BEHP 0694T Clyde Jeavons Transcript

Clyde Jeavons [CJ]
Murray Weston [MW]
David Sharp [DS]

Please note that there is some repetition between the first and second Interviews. DS

MW: Well although we didn't call our first interview the first one, with David Francis, this is our second interview with archivists from the National Film and Television Archive in the UK.
The copyright in this recording is vested in the British Entertainment History Project and the name of the interviewee is Clyde Jeavons and the interviewer is Murray Weston and its being recorded on the 15th of July 2016.
Well, starting right at the start Clyde, you joined the BFI at what sort of date?

CJ: February 1969.

MW: And prior to that?

CJ: as a totally untrained film archivist. Prior to that I spent five years as Chief Sub-editor of *She* magazine, where I eventually evolved into reviewing books, and also Deputy Film Critic. Now the film critic of *She*, Elspeth Grant was a wonderful old lady but she was quite fond of the gin, so there were some months when the Deputy, he had to take over [laughs] and that's how I – I'd already been in love with film for a long time before that, but that's when I developed my interest at another level, and discovered what we might call art cinema, where there was popular cinema. Before that I had done some journalistic training on a financial paper. God knows what I did there, because I can't remember! I did yields and things like that, but I don't even know what that means anymore, but I learned to sub-edit there, that was very good training, and I remember a friend of mine said "Well if you want to become a journalist, don't go and become a cub reporter in the provinces or anything: fast track is join a very small niche magazine in London."
Nursing Times or whatever – in my case *The Financial World*. And that will be a much, much easier stepping stone to try for journalism. And before that I'd wanted to be in the theatre. Originally as an actor, but I soon discovered at

university that I was about three levels too low to be a good actor, but I was over Tony Garnett and Tom Courtenay, when I was at University College London, but I was quite a good producer-director. And I wanted to take that path, and in fact spent my first post-graduate job was with a touring theatre in Norway. A state touring theatre in Norway, which I joined for about six months. I came back – it was so difficult to find work in the theatre. Unless you were someone like Roy Battersby, whom I'd been at college with as well. He got one of those rare Granada internships and things like that, which I failed to do. So like all good third class honours arts graduates I became a journalist. Which was what you did then. And you needed to get a degree to get a lot of jobs, something which you don't now of course.

MW: So you were a UCL graduate?

CJ: Yup, I am.

MW: For some reason I had it in my mind that you were a Cambridge person, because I thought you knew Christopher Frayling very well –

CJ: Oh, only latterly. But I tried to get into Cambridge, but unfortunately my school qualifications weren't broad enough to do the courses I wanted to do at Cambridge, so I took a year off and taught, in a prep school. That was straight out of, what's his name, Evelyn Waugh, really. That was a year of Evelyn Waughism – very bizarre, being a prep-school teacher. I was assistant sports and religious knowledge. I think those were my subjects. And then I got a place at UCL. I went to do modern languages, but the only courses I could do were Italian or Scandinavian so I chose Scandinavian Studies: so I still speak Norwegian. Oddly enough. Anyway that's coming forwards but you can trace me back to 1969 when I saw an ad for a place in the National Film Archive. I didn't really know what that meant, but because it was film related and I was a member of the National Film Theatre, I applied and strangely I was taken on. For quite a high level job which was the Head of Film and Television Acquisitions. So I leap-frogged a number of people I realised later. I was interviewed by Ernest
Lindgren, the original curator, the founding curator of the National film archive.

5.00mins

and his assistant, his deputy, Colin Ford, who went on to run the Bradford – well, he went to the National Portrait Gallery first and worked for Roy Strong to create a Film and Photography Division at the National Portrait Gallery. He then went on to Bradford – ran the Bradford Museum very successfully; and became Director of the Museums of Wales. We've stayed in touch. I asked him later why they'd picked me. I had no training or experience in this field, and he said two things: he said nobody had it. There was no such thing as being a trained film archivist. That didn't exist at the time – you learned on the job, but he said we were looking for someone with journalistic experience who could help us to publicise the work of the archive, which was something Lindgren was very, very, keen to do, to create public awareness of what we were doing, and help to raise funding, greater funding for the archive. So my role was not only to be Head of Acquisitions but to photo and do articles and things like that and meet the public as it were, and the press: that's how I got the job.

MW: You joined the BFI in 1969, and you would have been in offices at 81 Dean Street perhaps?

CJ: Yes we went straight in – they had been in Charing Cross Road or somewhere, I can't remember now. They were installed in 81 Dean Street then, yes.

MW: And how many staff in the archive?

CJ: There weren't that many.

MW: Harold Brown would be there. I think there were more at the office end in London than there were in the country, because the archive premises then were at Aston Clinton, Aylesbury where the first bespoke nitrate vaults were built; and Harold Brown was then Chief Preservation Officer,
and he had a staff of about twenty, something like that. It can't have been more than that. I don't really remember [but] it can't have been more than that. Repairers and Preservationists, all led by Harold, and it was busy but not highly staffed. In London there was the Acquisitions, myself in charge of feature films, and someone for documentaries someone for television, and I was sort of in charge of them, vaguely.

MW: Remind us who those were.

CJ: Yes, I'm trying to remember.

MW: Was Vicky Wegg-Prosser involved?

CJ: No, she came later. A television officer called – oh, what's her name, I can't remember. Vicky came- someone called Helen – oh god, I've forgotten all the names now of the ones who were there when I joined. It's very embarrassing.

MW: We'll do a bit of revision.

CJ: Yes, we might have to do that, have a think about that. Vicky came later, she took over the Documentary Division, as indeed did – [quietly] oh I've lost all the names. Terrible.

MW: Well David Francis was one of the early ones.

CJ: David had, he preceded me as the first TV officer; Liam O'Leary had preceded me as well as Acquisitions Officer. They – Liam fell out with Lindgren's methodology – he was a bit more Langlois-iste than he should [have been] and Lindgren liked.

MW: Can you explain Langlois? [He talks a bit over Clyde]

CJ: OK. We can go down that path. The history of Langlois and Lindgren always dominates FIAF. It continues to do so. Lindgren was the, in my view anyway, the founder of not only the National Film Archive, one of the first of the original four film archives. He was also the creator of all the principles of film archiving. They'd already been there embryonically in the Imperial War Museum oddly enough, which was the very first film archive, formed in 1919, but principles of preservation, selection, cataloguing and even accessibility were all formulated by Lindgren.
10 mins

CJ: Now he looked and was a bureaucratic figure, but he was also a cinephile,

profoundly passionate about cinema, and he wrote the first book about film as an art form, I think, that I can recall. And he formulated that and he also trained Harold Brown, who was the office boy originally, and Harold Brown learned how to handle film by going into the projection box. I remember one of his stories was that in the projection box the film was torn; and normally in a projection box you just snip the frames, and join them back together again, and you lose two or three frames of film. Harold tried to repair the tear, which was not the practice at the time, and he was ticked off by his supervisor for fiddling around too much, trying to repair a torn frame. Lindgren later came out and said "You know what you were trying to do there Harold? You were trying to save the film, weren't you?" And he realised he had the right person on his hands and who cared so deeply about the material that he would actually try to save individual frames of film. And that's how Harold began, as a self-trained film handler and preservationist, and he became the leading guru if you like of preservation in FIAF, and wrote extensively about early film and its status, particularly nitrate film, and wrote profound histories of formats of early film, and he could identify almost any frame of film that you put in front of him eventually. I suppose his great coup – there were two really – one was that he – we've gone onto Harold Brown here, wandering around I hope you don't mind, but a very important figure Harold, in film conservation. He not only trained himself into how to preserve nitrate film particularly, and he was a key figure in the construction of the first nitrate film vaults, ensuring that they were safe from explosion and flammability, but also that they had the correct amount of humidity and air-conditioning control and things like that. But he also established the first test procedure for nitrate film. Because there was so much nitrate film and it decayed at a rate faster than one could keep up with the copying, and that was exacerbated because you had to open the cans to find out if nitrate was decaying, and you didn't know until it was decaying; and he created this test with the help of chemistry technicians to – its called the artificial ageing test and you could, by taking a punch of the nitrate film, and giving it some chemical applications you could anticipate when it was going to decay, by a good five years.

So he created a priority – a copying priority of testing every nitrate film in the vaults, and then only concentrating on those which had the shortest lifespan, before they rotted away. That was extremely important. It was decried by the rest of FIAF because very few FIAF members had the resources to do things like

that, and it was sort of spurned by a lot of archives who did wait until the nitrate rotted, before they could do anything about it [chuckles]. The other important thing was that the other nature of nitrate film was shrinkage and a large amount of nitrate reels had shrunk by, sufficiently so they wouldn't go through printers or projectors; and this is where Langlois comes in because Henri Langlois, then another founder of a FIAF archive, the French Cinematheque, who was more a collector-historian figure than a bureaucrat like Ernest, he came to Ernest with some early Lumiere films, with non-standard perforations of course – Lumiere perforations were quite different from the later standard because he wanted to get them saved and printed, because they were decaying and he needed to save them

15mins

That was Harold inventing his step printer which was the first home-made printing machine which would tolerate non-standard perforations and shrunken film. He had to build it four times before it worked. It was called the Mark IV printer in the end, and it has become a museum piece since then. He had no money to create this machine, so the first one was hand-built from balsa wood and Meccano – he had a Meccano set at home which he used, sticky tape, knicker elastic as he used to call it, and it was hand, operated by hand [gestures], operated by hand, one frame a second would go through this strange machine. A year later he could afford a little electric motor, so he fitted that to it and it got a little bit quicker but that machine for years saved reel after reel after reel of heavily shrunk nitrate film which could not have been printed in any other way. Some engineers tried to create, if you like, a professional version of it but never as satisfactory as Harold's step printer. And that is still on display I think in the Conservation Centre at Berkhamsted [and] has been loaned out round the world for display and lecturing purposes. The Italians tried to steal it, took me about seven years to get it back from the Italians [laughter] – they gave it back eventually.

