the carpenter was number two and after the age of twelve I got the position of lead which was one of the great glories of my life. The second rink was skipped by the gardener and there were various other characters. I started in the second rink and graduated to the first, it was a terrific day.

When the frost came, on the first day maybe twenty or thirty chaps would turn up when the ice was bearing and you held a thing called the points medal which was a measure

of individual skills. Each individual got so many points, you continued that until the rinks were pretty full and then each farm had it's own rink and there were twenty-four in the Craigielands Curling Club and the next week or three days anyway it was spent in league playing, farm against farm within the Craigielands Club. Then we got onto the next phase which was our Club against Lockerby and then after that we got onto the next phase which was one county against another and the grand climax was the Great Game, the Highlands against the Lowlands which took place on Cobbinshaw Loch and then if you got through that we had the International. That only happened once in my lifetime, the frost lasted as long as that. It was the 1959 frost but it was tremendously exciting.

JT Was this on a loch or on a flooded field?

DF On a loch. Well actually my Grandfather was such a keen curler that he invented two aids to curling, the first one was a stretch of tarmac laid on a flat base and at night if he thought it was going to freeze he got the gardeners to water this and the next morning until the sun got too hot you curled on it for a few hours. It ruined the stones so there were tarmac stones that were scarred and scratched on the bottom.

Then the next phase was he built a concrete rink with four inches of water in it and that froze solid pretty quick and you could curl on that but there was only room for two rinks. Then you had to wait until the loch was bearing and you could get thirty rinks on to the loch easily. It was tremendous.

JT What other games did you play , I mean did you have games inside the family?

DF Well the general convention was that you didn't observe the rules in any game. That is to say you could play golf with a tennis ball and that was thought to be a bit classier than actually playing it by the proper rules on the golf course and if we played croquet we had the hoops very wide, like eighteen inches wide so that you got around quicker and had more fun, we never got through the hoops of the proper size, it took too long.
So most of the games were pretty ad-hoc and pretty scratch.

My two sisters who were the eldest got sort of serious about tennis and things like that when they got into their teens, as children do. But we weren't ever taught games, I never learnt any game at all. I was never taught to shoot, I taught myself to shoot and to fish.

JT When did your music come in, at this stage?

DF Yes very early. My Mother was a good pianist but she didn't sight read, she didn't play any big music but she composed a lot, she wrote songs. We had five pianos and two other keyboard instruments sort of small organs. There were eight of us and there was always a queue and if you were lucky you got in fairly high up and got a decent piano and if you were unlucky you got one of the bottom pianos so one was always fighting for a piano and as you got older and smarter you got the better pianos. You weren't allowed to play the Steinway which was the best, that was only for my Father and Mother but after that there was a sort of pecking order of pianos.

My serious interest started when I was about nine or ten I suppose and people began giving me records and I started listening to them, then I became a fanatical gramophone man and spent every penny I could earn on gramophone records and built up the repertory of my knowledge of music from gramophone records. I inherited some scores from an Uncle and between the scores and the gramophone records I was beginning to have a pretty good grasp of musical forms and structures by the time I went to Loretto which was stamped out of me there.

JT Did you consider or did you seriously think of becoming a professional musician?

DF No. At every point in my academic career - it wasn't really that, it was in a school and university career because I never really passed any exams - I wanted to read music and I wanted to read English Literature and every time I was told about how my Uncles got a First in Classics and I must read Classics and indeed much to my disgust the last two years at Loretto my musical activities were cut down to two hours a week so that I could study Classics, which I didn't do anyway, I mean I didn't do any work on the Classics at all. But I wasn't allowed to practise for more than two hours a week or something like that and I resented that very much and when I got to Cambridge I wanted to read music, but it was too late I was half way through the first year in Classics and I couldn't change.

JT Did going to Cambridge coincide with the beginning of the War or were you there when...?

DF I was there before the War.

JT I see.

DF My last year at Cambridge was the year that led up to it. It was 1939 and I knew in my last year at Cambridge that War was inevitable, it was coming, which made quite a difference to one's general demeanour.

JT Where were you, at Cambridge?

DF Pembroke.

JT Shall we go back to Loretto a bit. Is there anything more to be said about that horrible -

DF Well horrible is the wrong word. It was, I thought a very barbarian place in that it was there was a tremendous emphasis on physical success in football and athletics and cricket and all that which was okay because I was alright at those things but the staff was very poor quality, as it used to be in most public schools I think, they were sort of 'throw outs' rather like the Evelyn Waugh picture of what Schoolmasters were like, you know they were all a bit like that, they weren't drunks, but something had happened to them in the past, one of them had come from New Zealand for reasons best known to himself.

Anyway the staff were pretty poor and I ganged up with

four clever boys, I was easily the furthest behind and luckily for me they had a civilising influence and we did read a lot of books and poetry and listened to a lot of music as a sort of self appointed commune, we had no leadership in the Arts at all which were the things that interested me. Indeed it was pretty much frowned on to be too interested in the Arts.

JT Loretto was a kind of Scottish/English Public School, is that right, or you know it was kind of slightly, it wasn't like George Watsons or ...?

DF Well quite a lot of boys came from London.

JT It was kind of a more English Public School than a Scottish school.

DF More boys came from Scotland than England but there was an English element. The great Headmaster who pioneered the whole thing about sensible dress and physique being more important or as more important mental tuition, his name was Almond, Ian Hutchinson Almond. He was English or his family were English and because of his fame as an educational pioneer, people came from Liverpool, London, God knows where and it was never a day school it was always a boarding school.

I don't like to criticise it too harshly because in it's day it was very like other Scottish schools. I mean I am really talking about the general standard of small public schools I think rather than just Loretto.
I thought they were pretty horrible institutions and I wished that I had never gone to school or had gone to a day school.

JT In those days you didn't really have to sit much of an exam to go to Cambridge, did you, you just went?

DF I didn't sit any exam at all and I got a Scholarship which was because my Father had played rugby for the University, I got my rooms free. You wouldn't believe it possible would you?

JT Not these days.

Shall we start on Cambridge now?

DF Cambridge is really a blank for me, it was not a good period for me, I wasted my time there. I did quite a lot in music, I didn't work.

JT Which year did you go there?

DF I went up in 1936 and came down in 1939, maybe I was a slow developer but I didn't really learn to work or to

concentrate or to direct my energies and attention to anything and so I came down from Cambridge. I had a very nice time. A lot of Highland dancing, a lot of drinking whisky, a lot of playing bridge. A lot of reading but not on the subject I was studying, I made a study of Johnson and I made a study of seven contemporary composers in the music schools. I did nothing whatsoever to do with the academic work I was meant to be doing so I didn't do much of that and failed in my classical exam and then had to take an ordinary degree. I wanted to be a farmer. I was dead keen to get back to the farm, I was crazy about farming.

I decided to take Agriculture and Estate Management and the week before the exams I genuinely had a very bad illness and I got an aegrotat so I am one of the very few people who have got through Cambridge, a B.A. at Cambridge without ever passing a single exam. What a lesson to them all.

JT How conscious were you of the world outside Cambridge?

DF I was conscious, much more than most of them. I was conscious of world politics in the sense of Central European politics and Germany and Nazis. I was not particularly conscious of the United States and the Far East but European politics did pre-occupy our attention and also I began to study military history. I began to get interested in the actual practicalities of fighting

because it was so obvious that one would have to be fighting soon and some of my friends were in the Spanish Civil war and Tom Winteringham of the International Brigade, I met him.

He came to lecture or something at Cambridge once and he set me thinking about minor tactics in Infantry warfare which did become my pre-occupation in the early years of the war.

JT Was this your personal interest, or was there a family tradition?

DF Absolutely none, it couldn't of been less military. No-one fought at all. It wasn't an interest in military things so much as a knowledge of the Germans were much better than we were and nobody seemed to be caring about this too much and therefore it was surely important to try and stir people up to recognise that in a certain way, in Infantry tactics we were antedilusion compared to the Germans. Well I always thought I would be in the Infantry, I had always wanted to be in the Infantry. I thought it was the place one ought to be.

JT When did you leave Cambridge, and did you go straight into the Army?

DF I left Cambridge in June 1939 and I went to Holland and I got a job with a shipping firm through the Loretto Headmaster. I mean I wasn't qualified for any job, God knows, so it was a dead-end job, and I was in Holland when War was about to break out and my Boss there had me in and said "Britain is going to be defeated in this War and I offer you two options, one is to get on a boat for Batavia which is leaving tomorrow morning and the other is get back to London as fast as you can". So I obviously took the second option, pretty lucky I did too!

JT And then?

DF Then, I was frightfully ill for about a fortnight but I was tried to join up, I wanted to get into the Argylls because a lot of my friends at Cambridge, I had had a very strong connection with Highland dancing and Highland balls and Highland regiments, during the Cambridge period I was President of the Caledonian Club and I was a dancer, I danced a lot, Highland dancing. So my friends were all going into the Argylls and I thought I would like to go into the Argylls and I got into the Argylls and I went to an OCTU at Dunbar.

JT This was the winter of '39.

DF Winter of '39-'40 and passed out of that and got to the Argylls, became an Officer in the Argylls, that was when I started to work, I was determined to be a top class Infantry Soldier and every single manual I learnt by heart, I could strip a Bren gun quicker than anyone, I could fire more rapidly and I really put myself out to be a soldier and I found I could do it and that was the first time I had really mastered anything and beaten all the competition. From then on I was a dedicated soldier for the one good reason that I very much wanted to win the War.

JT How did you find the Army when you got into it, did you find it, how did you find it?

DF I found it amateurish and shocking. The general shape of an Infantry battalion like the one I joined was to have three or four dead-beat regular soldiers at the top and a lot of territorial officers below and I was disgusted by the lack of professionalism because by that time I had become a dedicated soldier. So I was not happy.

JT Where were you?

DF Well I was in the Argylls, I started off in Stirling Castle for about a couple of weeks which is the depot, I was then posted to the Eleventh Argylls which was a fairly newly

raised regiment, they sprang up like mushrooms at that time 1940 this was and it was stationed quite near Stirling and Callendor and places like that.
I remember the fall of France sitting in the mess and one of these old dead-beats, the Colonel, a chap called Frankie Elliot, in the dead silence after the news he said "Ah" he said "so the Frogs have packed it in bloody good thing too"! That was the sort of approach of the elder brethren, actually I think of them as old men they were probably in their forties.

No it was a dreadful state of affairs I mean the Army hadn't shaken itself out at all, I was lucky I got a mobile patrol which was two of those yellow AA motor bikes and side cars, you probably don't remember them you young chaps and my own MG which I paid £15 for and was just mobile, and two Nortons and this mobile patrol shot about in the valley of the Forth and Clyde doing I know not what. But at least I felt I was doing something, I wasn't sitting around in Barracks and doing nothing at all.

As I say it was a dreadful scene and all the time one knew how efficient and effective the German war machine was and how it was working.

JT Did the social life of the Regiment go on?

DF No, there was social life but it was mainly alcoholic, pure drinking sometimes there were women there but I don't think one noticed after about 10 o'clock whether there were women there or not it was very alcoholic the Highland Regiment.

JT So how did it develop after that then?

DF Well after that we were sent to the North East corner between round about Banff and I was still discontented with the state of affairs.

JT This would be the summer of '40.

DF Late summer of '40 and started to find kindred spirits in other parts of the Army who shared my discontent. It wasn't actually a secret society or a mutiny or anything like that but one did know of certain people who were also disgusted by the general low standard of Infantry equipment and Infantry training and we also collected films, we got some German films from the Army cinematograph Corps the AKC, we got some Russian films.

JT What kind of films?

DF The German films were like things like 'Victory in the West'.

JT You got copies?

DF Yes we got a copy of that. We got it for studying, I mean you could, only no-one bothered except staff officers, looked at it but we managed to get one and passed it around from one battalion to another. We got a copy of the Polish one I can't remember what that one was called, we got three Russian films which were very interesting of Infantry tactics and gradually .....

JT Were these technical films or propaganda films?

DF Propaganda films, all of them. 'Victory in the West' is a marvellous film, I mean a really terrifying film.

JT What about the Polish films?

DF I forget the Polish one, what was it called, 'Wings Over'..... ?

Well anyway, we were then moved from the North East corner to Shetland and I had nearly two years in Shetland and this is where we did actually form something worthwhile which was called the 'Battle School Movement'. It was led by a chap called Lionel Wigram who was the solicitor who sold off all the coal mines in South Wales for the Crighton Stuart family, he was a brilliant man and he was passionately anti-German, thoroughly Jewish, Jewish family.

JT In the Regiment was he?

DF No, he was one of these people I corresponded with, he was the Chief and he persuaded the General of his Army which was at that time stationed in the middle of England to set up a battle school which was to revise and reform Infantry tactics, it was set up at Barnard Castle. That was the sort of Mecca of the revivalist movement to try and get British Infantry tactics into some shape and there were about eight of us and I was appointed Commandant of the Battle School in Orkney in Shetland defences which was placed at a place near Sullom Voe actually where all the oil is now and this was what I wanted beyond anything else.

I got together perhaps ten wonderful officers and the first aim of the Battle School was to make people fit because they weren't fit. We had to go 40 miles in 24 hours and things like that carrying heavy weights, to use the weapons properly and to develop an entirely new system of minor tactics which we did with great vigour. I would go to Barnard Castle perhaps twice a year to pick up the latest fashion in thought and then we moved from .....

JT Did you get people from other Regiments through it?

DF Yes we did, the Orkney and Shetland Defences was a brigade and we had Black Watch and I think we had one

other Highlander regiment anyway, yes we did, we served the whole brigade. The we moved to the mainland Bonar Bridge and continued there, we used live ammunition but we never killed anyone, we did hurt a lot and we got into some trouble for the number of casualties. But it was an effective school and after a while I felt I really could not go on teaching at Battle School without actually having been in battle.

Now there hadn't been any fighting up until but by this time North Africa became active and in 1942 early '42 I tried to get out and I did get out in '43 to North Africa.

JT As an Argyll?

DF Well I was posted as an Argyll but you know what it's like, people all around you from all different regiments.

JT Was this on purpose?

DF No I simply said I must see some active service so this was duly registered and I was sent to Lancashire and I hung around for a week with a lot of other drafts of men and officers and eventually put on a troop ship, went to Newfoundland went from Newfoundland almost to the bottom of Brazil and then back to the Mediterranean and landed in, you know what the Conveys were doing,

picking up ships and avoiding. Finished up at Philipville in Algeria and found things pretty bad there, I mean it was fairly messy, we had by that time moved right along the top of North Africa. I took six hundred men by train from Philipville to Bizerta and couldn't stop them lying on the roof, it is very difficult to get discipline on a train with twenty coaches and two officers, and they kept getting knocked off at the tunnels and killed. There was no way of stopping this you could tell them but you couldn't stop it. I don't know how many we lost but it was double figures.