So Harold is an extremely important figure and not a lot of people realise that he was also the founder of the phrase 'vinegar syndrome'.

Later in his career he was invited to Manila, the Philippines, where they have a small film archive in the most appalling conditions of humidity and storage, and he started – he went into a vault and opened some cans; he'd been invited to do that, and he suddenly said "My God, fish and chips." And what he was smelling was vinegar, which was the first manifestation of vinegar syndrome

which is even worse than nitrate in a way, because it's so rapid, that decay: once 'vinegar' sets in you haven't got very long to save the film, and its also incredibly contagious. That's how Harold came back and did a little paper on what he called The Vinegar Syndrome, and that's how it all began. So whereas we'd all thought "Ah, safety film", acetate film this will last for years, 500 years, no problem. And then you discovered just when it was safe to go back in the vaults, there it was, the new curse. Which went hand in hand with the curse of Eastmancolor, the early Eastmancolor which faded within ten years. There's a whole story there with Scorsese – we can go on to Scorsese later on if you like, and my relationship with him about that issue.

MW: Sadly we lost Harold Brown in about 2008.

CJ: Yes I think so.

MW: So unfortunately we weren't able to capture him.

CJ: That's a shame. Yes – but a lot has been written about him, and he wrote some things about himself occasionally – I don't know where these documents are, I've probably got them. There's copies somewhere.

MW: There were other people weren't there at and indeed at Berko, there was a chap, Paul de Burgh He did some wonderful work as well.

CJ: Yes there was a man called Lewis, and Paul de Burgh slotted in to when we – I think it slotted into when we got money from the National Heritage fund. That was the first time that an arts institution outside the BFI had funded film restoration, thanks to David. David persuaded them to give us money, quite substantial money at the time, something like £100,000, this was about 1980 to restore Technicolor films, British Technicolor films, particularly, and of course that meant Powell & Pressburger mainly and the first one we did was *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp,* and we took on old laboratory technicians to help us to identify and deal with Technicolor film and Paul de Burgh was the key figure in that. And he was in some ways almost as important as Harold in terms of technical knowledge and ability and experience and he steered through the first photochemical restorations of British Technicolor.

20 mins

And we made all kinds of discoveries about the material then. The myth is that if you had a nitrate original of a Technicolor film it was the 'bee's knees' as just an example. And you revered that print and you didn't let it be shown too often, and so on and so on. I always thought British Technicolor was a bit disappointing: it was a bit dull, all browns and greens, and dull colours. And you looked at a Danny Kaye film, from Hollywood or something and it was like a paint box, you know, flew off the screen. I thought, 'well they are all Technicolor, why aren't they the same?' And it was when we came to restore *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* which was the first one we did under this aegis, I remember Lewis – can't remember his first name – and Paul de Burgh sitting there and we'd put the original nitrate print we had on one screen, and some work we'd had from the separations on another: they'd gone right back to the original separations; and the nitrate print was, well what it was, but the other one was flying off the screen, it was beautiful. The black uniform trousers had become rich blue, the dull reds had become vermillion, the yellow had become shining gold, it was an absolute – well [we said] "What's going on here. What are you finding?" And they were giggling away, and they were going "ah" and they were pointing at the nitrate original and saying "North of Watford print" they were saying. I said "what does that mean?" They said "well, Technicolor prints were very expensive and Technicolor never threw them away, so what they do, is if they had duff prints, they just sent them north of Watford to the provinces, where they didn't know any different!" These were by no means the premiere prints or anything like that.
So we all marvelled at what they were producing, and the first photo-chemical restoration was of *Blimp*, and *Red Shoes*, and *Black Narcissus* were absolutely extraordinary and they were wondered at by the audiences, this revelation. And I think they're still almost as good as Scorsese's digital restorations. In fact I prefer them because they still move a little bit, you know film used to 'float'. Well David Walsh says this, he will – I don't know if you are interviewing him – but he will extrapolate on how film is supposed to move a little bit, you know, in the projector, in the camera: if it's absolutely rock-steady you should be suspicious. It's not going to be like the original. Digital restoration loses that patina very often, the pleasant movement of the film, and lots of qualities disappear for the sake of perfection. And I still like photo-chemical restorations very much, they still look terrific.

Well, eventually we got around to restoring one of the lesser-known works of Powell and Pressburger, which was *Gone to Earth,* and, in fact it was quite a denigrated film, "oh it's not a very good film", it's not up there with *Black Narcissus* and so on, and it looked very dull. But again we, Harold and co., worked hard on that to produce, again, the original colours. It's meant to be saturated colour film, it's Victorian melodrama, *Gone to Earth*, and when they started finding these saturated colours and putting them back, it looked magnificent. And it turned – well, I remember Ian Christie reappraising the film as one of the masterpieces: not appreciated at the time because the colours had not been discovered, and Harold came to that screening. It was a gala screening at the Film Festival, at what is now the Curzon – I can't remember what it was called then, The Lumiere, I think… [off camera discussion] In a previous life it was called The Lumiere, I think yes.
Anyway, it doesn't matter: we showed it there, Powell came, all the existing cast came, Pressburger came with a bloody bandage round his head: he'd been hit by the train door on his way, and they'd wanted to cart him off to hospital, but he insisted in coming to the screening [laughing] so he staggered onto the stage with this blood coming down. Quite extraordinary – I don't know how he survived, so we had a wonderful screening, but some of the separations had not registered properly, a slight mis-registration but we warned the audience and if you tell the audience there is something wrong, they don't notice it.

25 mins
They relax. They come up and say "I didn't notice any issues with the registration." If you don't, then they notice and then they tell you. But a little later I got a letter from Michael [Powell] which I still have I think, saying "thank you for finding the colours we could not find in the laboratory at the time." So what it was really, it was an overall failure of the British Technicolor laboratories to do the work properly really. They just failed to find the colours that the directors of the film and the cameraman were trying to achieve. So that was a very revelatory piece of information from Michael

MW: There's so much knowledge in the laboratory, and the guys that worked there; I remember hearing that Agfa stock worked in soft waters so when you worked with Agfa stock in the UK, it never worked like it did when you had hard water. These are fundamental things that Hollywood, hang on – that film it's a

whole lot different. Is the lighting different? And it was the water quality as I understand it.

CJ: Extraordinary. Yes.

MW: These are things I only heard about, but I imagine these are things we need to find out more about, from the people who have been in these labs and worked on all this.

CJ: Well, yes. De Burgh had another quality which was important to us. We found we often did not have original materials or the right materials, but he knew what was back in the laboratories, hidden away by Rank or whatever, and he would go and talk stuff out of the laboratories, so that we could use the original materials, particularly colour separations and things like that. So that was a very important factor that you could do that.

MW: You've touched on already the question of now digital restoration, and we are now in a world of DTP [Desk Top Publishing] and all that stuff and packages and so on. And it seems to me that maybe there is that thing rather like with audio where analogue audio is now being revered more, and-

CJ: Bit like vinyl-

MW: And digital audio is now being discarded by those who are real cognoscenti. Do you think that's a thing that might happen? I believe there's a button you can now press on some of these packages where you go-but back the-

CJ: Yes, well as David Walsh said – he gave a very nice talk in Bologna a couple of weeks ago: everyone else had been talking about the wonders of digitalisation and things like that – all the young kids on the block, creating these lovely machines and all of that, seeking perfection; and David was very realistic and said "Stop mucking about. Don't press the stabilisation button. Don't press it, you don't have to do that. There are a lot of things you just don't have to do to recreate the original experience or the original film. And film was meant to float in the camera, that's fine, that's what it's supposed to do. Keep it that way. Don't try and sharpen the contrast if it's not there in the original.

Don't remove all the grain. Factors like that. Don't try to perfect the soundtrack, it wasn't meant to be a perfect soundtrack." You know all these factors. So I think that the balance is somewhere – use digital tools, not to take over first of all the act of preservation: digitisation is not preservation. It's an access medium on the one hand, and a very good one; but it's also a repair medium. You can use digital tools to repair damage which can no longer be done photochemically in the laboratory – a) because there aren't any laboratories and b) there's no film stock. It's a short cut to repair damage that you can no longer repair any other way. Take aspect ratios, for example: you can't recreate aspect rations for a film photochemically in a laboratory, so if you want to go back to the original Cinemascope, which is much wider and shallower than later, what became standard Cinemascope, you can re-create the original ratios digitally. Take a film – these are a couple of hobbyhorses of mine: MGM own two films, one *It's Always Fair Weather,* which is one of the Kelly Donen musicals, which came after *Singin' in the Rain*, and *On the Town*, that's in original Cinemascope and even new prints and I've watched in Bologna, so called restored prints, Dan Dailey and Michael Kidd are both cut off at the shoulders and the edge of the frame because they dance the full width of the frame.

30mins

Because they dance the full width of the frame: Dan Dailey, Gene Kelly and Michael Kidd. Kelly's okay [laughs] he can go on dancing in the middle, but the other two are cut off at the shoulders: it's ridiculous. There's another film, *Party Girl,* Nicholas Ray, Cyd Charisse and Robert Taylor: again, that's cut off at the edges because they have failed to go back to rediscover the original ratio. But you can recapture colour, you can clone frames, you can repair damage not otherwise reparable with photochemical means, and so on, and so on. So these are the advantages. But if you talk to someone like Grover Crisp at- who has a systematic programme of film restoration at Columbia Studios – now Sony Columbia, he is someone who has learned how to find a compromise between using digital reparation which he uses as minimally as possible. If he can still do it photochemically, he does it photochemically. The trouble is he is now trapped in the new commercial syndrome, of not going back to film. So restoration will now be a transfer onto a digital machine, and you can in theory make a print from that, an old fashioned film print. But they won't do it

anymore, because nobody's going to project celluloid, so you go straight to a DCP [Digital Cinema Package] after that. So you never no quite whether you have done the work properly. And film -celluloid prints – are still very expensive, well even more expensive now to recreate.

So it's a difficult area: one should be aware of film fetishists, who have shrines to nitrate and things like that. Film has moved on. I think the new methodology is very exciting, it's very accessible. It won't yet take over for preservation, you still- it's still very important for archives to keep original material for as long as they possibly can, because every time you go back to them there's an improvement in technology and technique, but one should beware of being too much in love with the old films. As long as you have archives, cinematheques, museums who can still preserve the machinery as well as the film materials and go on projecting. Projection is still a very happy way of watching a film, I think. In front of an audience. You get the full quality of the original experience that way.
I'll tell you another anecdote of mine which is – we are leaping forward now to a few years ago when I'm programming films at the London Film Festival, and Grover Crisp at Columbia had just restored *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, that's 65 or 70 millimetre, and he'd got everything back, the ratio, the colours, the lot. It looked magnificent. But we were not going to be showing the film as such and I remember walking onto the stage to introduce the film, carrying about ten double cans: they were empty of course, I couldn't carry them otherwise, but this is showbusiness. So I carried these ostentatiously, put them down carefully on the stage and I said to the audience "That's about half of *The Bridge on the River Kwai,* that you are going to see today. If you want to see all of it then I have to bring on another ten double cans of celluloid, blah, blah, blah, but we're not going to be watching that today, this is what you're going to be watching today." And I reached into my pocket and pulled out the entire film on a DCP. I hadn't actually got the right one, the projectionist wouldn't let me take it, but yeah, I said "That's what you're going to see today, what I hold in my hand." Gasps around the audience, that kind of stuff. So a little bit of an ostentatious way of showing how the technology had moved on. So even Grover at Columbia could no longer project, or he wasn't allowed to make film prints from the restoration. Now they're all DCPs. So that's how it's changed.

MW: In a way a line has been drawn in the sand now, whether we wanted it or not.

CJ: It's inevitable.

MW: If we say five years ago wanted it on celluloid we had to look after it in a certain way and there won't be much more of it coming through.

CJ: No. Nostalgia's all very well, but nobody's going to manufacture film any more. Kodak have stopped doing a lot of film now.

35 mins.

Take a radical case: in Norway a few years ago, film is run by, it's a state operation, all the cinemas are state-owned or if they're not there is a collective of cinema owners, who belong to, who are subject to the state, and how the state wants films to be shown, and they introduced an instruction that all the cinemas should now dispose of their original projection equipment and instal only digital projection, and the entire country of Norway is now subject to that order and only Bergen, Oslo and Trondheim, I think, where they have cinematheques are they still allowed to project film, but as a kind of museum experience. And that's what archives have to become now: they have to combine the first 100 years as a museum experience, with what is happening in the digital domain and whatever else there is to come. I have this vision of quantum film making where you just do it in your head [laughs].

MW: That comes next!

CJ: That's the natural next step. We're at a very interesting stage and I'm not a Luddite or anything like that, I find all this progress very exciting but you still need to keep a cool head and remind people, don't throw the originals away, they are still extremely important, particularly where progress is being made with new technology. I remember – here's another little detour – a number of years ago, Henning Schou, a Dane who became an Australian, but he became Preservation Officer in succession to Harold – not in direct succession but he became Preservation Officer during my reign in the 90s, and I remember him telling me how he went to – he was highly regarded in FIAF, travelled around a

lot so he went to the Library of Congress vaults one day, was allowed to have a look around and to give an opinion and he picked up these huge containers containing laser discs and each one was labelled 'laser disc – the preservation medium of the future', and of course they were already obsolete! That's how rapidly it moves on.

MW: And now falling apart as well.

CJ: And delaminating yes. And even now, it's all very well having binary digital films but that's somewhere in the ether, what they are carried on is very fragile discs which delaminate – and also computer systems can lose information as easily as they can retain it. Unfortunately. Somebody told me that government, digital government records in America, official government records, about 30% of them have now disappeared. Nobody can find them anymore. They need my computer man from round the corner actually – he can find almost anything.

MW: He's old enough to remember-
CJ: [Laughing] That's right.

MW: I'd like to go back a bit to when you started at the BFI. We've had a really good discourse here.

CJ: OK

MW: And we are going to readdress some of those points at the end…You started, day one at the BFI, 1969. You arrived there, how did you in a sense get your feet under the desk, because you'd been a journalist at She magazine –

CJ: Well, Lindgren was very, very, sensible: he was aware of my lack of experience, but he saw someone who could learn very quickly, which I could. I was totally besotted with the job and what I was going to do – I couldn't believe my luck and it got even better because he said to me "Well there's been a bit of a lull here in the Acquisitions area, and a lot of old collections have come in, actually, mainly what I want you to do for the next two years is run the selection committees," which I did. We can come back to selection if you like. "But actually I want you to spend at least two days a week going to the conservation vaults and watching film. And go through the collections." [Clyde

mimes being gobsmacked] I mean this is like being a ten-year-old again, and going to the Saturday matinees. So I could, with a light heart, travel to Aston Clinton twice a week and just run old collections through the – what did we have then, Moviolas or something like that – and it was bliss. There was Harold repairing them and me watching them, and selecting at the same time.

40 mins
I could select and discard as I went along. And saw the most extraordinary things. I mean the most extraordinary films go through my hands which I'd never ever envisaged being on film; and it's partly how I came to love non-fiction a lot – the huge variety and entertainment value in non-fiction films is extraordinary. And then films as an historical record of the whole century just blows my mind away really, sometimes when I watch stuff. I remember someone coming in: Lindgren had a – one of his flaws was he had a very bad relationship with collectors. I knew he just didn't trust them. He thought they were beggars off the street and things like that, and fetishists and they should be putting anything they found into the archive, and they shouldn't be hoarding it as collectors do. I remember saying then that the whole point about collectors, they collect and hoard. [Laughs] That's how they are. But they are saving films which others have not saved. They are quite important people, and he didn't like them, he didn't trust them. I said "Well occasionally they come into me and they offer me things. What do I do?" He said "You give them £4 a reel [Murray laughs] and that was the standard rate for acquiring a film from a collector. It was [that] you gave him £4 a reel – no negotiation – and there were major collections like the Norman collection in Soho, in nitrate vaults rotting away on roofs, which he would pay for them. That was the only way we were going to get them, and that had to come later. I had to negotiate for them later.

And at the time, there was man who came in who was a regular, a visitor – a lot of them I really didn't like dealing with because of the nature of the beast – but they did bring some important reels of films in sometimes. The man came in with a reel of film, he'd bought it off the market stall, I gave him £4 for it, he seemed satisfied and I looked at it and it was the most astonishing film of an MP, in 1917, called Noel Pemberton Billing. I don't know if you've ever heard of him. Well he was a quite a – he was like a Johnsonian [Boris Johnson] figure of his day, but extremely right-wing, he was quite posh, he designed motor cars, fast motor cars, he designed aeroplanes, his wife kept bees, and he was an

independent MP with the most fascistic opinions: he believed in bombing civilians in war time and things like that, a dreadful man and he was also an anti-white slavery campaigner, and he's actually started to make film about white slavery in London, and there were bits, extracts, from the film he had made in this reel. And it was the most extraordinary, it was a self-promotion film. It was Noel Pemberton Billing promoting himself as a politician. Quite extraordinary and all for £4! A classic piece of film.
So I developed a relationship with collectors during that period, covertly. And they were very suspicious of us, they didn't like institutions, so I had to do a very difficult, but in the end successful, wooing act with collectors and I got a lot of them on my side in the end. What they mainly wanted was to be recognised as having done something important; and they also wanted to see the films shown, they wanted them shown. So occasionally – I did a lot of programming at the NFT at the time: David [Francis] used to call me the public face of the archive, he did a lot of background stuff, I did all the front stuff. A lot of it was programming. Very often, if I could I would slot in an item from a collector, so they could be invited along, and have a free seat and watch their film on the screen. It was very important diplomacy, so it worked very well. Some collectors you couldn't get through to, they were just… totally hermits, you couldn't do anything about them: you had to wait for them to die. And then the films would go on the collector market and you'd have to get them that way, which sometimes worked. I knew there were lost films out there, I knew who had them, but I couldn't dig them out. Impossible.

MW: It's a similar relationship between some museum curators and [inaudible].

CJ: Yes, it is a bit like that.

MW: We need that. And somehow there has to be a collaboration, and I think there is more of a collaboration nowadays.