We got to Bizerta and all the Germans were rounded up on Cap Bon.

JT This was in the late Summer of '43 was it?

DF That's right and then I got onto an American tank landing craft with about one hundred soldiers and went across to Taranto. We played poker for about four nights without stopping and slept for an hour every now and then but it was a solid poker session and we were quite pleased because we stripped the Americans of all the money they had. We never spent it because there was nothing you could spend it on.

I landed in Taranto and then desperately tried to find the Argyll Regiment I was aiming for, the Eighth Argylls but

alas was posted as Second in Command to the Royal West Kent Regiment which was next door to them because they had got no Majors and the Argylls had too many Majors.

JT What rank were you then?

DF Major. I had been a Lieutenant Colonel running the battle school, and went down one rank to go abroad to get a bit of action and so I was Major in Second in Command but the terrible part of the story is about to begin because Lionel Wigram this guy who was really the sort of leader in thought and action on the reform Infantry tactics had given a lecture after Sicily to a lot of senior officers including Montgonmery in which he was bold enough to be critical. We pointed out that the main problem of our British Infantry was that they always ran away, which is absolutely true. The biggest problem an Infantry Officer faces is to stop people from running away, and he expounded various ideas about how to stop people from running away.

This greatly annoyed General Montgonmery he refused to believe soldiers ever ran away - this was quite contrary to the evidence - anyway Lionel was demoted and was sent out to my battalion as junior to me. I was Second in Command, he was a Major and Paul Bryan who became later a Minister in the Conservative Government and remained a friend all my life, he was the Commanding Officer I was the Number 2 and there

was Lionel turned up from the Battle School very bruised and upset as Number 3.

Then Lionel and I started organising guerrillas and we thought we could do more with guerrillas than with conventional troupes. It was a thinly spread line from the Sangro across to Cassino, I did a month's really dreadful patrolling on the Sangro which was a gruesome operation and after that I didn't really see why we should put rather ill suited young English and Scots boys working through the Italian countryside when the natives could do it a lot better so we recruited a hundred or so. We gave them boots, rifles and greatcoats and they started doing the patrolling.

I went with them quite a lot so did Lionel and then it snowed and we travelled on skis or on ponies. We were quite a long way behind enemy lines and Lionel got too venturesome. By this time Paul had left he had gone to visit the wounded in North Africa and I was in command of the battalion. Lionel wanted to do a fairly big attack on a hill village because he thought there were some rather interesting troops there who could give us important information and I agreed to this. Lionel was killed, all the British soldiers that went with him were killed and half the guerrillas so that was a blow from which it took me quite a time to recover.

Then we went across to Cassino which was an ugly scene too and I got half way up the hill to the castle and got my leg shot off and came back. And after that it was a much more peaceful War.

JT Were you shipped back to Britain.

DF Yes I don't remember much about it, I was in hospital in Caserta for a long time then I was put on a private yacht which had been converted into a hospital ship but either there were no nurses or they were all seasick and we had no-one to look after us, there were about eight of us. We had to look after each other and I think we came into Bristol and I know the first thing I remember was arriving in Worcester a hospital called Ronkswood and I became compos mentas again and gradually recovered.

JT This would be by what date?

DF We are now in April 1944. I was wounded in the last week of March '44 so this would be the end of April beginning of May I should think. I am not too sure of the time.

JT Were you operated on on the spot or were ....

DF Yes, I was amongst Indians and had a hell of a time getting down because we were being shelled and it was, precipice. My batman a big guy called Rutherford he was about 6'2", tried to find people to carry me down but couldn't, we would get three Indians and we would get a few yards and then a shell would fall and they would all run away so it took about he says twelve hours to get me down. At the bottom there was an Indian field hospital and they sawed off the bit of leg there and had a second operation when I got to Caserta.

JT Now can I just ask you just one question, which you need not answer, was losing your leg something that in actual fact changed the course of your life because it pushed you into desk jobs or didn't it have that effect.

DF Absolutely, I immediately recognised that I wasn't going to farm, it was always my aim and object to farm in Scotland and in those days a farmer was an active man he didn't sit with a computer as he does today. I reckoned that if I couldn't be as active as the guys who were working for me on the farm then farming wasn't for me so I then decided that I wasn't going to farm I would have to find something else and that was when I started to move towards films.

JT Were you in hospital quite a long time?

DF I should think I was out of hospital by August/September about then, September, six months.

JT Did you go back into the army then?

DF Yes I did and I was a still a passionate soldier I mean I was absolutely besotted with the idea of reforming our Infantry tactics so Paul Bryan, the man I mentioned as my Commanding Officer, had an Officers' Training Unit in Bournemouth and I went to join him there. We were joined by the Consultant Psychologist to the Army, Brigadier Stephenson who I saw a couple of weeks ago at the age of ninety, and he and I set about writing a manual for army training and army tactics and that kept me going for a year. It was called the 'Principles and Practice of Good Instruction' and I think after six months they junked it.

JT Good preparation for your future life.

DF Absolutely.

JT So that would be, when you finished that, that would be the end of '45 was it?

DF In 1945 I went out to India.

JT It was just after writing the training manual. I hadn't quite finished it I was still editing it - it was a hell of a big thing, two volumes and it had to be right, and I was still picking away at it but then I had this wonderful chance to go to India and to hand over or to assist in handing over the Officer Training Unit at Dehra Dun (which was the sort of Sandhurst of India) from the British Army to the Indian Army. I didn't want to pass that up, I was still on crutches and I had whooping cough but I got on the plane with my Sergeant in Southampton. It was a sea plane, and I got to India ten days later.

JT But the War was finished.

DF The war in Europe was finished, Japan was still going.

DF After I had been discharged from the Army I picked up with Fred Majdaiany who was subsequently the film critic for the Mail and for many years and we went together, we had a limited amount of money left and stayed in an Officers' Club where you were allowed to stay for forty-eight hours. But our combined wishes ensured that we actually stayed there for seven months, I think it cost half a crown week. We had our gratuities, if I remember rightly it was £28.

JT Was that the gratuity £28?

DF I had more than that over £100 because of my service in India and I hadn't spent a lot of my money because in India you couldn't spend it, so I was fairly well off. As the year wore on the money ran out and Fred used to type a notice of a Film every night and send it to a different newspaper and I suppose about August he struck gold and the Mail asked him to go and see them and they gave him the job. Suddenly we were rich and like a good friend he shared his income with me. Meanwhile I was trying to get a job in films.

JT Denis, the first thing I remember of you was an article in Documentary Newslist by you I think, about training films or..

DF Well you have got a better memory than I have.

JT Before you came into films.

DF Quite possible.

JT I think it was when you were still in the Army.

DF I probably was still in the Army. Because I was of course, interested in films it started in the Army in Shetland actually. I planned certain Battle School exercises and they were enormously elaborate and they took a lot of time and money and I said to the Brigade Headquarters "Why the hell don't we make a film of these exercises, because they would get three quarters of the value of the exercise by looking at the film" so they said "fine, you write the script", so you know nothing daunted I wrote the script.

The film was never made. It was a terrible script but from then on I became interested in the use of film and got involved with the Army Kinematograph Corps. They were making films like 'Officers and Men' with star casts - David Niven - Peter Ustinov - when I was writing this Instruction Manual I got involved with them and the whole business of Army training films and that's when I would of written the article I am sure.

JT You mean with the people of the AKS?

DF I never belonged to it. I remember Eric Ambler was the guy I knew.

JT Yes and Kimmings and Leedcock were in one of the Units.

DF Yes.

JT Carol Reid

DF Carol Reid, he directed 'Officers and Men' and 'The New Lot', well it was the same no 'The New Lot' started as an instruction film and finished up as a feature film. I was getting interested in films. I said to myself actually whilst I was in hospital "What do you want to do?" and the answer was "I want to make films".

JT What kind of films?

DF I was thinking of documentary films and instruction films because I started writing scripts and...

JT What were the scripts about?

DF Disability. I thought that I had one plus which was that I knew about disability personally and I had travelled the country usually hitch-hiking, getting lifts from Army lorries and went to hospitals and simply bulldozed my way in - sometimes showing training credentials - to talk to people who were disabled particularly the blind, I got very interested in the blind the difference between unsighted persons who were born unsighted, people who were unsighted during childhood and people who were unsighted during the War and I wrote quite a lot about that in articles for the Army, and for 'Blesmag' which is the journal for disabled people and I wrote a script which was really my first contact job with the whole of the documentary world because I sent it to Edgar.

JT This was the script.

DF I sent this script to Edgar. Anstey none other, Edgar was tremendously nice to me I mean it was a dreadful script, I mean now I wouldn't read beyond four pages of it, but anyway Edgar was terribly nice to me he talked about the script as if it was serious item which of course it wasn't. Some of it was serious and some of the actual research and facts were of interest to him but the film itself was ghastly.

He tried to find me a job and from then on as Madge was tapping away, I was writing dreadful scripts and Madge was writing rather a good film notices but I never got anywhere, no-one showed any interest in them except Edgar and then I got a message at the Officers' Club in London saying I was to ring MGM, so I rang MGM and Edgar had got me a job as some Assistant Publicity Officer or something. I went along there and got the job starting on Monday, I started on Monday and by 12 o'clock a notice came round saying the London office was going to be closed. So I held that job for four hours.

Then I went to see, this was a bit of old boys stuff I went to see Brenden Bracken because Brenden Bracken had some sort of passionate interest in public schools, very strange.

JT Was he ex-Minister of Information.

DF He was Minister of Information.

DF My Uncle had been Headmaster of a public school, Loretto and Brenden Bracken had known him very well and he had this passion for public schools, God knows why. He went to Sedbergh or said he did, he told so many lies no-one ever knew where he had been or where he was born or whose son he was and Bernard Sendall later of the IBA ushered me in, he was Brenden's number one and Brenden had about one minute forty seconds to spare for me, he said "You want to get into films?" and I said "Yes I want to get into films" "Okay" he said "I'll fix that" and he picked up the phone and he said "Get me Alex Korda " and they got him Alex Korda and he said "Alex, I have got a poor fella here who had his foot shot off in the War would you give him a job please?" and he put the phone down.

So I was then told to go around and see Alex Korda of course it was absolutely hopeless, I sat outside Alex's office for maybe two or three weeks saying "I am Denis Forman, I am the chap that Brenden Bracken sent round. People kept saying "what was your name, who was it, Brenden Bracken, whose he?" anyway nothing happened. After about a fortnight suddenly Alex himself came out and shook me by the hand and said "You must come and have dinner with me tonight, I have heard all about you".

Anyway I went to dinner there were twelve people there and I was the furthest away from Alex and the people next to me were absolutely potty, one was a trapeze artist God knows why he was there, another was a make-up girl. After dinner that was the end and I never saw Alex again. So I went back, back to Brendon Bracken and said "I want to see you again" and Brendon invited me in and I said "I didn't get a job from Alex, I want a job in films" so he turned to Bernard and said "Couldn't we get him a job in the MOI?" and Bernard said "I'll see what I can do", sure enough about a couple of months later I got an interview with Helen de Moulpied. Philip Mackie and I passed the interview and we started work together in a little office, quarter the size of this, facing each other across the desk, like this and that's how I got into films.

JT That was already the central office.

DF COI, yes I mean Brenden Bracken had gone. It was an entirely new world.

JT And it was a world that you wanted?

DF Yes, I wanted to make factual documentary films and by this time the Army orientation had moved toward a social one as it did with many of us. What one was interested in was Britain after the War or that the War was over, all that Army stuff you could forget.

JT How did you find this Central Office of information?

DF It was a new experience, it was much less efficient in the Army. In the Army you could disregard the paperwork, it plodded along behind you and you could lose it or burn it and nobody minded too much. As an institution my first impression was that the COI was dogged by files, they came in by the cart load every morning they were on your desk, again it was an antediluvian system of working in that you had everything on a file about a certain subject and the very last thing was the thing was the thing you had to read. Now any inquisitive person began at the top therefore it took you an hour to reach the memo that you had to act on. But seriously, I think the whole system was crazy and the fact that you couldn't move hand nor foot until certain persons had signed in certain places and there was no feeling of line management. There was some feeling of democracy with the line managers doing their best to get us a little bit of elbow room to make films. That was one impression. I liked the people very much and they were a very good bunch, both the documentary film maker, I liked some of them not all of them but the actual people inside the COI, the senior officers in the COI were likeable people. There was Jack Beddington, there was Ronnie Tritton, then there were lots of Production Central Officers at the same level as myself like Philip Mackie, Peter Shaw, Marie Bowen, they were all nice people I mean they were there for to do good, they were not there for reasons of ambition. I wouldn't say it was drudgery, but it was not glamorous work in any sense you were a long way away from the actual film making bit.

The interface with the bureaucracy was on your left-hand side and the interface with the film people was on your right-hand side.

Third Person

And who were they, was John Grierson there?

DF Yes Grierson hadn't arrived when I did but he appeared later on. I mean the people that I had most traffic with, people like Paul Rotha, Humphrey Jennings, Rod Baxter and Kay Mander, oh I could go on, I mean Basil was in and out the whole time Basil Wright and John Taylor. Alex Shaw I think was in charge of at that moment or Basil was. Each Company had two or three people you got to know very well, Donald Alexander, Budge Cooper and people like that and it depended which films you were responsible for, you got to know throughout the course of a big documentary film, you got to know the producer and director pretty well and that was enjoyable. That was really enjoyable.

Third Person

What was the financial side of all this when, did the money for these films come from the COI?

DF Yes.

Third Person

So that you really held the power to a certain extent.

DF We hadn't had any power we were middle men. The power resided in a man called Oliver Watson who was Head of Finance

and every film project had to be submitted through Finance and be approved and the debates of the budget, the amount to be spent, went on for hours sitting around a table, trying to cut it down here and trying to cut it down there and of course it was pretty stupid because they had no control over expenditure once the film was commissioned.

So you get someone like Rotha and there was nothing you could do about it. There was no financial control and no check once the film had been authorised by the COI. So people - I don't say they did this deliberately - once a budget was approved it was a licence to spend money. If you spent too much the COI would try and get it back from you but in the end they couldn't, there was nothing they could do. I thought the financial control system was absolutely potty. Again, no line management. You had on the one hand the finance department saying "Yes you can spend £5,000" you then said to your own unit "Right you can spend £5,000" the unit goes and spends £6,000 and you have got no power at all.

JT The other snag was, if I can put in a word here was that you didn't, the films didn't start with you they started with the ...

DF With the departments.

JT With the departments like the Ministry of Agriculture and so on. It was a thoroughly bad set up.

DF Thoroughly bad. A Ministry would come on stream with a list of the films they wanted to make in a year and you could say to them "Well look half of these are potty, you couldn't make a film about this, I mean you couldn't make a film about the binomial theorem. That is not for us - take that to a book". But the ones that they did want to make were usually of much lower priority than the ones that should have been made and again we were powerless as John said to initiate, there are a few areas where the departments worked well - like Helen worked well with Jacquetta Hawkes in the Ministry of Education and the Home Office was pretty good. But otherwise it was a sort of shopping list of the department's requirements that they thought they might manage to satisfy through film instead of a really imaginative look at what the film could of done for the country at that time. So the money was badly spent.