45 mins

CJ: Well, Lindgren – and I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing, but he was very, very, institutional. He believed in there being a national institution devoted to the preservation of film, and the survival of film and the collecting

of film, and – I can't stress this more – the showing of the films. And he's often accused historically of never showing the archive's films. It's absolute nonsense, he was the first person to show classic films at the, whatever the National Film Theatre was called earlier. He did all the programming then, but only if we had copies that could be shown. That was his line. If there's only one copy and we have to preserve it, you're not going to put that on a projector. That's where he clashed mainly with Langlois, who threw everything on a projector and destroyed it of course. But Lindgren very slowly, carefully, built up a projection collection and when we could we did programme them. But – I can't remember where this was going.

MW: In your viewings at Aston Clinton you started to fall in love with non-fiction.

CJ: Yes.

MW: Had you, had it been that exposure to non-fiction films that sort of turned you on to that expression of film or had you previously been excited by them?

CJ: No, I hadn't been excited by non-fiction, except the obvious things like those of the Documentary Movement, but those were films that were shown in the cinema, you were exposed to them that way. But I had no deeper knowledge than that, beyond newsreels, and documentaries. It was the discovery of unseen film really, which excited me, and it went hand in hand with Lindgren's philosophy, where again he clashed with the Langloisistes in FIAF. Langlois wasn't alone in his view that the cinematheque should only show arty films, should only show feature films. He didn't care a jot beyond that, and there are still people in FIAF who are *Langloisiste* in that sense. But Lindgren's philosophy right from the start he said cinema is extremely important, particularly British cinema, but all cinema is international and we should regard it as such, we should never reject anything on a national basis we should regard cinema as an international medium but also, this is the first century when we can record our own history. And in any shape or form on film, and that is just as important, film as a record, just as important as film as fiction, as entertainment. And that carried for him as much weight as cinema films. And I espouse that immediately, particularly the more I watched. The other conclusion I came to when I was looking at all these old collections, a lot of

them were silent material, and the day I was told that 80% of silent film had already gone throughout the world, in some cases practically all of it had gone, I said I'm never throwing any more of this away. I selected every frame of silent film that went through my hands because if we've only got 20% of it left, don't throw anything away, unless it was a completely pointless piece of film or a copy of better material, but I never rejected silent material at all.

MW: Let's talk a little bit more about selection because that's one of those sort of 'old chestnut' issues – old chestnut? I mean it's an issue which any archivist has to face. Whether to be inclusive or whether to be more selective, and your role particularly with feature films in the selection panels. Did you have a relationship also with the non-fiction panels or was that left to your documentary officers?

CJ: Well we've probably had this already but again Lindgren set up a formal, a very formal selection structure, more than any other archive in the world. Some had no selection structures at all they just had a curator who did what he liked. But he said "because again we are a government funded body we had to show what we do is responsible and we have to try to stay within budget. I will clamour for as much money as I can get but we still have to stay within budget." So the selection procedure was designed to prioritise the most important films whether they were cinema films, or documentary films, non-fiction films, or newsreels or television.

50 mins

CJ: And for that he set up extremely sophisticated selection committees of the most important people he could find who voluntarily met every month or every two months, I can't remember to go through selection procedures, and we as curators of our different disciplines, in my case feature and fiction films would prepare long lists of all the latest film material. Roger Whitney, who became Documentary Officer had to do the same. Labyrinthine lists of material from which the committees could select, because they wouldn't do that homework themselves, and the same with television and the same with scientific films because we had a science committee as well. So all these were formally set up, and some of the names were staggering, people who were on these committees. Extremely important people. Zoologists and botanists, historians,

you name it. And I had all the major film critics on my selection committee, as well as industry people and so forth. And it was hard work having to do this every couple of months, entirely distracting, took me away from the actual act of trying to get the films sometimes and my only complaint: I loved the procedures, it was great fun, it was wonderful engaging with all these people and talking about film. And Lindgren always insisted on every film selected having a reason, a reason was always recorded of why you'd selected that film: because of its script or because of its theme or because of an acting performance or whatever. Lots and lots of reasons, and as it progressed I started to worry that we were over-selecting. It was over-rigorous and I came to a conclusion quite rapidly that it was important for every country to preserve its own production, irrespective of whether it was crap or not, and every country should preserve everything produced in its own country if it could. That was not 'Lindgrenistic'. He selected even British material, I thought we should concentrate more on selecting British material and being more selective about Hollywood or French films or anything where they should be doing that job themselves. I wanted a balance where we preserved all British cinema, feature and documentary and when we selected material from abroad, unless it was threatened in some way, and not being preserved in the country of origin, we should select it more as access material where it could be shown to further the study of film which is another of the purposes of the BFI, to educate through film. I never settled that argument with Lindgren, probably because I only knew him for two or three years before he died. So it was only when he'd passed on, later in the day, I prepared eventually, much as I loved the selection committee, the selection procedures, I thought in the end we should be our own curators, we should do – we should be experienced, informed curators like any museum and we should have the discipline of deciding what to take. And then I wrote a a paper in which I declared my opinion of the need to preserve all British film irrespective of what it was and to decide amongst ourselves internally the amount of non-British material we took, and not as a selection procedure but just as a decision-making process. And all of that would depend on availability really, but it also led to much closer co-operation with other archives, just what they were preserving, what they were keeping, whether or not they wanted the material we had, to work on, so we loaned a lot of material out. We particularly had this relationship with the Museum of Modern Art, New York, another original founder member of FIAF. We had a very close relationship of exchanging material.

We also had very important original materials in the archive, most notably the films given to us early on by the London Film Society, led by Ivor Montagu and the intellectuals of the twenties who discovered film: avant-gardists if you like.

55 mins

They imported films which commercially were never imported in the twenties. Russian films. French films. German films. All the latest art films of those periods and they were marvellous original prints – they were the best, very often the best we had became the print we had been given by the London Film Society. I'll give you an example: *Potemkin* – I think that the National Film Archive's copy – sorry I keep on calling it the National Film Archive, it's something else now, BFI National Archive or something – I shall continue to refer to it as the National Film Archive [chuckles] although I did introduce television into the title in the '90s – we still, they still have the best copy of the *Battleship Potemkin* because it's an original, off the camera negative; it's complete; it's untrammelled by subtitling or anything like that, except it does have English inter-titles; most importantly – it's a detail, but its an important one, is the flag on the ship at the end. The end of *Potemkin,* the ship sails into the harbour and the flag is flying and it's a red flag; it's a black and white film but it's a red flag, and in the original prints they applied, they painted the flag red. So all the distribution prints from the original had the red flag painted on – it sort of shimmered a bit, like that [demonstrates], it wasn't very accurate. So we – the BFI still has that copy. But if you'd made a negative from that, with the red flag, and reprinted it, you got a black flag. So now you had a ship that was either carrying the plague or it was a pirate ship. [they laugh] Or, if you had an original from where the flag had not been painted red, you ended up with a white flag. So there you had a ship which was surrendering, which is quite the opposite of what *Potemkin* was about.
These are little amusing anecdotes about film but they are very important about original materials, and so there was a lot of material like that in the archive which was of the utmost importance, historically and also why you should never give or dispose of the original materials. They often carry details of originality which you don't want to lose.

MW: In connection with-

CJ: [interrupts] oh, let me finish what I started there – I wrote this paper with the object of abandoning the selection committees, which I did with great reluctance: they had been wonderful people, we loved engaging with them and Lindgren, I still followed Lindgren's philosophy that if you show you are engaging with the major intellectuals of the country in the work that you are doing, this gives you a status and can lead to recognition and greater funding from your funding body which was the government. And it worked to some extent. He did create an archive that was very highly regarded not only nationally but internationally. For long many, many, years we were the leading film archive in the world, both technically and in terms of our procedures, even though there were mavericks like Langlois, and his little clan, who were fundamentally opposed to all these philosophies and procedures. All they wanted to do was slam the films on the projectors, acquire them clandestinely, fill up secret vaults with nitrate which blew up occasionally. This is where Langlois goes – we lose touch with him. He and Lindgren fought bitterly. Lindgren didn't want to, he could never understand why Henri – but he was a bit psychopathic – he definitely was and I think even Lindgren thought that: he thought 'I can't deal with this man any more he's, there's just no meeting of the minds, there's no talking to him.' And that's, Langlois' heritage is at least two secret film vaults that blew up in Paris: we only knew they were there when they went up in flames, and he wrecked dozens of films on projectors by showing them to the *Nouvelle Vague*, but he got their support and they loved him. Truffaut and co loved Langlois because he showed them films and there's a lot to be said for that but you have to find a compromise somewhere. Sorry. So I wrote this paper in order to abandon the selection in a formal way. All the selection committees agreed, reluctantly. They said "We've had a wonderful time, but we know where you're going with this…"

60 mins

It was now up to us. Up to the - we were called officers then but I preferred to call them curators; or Keepers, actually. Keepers was word I used. That was Lindgren's. So, there was, a Keeper of Feature Films, a Keeper of Documentaries and so on, who would make those decisions and that's how it transpired. Round about the '80s, the early '80s.

MW: Now, in deselecting content-

CJ: Yes.

MW: -I think you were saying there was some content that wouldn't be taken into the archive, you would occasionally offer these if they were foreign films to other places-

CJ: I don't like the word deselection.