Third Person

Who was the audience?

DF Two audiences. One was a non-theatrical audience the COI had built up a number of mobile vans and also static projectors which showed films in village halls, factory canteens and places like that, the figures I can't give you but they are there and they are substantial. Some films were made for

theatrical release and actually my job after the first few months was the monthly theatrical release for the cinemas which the cinemas had agreed with the Government they would show so every cinema had to show it. It was twenty minutes to begin with and then came down to ten. Those were the two audiences.

JT Can I put a piece in here. It went back to the winding up of the Ministry of Information, Basil was on the Committee with Radcliffe and various other people and they drew up a plan for the future Government production in this country based on the National Film Board Canada and it was agreed, the whole thing was agreed that this was the way it should be done. We should have a budget, and decide which films should be made etc. And Basil picked up the Times one morning and found out that they had double crossed him and it was not to be a films department, such as the BBC might be which was independent of everything but it was to be under the Central Office of Information and that was the fatal mistake. I got the catalogue of the Canadian National Film Board thing the other day and it is absolutely incredible they made 7,000 films and the present catalogue is 1,000 films. They won 300 international awards in fifty years, this is the difference between an organisation set up specifically set up for making films and the other one which was a hotch potch of this, that and the other, would you agree with that?

DF Absolutely, yes I would. That was the Radcliffe Report wasn't it.

JT The other mistake was of course that someone decided to build a film studio and the last thing they wanted was a film studio to make documentary films. You didn't want 150 staff to make documentaries, carpenters and plasterers and so on.

DF That was Crown Film Unit you mean, of which you became Head.

JT Yes.

Third Person

I am just wondering when you were in this desk job did you hanker after being a Director yourself or, had you set your line firmly ahead that what you were doing was what you wanted to do.

DF I don't know, I mean it is difficult question to answer I always assumed that sooner or later I would be Director, I am 71 now and I am not a Director. I suppose, I started then and have since then worked through people who are producers and directors and writers rather than standing on the floor and doing it myself but I have always wanted a very close involvement, part of a team, not so much hands on but being a central figure in the team, not always the leading figure I mean quite often I have been bashed over the head by other people. But the actual direction, I am not sure I sometimes I think I wish I had done it and sometimes I think perhaps I am lucky not to have done it. Writing I think would have been nearer.

JT At some point in your career Mr John Grierson arrived?

DF Yes he did. I remember you saying, John Taylor saying quite a lot about a second coming and I think we have to be honest and say that the second coming was a terrible disappointment. He was a stimulating man and I used to sit where you are sitting now Stephen the other side of his desk and listen to him for an hour and he didn't draw breath. It was really nothing to do with the job you were doing and when he did address his mind to the job that you were doing it was unfocused, he no longer had any clear objectives and didn't descend to the practical level of suggesting what kind of films and what sort of jobs. Occasionally he would say that we ought to make a film about football. Well it was quite impossible, there was no ministry for football there was no way of making a film about football, there was no money from football. He would say this for quite a long time and a file would build up about the need to make a film on football.

Third Person

What was his actual position then?

DF Controller of Films Division. I honestly don't think with the best will in the world that in his second coming he contributed in saving the scene that John has described and

help to make the Government film making machine something significant and worthwhile, he certainly didn't do that.

JT In fact really he did the opposite didn't he?

DF Yes he did. But he was still a wonderful guy to talk to remained that right up until the end and then he drifted off to Group Three making low budget feature films and then he found his own length again of course with the STV series "This Wonderful World" where he did have a success I think.

Third Person

That was considerably later was it?

DF Yes, but he lay fallow a long while.

JT It was a very bad patch wasn't it for him, I mean he was brilliant before the War and I talked with all of them about it and they seemed to think that he worked himself out during the War and was more or less forced by the time he got there, but he was a great pusher-on of people, wasn't he? I mean he would say "You must do better" and so on and however chaotic he was he did tend to.....

DF He stimulated people, he stimulated me, no question.

JT You always seemed to have a kind I don't know what the right word is - but a good thought for him.

DF I always found him a very congenial and stimulating person but I couldn't honestly give him top marks for reorganising the COI or bringing any real benefit to the COI in that particular period. I think he was probably to some degree demoralised by the terrible experiences he had in part of the spy trials too, I think that must have been a factor in it, the Canadian spy trials.

JT That is what the others think.

DF They think that too? But it was a strange period and it passed very quickly, I mean we are talking about a span as far as I am concerned of only two and a half years, three years. I would like to say that there were interesting relics from the past in the COI, there was Jimmy Davidson who had been a cameraman and a famous cameraman and he had now relapsed into being in charge of technical appliances and there used to be a little drinking school every night next to the COI in Baker Street which Jimmy Davidson presided over and he was the first there I should think 5.30 pm, did the pubs open at 5.30 pm? and he was the last out I should think 10.30 pm and people came and went but Jimmy was the string on which the beads, and he told story after story after story some of them I dare say true but certainly not all of them true and it was the sort of club and collecting point for, not only for the COI workers but for people who made films, people up from Crown people in from the documentary units and if you wanted to launch a theory or suggest how a film might be made that was the place, that was the club.

Third Person

Can I just ask you one thing, it was around about this time you got married didn't you?

DF You are absolutely right after some initial reluctance Helen agreed to marry me and I think we were pretty artful in that it wasn't noted within the COI, they were really surprised when the news broke and I remember Ronnie being absolutely thunderstruck. Because I was her Number Two we thought it terribly important that it shouldn't appear that it was a special relationship so she used to go out with Philip Mackie a lot to try and disguise what was going on but yes we were married and then she went to Crown because she couldn't stay, so I got her job.

JT Grierson pushed everyone each way. His great thing was moving people around like a chessboard you know which was really rather pointless especially with Helen but I can remember one incredible evening with you and Helen and Tina Peters and Burgess Meredith.

DF Oh God drinking brandy! The girls had to pour the brandy into their shoes because Burgess was drinking so much. We couldn't find him the next morning, we couldn't find him anywhere. "The Yank comes back" the film was called and we simply couldn't find him, he didn't turn up for lunch.

JT It cost Crown £250 to get the flat he had redecorated when he left because he was into painting at the time, and the walls were all painted with oil paints with pictures.

DF I remember him that night, I remember that his head got lower and lower and lower until actually you thought he was sound asleep because his head was on the table but wasn't asleep he was still talking he was still telling jokes but you couldn't actually hear them, he was going on like a very low level speaker.

JT And all the way through that he was pursuing gorgeous Gussie, the tennis star.

DF That's right, Gussie.

JT Why did you leave COI had you had enough of it?

DF Yes I felt the frustration that a lot of people felt, money and time were being wasted in making pretty ordinary films. It was Grierson who sought me out and said that "I have put you up for the Directorship of the BFI" and I said "What's that?" and he explained to me what it was and he said "I think you should take it" and I said "Well I don't know, I hadn't thought about this" and then I found out there was a guy called Oliver Bell and a secretary called Dickinson and I thought something could be done with BFI. I went to talk to Cecil King who was the Chairman and I saw an opening for something that one could do as an individual as opposed to sitting getting files off from Oliver Watson, saying "agreed" on them. So I went for the job and got it.

Third Person

It was quite a small organisation then?

DF It was yes, it was more concerned with schools and education and a certain amount with film societies, but very limited. 'Sight and Sound' was a sort of academic journal and was unreadable. Then I found out that Oliver Bell and Dickinson were both crooks and they had been you know spending the Institute's money and all that had to be sorted out. I quite enjoyed that.

JT It was a pretty desperate organisation when you went, when you were took over.

DF It was chronic, it had one good man, Ernest Lindgren, who was the curator of the National Film Archive and he was a purist, he believed passionately in preserving every film that existed. He could only raise a farthing for every million pounds that was needed and so he was constantly putting in his requests for budgets which were astronomically bigger than our resources but he was a good man and stuck at it until he died. He laid the foundation of the National Film Archive in a very narrow academic rather pineckety way but he was a dedicated man. Then I got in those three, four people writing sequence 'Sight and Sound' was entirely changed, Gavin Lambert, Lindsey Anderson, Penelope Houston Lindsay and the fourth was Peter Erickson who disappeared very soon off to the Foreign Office.

But the three of them took over the Institute's publications and livened them up considerably and the first big row I had

at the Institute was over 'Sight and Sound' in that 'The Blue Lamp' came out to amazingly ecstatic notices, everyone thought it was absolutely wonderful. Mick Balcan was the Balcon Deputy Chairman of the Institute and Gavin wrote the most savage review of 'The Blue Lamp' that you have ever read and Mick rang up Cecil King and said "What are you going to do, we will have to close down Sight & Sound or else, the paper must be properly supervised. You know what Mick could be like, he was absolutely furious, it took about a week to quieten him down and from then on it was always fairly dicey in that you had to keep the Governers at bay from 'Sight and Sound' otherwise censorship would have raised its head thank God Dilys Powell was on the side of the angels.

JT Who was on the Board when you went there, King was Chairman?

DF King was the Chairman, there was one from each of the trade associations, Henry French from the producers and Walter Fuller from the exhibitors and a faceless and unmemorable man from the exhibitors who changed from time to time. There was Dilys Powell, Mick Balcan. Then I recruited Bob Camplin as Balcon the Secretary and Finance Director and he became a figure and carried the administration on his shoulders.

Third Person

Was this Olwen Vaughan's position? She had been there before the War?.

DF Olwen Vaughan was a friend and enemy of the Institute. She was a staff member before my time. And she left with hatred and love for the Institute, like the friends of the Abbey Theatre you know which meant the enemies was the Abbey Theatre. I got on well with Vaughan and thank God, it would have been impossible if not and she was very close with Langlois of the Cinematerue Francaise. I had a good relationship with Langlois, and Olwyn and Iris Barry she was Olwen close with Iris Barry who ran the Museum of Modern Art Film Department. So that particular cell which had been anti the Institute turned round and became pro Institute.

I had more trouble with the Film Societies who were really a bit of a pain in the neck at that time because general release had been the only pattern in most of the country apart from Glasgow, London, Bristol and Manchester. The were very few specialist cinemas, so there was a real role for the Film Society but during my time specialist cinemas sprang up in many towns and the role of the Film Society was really undermined because the sort of film they used to show in Film Societies were shown in the specialist cinemas.

It was uncomfortable because some of them meant membership of three or four thousand and booked big cinemas and put on big films and they didn't fill the cinemas, they all got into financial difficulties and it was a very tough scene for the

Film Societies who didn't adjust quickly enough to the fact that now for real sort of looney buffs and not just for people to see films.

Third Person

You said during your time was that '48/'55?

DF About that yes, '48 to '55, seven years.

Third Person

That was quite a long period, isn't it?

DF Yes.

Third Person

Did the BFI build up and expand under your Directorship?

DF Yes, two things that turned it, one was the gaining the respect of the film world academically by 'Sight and Sound' being written by people who were literate and good critics and turning it from what it was. The general standard of literacy and sort of academic study of film at the Institute was one thing, but by far the most important thing was getting a cinema. A Film Institute without a cinema is a joke and my first object on getting there was to get a cinema. We were lucky because in 1951 there was the Festival of Britain and we got the Telekinema which had been used at the Festival of Britain and held on to that.

Now once you got a cinema you can charge money for people to come and we had a tremendous negotiation with the film trade as to whether we could charge or we couldn't and how much we could charge, but in the end what we did was to introduce a thing called 'Corporate Membership' anyway it was a form of membership which was quite cheap like a £1 for which they got into the cinema much more cheaply so the membership went up from 3,000 to 35,000 in two years and then we had a base. Then we really could move and there was a big consumer base for the stuff that we published and for the films and we managed to get, I mean you couldn't get into the Telekinema for a big series. It was 98% capacity of one year. It began to mean something, and also Gavin and Lesley and others were I think genuinely creative in the series they put on, they managed to press the right button, they brought Preston Sturges on in the right year when people wanted to see Preston Sturges. They did 'The Old Russians' at a time when people wanted to see them and presented them in a way that people wanted to see them. In fact there was for the first time a sort of feeling of real energy and life about the Institute, it had a purpose it was showing films to people in a way that they couldn't normally see them in a cinema, they got much more background.

Third Person

Did the London Film Festival start in your time?

DF It was starting but it was a very different affair it was after my time that it took wings and took off. But that was another big plus like, then the next big leap was of course the Museum of the Moving Image.

JT How did the budget go when you were there, did you manage to get more money over the period, I mean because it must of been a fairly low budget thing originally was it, do you remember?

DF Yes we got some from the Lord President's office that was Herbert Morrison and then we got some from the LCC and the rest we made ourselves from the revenue from sales of tickets, and of course like all things of that nature the budget was never big enough but we did, it increased by about 400% between the time I started and the time I finished.

JT So anything else about the BFI?

DF Yes, we started an experimental film fund the money was laughable I mean I remember the biggest grant was £500 but it was the beginning of the present thing and the first substantial one we funded, was Johnny Schlessenger who was making a film at Oxford and I was told that anyone who makes a film at Oxford goes broke, sure enough when he went broke we had to bail him out. It was a medieval melodrama if I remember rightly called Black Legend.

Schlesinger

Then the next one was Lindsay, he made one, I think it was called 'Mama Don't Allow', then an American poet called James Broughton who came over and made four very remarkable films under-seen today and Eduardo Pelozi and Lorenzo Mazetti together made a film about the East end of London, they fell out half way through over the possession of a bed, they had a brass bedstead they might or might not have been sharing

Paolozzi

Lorenza

and one of them stole it from the other and the whole film came to a stop until this bed could be sorted out. I wanted to saw it in half and give them half each, but it was sorted out in the end. But Eduardo has gone on from strength to strength since then.

Third Person

That was the film about deaf mutes?

DF That's right two deaf mutes yes.

Third Person

Because that group invented the name 'Free Cinema' in order to publicise themselves.

DF Yes they did, yes. 'Free Cinema'. It was Lindsay who invented 'Free Cinema'.

Third Person

Carroll Rice. Karel Reisz

DF Carroll was there, I should have mentioned Carroll Karel he was a great figure.

The next one that Johnny made was a documentary of Waterloo Station.

Third Person

Yes, 'Terminus'.

DF 'Terminus' and then he became a feature film director, a big star. Gavin alas never developed, he made one rather bad feature film and then went to Hollywood to be writer but I feel there was such talent, such promise in Gavin very sad he didn't contribute to the major feature film making.

Third Person

But he really was under your Directorship, and these various things beginning laid the foundation for the enormous organisation it is now.

DF Well I wouldn't take too much credit, you know you just do what you can at the time, I mean some of the seed grows and some of it doesn't, I daresay there was some pretty awful flops that I have forgotten about now, you tend to forget about the things that go wrong.

Third Person

Were you tempted now that Television was beginning to come into its own much more, were you tempted to try and go off to the BBC or something like this at this period or were you fixed in running the BFI.

DF No I didn't want to stay at the BFI, I realised I had stayed long enough, I thought it was time for someone else because there is a limit to the time you should do a public job like that. I had seen other people do it for too long, so I wanted to get out I had offers from people which were financially very tempting and I was foolish enough to follow

up on one of those with an advertising firm who wanted me to run a Company which would make both documentary films and commercials for Independent Television when it started and there was some nice people in this firm. They talked to me and buttered me up and told me what a wonderful prospect it was going to be so I didn't actually join but I said I would meet the Board. When I met the Board I ran out of the room and decided I would never go in for that sort of thing in my life. So then I saw ITV coming and I knew Cecil Bernstein well and Sidney Bernstein fairly well.

JT Was Sidney on the BFI.

DF Cecil was the Chairman of the National Film Theatre Committee he was wonderfulf because he stood between the trade, he was well known in the film trade and he could handle the exhibitors and renters and he also told us at the Institute when he thought we were being unreasonable and so on. Then Sidney and I used to go off together to for instance The Edinburgh Festival, we'd go off for two days together and go down to Elstree and spend the day watching a film being made if one of his friends was making it and we got on to friendly terms. So when it was clear that Independent Television was coming I said to myself "Who do you like best, who is going in for it?" There was no question the Bernsteins were the best.

TAPE 2 - Side 3

DF It was in December 1954 just before Christmas that I came up to see Cecil Bernstein here in 36 Golden Square, in fact in that office just opposite where we are sitting now. I knocked on the door and I said "If you are going into television Cecil I would like to go in with you" and he said "I'll talk to Sidney". and the next morning I had a phone call from him saying "Come aboard" and that's how it started.

JT In those days the future of commercial television wasn't very bright, why did you take that decision?

DF I thought that in the long run it was going to happen, there might have been some awful bumps and surprises in the early years but it seemed to be looking at the United States and looking at the BBC which was a pretty decrepit organisation in those days, there was a good prospect for independent television in the long run if one could get it going and get

started and indeed it turned out that the first two years were very dicey but after that it took off.

Third Person

When you said, they said "Come aboard" that's how it started in what capacity did you come aboard?

DF That is a matter for debate. Never been settled, I never had a title in Granada. I was Chairman of the Furniture Committee, that was my first title and I bought the cheapest possible furniture in Tottenham Court Road with Charlie Stringer and Sidney thought I was spending money like a madman so he took me off that. After that I had no title until I was Managing Director, sounds crazy but it's true. One of the things I did to start with I recruited the personnel.

JT To start, how did you move in, where was your office?

DF My office was here in Golden Square, somewhere down on the third floor. I moved in with a Secretary who had been with me in the War. She was a WAF and we set up shop downstairs.

JT Was anyone else there at that time?

DF No. Television, our organisation was Sidney, Cecil, a man called Victor Peers who had been with Sidney and Hitch in film making, Transatlantic, and he had been moved across to

television and there was me and then shortly after that there was Reg Hammans the Chief Engineer and from then on one was recruiting pretty quickly. I didn't actually get clear of all my commitments at the Film Institute until March/April 1955, the last thing I had to do at the Film Institute was to run a festival of British documentary in Rome for the Cinecitta people and it caused an absolute sensation because 'Bicycle Thieves' had just come out and everyone was praising Zavattini and De Sica and we showed 'Fire Were Started' and they said "My God, you invented neo realism before we did, this is terrific" and they were absolutely astonished by Humphrey's work and then all Humphrey's other films were flown out and we showed them. Sidney was pretty cross about this, he thought it was about time I gave up fooling around with the Film Institute and start working for Granada.

The Application had gone to the IBA, it had been granted, we were looking for money, in those days Granada had forty-four cinemas and nothing else. It was a cinema chain and some of the cinemas were very small and some of them were not making much money. So we had to raise another £1 million and we wrote to the IBA and said we had been to Barclays Bank and we have raised £1 million and we can get more if necessary. That was sufficient for the IBA to say "OK, you have won the franchise go ahead" so it was during that Summer and Autumn that we started to recruit but not very heavily because we didn't want to have many people on the payroll until the next year, we wanted really to stock up in January, February, March and go on the Air at the end of March or beginning of April that would be 1956.

So I started recruiting key Personnel like Bernard Flood who took charge of Personnel Relations, he was an MP at that time and Reg Hammonds the Chief Engineer had been selected before I arrived and then we looked for an American because we felt we didn't want anyone from the BBC, we wanted to start a fresh slate, so we wanted either an American or a Canadian to train Granada's programme and technical people and we found David Lowe from the United States and a guy called Guy Mitchell from Canada and we booked them to come over at the turn of the year. Meanwhile we were looking for a site, we hadn't got a site and I was going to Leeds and Cecil was going to Sheffield, we had the whole of the North in those days

Third Person

Oh, I see you hadn't decided on Manchester?

DF No we hadn't decided on Manchester, we went to Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester. Those were the four possibles.

JT The whole of the North of England?

DF The whole of the North of England, but only for five days as opposed to the North West for seven days which is a little smaller but not much. So we used to go up there by train for the day the an Estate Agent said "there is an arcade that might suit you" and he took us to this arcade which didn't of

course suit you and eventually I wanted to go to Manchester, I thought it must be the best communication centre. There was a bit of feeling that maybe Sheffield although the communications weren't so good, was more central, Manchester was very much associated with Lancashire and the West, but in the end we found this canal basin with a fringe of houses around it, five acres - and after some negotiation we bought it for £80,000. In the houses around the canal people were living and there were two garages. One of my first jobs was to go around and buy these people out with handfuls of £1 notes, "What will you take to evacuate your house?" and we got them all out except two and then we got them all out except one and that one remained there for a year after we went on the Air.

Then we recruited a wonderful guy called Jim Pheonix a Public Relations fellow from Liverpool and he had a brazier in the middle of the site and a wooden hut, that was our Head Office. He had a filing cabinet, a desk and a chair and then he got a second chair for visitors and then he got a secretary so she had a desk. That must have gone one for something like three months whilst Sidney was madly planning the studio with the Architect. There was nothing Sidney liked more than planning a studio. There was a different plan every day, good ideas springing out of his mind. I thought we'd never get the plans settled because as soon as we would agree it he would say "I think we should ....." and I said "....Oh for God's sake don't ..... look at your watch" the time was ticking away there was nothing built in

October, we were meant to be on the Air next March, that was six months away.

Eventually we did start building and we moved into a tobacco warehouse adjacent to the site as an office block and the building started. It was a tiny, tiny start I mean Granada has and always has had the right idea about economy and when you are starting something you don't spend money unless you have to, so we had a skeleton staff and a tiny studio, a cheap office. Then we started to recruit the creative people and the Engineers and that was as I say in the first months of 1956 January, February, March and we got sort of agents working amongst people like Rank and we didn't want any from the BBC. There was a veto on anyone who worked for the BBC. We didn't want the BBC practices, we thought that they were over-manned and so forth.

But we got Joyce Wooller, Mike Wooller, Mike Scott and Kenny McCreadie from the Rank Film Organisation which was making films. They were the backbone of the sort of central Granada group over thirty years. Mike Wooller and Mike Scott have just left so has Joyce Wooller but they have all worked through to retirement age, that was a lucky stroke, that happened in one day. I signed them on all in one day, I think it was £12 a week, I was allowed to go up to £12 a week without consulting Sidney, £13 I had to go to him. So it must have been £12. We interviewed a lot of people, some of them now famous, some of them now not famous and we started a training school in London because the studio wasn't built there was nothing up there however, we got two working up

there we bought the gear from Pye and we had two scanners - which were much more than we needed. So the OB people trained in Manchester and the studio people trained in London, we ran a course in Kensington.

Third Person

Did you have to worry about transmitters or was that another matter?

DF We worried like hell about transmitters. We were told that originally we would go on the Air in the first week of April, we had two transmitters, Winter J Hill in Lancashire and Emlyn Moor in Yorkshire. About February the news broke and Emlyn Moore wasn't going to be ready, we would have to open only with Winter J. Hill so of course we screamed blue murder we said we had signed a contract on the understanding we would have two transmitters on a certain date, we demand remission in our rental and so on.

JT This was with the GPO?

DF No this was with the ITA. They were building the transmitters and they were late. We got some remission but not enough. Then as time went on the Winter Hill transmitter went back to May, the first week in May a month later, that was just as well because the studio was not finished and the people wouldn't of had been trained so although we made a great fuss about it, it suited me very well. Then we had a guy who was called Programme Controller, Robert Heller and my relationship was never very clearly identified whether I was

senior to him or junior to him but he was a very important guy and as we came nearer and nearer to the opening date I didn't see any programmes being made. I saw everyone concentrating on the first night, the big opening night so about six weeks, seven weeks before we going on the Air I went to Sidney and said "Look there aren't any programmes, you know you need programmes for a television station and Bob seems to be in a state of paralysis, he is not making any plans for programmes", Sidney went quiet and said "Actually you are right, we must make some programmes".

I got a number of people around to make programmes. It was pretty desperate, we had to do a certain number of hours a week and we got the OB unit out and somebody who could talk a bit and it would do three hours from the jam making round to a Agricultural show. In the studio we had a talk show called "Let's Listen" and as soon as we had finished the network programmes we would turn the cameras round on to three guys behind a glass sheet, and they had to talk, until we told them to stop. There were other programmes, we produced a situation comedy, we produced two or three documentaries that went on for some length of time but it was a hand to mouth existance, we didn't really have networking. We picked up some London programmes but it was barter, you have this, we have this, we pay this, you pay that. Hand to mouth.

Third Person

Were you working on video tape at all?

DF No, no film and no video. All live, so if you did an OB you had to get a live link in. So we started. We thought that the first night was OK and we only had about half a dozen programmes we made ourselves in the first three or four months and so we struggled onwards, the only problem was there was no revenue coming in. Towards the end of the Summer things began to look pretty grim and come July they were very grim indeed. It looked like disaster, so we did a deal with Rediffusion, Sidney did the deal. I was not privy to it for quite a long time afterwards, it was a very secret deal but I think Peter Black has described it very fully so it is on the record. Roughly speaking the deal was that Rediffusion would provide us with programmes free in exchange for a slice of our profits - a simplified version of what was a very complex deal.

From then on we took every programme from Rediffusion in addition to our own. This was the beginning of networking and since we had no profits but the reverse they got nothing so we were quite pleased. Things became tough in August and September. It was difficult to rustle up the cash to meet our weekly and monthly commitments.

Third Person

When you say "rustling up the cash" was it that you weren't able to fill the advertising or the commercial slots?

DF We were getting about 20% of what we thought we would get in advertising revenue. The Advertisers had ganged up and they had said "these people are asking a ridiculous rate" it was £1,000 for thirty seconds, "this is a ridiculous rate" they said "We'll hold out and we will break them and then we will get in cheap" and so in September we each decided to go and talk to one major manufacturer like Rowntrees or Lever Brothers and say to them "Look will you please place your advertising with Granada, we will give you preferential rates, we require support at this moment because Independent Television is going to be tremendously important to you and everyone else" and we scarcely got our travelling boots on when suddenly the revenue started to come in and in three weeks we had turned a corner. The revenue was quite astonishing and then for three or fours years we had the irritation of paying quite a large proportion of our profits to Rediffusion.

JT Was there any reason why it turned a corner?

DF The Advertisers caved in, they realised the value. I think one Advertising firm, I think it was the one who makes Gibbs Dentifix, one of the big drug firms decided that they were launching something and they must get in there and they got in and that broke the ice and everyone started coming in and in three weeks it was difficult to buy space it was quite incredible. It was a close run thing. Rediffusion had the resources and we didn't, ATV was fairly shaky, ABC weren't because they the whole of the cinema chain behind them. It was quite a relief when the money started to come in.

Third Person

What were the mechanics of having three minutes for commercials and in the early days only being able to fill half a minute of that?

DF We had a promotion, or we actually played the advertisements again without telling anyone, you could fill it with promotion or you would put somebody on double the length of The Weather, put an extra minute on the News, all those sort of tricks to close the breaks, but it was primitive in those days. We had three cameras in one studio and the same three cameras whizzed back to this glass sheet when the show was over, so as the credits were finished rolling the same three cameras whizzed on to the next sheet, a glass sheet after a commercial break and then there was 'Let's Listen', so that was two programmes. Then we had another studio which was a shed with dismounted OB cameras where we did shows like 'What the Papers Say' with the cameras mounted on fixed pedalstals and Peto Scott machine for captions which as the producer I used to roll myself with a camera up there taking pictures of it and then you'd wind and then stop and then you would get a camera shot and then you would wind it a bit more, it was exceedingly primitive.

There were only Mark III cameras too, they were heavy, fixed lenses on a turret it took time when you moved from one lens to another. You had to have another camera on for quite a long time.

Third Person

But at what point did Granada begin to achieve a style that has continued ever since. It got known as the controversial station, the innovative station and so forth, was it about there that you began to make things that have gone down in history?

DF Well the intention was always there, Sidney and I were like minded about politics in that we wanted to bring politics onto the screen, remember that up to then the BBC had not covered a General Election at all. They said we must leave it to the citizen, we must not interfere. We thought that was absolute rubbish.

Third Person

That was a BBC decision was it?

DF Yes, and practiced. Well they said that the Representation of the People Act would not permit it, but we took a different view we thought we could get around the Representation of the People Act so the first break through was the Rochdale By-Election where we got cameras onto the three candidates and there was the most terrific fuss. We only did it by going to the Headquarters of the various Parties and Barry Heads was in one and I was in an other and you would say to them "The Tories will agree to it if you will" and Barry would say to the other guys "The Labour party will agree to it if you will" and negotiations of this kind went on for some time.

Eventually we took a chance with the Representation of the People Act, we were warned, the legal advice was that we might well be sued for breaking it but we weren't. And from then on you could put candidates for an election on the screen provided you had all three or you gave equal time and all sorts of rules of that kind. The next thing was to get Party Political Conferences on the screen and to get programmes in which Political issues were debated not in a bland rounded way which finished up you know by saying "Well we have heard both sides and I am sure the viewers at home will reach a conclusion" but taking a real dive into a Political topic and saying "this is disgraceful, this ought to be put right, this is monstrous it should be changed".

Third Party

When was this, in the late Fifties?