MW: Okay! [laughter]

CJ: So, now and again, because I was in charge of selection, we had, whatever the rest of the world thought about our selection procedures, they were fascinated by them and they often wanted us to talk about them at congresses and symposia and we did: not to be convincing in any way, but to explain why we did things this way, and I would never talk without showing stuff on the screen, and they would often say to me "Well, can't you show us something that you are not selecting and you're rejecting?" I said "The moment I put it on a projector, it selects itself." I said "There's never a reason to throw it away, there's only ever a reason to keep it." And I said "in the end there is no such thing as deselection. You can decide not to take something at the beginning, but once you've got it, you keep it." I've never believed in throwing anything away, other than a technical reason. It's rotted away or whatever. So: deselection, no. But often I would look at material or find material in my hands that we didn't want to keep but somebody else should. Particularly Hollywood films, that we didn't need another copy of a wrecked distribution print. Which is all we had really. So in that sense, yes. But we did take the view after I'd written that paper that all British cinema should be considered as 'to be acquired' if you could get it. Not to reject anything from that area.

MW: Now the archive was called The National Film Archive.

CJ: Yes.

MW: And rightly so. Television was there though, probably since the late 1950s and I imagine it was acquiring videotapes, and telerecordings and various other

media to capture television. And David Francis was I think one of the first Television-

CJ: He was the first TV Officer, yes.

MW: - television was coming a couple or three channels anyway from the late '50s, a torrent of stuff-

CJ: That's right.

MW: How did the Archive approach television then? I mean I know it's probably a question for David Francis, but that was a whole new area, and one which wasn't so familiar to the National Film Archive, presumably.

CJ: Well, again, Lindgren, he spoke with slightly forked tongue on some things, take newsreels for example, he never thought the soundtrack to newsreels was important: don't take the soundtrack, just the images! Which of course is nonsense historically – he had his little flaws. But he had a similar ambivalence with television: he could see that some of the television that was being produced was important, particularly by the BBC, and we should take some television but on a highly selective basis. He was very, very, firm about that and he wasn't terribly keen on taking the 'ephemera', what we would call game shows and comedies and things like that, you know, only an example of this, and example of that. We all began to feel differently, once – he did formally create a Television Acquisitions Department, and one day I'll come up with the name that I can't remember, who did it first of all…but it was very selective. But it did include ITV which had been formed in [19]55 I think – is that right? Because I remember having the very first television advertisement, which I used to show in an advertising programme: *Gibbs SR toothpaste*. That's it: twelve minutes past eight on such and such a date in 1955.

65 mins

So we did espouse television, we had a Television Selection Committee, but it was highly selective. As that progressed we began to see so much television discarded, particularly by the television companies, or the BBC claimed it was keeping all its own television which it wasn't, it was recycling expensive two -

inch tapes, and so on and so on. To the extent that it became scandalous, some of the stuff they were throwing away like Dennis Potter plays, and jazz material and things like that. We began to take the view that we should be taking in more and more television. Fortunately television came to our aid eventually, where we could record off-air, not to a preservation standard but at least we would have a record of all, and that reached a point where we did do 24-hour recording, as you probably know: BBC material off-air onto videotape. The strange thing is that television took over in a way and leapfrogged film – of course the other thing we should talk about is legal deposit – and we actually achieved legal deposit for some television long before, well instead of ever achieving it for film. And the first manifestation of that was the right to record off-air, officially, all BBC material and, by negotiation eventually, Channel 4 and ITV, and in fact Channel 4 funded us to record off-air: we were doing the archiving for them. And eventually some of that was formalised, so that we became, although the words were never used, we became the legal depository of a major amount of television, and ultimately then, the BBC began to deposit material in the archive, particularly their obsolete tapes. So quite a lot was saved that way, but still there is so much television missing. That's why there's this programme of Missing Believed Wiped, where we hope to discover old television under peoples' beds or, more importantly, television that had been exported other countries and gets rediscovered that way.

So, the tail started wagging the dog really, to a great extent, and television has been the big success story in the Archive. Also copied by a lot of other archives who also record off-air and acquire much more television than they used to. And I guess rightly so, in a way. You can also almost divide the procedures really. You need a whole different set of procedures for acquiring television and they are technically easier. They are less threatening to the producers of television than the paranoid film companies. So it became a much easier passage.

Acquiring films, until digitisation, remained profoundly difficult, partly because of paranoia about piracy and things like that and also film companies' reluctance to give you what they consider to be a rather expensive item. So, all you got in the end was a film that had finished its shelf life, and what you got was a clapped-out distribution print, I mean something that was hardly worth acquiring – but in some cases that is all that's left of the film. I used to hate the irony of – I would go to film companies and say "Look why don't you give me a print now while the film is fresh and new and pristine, 'cos I know that in

twenty year's time, your successors are going to come back to us and say have you got that film we made twenty years ago, because we can't find any material on it?" "and it'll be there in the archive and you can make a perfectly decent negative from that." No. Nobody took us up on that – ever. The only two cases where that almost worked is Tony Garnett, when he started making films with Ken Loach – not television material but film: he made a film called *The Body*, I remember. Nobody remembers that anymore; and *Kes*. He became a governor of the BFI briefly, a rather contentious one I might add [laughs] being Tony, and I did persuade him to write the National Film Archive into the budget, into the pre-shooting budget of the film, and I said "If you put it in, if you've got a budget of £750,000, and hidden in there is a print for the National Film Archive - £1500 – even the accountants might not notice that."

1 hour 10 minutes

Of course, the accountants always did. But at least they could always lose that little budget item right from the beginning, and make a print, a new print, just for the National Film Archive, and he did take that up. But it didn't last very long because they moved on. And the only other person who honoured that was David Puttnam; and his trick was to make a stand-by print – a stand-by premiere print and put it in the projection box in the west end, and it never got used. They never used the stand-by print and that was the print that came to the National Film Archive. So in Puttnam's case we did have a brand new untrammelled print of all his films.

But those were rare successes, and to go right back to the beginning again, '69, that was exactly the moment at which Lindgren, not for the first time, was campaigning for a legal deposit system for film. His argument being there was already a hundred-and-fifty-year-old legal deposit system for books, print, so why not for this new medium which was just as important? And it should be government funded; it should be statutory, and this is where he was going slightly wrong, and in the case of both British and international cinema, it should be enforced, and Hollywood studios should not be allowed to introduce a film into this country and not give a new copy to the archive if they asked for it. He said it's still a selection system, but everything we select should be formally given to the National Film Archive. He found support from an MP called David Kerr, who introduced it as a private member's bill. It was taken up.

There are whole little booklets on it. Jenny Lee, who was then Arts minister supported it, and the only reason it collapsed was lack of money: the government would not fund it. And that probably was his best chance of getting legal deposit. But in my reign we tried two or three times, and under David [Francis] as well we tried to get some form of legal deposit. But we just hit a brick wall every time.

MW: The Anthony Kenny review… [Report of the Working Party on Legal Deposit, 1998. DS]

CJ: That was the nearest I got, and we were still then mainly talking about photo-chemical materials. I've got boxes and boxes [indicates] of Kenny's stuff. He became a passionate supporter of mine, even though it wasn't all about the Archive: we were just an appendix. They were trying to update copyright laws to take in non-print material, into the British Library. I don't even know whether that was successful, frankly. I was so distracted by the film element of it, and I rather took over some of the meetings by ranting, particularly when – was it – Chris Smith, Arts Minister… Okay, quite a lot of qualities, but he had a blind spot when it came to what I was trying to achieve on the committee and he planted a low-life member of his staff on the committee, who kept trying to filibuster me and corner me and prevent me from making my case. He was an absolute – I won't use the abuse that comes to mind on camera but he was a nuisance, let's put it that way, and even Kenny got rid of him. He did not like people like that being on the committee without a brief. So Chris Smith was my stumbling block, and it reached the point where I had devised what I think is still the perfect legal deposit system, which in our case was that for every British film where it was selected – requested – it wasn't everything: any film requested by the National Film Archive, a new print should be deposited initially, a print deposited in the National Film Archive, in the case of cinema films a premiere, premiere quality print, and then within a space of time, lets say two years, when commercial demand had died down on that film, then pre-print material should be deposited in the National Film Archive except for the print materials. So it might be materials which had been left in the laboratory, no longer being used: that should come over to the Archive. The Archive would not have any copyright, any rights or anything like that.

75 mins

But the right to keep and preserve; and the print that had been initially deposited would then become an access print once there was pre-print material to cover it for preservation. Simple as that. All British films.
In the case of non-British films, any film publicly shown in this country, from abroad, imported and shown to the public, a print on request should also be deposited at the National Film Archive, but not for preservation, for study purposes, projection and study purposes: simple as that.
Something similar for television although that was already being taken care of in other ways. And other little details that we went into, about – and the film companies should pay for it, the argument being that if you put a film print like that into a £2 to £5 million budget, it was 'lunch money': a taxi-ride. And would have no effect on the budgeting of the film whatsoever. I think we could have got that through, except for Chris Smith, who was scared of the Americans, it was a simple as that. And he said "They won't buy it – they won't want to be subjected to a British law, import law, on their films."
I even watered it down, and said "Okay, we would be prepared to accept a used distribution print, if it was still to an acceptable standard, because we are not going to preserve it, it will be for study and access use anyway, so it could be a moderately worn print: that would be acceptable.
No. It would still scare the Americans off. So he used that deadly term: "We'll try it out as a voluntary system." I said "Chris, we've had a voluntary system for seventy-five years. It doesn't work." I said "That's what we do now – we ask for these prints, and nobody plays this game except maybe Columbia now and again or one or two other studios. That's it." So, it collapsed because of that. And of course, subsequently with the new digital domains and so on, you don't need legal deposit anymore you just need half a guinea to go out and buy a DVD. Then you've got the film. It's preserved. It's a cloned exact copy of the original: all you need is – I don't think you even need permission from the film companies any more. Everyone can buy or download the film in one form or another.