DF I think the first major documentary we made was in 1957/58. Robin Day, Kenneth Harris did a series called 'A Case to Answer', where we said "Football Management is disgraceful" or the way "Hygiene on Food is not properly enforced". Then came 'Searchlight' which I think was two years before 'World in Action' and then came 'World in Action' and the recruitment of Tim Hewat was an important feature in getting 'World in Action' into the sort of shape that it was. Tim was not really a political animal as you know, he was a journalistic animal but he was on the side of the enquiring mind against the established mind. But in reality he was just a very very good rough journalist and it was difficult

to woo him away from The Express, it took a long time, a lot of late hours up in the Midland in the back room then I was delighted when he came to us and sad when he left, because he was unique he brought a vigour and a dash to Television as we had never seen before and sometimes I think we will never see it again.

JT Which year was Rochdale, can you remember?

DF No.

JT Judging from what you have been saying Denis you seem to have been doing everying in the organisation from buying furniture to .... you helped wherever there was a gap or where there was an emergency or what?

DF Sidney did more than anyone else in the first four years he was completely dominant in the Company and then his presence and influence gradually receded as other things began, like TV Rental, Motorway Service Areas but during those early years he was the dominant figure in Manchester, Cecil was the organiser in London. He ran our relationship with the other companies in the network. He also looked after Comedy programmes like 'The Army Game' and 'Bootsie and Snudge'.

JT Who, Sidney you say?

DF No, Cecil was down here, Sidney was up there with me Sidney was in both places, I spent most of my time nearly all of my time up in Manchester, Cecil spent most of his time down here and then as things developed, I mean my central role to start with was a slice of the programmes, the programmes that Cecil didn't make and the programmes that Sidney didn't make. Sidney made the Drama, the Plays, Cecil made the Comedies and I got everything else. That was the way the carve up worked in the early years.

Then we had one big show that occupied far too much time and attention which was a show called 'Chelsea At Nine' and went live every Monday at 9 o'clock from Chelsea Palace which we converted into a studio. It was an International Star Variety Show and had people in it like Callas and Danny Barenboim but also Bob Newhart and any great talent or star we could persuade to London. It was a man-eater, Sidney did it for a while and then he and Cecil did it then I did it and it really took up practically the whole week because by the time you had finished with one show you were auditioning for the second and you had to work right through the weekend. In the end I thought it was unreasonable to spend so much time on one hour.

Third Person

Was this in the early Sixties?

DF I think 'Chelsea' started in 1959 and it ran I should think for four or five years. It was a big show, I mean it cost in those days the top budget and it was a big strain getting artists of that callibre to move onto a musical stage and play in front of a pit orchestra with three cameras, five cameras as we had then pointing at them. It was a tough assignment 'Chelsea'.

Third Person

As well as breaking new ground in style of programme was the organisation of 'World in Action' different for Television?

DF Oh yes I think so, I mean it was much more relaxed it was like a field unit in the Army as opposed to a staff unit in the Army. They used to work on the other side there (points) in their shirt sleeves halfway through the night, sometimes right through the night. It was more like a newspaper office it had the atmosphere of a newspaper office and indeed the show was handled rather like a newspaper in that Tim would write the script and say "Get pictures for that", which is rather the opposite from some poet in the cinema who says "I see it opening with a sequence ..." , but Tim would write it as you know and it was very free and easy, the language was very free and easy. Tim's relationship with other people in the Company was abrasive in quite a productive way but I don't think it could have been made in a stately way like "March of Time", it was a last minute deadline - meeting event I mean if you got it on the screen it was sometimes a triumphe.

Third Person

It was all made on film?

DF To begin with it wasn't. When it was 'Searchlight' it was 50% studio, 50% film then when we started "World in Action" I think the first one had a bit of studio in and then Tim said "I want it all filmed" there was a big row and we said "that's very extravagant" but he got it in the end.

JT Once the money became easier, things became....

DF Yes but the discipline was still very strict, I remember for instance when we started people were using 35mm for television and we were the first Company to insist that everything went onto 16mm and that saved a hell of a lot of money. It was thought in those days perhaps wrongly that the picture quality was very much worse. I don't think it was noticeably worse on 16mm, Tim was the person who introduced it to television. But the discipline was very tight even when we got video which was I suppose tape came in in 1958/59 we had an absolute rule that you had to shoot the show to the tape and no editing. Now as the years went on of course that broke down and today it is shot by shot like film shooting but initially and for maybe two years we held the rule that video tape was a way of recording and not editing, you could not edit. It saved a lot of money.

JT What about colour, when colour came in?

DF Colour was a frightful bore. I mean we all wanted colour aesthetically and I suppose commercially but the technical upset of colour was very considerable. I mean television has always been badly served by the electronic industry in my view, we have always been well behind what technology could and should have produced for us and colour because of it's more complex technical requirements. The whole studio had to be rewired and Central had to be reconstructed. The next upheaval will be digital. I feel that it is just extraordinary that a Nation like this can't think ahead and why we couldn't of put in colour equipment in 1956, I do not know.

We could of done, I mean it was there from the point of view of engineering it wasn't there from the point of view of manufacturing. There may be a bit of built-in obsolescence in the manufacturers' mind that it is more profitable to have a turn up every few years. Colour was an awful bore technically. It crept on the screen without anyone really noticing all that much. It wasn't sensational.

Third Person

Well not all that number of viewers had colour sets.

DF There was BBC2 to start with only.

JT The usual question, which programmes do you look favourably on that you have been involved with?

DF Well it is a terribly difficult question because I have been involved with so many I mean I have been involved in television for thirty years now, I suppose twenty-five of them absolutely active programe making years and you tend to remember the flops rather than the successes. They leave a bigger mark in your life.

JT Tell us about the flops.

DF I certainly had some of the biggest flops in the business the biggest flop I ever was involved with was a drama series called Judge Dee. I read this series of novels by a Dutchman about a Chinese Mandarin Judge and I thought they were absolutely terrific. I negotiated a deal with the Publisher and worked away on the scripts, I thought it was a marvellous idea and enthused everyone around me and I remember we showed the first one to a programme committee within Granada. Half way through I looked at their faces and I realised they hadn't the faintest idea what was going on on the screen. It turned out that this series only lost its audience entirely, but they were absolutely untransmittable. It occurred to me several times. I would put something onto the screen, full of hope and glory and discover that no-one else liked it at all. The flops are the ones you remember.

JT How free a hand did you have in picking subjects?

DF I had a totally free hand, it was one of the great bits of good fortune in my life that for perhaps fifteen or twenty

years I had a completely free hand in making whatever programmes I wanted to make. Not many people get a chance like that.

The ones that live in your memory are long runners like 'The Street' and 'World in Action' which will never live unless they are given an immense amount of care and attention and the proper resources, you can't leave them alone for a minute. That's one class and then there are other single 'one-offs' that are either glorious or not glorious like Plays and single Plays can be very satisfying to work on because when they are finished they are finished and they have either made their statement or they haven't. And then the ones of course that I always like best were series and the series that I liked working on best were 'A Family at War' which I was very close to with John Finch, I enjoyed 'The Christians' very much although it didn't get an audience of millions, I enjoyed making 'The Christians, I liked 'Jewel' of course, 'Jewel' was the one I liked best because it came off so well. 'Jewel in the Crown' was the greatest pleasure of my television life.

JT How active a part did you take in 'Jewel in the Crown'?

DF In the early stages.

JT I mean did you pick the subject?

DF Yes, first of all I read 'Staying On' a short book by Paul Scott, I thought it would be a wonderful play then as a result of that I read 'The Raj Quartet' and became absolutely obsessed by it. I had been out in India and I thought it was a marvellous story, extremely difficult to unravel. So I then started breaking it down for television and did that by unravelling the flash backs, because it is closely knitted, by sticking up bits of paper around the room and going through the story in a proper time sequence starting with the first episode in the story line and finishing with the last episode of the story line and putting the narrative in chronological order with references to indexes which book and which chapter it came from.

So then you had from A - Z, a straight narrative, which in the end was the approach we adopted. There are no flash backs in the screen version whereas the book is worse than Conrad. Having done that I felt satisfied that it could be a large and rather stunning series and then I recruited Christopher after one or two others weren't recruited.

JT Christopher?

DF Morahan. Christopher Morahan who became the leader of the whole operation and from then on I was an Executive Producer. I went out on location and I saw rushes every day but I was not directly creatively involved as I had been up to the script in process.

JT But with a subject as big as that you could say "This is what I am going to make" and no-one would argue.

DF Yes indeed and it was marvellous. We had started making 'Jewel' and we were committed to full expenditure and we had no outside money at all. 'Jewel' was going to cost about £5 million and we only had the guaranteed return from the home transmission which was about £2 million so we were actually shooting and we were £3 million shy. You can't often do that in our business and then I knew, I just knew that Mobil would take it, it was obviously such a good property that there was no point in panicking about it so we showed it to Mobil and they thought it was terrific and we got the money. But it is not often you can do that in this business. A very privileged position to be in.

Third Person

There was rather a disastrous fire in the middle wasn't there in the studios?

DF Towards the end yes.

Third Person

Did that throw you at all?

DF Very little. I was in the flat in Manchester and I looked out and I saw a tiny puff of smoke and I said to Joyce Wooller "Look there is something going on down there" and ten minutes later, in ten minutes the whole place was flat. This was the shed that we had adapted for shooting Jewel. The

thing that held us up, you will not believe this, was Merrick's artificial arm we couldn't get that replaced in time for a shot the next Tuesday. Everything else we could replace. I think we lost two days over that arm, that was all we lost. All the props, all the sets were rebuilt. But that was an adventure.

JT Financially did it turn out to be a great success?

DF Yes it did it made money as did 'Brideshead' they both did.

JT What about 'Brideshead' how did that start?

DF 'Brideshead' was the obsession of Derek Granger who pushed for it and rightly so and he and David Plowright persuaded me that it was something we should spend a lot of money on and we started on it. And then we had that disastrous strike, many weeks I forget how many weeks. All the contract artists ran out of contract so all the people we'd shot half of had to be re-negotiated and some of them were in feature films. I had to negotiate with people like Karel Reisz to get their artists for so many days and he had them for so many days. It was logistically absolute murder, 'Brideshead' but it came together wonderfully much better than I thought it would. The first cut I saw I thought was too slow, it didn't have enough drive and narrative but gradually I was persuaded as the viewers were that was a tolerable pace and it was unique in my experience in that it did take you in under it's spell although it did not move fast. Brideshead did terribly well in America where they usually like things to move fast. That was mainly Derek Granger.

JT But you would deal with things like artist's contracts?

DF Yes indeed, I had to deal with the artists, even worse. I mean it was very upsetting here was a guy Jeremy Irons who is going to be a big star and he is halfway through 'Brideshead' and he has got a feature film part coming up next week, and here were two Companies wanting him, it was very difficult.

JT It doesn't seem possible to me.

DF Well it is one of the hazards of television life.

JT What about 'Seven Up' was that one of yours?

DF No it wasn't my idea it was Joe Dursden Smith and Mike Apted had the idea and instantly you could see it was a good idea so they went down to the East End and they collected people there, they went to private schools they collected kids there and I never thought when we made the first one we would make more than perhaps two. Let's do Seven Years from now and see what they look like.

JT So now the fifth one is coming up.

JT What other programmes, not ones you regard especially but you know, ones that you think were worth doing and so on?

DF Well I think 'World in Action' has been a tremendous struggle for the people making it. Since Tim Hewat, it has

had a succession of brave and bold editors including Ray Fitzwalter. 'World in Action' puts more strain on a company management than any other programme.

I had more problems with 'World in Action' than all the other programmes put together in that there is constant pressure from various quarters not to publish things about politics, about industry that people don't want to have published and they persuade people like the IBA that there is rationality in their view. But of course one cannot share that view if you are in broadcasting, you must always publish, you must not be persuaded it is unreasonable not to publish. It is an absolute article of faith that you must publish unless it is against the Law. And even then sometimes if the penalties are not too great.

DF Security was a problem. Tremendous fusses about shooting at Cheltenham and naval secrets, spies and things like that, people get frightfully excited about it. From the point of view of practical common sense I don't think anything that we either did say or might have said on 'World in Action' would have caused a ripple in security circles. But people get extraordinarily worked up about Security. Even when we interviewed Spycatcher a year before his book came out no one noticed it. Then there are allegations of political bias which is always around the corner but that's easy to handle, that is a daily hazard of the trade. The great danger of that sort of programme is that people begin censoring themselves because they feel their bosses are against them and that has happened to the BBC in the last two or three

years, and I just hope it never happens to Granada. You must always publish if it is legal and correct. It has got to be right and then no argument can stand, against it. I am absolutely opposed to all these arguments of national interest. It is not in the national interest to do this because we will lose a £500 million contract tomorrow. Absolute rubbish, if it is legal and if it is accurate you have got to put it out.

Third Person

In professional terms working on 'World in Action' is a kind of blooding, that many people who have done their stint on 'World in Action' are glad of it.

DF Yes. I think it is in Programme Executive terms too. I mean I feel that I would like to have had a lot of people sit in my seat to understand what it is like to have to handle the pressures that you get from a programme like 'World in Action' because there is no way in which you can convey it unless you have actually done it and I fear for the next generation that they may be too compliant, not Ray he will be alright.

JT What about the IBA?

DF Well, ups and downs, I had a long period of total war with the IBA on the topic I am talking about now and I felt that they were restrictive pussy-footing sort of middle-class morality people who wanted to make the world smell nice and did not want to have anything said that would upset people too much.

BREAK

JT What was your actual job at the central office of information?

DF I was a Production Controlling Officer for the first year. Phillip Mackie and I were both production controlling officers we each had I think about twenty films which were made some in Crown some by documentary units outside and our job was to see them through from the administrative point of view - to organised rough cuts where the client came and met the producer and to organise the release of the publicity and hand them over to the distribution department at the end. Then I was Chief Production Officer and then when I married Helen I got her job which was something higher than that but I can't remember what it was, but it was the senior post in

the Films Division under Ronnie Tritton who was the boss of everything.

JT Clients, by Clients you mean Ministries.

DF Government Departments, yes.

DT Do you remember which department you dealt with at all?

DF Yes I certainly do. My departments were the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, the Home Office and I also had some quite interesting clients like the British Council who weren't Government departments but were in film making. I was the contact with the Scottish office and forsythe Hardy. Although they had some kind of autonomy up there he had to come down and get certain approvals and I was middle man in the Anglo-Scottish football match that went on all the time because they were very independent minded the Scots and they didn't much like interference from London. I was a Scot therefore I was reasonably acceptable.

JT Any more specific details about the BFI?

DF I think I mentioned the incidents about Gavin Lambert and the Publications Department. Specific incidents - I suppose the relationship of the archive with other archives was tremendously important and Ernest Lingren who was a man of

very pronounced views and personality, had many good friends in the archive movement, he equally had some exceedingly powerful enemies and I found it was my job to try and move the enemies slightly nearer to the Institute. He had a vendetta with Langlois from time to time, the Head of the Cimemateque Francaise who was a wonderful character and Langlois used to do rather horrible things to Ernest Lingren like removing his umbrella and breaking it and inciting small countries to gang up against Great Britain when they particularly wanted a film, for instance, from Denmark he would get a cabal together to make sure that Ernest never got this film.

The goings on between the archivists had to be seen to be believed. They were all dedicated people and they were devious, they hated each other or they loved each other it was an absolute jungle and after a while I gave up. I had some friends, Iris Barry of the Museum of Modern Art was wonderful. Langlois I loved, I got on with him very well but the Scandinavian and the Dutch were tremendously proper and prim rather like Ernest who was basically a Scandinavian, his parents came from Scandinavia and you had both the astonishing Latin temperament of Langlois who would rage about with no clothes on and a fish under each arm, compared with the orderliness of the Dutch and the Swedes who were properly dressed and properly documented you can see there was room for disagreement.

I suppose the other event which I don't think I spent a lot of time on was the films we made for the Festival of Britain. Norman McLaren made two.

One was made in stereo so you put on a pair of spectacles, red and green spectacles when you got to the Telecinema and everything stood out in three dimensions. After the first day we had a lot of complaints that people actually didn't see them in three dimensions. The reason was they put the red and the green the wrong way up and the polaroid didn't work the wrong way up so we had to change all the lenses in every pair of spectacles in twenty-four hours. Norman however, was splendid he came over and finished the film in London and was much loved by everyone in the Institute.

We did another series of films which I would regard as one of my major flops and that is saying quite a lot. It was called 'Poet and Painter' and we selected a painter and asked him to illustrate or her to illustrate a poem. Ronnie Searle did John Gilpin for instance, that's about the only thing that wasn't a flop, every other one was absolutely deadly. We made about six or eight of them and rather distinguished contemporary painters illustrated ballards like the 'Two Corbies' - that was Michael Rothenstein - and we shot their films, like action stills. Rather famous actors read the poems. The whole exercise was really pretty horrible, I hope they'd been lost.

JT It sounds such a good idea.

DF It was a good idea but it didn't work like so many good ideas it didn't work.

JT Where were the offices when you went there?

DF Shaftesbury Avenue, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue now it looks rather like a battle ship. They were ramshackled old offices and we rented them from the CEA and Walter Fuller was then Secretary - the head guy of the CEA - and he also was a fairly devious old brute. He was on the Board of the BFI and he had the biggest set of yellow teeth I have ever seen, both upper and lower and he was ingratiating he would come into my office and smile at me. I had to turn away, I couldn't bear his smile. In the end I used to say "Walter I will do anything for you if you don't smile at me" and towards the end of our association I managed to get him to keep his mouth shut. It was an absolutely horrifying smile, also ingratiating.

He was fairly wicked, as most exhibitors were in those days. IT wasn't a profession that was noted for moral probaty.

JT And they were quite small the offices were they?

DF Oh God, everyone was sitting on everyone else's knee almost you know.

JT Did they have new offices while you were there?

DF I got better offices but not new ones, we extended then into Great Russell Street we had a cinema, a preview theatre and a set of offices in Great Russell Street but it wasn't until Tony Smith came along much later that he got millions of pounds for the beautiful offices they have now off Charlotte Street.

Third Person

While you were at the BFI did it extend out into the regions with regional cinemas and theatres or was that after your time?

DF It was starting in my time, what we had was the Film Society movement organised to some degree regionally and the biggest Film Society was the sort of Mother Ship for all the smaller film societies for instance Liverpool and Newcastle and towards the end of my time we were setting up real cinemas.

BREAK

JT Have you any example of the kind of pressures that you met from outside 'World in Action' can you remember an outstanding...?

DF Yes I mean sometimes they were direct that is to say the IBA would just ring you up and say "We think it impossible that you should include that Northern Ireland sequence" and you knew they had been got at by the Government's various branches that were concerned about security and concerned

about Northern Ireland but sometimes they were much more interesting. I remember "The man who Stole Uganda" about Idi Amin.

DF "The man who Stole Uganda" was the title of the show and Idi was then top of the pops with Great Britain because he wasn't a Communist. He was thought to be the blue eyed boy and engaged the support of all good and true British Citizens, well we made a programme which rubbished him pretty horribly, said he had stolen a million pounds, committed various other crimes and this was at a time when there was a great blast of favourable publicity for him coming from the Foreign Office. I was rung up by the wife of the ex-Governer of Uganda who said to me "You are making the most terrible mistake, you know, this is the most wonderful man, he has been to dinner with us, we know him very well and he is going to be the salvation of Uganda".

I was rung up by the Chairman of another television company, I was rung up by a Junior Minister and I was asked to go and have a drink at I think it was the Bath Club if there is such a Club with the Senior Minister, I knew what it was about so I didn't go. People rang up Sidney as well as the IBA saying they must see it. We had great trouble in getting it through and it was clear that the sort of network of pressure exerted by the Foreign Office through the 'Old Boy' system was very considerable and the most difficult one actually was the wife of the ex-Governer who was a very close friend of Helen, my

wife, and she was almost tearful about this because she thought he was such a splendid guy. Two or three years later when Idi Amin fell into disrepute the Foreign Office almost begged us to repeat the picture .

Third Person

Wasn't there trouble right from the very first programme, the one about defence, spending and waste if I remember rightly?

DF You are absolutely right yes. It was on the Navy, on Defence spending generally, there were a consignment of right footed boots no left boots. Tim almost had a clock ticking away telling us how many Pounds a minute was being wasted. He had many many examples which he had drummed up and the IBA felt that these examples had not been sufficiently researched. In fact they were just terrified because they knew that it would cause a great row with the MOD and the Press would probably be critical of television being so outrageous and they forbade us to transmit it. So I called Paul Fox who in those days was in charge of Panorama and said "Paul would you show this film?" and he said "I can't show it all" I said "Would you show some?" so he showed the ten minutes they had objected to and out it went on the BBC and of course the IBA were outraged, they could not imagine how such a terrible thing could happen but the enemy, the BBC should show something that had been banned on the IBA. We were all rather pleased with that.

JT Did the BBC put it out as "This was banned by the IBA".

DF They did, they said that.

Third Person

I remember one from the first year, it was about Charities and corruption in charities, where nearly all the money was going to ....

DF To the organisers.

Third Person

When Oxfam got rubbished by mistake and as an apology Tim agreed to make a film that said Oxfam was a wonderful thing which I directed, and the Press were rather horrified saying "What's happened to World in Action, has it gone soft?".

DF Yes we certainly did make some mistakes. I don't know whether I talked about the biggest apart from British Steel. Ray Fitzwalter, Editor of the Bradford Argos first got the Poulson story which was that here was an Architect who had corrupted a whole Counsel by bribery, and more than a whole Counsel, it corrupted other Counsels and branches of the Government and was getting getting contracts by paying money to Civil Servants. He had this marvellously documented we asked him inside Granada.

He sweated and worked for months and eventually we got the Poulson story ready for transmission and the IBA said they must see it.

JT How did they know about it?

DF You had to tell them in advance, you had to tell roughly what it was about. We used to tell them, I can remember certain descriptions which was somewhat belied by the actual show that came up, but in this case the word 'Poulson' alerted them because they knew Ray had been writing about it in the Bradford Argos. So they had a viewing and they decided it couldn't go out. We were furious about this because it was a big story and we were the first to get it and the first to get it right, so David Plowright and myself went to the IBA and we asked if we could see this rough cut with the members who had turned it down. The three strongest objectors included Dame Evelyn Sharpe, a notable Civil Servant, who had served long in the Ministry of Housing.

She was really a formidable lady and she said having seen the show she said "This can't go out, this is going to discredit local Government, all over Britain people are going to lose confidence in local Government" we said "Yes but look, here is a local authority being corrupted by this man Poulson etc.". "It doesn't matter" she said "It is not our business to undermine confidence in the institutuions of the Realm".

And then we got on to Dan Smith who had been deeply involved in this and indeed perhaps was a bigger villain than Poulson. He had been fiddling around in East London as well and he had got an application, a planning application in which had gone to the Department and Dame Evelyn had taken his part and pushed this through and she thought he was a great and good go-ahead developer. How wrong could she be? Because Dan Smith was in prison within nine months of this particular screening but Dame Evelyn actually said to David and myself "You can't put this film out it will ruin poor Dan" and that is one of my favourite quotes. The reason for censorship of Poulson therefore was a) it would undermine confidence in local Government and b) it would ruin poor Dan. Needless to say we did get it out but we had to change the title and make some absolutely piddling little cuts and alterations before getting it out and when it did come out it was a big story. It spread, and it also involved Reggie Maudling who had been associated with the Poulson Companies. He issued a Writ against us, which was interesting.

We were very keen to have this in Court because we thought we had a very strong case, but that Writ lay dormant for three years and we spent a lot of time and money preparing our Defence. Then suddenly it became active, he was going to sue us. So we got the wheels moving and then he died, so it was never settled and that was a great disappointment to me I was very sorry that Reggie died, he was a nice man in many ways but I would very much liked to have had that case settled one

way or the other.

JT Was this the hospital in Malta?

DF You are absolutely right. Dan Smith again.

JT You broke them down in the end and they agreed to it.

DF They agreed to it going out but they had to save face I wish I could remember the original title, but it was changed to "The Life and Times of Poulson" instead of some rather derogatory initial title and there was a lot of tiny editing taking words out, changing paragraphs, you know the sort of fiddly things that people do. But the main grovanen of the charge came through on the film that went out. It did in fact result in a general clean-up of local authorities.

JT What about the people you worked with?

DF People in general? I will start with Sidney. I had always found Sidney a magnetic and attractive person and even before I joined Granada we used to have a very good time together going to films and going to the Edinburgh Festival together. When I joined Granada I found him a marvellously stimulating and energetic companion, I mean he stirred me to the highest level of activity and he himself never rested. It was great fun working with him. It wasn't all roses however, he was extremely moody and could be very unfair to people and certainly a large part of my early time in Granada was

protecting people from being fired by Sidney. If he saw a show in which there was a mistake, a shot missing, a bad cut or an overrun - and there were plenty of them in the early days - he would instantly mark this down as a man who must go because this man didn't know his job. The first sign of this was when he would say to me "Denis did you see Mr Smith's show last night?" normally he would call him 'Jack' but when it moved from 'Jack' to 'Mr Smith' that was a sort of amber light and I would say "Yes, I saw it Sidney" and he would say "Did you see the way he cut from that two shot onto the floor, there was a shot of the floor before he got onto the other person?". I would say "Yes I saw that he got his lenses wrong Sidney, it happens you know" "Disgraceful" Sidney said "We can't have people like that working for Granada, absolutely disgraceful, I must think about it". The next day he called me and he said "Denis I have been thinking about Mr Smith I've lost confidence in Mr Smith". This was the red light and I would nearly always say "Sidney you should pray to have your confidence restored, he is going to be one of the best Directors in Television he musn't go" and the argument would enrage and I would usually win but not always. The fall out rate was pretty high I should think we lost one a month. But I think it's true to say there are only two Directors out of the first sixteen that at one time or another Sidney didn't try to fire. So that was one side of his character.

He was also a very hard task master he was ridiculously perfectionist in what he required of quite junior people. He would expect them to be intellectually well above their

status. He would expect the secretaries to be able to spell rather difficult Hebrew words which not many secretaries can do, and also if they went to the loo he would come in and say "Where have you been?" "You weren't here, I wanted a telephone call and you weren't here". The poor girl had to explain and he found it very difficult to accept that people had to actually leave their desks from time to time for natural functions. So I mean he wasn't a man full of reason but when he was on the boil, when he was being funny, when he was on good form - and we travelled abroad alot together Sidney and I - and he had this wonderful knowledge of Art. He taught himself Art, by buying prints and pinning them on the back of the lavatory door. A different one every day, he bought 360 cheap prints and every day he pinned a different one on the back of the lavatory door and he went on doing that until he knew every print. Who had painted it and what date it was and he had it by heart and that's how it learned about Art. He talked to people and he moved into Cafe society in quite an easy way because he was very charming and had the gift of the gab and picked up culture from talking to people. I mean he was a man who had no formal education beyond secondary school, by the time I met him he was one of the most knowledgeable and cultured people, for instance about American Literature, about Modern painting - but not about music. He knew not a thing about music. He knew a lot about the theatre, actors. He was extraordinarily knowledgeable and all entirely picked up from the street, from the Cafe and from the back of the lavatory door.

His tolerance was very limited, he was one of the most intolerant people I have ever worked with and this was particularly painful when it came to industrial relations. My two greatest problems with Sidney were protecting people who he wanted to fire and stopping him from taking the most outrageously autocratic actions vis-a-vis unions which would immediately have caused a strike. He could not ever understand why shop stewards couldn't see reason - which meant seeing things the way he saw them. He would say "why should they want an increase?" and he would then go into what they were doing wrong. And I would say "Well you see Sidney, they have got their point of view you see. They think actually that this Company is making a lot of money, they think Sidney you are actually making a lot of money and they think perhaps the tea allowance might go up from 40p to 50p because after all..." and he would say "Denis look at those cars in the car park, they are well paid, look, they are all extremely happy here". This was a very tough one. However, the rewards were greater than the penalties working with Sidney. He was a real companion and we were very close for many years and in particular if you got a good show he was delighted. He never showed it, when he didn't actually say a show was bad that was a terrific accolade and he also supported you against the IBA, against the Law, against the newspapers, Sidney never gave way to any outside pressure. Now that is a tremendously important thing for a Programme Controller to have at his back. Another thing, I would walk in to Sidney and say "John Smith has had back luck, he was

going to buy a house and it fell through, his own sell fell through and he has to get £3,000 by tomorrow, or he is not going to get the house" and Sidney would say "How much?" and he would pull out the cheque book and write £3,000 and hand me the cheque like that. Of course it had to go through the Accounts Department, and I am quite sure Sidney got that £3,000 back. The gesture was both dramatic, immediate and he got a lot of credit for it, he got the £3,000, perhaps he got interest on it too, I don't know, but it was a wonderful way of working things. David Plowright would come in and say to Sidney and myself which he did sometimes, "We have got a terribly difficult problem, this guy is running drugs on the Mersey, and we believe we can get some really important information if we pay him a £100, but he is a crook. What should we do?" and Sidney would say "Pay him a £100" now most people would take a long time to come to the conclusion or he might say "Don't pay him a £100" there was no saying "Well on the one hand, and well on the other hand" and sometimes I'd say "That's absolutely right" or sometimes "Sidney you are mad, you can't do that" and we would have a bit of a barney. There was never any measured discussion or committee or anything like that to decide what the moral code was of getting information from criminals by money. That was Sidney. I haven't given a full picture of him, it would take a long time to do that. He was involved in Television for only a short while, people don't realise this, he was involved in Television from the time we went on the air in

1956 until about 1962 and his presence remained for another decade, perhaps even more. But in fact he then moved into TV Rental and other things and he was on the telephone, he wasn't there personally very much although he was so artful if he were there he showed himself in fifteen places in ten minutes and could be there for an hour and people would of thought he had been there all day because he had spoken to practically everyone on the plant.