MW: There are a lot of good new things in the Copyright Act, that says you can copy without even asking.

CJ: Exactly, yes.

MW: Something that had been overlooked for years and years.

CJ: Well indeed yes. What saddened me was I wanted to honour Lindgren – it was one of his great, great, campaigns, and it became one of mine. And if I'd ever achieved legal deposit I would have died the next day happy… and I came within that with 'Kenny' [gestures how close it was] and I was just baulked by Chris Smith.

MW: I think we still got-

CJ: I would still like it to be an official right to do so, even though you can do it anyway.

MW: It is within the BFI's five-year strategy I think, it's in there as a full paragraph. [inaudible]

CJ: Is it! Oh it's come back in! I didn't know that. Good. That's interesting.

MW: It's under Education.

CJ: So it hasn't gone completely then?

MW: No.

CJ: Oh, well maybe I will see it happen. On my deathbed [chuckles].

MW: Interestingly if you write a book. It now has an isbn, [International Standard Book Number DS] and all that and all the metadata. It used to be Mr A T Smail [at the British Library copyright office DS] that is a selective system as well, six copies of course.

CJ: Six libraries, yes. They go to the six libraries [the UK Copyright Libraries]. No it's weird isn't it? We went through all that on the Kenny committee and how liberal that was and how progressive and this and that. I said we could do the same with film: copies should also go to the original film archives, but I was never going to get passed that one. But I did introduce it as a thought.

MW: Meanwhile the industry has continued to be somewhat cavalier with its own content and so on.

CJ: Well-

MW: [interrupts] especially with regional television and so on.

CJ: Well industry equals greed – it's as simple as that. And penny pinching for all the wrong reasons. I'll give you an example.

80 mins

CJ: I've written not very important film books in my time. Picture histories of film. In each case heavily illustrated with three- or four-hundred stills, and never had to pay a penny for those, or even clear them with the film companies, because traditionally you could use any film still, for any purpose, because they were publicity stills and that's how they were meant to be used, so there was no copyright claimed on any – well you know all this. Until, suddenly there was whole sea change when companies discovered they could make money out of people using film stills by simply imposing their right to do so, and it was almost overnight I remember. Same with film soundtracks which always came with the film. Now they are treated as a separate copyright issue, film soundtracks, as well as the picture. Now just sheer greed really, and now you do have to clear every still. What I used to do – well you'll see in my books – was a little paragraph in the front which thanks everybody for the use of their stills but I just put everybody down, every film company, every still I could think of, whether I'd used their stills or not. And you covered yourself that way… when we owned the Stills Department in the National Film Archive, we just put a waiver on the back of every still we sold: it's your responsibility to – copyright responsibility is yours, not ours. There was a waiver, but nobody ever prosecuted anyone for using the stills that I can recall.

MW: When I said that they were a bit cavalier I was referring to the content itself, what is the concern of many artists, the script, the paperwork, all the correspondence and so on, which has tended in many cases to be put in skips-

[They talk over one another]

CJ: That was also in my Kenny appendix, was the right to acquire associated material with the film, including stills, publicity material, and booklets and everything. And scripts, if possible, yes. It was all there. Oh, if only we'd got that through that would have been the magic day.

MW: Having talked about that, we need to talk about cataloguing, so important in any archive.

CJ: Well, back to Lindgren-

MW: We should certainly hear more about the National Film Archive cataloguing regime ,… and its methodology and so on. Because it had to move from-

CJ: Well again, Lindgren led the way in film cataloguing. He was at heart a librarian figure really – he wasn't a librarian but his philosophy was librarianship as you will know. And life should be led as if you were a librarian I think [chuckles] and he applied all those tenets to film archiving and he said there was no point in storing all this material unless it is fully recorded and catalogued, and he consciously built up a formal cataloguing department and when I joined to be a cataloguer you still had to take a librarianship course, and become a qualified librarian to be a film cataloguer. So, Elaine Burrows for example, it took her several months or years I think to qualify as a librarian, so that she could become a fully qualified cataloguer, and she did that course, as they all did, those that didn't drop out, anyway.

And at the same time he devised – oh, who was the Head of Cataloguing?

MW: Roger Holman.

CJ: That's right. Well, with, through, Roger Holman [they] devised a cataloguing system which you would be familiar with, the basis of which was on the one hand a card-index system – the Kalamazoo system – which I still love although it's all paper and heavily leather-bound volumes, it was a superb cataloguing system. Using carbon copies and it became the basis of the cataloguing system, so once you had recorded all the essential details on the Kalamazoo system, so

you could find anything in the archive through the Kalamazoo system. Then the job of the cataloguers was, according to their own priorities, to those of the archive, to go then into detailed cataloguing.

1 hour 25 minutes

CJ: Shot recording [shot listing DS], and things like that. And if you look back at that system, some of that detailed cataloguing is extraordinary. If you just look at Luke McKernan's list of specialised cricket films, which I commissioned from him, I said "If we are going to show these films every year, I need to know what we're showing." It's not a formal cataloguing record, but film after film, where every person, every shot that's in the film, he has recorded. Extraordinary. And Lindgren was a hot, hot, cataloguing person for that. And I think – well you'd know better than me now if that's still, if they still – I understand now that curator's do their own cataloguing – is that right?
DS: They do – they do their own cataloguing, and there are of course fewer of them so they are stretched.

CJ: Yes. So, they can't possibly go into the kind of detail. But every acquisition is recorded, I hope.

DS: Yes, yes.

CJ: I mean I look at the records sometimes, and they are pretty good. Particularly the technical records. They tend to be exceptionally good. The descriptive cataloguing I don't know – I don't often go into that.

MW: With online data now, that will that help.

CJ: Well its metadata now, isn't it?

MW: I mean television has electronic programme guides which allow you to get records rather than rewriting, but then really the industry itself should have taken on the responsibility of cataloguing its own works.

CJ: Television has, certainly. But with different priorities. Archives don't need the kind of metadata systems that companies use because they don't use that

kind of information or detail. They need more descriptive elements I think, as well as technical records of course. I think its still a reasonably well covered area, I think. It's progressed away from librarianship and more towards record-keeping.

MW: [inaudible] We are going back again: you've got your knees under the desk, you're on the essential committees, and by 1985 you've done your paper, gone away from selection-

CJ: Yes.

MW: And you are working under David Francis as Lead Curator-

CJ: Yes. Deputy Curator.

MW: And you're acquiring lots of feature films and so on, and in that period leading up to '98, I understand you took a break from working at the BFI.

CJ: Yes.

MW: What was the key moment in that period or was there a reason for you to take a break from the BFI?

CJ: Yeah, one or two. I'd already achieved one or two of the things I wanted to achieve – not legal deposit, unfortunately – but I had crossed quite a lot of boundaries of ambition by then one of which was setting up a viewing system, which I did under – again, Lindgren is accused of not wanting to make the archive films available, complete nonsense. NFA they used to say, "No Film Available", but in fact he was the first to set up a formal viewing service. He said people should be able to watch these films as far as they were available. Production library – that's different: if the industry wants its films back, they can do so, as long as it pays for the copying, and it can't demand to have the original film back – they have to pay for it to be copied and we have rates for that and so on. Quite right, in my opinion. Fortunately he appointed someone to do that who was 'Cerberus': made life very difficult for them. Anyway, that's another story.

But I – in fact he actually instructed me to write a paper for a viewing system mainly for students. Sort of an academic viewing service, which I did. I created, or described what I thought would be a good viewing system for people coming in to view films on the premises, on Steenbecks, not on projectors, and as long as there was an accessible film copy you could do that, even with original preservation material you could show a quota. There was a quota system for showing the original materials if it was important to the user. Up to four times, I think, after which that film had to be locked away.

1 hour 30 minutes

CJ: Before it could be copied. And so on and so on. Almost overnight that became a far more extensive viewing system – we didn't just get applications from film students and academics but all kinds of people suddenly wanted to come in and view material: authors, historians, you name it. We had a flood of applications to do it so immediately we had to expand the system, which eventually became almost a distribution system because it went hand in hand with lending copies to other cinematheques, and film festivals and archives. Again on a limited basis, but when eventually I was Deputy Curator – no, when I was Curator and Elaine Burrows was running the viewing service, with a staff of two, I think, she was lending out three times as many films as the BFI's Distribution Service: I think it was six-or seven-thousand films a year she was lending out, not just to internal viewings but also to external use as well, and that was the biggest viewing service of any archive in the world. Nobody else gave out that number of films even though we had this reputation for not doing so. I never really understood this, but in the inner circle as it were of cinematheques like Museum of Modern Art, and so on, the Library of Congress and so on, they understood what we were about and they relied on us for their screenings.
David [Francis] did a very clever thing: our problem was making viewing copies. We needed a whole different budget for that, even though the preservation budget was quite high, copying nitrate, all that budget did was copy the nitrate [prints] onto another, alternative, preservation medium, and we struggled with how to make these films accessible. David came up with this wonderful plan of purchasing – you may remember in annual budgets you could get quite a lot of money for capital items if you were clever: the Treasury still had quite a lot of money knocking around and when you reached March, [end of the financial

year DS] they were throwing money at you, so they could clear the decks. They don't do that anymore do they? They are more likely to take it away from you. David applied for the latest film transfer machine, where you could transfer negatives into positives and so on, onto access copies. One light only. One hundred thousand pounds this machine cost, I remember, we got two eventually [and] his argument was we need to make a check print. When we make the preservation material, we need to check it. The only way we can check it is by making a print from the new preservation material. That was his way of saying "we are now making access copies", and although they were only one-light prints they were far, far, better than anything else that was being produced at the time, that was available at the time. So that's how we built up this viewing collection like no other in the world I think, the best viewing collection in the world: coming off that machine. Marvellous prints which are still being used, I would imagine.