His real commitment to Television I would say was six or seven years, perhaps eight and then he did take Board Meetings and Programme Meetings for a while but as the rest of the Group developed his interest moved across to that but he never lost his critical faculty and still the phone would go at 11 p.m. and say "Denis did you see that programme we put out early this evening?" and I would say "Yes Sidney it was rather good wasn't it?" and there would be a long pause and then he would say "I thought it was disgraceful". That was life.

JT Did he delegate a lot?

DF Yes he did. He delegated a lot of things he didn't do at all himself. For instance it's an astonishing thing about the Bernsteins, they didn't look after the money. Now they had

an intensely accurate sense of spending and a less accurate sense of revenue, of what's coming in. But their way of controlling Television and this is really important and this should be on the record, it's a wonderful way of doing things. They didn't believe in budgets, they didn't believe in long term reviews, they didn't believe in looking at both sides of the profit and loss account. They controlled Television by expenditure. No-one could spend anything unless they approved it. I'd tell you in 1965 that the General Manager in Manchester couldn't spend more than £50 without a reference to the Board. Now most General Managers probably can sign a cheque up to £20,000, but it was £50 with us and if you bought pencils you had to cut them in half and sharpen both ends so that they went further, you had to write on both sides of the paper and you could not buy a thing unless somebody had approved it. We didn't make any films for the first four years, because films were a mad extravagance. The latest has stayed with Granada ever since - this ability to keep the house-keeping costs right down and watch every single penny that is spent. Now that's the way they controlled Television. They realised they hadn't got much influence over revenue which came in from advertising, they left that to an advertising guy, Alex Anson and if he wanted them to go and talk to Rowntrees and butter up someone they would do it, but not with any great enthusiasm.

What they did was to watch the money going out. When I wanted to introduce a budget in 1962 I think, I said "Look we really must get up to date, we must have an annual budget, so

much money spent, so much coming in" and Cecil said to me "Denis you musn't do that" he said "It will give people ideas they can spend up to that amount". However budgets did come in and long term reviews and computers and God knows what else. But I don't think we were ever so economical as in the days when you couldn't buy a pencil without signing a form.

JT This came from the very hard going from the first two or three years?

DF It came from the cinemas. The cinemas had a sort of rule book like an army manual, where the telephone should stand how many hinges on a main door and what size of hinge, how big the lavatory bowl should be, where the fire extinguisher should stand, how much sand in the fire bucket. All of that was laid out in this book. Now in Theatres Managers didn't spend money, if they wanted something they rang up Head Office and Head Office bought it for them. They didn't spend money at all because it was too dangerous for people to have money, they might spend it. So when they got their takings at the end of the day it was put into a night safe which was a portable one and taken and put into the bank that night and every day the money was taken off the Manager and checked before he left the cinema and he had no money to spend. There was no money available, except to give change at the ticket kiosk. That psychology moved into Television that you don't give people money and then you will get on quite well. If you don't give people money they can't spend it. It was a very very solid bit of reasoning.

JT What about Cecil Bernstein?

DF Well Cecil, I always used to say to people that Sidney was a front man but Cecil signed the cheques and this is more or less true. Sidney would not commit to any venture or enterprise unless he had Cecil's support. They worked very closely as a team. Cecil was the cautious one, Sidney was the brash one, although Sidney too could have his measure of caution.

There was a third member of the Group and that was Joseph Warton, Company Secretary who had been with them since the very start of the cinemas as an office boy and amongst those three, Joe Warton did the figuring, Cecil said "No" and Sidney said "Yes". That's roughly the way the three of them worked and it was an extremely powerful triumvirate because if Cecil did say "Yes" you could be quite certain it was copper bottomed, it was going to work. If Joe got the figures wrong it was amazing, it never happened. I can remember him going red once and fluffing something but it was probably about a small amount. Joe's figures were taken to be absolutely sacrasanct. He wrote them on a big piece of foolscap accountancy paper torn out of an account book with a Swan fountain pen. This is a little different from what is going on over the corridor at the moment - the long term review's up on all screens.

Cecil, had a good sense of show business, and Sidney had a tremendous flair for advertising, terrific. Publicity, advertising, the front edge of the show. Cecil had a very solid appraisal of ratings, he knew comedy well, he was a

very good judge of comedy and light entertainment. He and Lou were the two people in ITV who knew a lot about Light Entertainment. Lou Grade, and Cecil Bernstein were I believe the people who formed the successful attack on the BBC's ratings supremacy when ITV came on the air. The two of them knew through their experience in Music Halls and theatres and cinemas what the public would want to see and what they wouldn't and the BBC didn't know that, and they used to be on the phone every morning and very often I would be there too and Cecil would say "What are you putting on next week Lou?" and Lou would say "Cec, I've got a wonderful bill next week Cec, I have got x, y, z, top of the bill" and Cecil would say "What did you say Lou, you got them as top of the bill?" "Yes" said Lou "It's great, isn't Cec?" and Cecil would say "I wouldn't give him house room Lou" and this would go on.

The two of them would argue the merits of every show, every artist. The nice thing about was that although they did deals constantly over the phone ("I'll give you £1,000" "You must be joking" and so on, eventually it would end up at £250 or whatever.) they never actually put anything in writing at all, Cecil wrote it down with a piece of pencil on the paper on his desk and he used to give it to his Secretary and that was the contract. Every month there was a settlement between Lou and Cecil, which went through the Accounts Department and all that but they had to work off these pencilled figures, or by asking one of them "What did you say you would give them for that?" "I said I would give £1,250" he would say. All like that. So those two I believe built the audience for ITV

with Howard Thomas perhaps helping quite a bit, particulary with the Plays which ABC did under Sidney Newman, they helped quite a bit. But basically it was Lou and Cecil Bernstein who were the showmen who brought ITV forward. Cecil was a wonderful guy to work with. He was much more equable than Sidney and in many ways more shrewd when it came to danger, he could sniff danger a mile off, financil danger. Risk, he knew exactly what risk was but of course he wasn't the buoyant effervescent figure that Sidney was, he was a calmer man than Sidney, a quieter man - that was Cecil.

TAPE 3 - SIDE 5

DF Looking back over my period at Granada I would say it was really the people that were the Company's main asset and not just a few people but a very wide swathe or deep drift of talent that we had. A lot of them moved on from Granada like Jeremy Issacs who went to Rediffusion, BBC, Thames, Channel Four. Graham McDonald who became something very important in the BBC, Mark Shivas, John Birch who is now the Deputy Director General, never thought he would get that far and others who have gone to Canada, Australia and so on. I suppose really it was the cohesiveness of the creative group in Granada that was the unique thing about the Company. There were about three of four of us at the top who had each around us another three or four who each had around them another three or four so you had a top group. We had a Programme Committee which I used to Chair every week of about

eight or ten people but around those eight or ten there were little nuclei all the way down the line and they were all bright people because they were all selected very carefully.

The first rule was 'no-one from the BBC' we did not want to imitate, we used to use rather awful words like we didn't want to be contaminated by BBC practices because we thought they were far too staid and far too meticulous and engineering dominated so we looked around for people working in the theatre or in journalism and we got people like Derek Granger who was then in charge of the Arts page of the Financial Times and he was a wonderful writer, Sidney spotted him, and he came aboard and stayed for many years and was a leading figure. Philip Mackie who was writing novels and plays at the time, a great friend of mine - we shared a house - and he stayed until he made a bid for the Yorkshire contract in 1970, and didn't get it. Peter Wildblood who was a novelist and was sent to Prison for a sexual offence. I thought unfairly, so the day he came out of Prison he had a letter from me saying "Come and join Granada" which he did and stayed with us for eight years and produced some wonderful series. Peter Eckersley, a Guardian writer, a wonderful character, a beautiful writer, a funny man, an ideas man. David Plowright who is Chairman today, clever journalist from Scunthorpe. His Father was Editor of the local paper, David was the equestrain correspondent for the 'Yorkshire Post' because he could ride a horse. Barrie Heads from the 'Daily Mail' in Manchester, another wonderful

writer. That's the strange thing, that the standard of literacy in the Granada Programme Department was considerable and it was competitive. We used to talk about publishing our memos, the best selected memos annually like the 'Guardian' bedside book but we decided they were too obscene we couldn't do it. If we took all the four letter words out they weren't funny. It's amazing. Tim Howat, I have spoken of him before, he was a tremendously influential guy. I could go on with this list for a long while but I think I would like to home in and expand a bit on certain people because David Plowright and Barrie Heads formulated a Current Affairs approach to local programming. I mean they were very top-class journalists, they were very funny, they believed in short sentences. They believed in the Producer, the Writer and the Performer all being the same person so you got poor wretches like Peter Eckersley and Mike Scott who had to write, produce and perform a twenty-five minute programme every night. Perhaps every other night if they were lucky someone else would do it on the alternate nights. Bill Grundy was another great Producer/Performer.

There was built up a kind of robust tradition of local journalism which linked very happily with two other areas, one was 'World in Action' where the wild man Tim Howat was taking tabloid journalism onto the British television screens in a fairly sensational way and at the other end I was working away in a much more political fashion to get politics onto the screen. Before Granada started to work on this people don't remember this, there was no coverage of

political affairs during a General Election. There was a blackout for six weeks. Now we thought this was quite ridiculous and Sidney supported me greatly. So all we did was, we aimed first of all at two targets, one was to get the Party Conferences on Air and the other was to broadcast during an Election. We thought in our simple way that there was no more important time for the Electorate to know about politics than when they were actually voting. Instead of taking a General Election which would have been a toughie, we took a By-Election at Rochdale and we mounted a considered campaign over perhaps four months leading up to the date. As soon as the Writ went out we knew when it was coming. We worked on the Candidates, we worked on the Head Offices, we worked on Senior Politicians and we worked on the Authority who said it was illegal - it was against The Representation of the Peoples' Act. We contested that because the point at issue was whether any money was being spent to assist the Election of a Candidate. Well of course money was being spent, but it was not being spent by the Candidate and it did not affect one Candidate more than another provided they each had equal time so I think in the end we managed to satisfy, if not to satisfy to quieten down the IBA on the legal front.

The problem really was the Head Offices and the two most difficult ones were the Conservatives and the Labour Party, it was Morgan Phillips at the Labour Party and I tackled him and I forget who it was, I have an idea it was Selwyn Lloyd

who was at that time speaking for the Conservative Central Office. Anyway the Liberals were a push-over. They were dead keen. The Candidates were a push-over they were all dead keen but they were overruled by the Head Offices. So Barrie went to the Conservative Head Office and I went to Morgan Phillips and we opened a phone line between us and we said to Morgan Phillips "I am sorry my colleague is just talking to the Conservative Party and he is asking their view just as I asking yours" and I would hold the phone to my ear and say "Yes, Barrie I think that's wonderful" and I would look at Morgan Phillips and imply Barrie was making progress and he would do the same at his end. You could see these two were absolutely terrified that the other side was going to give way, and the upshot was that in ten minutes both had agreed that we could cover their By-Election. Brian Inglis was in the Chair, it was meticulously timed within a second, and it was a singularly boring programme. But it was the first time that a By-Election, an Election of any kind had been covered on television and that led of course to the immediate excesses. We then put every constituency on the Air that would agree. I think something like 60 constituencies at the General Election that was really very boring and then the coverage of all Party Conferences in the TUC became perhaps extensive but the dam was broken and from then on broadcasting was able to select what it wanted from the Political scene which it hadn't been able to do before.

Now those I would say were the three prongs of Granada

'Current Affairs'. There was 'World in Action' there was this hardcore of local journalists, Bill Grundy not to be left out, Barry Heads, David Plowright, Mike Scott to some degree, Peter Eckersley was in that lot, and there was the political side which was mainly Sidney and myself and various producers and directors working with this, Now that kind of robust approach towards 'Current Affairs' does act as a magnet towards journalists who want to have that stuff published and who want to be in there fighting as opposed to writing features and commentaries that are fairly bland. That is how we built up our stable of 'World in Action' people and 'Current Affairs' people. Amongst whom I would name a few, Gus Macdonald came to us fairly soon after the shipyards and brought a political brain which was different from any political brain we had had before. It was Clyd S which was good and it was sophisticated, much more sophisticated than most of our political brains, Jeremy Issacs came straight from Oxford, he was unemployed and couldn't get a job. I think he applied for one at the BBC and didn't get it, then he worked for Granada, he produced 'What the Papers Say' which was my little pet show.

He started doing that and did it for two years and he brought an intelligence to television which he demonstrated as Head of Channel 4 much later on in that he had a broad vision of what television could and couldn't do, indeed Gus did it in his own way also.

Each Year we went to the Universities and we took this very seriously, we put one of the most senior people on to it like for instance Derek Granger or Barrie Heads and we first of all advertised for six production trainees and I think our average response was just over a thousand. From that on paper we selected perhaps, I don't know a hundred and ten, a hundred and twenty and our team would go to the Universities and interview ten here, twelve there, twenty somewhere else and we would finish up with a short list of twenty. Those twenty would come to Granada in Manchester and spend three days there, being grilled by people like myself and David Plowright and others. At the end of the three days when we had got to know them and they had found out what rough sort of people we were, we asked them if they wanted the job and they all, except usually one or two said they did and we then selected from between six and eight from the twenty and I honestly believe that that was the most productive form of recruitment that we ever did and perhaps any Television company ever did. It was enormously time consuming and I often wondered why our best Producer was spending three months on the road but it did pay off. Many of the names I have mentioned, people like Leslie Woodhead, John Burt, came through that process and that group as they went up became the heart and centre of Granada's creative team. They were mainly current affairs more than drama strangely enough. Mike Apted came up through that way, Mike Newell came up through that way and they are now both quite famous film directors and if they were very good at drama they tended to move out and become film directors because, alas, good

directors always want to make feature movies. If they were documentarians they either became Executives like Jeremy Issacs and Graham MacDonald or they moved into big stuff like Leslie Woodhead, who has made some enormously important drama documentaries and indeed 'Disappearing World' which was another of my pet shows. Leslie had been a great contributor to that and it was that kind of talent selected in that way that gave Granada its character and made it a company which as I believe a lot of people did want to work in and for the period of the 60's, 70's and early 80's until the present troubles came upon Television, I think it was a happy company to work in, certainly I enjoyed myself - I don't know about the others.

JT The spirit of the Company from the start was different from others. Can you add anything to that?

DF I think there is no doubt that it was not deliberate. Whatever happened in the Company reflected the personalities, Sidney's personality, my personality and David's personalty in Manchester and Cecil's on the more administrative areas in London. I think that you tend to pick like-minded people when you are selecting talent and when we went through the

selection process I am talking about, the six or eight lucky people who were finally selected were the ones I am sure who are most like the people selected them. You perpetuate your own image and as with a plant you fix a strain by grafting one group of people onto another group of people so you get a continuous kind of persona which goes beyond one person or one group of people but goes down generations and by the time I left I suppose there were in Television terms four generations of people who had come through the same selection processes.