MW: So you took your break in 1985.

CJ: Yes I-

MW: [interrupts] I remember being at home in the '70s watching you on *Pebble Mill at One*.

CJ: *Pebble Mill at One*, yes.

MW: But that was you once a week – you had a slot didn't you?

CJ: That was me, being the public face again. David just got on with raising the money, which he did magnificently by the way, he was terrific money raiser behind the scenes and he looked really after all the technical preservation aspects of the archive. I did all the showings and the programming at the NFT, and yes, now and again I would be invited onto things like *Pebble Mill* to show my favourite bits of film and they were small dramatic bits and I remember doing one slot [which] was advertising films. I did that with Graham Garden as well, do you remember that, *A Sense of the Past* programme? I did one with him in a cinema in Leeds, but with Pebble Mill, Stephanie Silk was the presenter, I think. We did royalty, films about royalty, films about advertising, one or two other themes like that, with me on camera.

I remember Scott's – you can edit this out if you like but I remember Scott [Meek] telling his parents back in Scotland that his boss was going to be on television on *Pebble Mill* and they should watch it. And they did watch it.

1 hour 35 minutes

CJ: And they said "Scott, that was very impressive, but why was he dressed like that?" And I'd gone out and bought some new blue jeans and you remember jean-jackets?

MW: Oh yes.

CJ: A denim jacket, and a flowery shirt – we are talking about the period of course, so I looked like the bee's knees, phwoar, cool or what, and they said "I don't think anyone should go on television wearing clothes like that." [laughs] that was their comment. Yeah we did quite a lot of that kind of stuff and we also did a lot of – again, this is making ourselves accessible – one-off programmes at the NFT: I had an annual programme of advertising films, because I consciously acquired advertising films, I introduced that aspect. Cricket films of course; [I] introduced the annual cricket evening, again consciously acquiring cricket films. I was very eclectic to acquiring films but also in showing them. Once you've got them you have to show them. These programmes were extremely successful. They were sell-outs every time. The public loved the advertising films it was astonishing. Sometimes we'd do sports themes: we did an Olympic evening – it was fabulous the Olympic evening. It was round the time of Seoul I think, and we had some of the last survivors there. Hugh Laurie's father who'd won a gold medal rowing. What was the Dutch woman who won four gold medals? She was known as the running housewife or something.

DS: Fanny-

CJ: Fanny Blankers-Koen. She came along. She was a bit diva-ish I have to say. [Laughter] Quite difficult to handle. We had all these old Olympians along – all the [19]48 women came second, I don't know why. We had three or four of those. Fabulous evening of Olympic film. And then we tried tennis. That didn't work quite so well: we didn't fill the house with tennis. We discovered how big

the women tennis players were. They were enormous: they were a breed. Are they still like that? Enormous, these athletic women. And then we had a boxing evening, which scared me to death, because we had two front rows filled with 'people like this' [gestures]. Some of them highly nefarious, but it was a very successful evening, the boxing evening. We did so much of that then, and it's hardly ever done now, this kind of programming, sadly.

MW: Of course in the early days you had the London Film Festival, and the Thames Silents and that was a keynote of that period?

CJ: Well, let's stay in the 80s for a moment, because we all played a part in that kind of thing. First of all there was the whole aspect of [Abel Gance's] *Napoleon*, and when Kevin [Brownlow, BEHP interview No 563] finally put *Napoleon* back together using all kinds of different materials, a lot of it from the Archive by the way, particularly the 17.5 [mm] material, and also a lot from France and so on: he did his first version which was about five hours long, and commissioned Carl Davis music and put on the first screening. It was fabulous, absolutely fabulous, but he couldn't have done it without the Archive, we had to give him the technical facilities to put it all together as if in a cutting room, and I remember we gave him all that, for nothing I think: we just let him in and let him loose into the cutting room. So, the first four screenings were under the aegis of the Archive, in the Empire, Leicester Square and I went to every one of them it was just fabulous, fabulous. Incredibly emotional, extraordinary, and Carl Davis's finest hour I think before, well, since. They were packed. Packed with people who'd never seen anything else like this before: huge impact. So that kind of kickstarted the annual Thames Silents and then became the, Channel 4 was it who sponsored it later, I can't recall? [Thames TV. DS]

MW: BBC – I was trying to remember?

CJ: Before that, I have to say in my own credit, I still claim to be the first person ever to show film – retrospective films in mainstream international film festivals, which had never been done before.

1 hour 40 minutes

CJ: Geoff Gardner who then ran the Melbourne Film Festival, with whom I'm still in touch, through a film critic there, Tom Ryan, suggested that I pick some films from the Archive, and put them on in Melbourne. "It'll go down well in Melbourne."

MW: From the UK Archive or from theirs?

CJ: No, from our Archive. I could come over – well I couldn't refuse an offer to come over and show them, could I? And Sydney took it up as well: David Stratton, who then ran the Sydney Film Festival: I can't remember – I took *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, which Harold had just restored, with two colour – Technicolor – scenes in it; *Maytime*. Why *Maytime,* I can't remember. Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. The remake of *M* with David Wayne, the Hollywood remake and there were about half a dozen of these random titles which I just plucked from the Archive because new prints had just been made of all of them, and I just thought we'll show all those, so there was no rhyme or reason, except to show old films and introduce them to a festival audience, and they went down a bomb, it was wonderful. I even had the good fortune – data computerisation had just come in in the film companies [and] *M* was a Columbia film I think and I tried to get clearance for it, so they wanted to show *M* in Melbourne, the film with David Wayne. "Oh, we don't have a film called *M*: there's no such thing as a film called *M*." I said "Yes there is, it's a famous film originally Fritz Lang and "No, No, we've looked it up in our records and there's no film called *M*." It's because they'd done their first primitive computerisation of their records, *M* didn't come up as a film title, it just came up *as M.* [Laughter]. So in the end I gave up and said "OK, well if you don't claim it, I'll just go ahead and show it." So we did, in the end we showed it without clearance because it wasn't on their records.

Anyway, that was deviation.
I was the first person to show films I think, in that context, in Melbourne and Sydney, and then *Napoleon* came along and kickstarted the whole idea of silent films with orchestra, but at the same time I negotiated, I think it was with Ken Wlaschin first of all and later with Sheila Whitaker [BEHP Interview No 385] to have an archive film section in the London Film Festival which began just as a single tribute to a then living British film maker, so I remember we did Roy Boulting one evening; we did – again I'm losing names here – Guy Green; we

did Anthony Havelock Allan [BEHP Interview No 139], we did an evening with him, I think it was a Valery Hobson film – he was married to her. Incredibly successful, a whole new audience turned out to watch these films and see the film maker on stage.
So, Sheila eventually encouraged us – it coincided with when I left, when I was leaving, to develop this not just for a film from the National Archive, but get some films from other archives as well and make it international. So we started developing this idea of films restored by other archives. We started with two or three, four or five and eventually it developed into this, you know, twenty film section, which I carry on doing ever since that day. And again, I don't think you would have all these retrospectives at Cannes and Toronto, and specialist film festivals like New York.

MW: [inaudible but seeking clarification]

CJ: No in New York they have a restoration film festival now and in LA, and they all stem from our having begun that in London. Well, Melbourne originally and then London so I think we can take credit for introducing that yes.

MW: Remind me who was Director of the BFI during that period before you took your break.

CJ: Well, it was all a bit controversial…

MW: There was a chap called Keith Lucas, wasn't there? Well in 1978 when I joined, I seem to remember.

CJ: I remember Leslie Hardcastle, [BEHP Interview No 373] whenever he had a problem with the BFI management, or anything was going seriously wrong and he couldn't stand it any longer he'd go off into a corner and he'd go "Keith Lucas, Keith Lucas, Keith Lucas" because that was the only way he could purge whatever; it was even worse, nothing could be as bad as Keith Lucas. However bad it was he could only purge it by going "Keith Lucas, Keith Lucas, Keith Lucas, it can't be that bad."

1 hour 45 minutes

CJ: He was so inept, such a nice gentleman, from the college of art somewhere.

MW: He was. Royal College of Art.

CJ: He was lovely. Terrible painter, and a totally inept director, I'm afraid. [He talks over Murray] he tried to absorb the Archive into the BFI [and] get rid of the Archive as an entity: "Oh, the Director can be curator of the Archive." What! So we had a little revolution on our hands over that. Fortunately, we had a fall guy: Kevin Gough-Yates, who was Temporary Curator fill-in, between – now what happened there, it was when Lindgren died: Kevin had charmed Lindgren a little bit, Lindgren misguidedly nominated him as his successor, but fortunately he never got the job officially, but he was the Temporary Curator for a while. Total disaster, but we used him as a fall guy: we got him to take Lucas on and oppose this notion of the BFI absorbing the Archive, and he did. He won that battle and lost the war, because – again we are digressing slightly, but that was the famous strike, the BFI strike.

MW: Gosh yes.