JT Do you want to say anything about 'Coronation Street?'

DF Well there are a lot of myths about 'Coronation Street' and how it started. It was really pushed through by a Canadian Producer called Harry Elton who saw the power of it and it was the only, alas the only great success he ever had in his life, a very nice man, he returned to Canada wrongly I think and never had a success like it again. He got the scripts from Tony Warren. Now Tony Warren was a very interesting guy, he was a child actor and I always used to think he looked like a younger brother of Noel Coward, he would affect long cigarette holders, black canes with ivory handles and trilby hats now and then and he was a cafe character and the most unlikely person to write 'Coronation Street'. His roots were in Salford but you would have thought Tony's ambition would have been to rewrite Noel Coward comedies. He came up

with I think three or four scripts and Harry thought they would work and he was absolutely committed to them. I thought "Yes, they probably will work, I am not sure". They were put to the board which in those days consisted of Sidney, Cecil, Alex Anson the Sales Director and Joe Warton. The story goes that it was turned down by the Board but Harry managed to persuade Sidney afterwards when it was over. That was not true. It was in fact agreed at the Board that we should run it for half a dozen, see how it went and if it went well or it looked like going well to continue with it. Certainly there was not 100% enthusiasm and this was a blow to Harry who was 200% enthusiastic about it and the board were potty not to endorse it.

However, we then started casting and I think it was in the casting that the revolution took place. The Casting Director was Margaret Morris, and Tony and the first Director Harry Latham didn't have a lot to do with it. To be honest it was done in the Casting Department and then the Story Department and here was Harry Elton running around mad with enthusiasm but immediately one saw the first ten minutes on the monitor from the studio you knew that that show was pure gold, it was going to go. Cecil knew too and from then on the show was

backed 100% by Granada although the Network was slow to appreciate it and thought this strange Northern comedy was not for them. It took many months before it was fully networked and then almost immediately of course it became Number One and Number Two in the Top Ten and has stayed there ever since.

Third Person

Did it start as a live show?

DF Yes, it did, yes. I say "Yes" with confidence, it was certainly 'uncut tape' non-stop tape.

JT Was it forbidden to cut tape in those days?

DF Tape profer started in the early 60's. Yes we had tape in 1958 but not allowed to edit tape in any way or to stop and start. It was simply a record of what you had done in the studio. It was time shift and my memory is that the first series of 'Coronation Street' was simply time shift tape and then of course we started stopping for re-takes or if there was a fluff or if someone said "bugger" you know. Then the rot set in and before you knew where you were you were making a movie. Once the 'Street' took off it was the most prized possession, they were treated like Royalty. They didn't think so, they compared their salaries to those of American

Soap Opera Players, and of course Cecil was very very hard and would give them a rise of £2 per week after three years, you know. At the same time he took them all out to lunch and was so charming and pointed out what wonderful dressing rooms they had and how much unemployment there was in the acting trade in London but they were very badly paid in the early years.

I think more foolish companies would have paid them more and they would have disappeared: the hard living that they had to endure up there and the low pay did keep them together as a team quite apart from his natural instincts Cecil was psychologically right in paying them too little.

JT When did you realise that the new pressures that were coming on to television? And would you describe what has been happening as a planned attempt to break the power of televison?".

DF That's a very loaded question. Of course I would, but I will come to that later. I say of course I would, that's too simple. There are two quite separate influences that have caused the present turmoil in television and the two often get confused. One is technological it is cable and satellite and shortly it will be digital and large screen and all of those things. This will affect off Air television in one way or another. We saw it coming a long way off this particular one. We looked at cable intensively and decided it was no

good, that unless you could get 30% connections with the homes you passed you weren't going to make money and we still cannot understand why the Americans are pouring money into cable in this country. The connection rates are about 18% and won't go up to 30% for many many years. Equally they probably can't understand why we are not pouring money into BSB which can't make money for a number of years but better in the long term. We opted for satellite having looked carefully at cable.

The Americans on the whole are putting their money in cable both over there and over here. Cable and satellite means a multiplicity of channels whatever the Government we may have and that threat of diffusion I wouldn't even call it competition, diffusion has always been there. Remember Reith used that unfortunate phrase "The brute force of monopoly" - if you have one channel you can do what you like and the public have got to watch it, so I can make them better mannered, I can make them more moral, I can do anything I want because I have the brute force of monopoly.

Well that of course is the dark side of monopoly but the bright side simply was that there was enough money in the advertising kitty to support a very high level of production, a high spend per hour and this forced the BBC licence fee up to a similar level otherwise they would have been the poor relation. So in a way it was the spend on ITV 1 that set the rate of the licence fee. Channel Four was very artfully contrived to use a bit of the spend on 1 in return for augmenting the general size of the advertising cake. So that

economy which is being reviled at the moment was a balanced economy which provided enough money for high quality programming on four channels. Now satellite and the cable firms come, I don't think it affects the balanced economy because the in-roads of the two systems are going to make on off-air broadcasting is so limited. My guess would be 15% of the total of the BBC and ITV which is 7 1/2% off each which is perhaps 4% off ITV 1, 4% off ITV 2, 3% off, etc. etc., so it is a very small inroad and I believe that without political intervention the system would have swum into a multiplicity of channels without damaging the existing economy.

Now two things happened at the same time. Both of them rather serious. First the Government's tolerance of broadcasting's autonomy ran out. There is a tolerance exercised to a greater or lesser extent by Governments towards broadcasting and indeed towards newpapers, traditionally in Soviet Russia the degree of tolerance used to be nil. That is to say broadcasting there reflects the Government's view. Traditionally in the United States the degree of tolerance is 100% in that broadcasters are free, absolutely free to say whatever they like under the first amendment. In Britain, we thought, we think, we believed it was perhaps 90%, 95%, sometimes the Broadcasting Authorities were intimidated by Government but very rarely and if they did you could always make a fuss and get a splash in the Press but this particular Government, and certain individuals in the Government lacked the breadth of mind, the generosity of feeling towards the Media to realise that criticism of a political system is a healthy thing.

They resented the criticism of their political decisions and their political views, they equated it with not quite treason but they equated it with anti-the-Nation rather than anti-Government. They said these people who are broadcasting are criticising what their people's elected Government is trying to do. This, if not treason, it is still pretty bad and we must do something about this. They therefore set about destabilising the BBC which they did pretty effectively and I am not going through that because it is a well known story and the set about demolishing ITV which they proposed to do by breaking it down into a number of different channels. Now that is one motive and quite a separate motive from the first one. The first element is satellite, the second thing is a motive for revenge against the broadcasters by the Government.

The third motive is the most tiresome one because it is here for perhaps longer and it is the notion that broadcasting should be to market forces because market forces are the best thing in the world. Anything that is not subject to market forces is a bad thing, therefore broadcasting must be subjected to market forces. This comes from a long tradition of Adam Smithism which is a mis-interpretation of the original Adam Smith doctrine but is best expressed by the Adam Smith Institute who believe that all human affairs are at their best when there is competition by a consumer, by the producer, by the manufacturer for their share of the market for their place in the sun.

The result of that when applied to broadcasting is disastrous for this reason that the pool of advertising revenue which is available in any country and has a maximum, has a norm and a minimum is immediately diluted from the narrow sphere to which it has been applied to a much wider one. This means that instead of two channels ITV 1 and Channel Four being financed from advertising revenue we are going to get at least three perhaps four, perhaps five and this is going to be done in such a way as intentionally to erode the financial superiority of the major channels, in fact the policy is to spread the butter as evenly as possible to whoever can make money out of it. Good on you, you're clever, you'll make money out of it, you keep it. That's great. In television production the simplest equation of quality is with money, there is no question of that there are lots of subjective definitions of quality but what you make for £100,000 an hour you can't make for £50,000 an hour or £20,000 an hour. The pool of available advertising money will be spread thinner and thinner as new channels multiply, as new advertising outlets appear and the 15% I was talking about from satellite might go up to 25%, 30%, or 40%. When you get to that level you are impoverishing the production capacity of British television and which has been different from all other television industries in the World except America by the fact that it spends more money on its programmes than any other television system. You are giving yourself a self inflicted wound as a nation because you are spending the resources which have given you something which has been positive and has sold and has given the nation a moral superiority over the years in exchange for the

obedience to the belief that market forces and competition are the most important thing, more important than the amount of money spent on individual programmes. I believe that is the central falicy of the Government's present plan.

JT What is the future of Granada?

DF Granada will fight on. I mean you are not going to sort of wave a white flag over the parapet because we don't like the present proposals. We will have to, we will certainly apply for the next franchise within the remit of that franchise we will make the best programmes we can. We will have to make a profit, we will have to compete, obviously any company in a group like Granada's must deliver a certain level of profitability or else it goes down the pan so we have got to achieve that. If you ask me what it means, I think it does mean less spend per hour, fewer programmes that appeal to a minority, I see no escape from that. It's funny, but we are almost back to square one because that's what we thought we had to do when ITV started and we found we didn't have to do it because we had got enough money. Some people would say too much, but at any rate we had enough money to be able to put on 'What the Papers Say', children's programmes, adult education, music, the arts. These are the threatened areas of television because they don't bring back any revenue and they cost money to put on. The big ones, the big dramas I don't think we will spend money on that scale again on a British production, we may well do it but in connection with the French, the Germans, the Americans. I find that

personally distasteful. It has to be, but I believe the compromise of two Nations working together has never produced a work comparable to the best works of British television which have been made nationally, I just don't believe it is possible to weld together the temperaments of the French and the English or the Italians and the English and the Americans and the English and get a unified production out of it, it is always prostituted in one way or another. I mustn't be heard saying that too loud.

JT An organisation like Granada was built up carefully as evidenced by your stories of going around the Universities?

DF That's all over. You will have Independents, which is fine. The Independent are thriving in every respect expect that they are all broke. The problem with Independents is that the spirit is there, the talent is there, the ability is there but at the moment there is no money. They have not sorted themselves out financially. I did a study two years ago, and found return on capital was 2%. You can't run a business that way so the Independents are not yet viable. They are alive, they are kicking, they are vigorous, they are good but we still have to see them viable. That's the new development, they are probably the new Granada if you like to look at it that way, the new talent, the new in-rush of young people of quality and talent. They should be going to the Independents, they shouldn't be going anywhere else at the moment that's a big chance in the Independents but I worry because I don't think the Independents can pay their salaries.

JT What about people like Murdoch?

DF I don't know anyone who is like Murdoch. Not one. I know what you mean but I think the Big Bad Wolf script for the future of ITV is probably an exaggeration. I don't think there will be many big bad wolves permitted, if any. I think that if George Russell remains at the Independent Broadcasting Authority he is shortly to come to the ITC, there will be a stringency about cross media ownership, about quality and I think anyone who publishes the Sun is not going to get a TV contract, I really don't. I think that that will be built into the specification, somebody who publishes the Financial Times yes, but somebody who publishes the Sun I think very hard to meet George Russell's criteria. I mean I am speaking in some hope, I have listened to what he says. We haven't seen the specification yet but the intention will be only to allow applicants to come in who will make good television.

JT How long would George Russell stay there?

DF Well I should think only about ten minutes if he doesn't get his way, but if he does get his way, five years, three years and he will set the tone, it is extraordinary how an institution doesn't change once the first guy has set it's tone. Reith for the BBC, Bob Fraser in ITV, I mean they did actually create an institution which has reflected their personalities right up to the present day. They haven't changed.

The BBC may have changed in some ways but the hard centre of the BBC, I don't know what to call it really, it's personality, it's inner personality - not all this stuff that Checkland talks about money because that's hype and it is necessary hype - the present vision of the BBC which is being peddled which is "We are terribly efficient, we are terribly cost conscious, we are expanding this, spending less money on that", - that's not the BBC. In the end the BBC is half a dozen rather proud rather superior men sitting around a table and deciding what is good and what isn't good. It is still that, and will continue to be that lot of people say this is an elite, but it is better than having a lot of unworthy men sitting around a table deciding how they can make the most money out of broadcasting. Checkland at home in his parlour is probably still a BBC man at least and he is not this guy who is going around wheeling, dealing, calculating.

JT What about Hussey?

DF Well he has got a wooden leg like me, which binds us together, I find him a little enigmatic, he is undoubtedly a very nice, brave, English gentleman, no question about that. Seemed to buggar up the Times Labour Relations. You may remember that year, they went out that was the Duke. Times newspaper, I am simply trying to identify the period when Rupert took over and there was a big fight and there was

a strike. I don't think he handled that terribly well but he could be a good training for the BBC. I am not sure that he is an intellectual leader but I think he is probably a very safe sea captain, he will steer the boat.

JT Leopards change their spots.

DF Well you know it is astonishing what happens to people if you give them an organisation, I mean there was Charles Hill, rabidly anti the BBC, make him Chairman and he immediately thinks the BBC is wonderful, will do anything for the BBC, lie down in front of a train.

Stephen:

May I ask something quite different?
Your other love, music, is this something quite separate from your work or is it in anyway cross fertilised with things that you have done in television.

DF Not enough. I mean I am discontented for my performance in introducing music as an element into television. I have never managed to do it, mainly because the people I have worked with have all got tin ears. The hardest thing in the world was to get Tim Hewat to understand what music was, I mean he'd listen to something and wouldn't know whether it was somebody beating on frying pans or whether it was music. I have failed really, I mean I am doing a big series 'Man and

Music' which is an attempt to look at the history of music from the point of view of Society not from the point of view of musicology or composer's lives. Why did society want music, what sort of music did they want? What did they pay for it, how did they listen to it? and I suppose that is some sort of binding together of the two things I am interested in but I have occasionally got the music I wanted on a show but one in a hundred, literally one in a hundred. I can remember the shows where the music worked the way I wanted it on the fingers of two hands out of the many many hundreds of shows I have produced or been in charge of and looked after. So I failed on that, total failure. I was Chairman of Novello's for a while, Novello Publishing Company for ten years and that brought together my interest in music with a reality of the music publishing business. That was in Television of course, Novello was totally isolated. Apart from that, no. I think the road that I had gone down on music has been a personal one. I have had allies from time to time, sometimes one, sometimes two, but it hasn't moved into the mainstream of my business life at all athough it has with the Royal Opera House obviously. I was having lunch with Jeffrey Tate today, no doubt you noticed. I had quite an earful.

Music has been, and is, the most important part of my private life outside of human relationships whereas literature isn't. I am very very fond of good writing, I love it but it doesn't absorb the whole of my conscious and sub-conscious mind in

the way that music does. Music takes over completely, literature never, movies very occasionally, plays never, opera yes. I don't like plays much, that's a terrible confession. They are so slow. No close-ups, you can't see the actors' faces and they are so badly lit and you can only hear about 70% of their lines.

Phase 2
Start from Back
Here