CJ: And that was over Gough-Yates. Gough-Yates was accused of mishandling his expenses, but Lucas was trying to get rid of him, they were just trying to get rid of him…they made up this rather woolly accusation, that he'd fiddled his expense or something. Well, he hadn't as it happened and he got the union involved: reluctantly the union got involved – no, it wasn't the union then, it was the Staff Association, that's right and they took up the cause on behalf of Kevin Gough-Yates even though nobody had a second for Kevin Gough-Yates normally. It became a political cause and it was all wrapped up in all of the political activity of that time and that was the two-week strike which the BFI won – which the Staff Association won it in the end. Kevin was reinstated, but then he immediately resigned – he'd had enough. So that's when David came in.

MW: I was going to ask about another personality John Huntley [Clive makes a gesture akin to warding off a vampire and laughs] and I occupied an office which had been the Personnel Office on the top of 81 Dean Street, and he used to come in and say "there are ghosts in here."

CJ: Absolutely.

MW: And I didn't know what to [inaudible]

CJ: I liked John. He was a rogue but a charming rogue and unfortunately, I would equate him with someone like Langlois. He was a maverick and should not have been working in a government institution such as the BFI, because: one has to be careful what one says about John, because he did not deal legitimately all the time, and he ran then the Distribution Service, but what he also did he was also a collector and he was actually using the Distribution Service to build up his own film collection, so he would acquire films as if he were the archive. He would tell people he was acquiring their films to put them in the National Film Archive. We only found out about it a lot later when we read some of the correspondence, where he had actually written to people to put their films safely into the National Film Archive. They all went into storage in Lower Marsh [BFI premises in the Waterloo area. DS] and they were the unofficial John Huntley collection.

MW: When did he leave then? It would have been '70s sometime?

CJ: Late '70s, and then, well his crimes caught up with him, and he was asked to leave at an hour's notice, I think: "You take your personal possessions but you do not pass go, you do not collect £200, you get out of here now." And he was accompanied out of the building so he couldn't touch a reel of film, couldn't go anywhere near Lower Marsh, and that's how we discovered all these films that he'd been acquiring.

MW: I hope you don't mind me asking about these people.

CJ: No, no. Historically very important.

MW: There is another person who I came across-

1 hour 50 minutes

CJ: But then John set up his own film company, archival film library. Go on, yes. Which is still running.

MW: Yes. [There is a cut here]

CJ: I decided to resign in 1985, for two reasons. One as I've said I felt I'd gone as far as I could go. David was in charge, looked as if he was going to be there for ever, so I had my own little glass ceiling hovering there. I did think about applying for the job programming the National Film Theatre, but I ended up giving a reference to Sheila Whitaker who got the job [laughs] probably my mistake. I would have loved that job at the time. And I was a bit tired after about sixteen years of slogging away there; and I already taken one big sabbatical off in the United States – David very generously allowed me to use two year's holiday to do that but it told me that I needed a kind of proper break. So, without knowing what the future held – but I got a lot of commissions: Puttnam gave me a commission to review the collection at Columbia Studios. That was the first time that they looked at their back catalogue; I helped set up twice, maybe three times, the 'British in Berlin' stand for the BFI and the Film Council [British Council? DS] and I did a lot of writing. I was actually doing quite well at freelance work and so on and then five years fled by and I did a lot of programming at other archives and cinematheques as well, and the BFI were very co-operative when I did that. They allowed me access to the materials, and then David suddenly resigned, in 1990. '89, '90, and-

MW: Was it a big surprise to you?

CJ: Yeah. It was. I had no ambition to come back particularly, partly because I didn't have any job to come to that I wanted, and I was quite enjoying my freelance commissions. But suddenly the job of curator became available, and I had already got a relationship with Stevenson because of the British in Berlin – he actually commissioned me to run the stand there and I had already conversed with him about – he was very keen on making the Archive collection available. I didn't know then what he meant by that; [it] was certainly different from my idea of making the Archive collections available: he wanted a warehouse of films that he could plunder, but he liked to hear me say I had ambitions in that direction: that the collection should become more accessible. We should find ways of making films more available. I think that he then vaguely encouraged me to apply, which I did.

[Brief cut]

MW: You were talking about Wilf Stevenson and how he approached you…

CJ: David having left totally under a big cloud.

MW: Sort of instant was it? There must have been some reason.

CJ: Almost, yes. Just "That's it, I've had enough." Totally fed up he did not like their style, their policies; he didn't like the new style of management. He didn't like being under their thumb really, and they were trying to make him do things he did not want to do. In other words, they were taking away his autonomous curatorship.

MW: The previous Director was Tony Smith [BEHP Interview No 473] whom we've missed out.

CJ: Tony Smith was wonderful, we should have talked about Tony, yes.

MW: David got on with Tony, the Museum of the Moving Image was built for Leslie Hardcastle…

CJ: Absolutely. It was the best period under Tony. He was fabulous.

MW: And Wilf was Deputy Director.

CJ: Yes, and he was a good Deputy Director. So good that Tony, erroneously as we now found out recommended him to take the job to succeed him. He now vehemently regrets this. He said "That was my big mistake, wasn't it?" And it was his big mistake because it was Peter's principle: he could not make that leap from being a good deputy, which he was to becoming Director.
But he was a charming man, Wilf, in many ways. He was also a stormy impossible person as well, particularly on committees and things like that, he could be absolutely outrageous and monstrous, but one on one he could be very charming and very persuasive.

1 hour 55 minutes

CJ: So, I decided to apply and didn't really expect to get it, and it was out of the blue, and I just thought "Oh why not?" Be speculative. Dickie [Richard Attenborough] was then Chairman, and I think Wilf and Dickie must have conferred about who was wanted, because I was up against quite stiff opposition: Ian Christie was one, who was shattered when he didn't get it, I remember; and I interviewed appallingly, I know that, I can remember how bad it was.

MW: Christopher Frayling was one?

CJ: Oh that's a previous one, that's also worth mentioning. And then I got this phone call from Dickie in the evening, welcoming me. I was staggered, I don't know how I got through. A combination of Wilf wanting me to take over for reasons I've told you and Dickie being quite happy about it. One or two of the Governors were quite hostile to me, I remember that. And then when I moved in of course, because of the way David had quit, this has affected Archive staff profoundly, and they treated me with deepest suspicion. They thought this was put-up job and I'd even been part of the machinations myself! I mean "Huh?" [laughs] I don't know where that came from, so it took me a good few months to get them out of that mindset. I eventually was fully accepted and from a staff-management point of view it was a very successful period for me, but I didn't enjoy it, I didn't like the new style of management, I didn't like the new level of management that had been brought in between the Director and the Departmental Heads. Totally unnecessary. We no longer had control of our own budgets. I had to be part of BFI Management, which took up a destructively large amount of time.

I wasn't really running the Archive in the end, so I had to fight to get Ann Fleming [BEHP Interview No 698] in. Fortunately I succeeded, thanks to Margaret Matheson But she was virtually running the day-to-day Archive. She was the one who even put in the bid for the Lottery money successfully; it wasn't me it was her. I was too busy being forced to manage the BFI, because Wilf had no way of doing it on his own. Such a maverick bunch then, there was that Colin MacCabe and so on.
The earlier – you reminded me that when Wilf got the job, the two closest competitors were Chris Frayling and Colin Ford; and Chris and Colin, they knew

– they imagined – it was just between them, and they were both totally fully qualified to do it and they both would have been good – and the both still think so. And they were over-ridden obviously by Tony making his one big error in his life, recommending Wilf for the job. Big mistake. And that's what led to that whole regime of the '90s which I thoroughly did not enjoy, sadly. I enjoyed the international aspects of it, FIAF, and things like that. That was a nasty period, but Tony was magnificent. He raised all the Getty money, he didn't pretend he had a lot to do: now and then he would call me and Scott, and say "Shall we have lunch? I've finished now. I haven't got anything else to do today, so why don't we go and have lunch?" So we'd go and have a two-hour lunch with Tony Smith and come back a little bit tipsy. He gave us the anniversary Guildhall thing to organise, me and- we fought Dickie constantly over that, because he wanted to invite the whole film industry, right down to the clapperboard boy.

MW: Was that the one with Orson Welles?

CJ: Yes, that one. That was an amazing evening, just staggering.

MW: Tell us about Orson. We hear all sorts of apocryphal stories about his bed and so on.

CJ: Well the story, this is the story. First of all they decided to give these Fellowships. …The first Fellowships were Orson Welles, Satyajit Ray, David Lean, Powell & Pressburger, Kurasawa and Marcel Carne I think. And Orson Welles. Orson was going to be the one who did the keynote speech after Prince Charles and we had the most amazing array of ancient people from the British film industry there.

2 hours

CJ: Some of whom were alcoholics, and ended up under the table. I met Anthony Steele under one table and – what was that lovely husky voiced actress in *Kind Hearts & Coronets* – what's her name? Greenwood, Joan Greenwood, that's right. She ended up under another table, Anthony Steele under this table, they were completely gone. Fabulous evening. And Orson Welles stood up and gave this speech. He had no idea what he was talking

about – he'd never heard of this place before, but he put all the words in the right place, in the right order, he was very funny.
But we couldn't find him originally. And we finally got him, I remembered "Oh hang on, he does this Carlsberg ad. Where does he do this Carlsberg ad? He does it in Los Angeles." We finally tracked him down through his agency in Los Angeles, where he did the Carlsberg ads. We persuaded him to come over under certain conditions: he needed to travel first class; he needed two seats because of his bulk; he had crossed the Atlantic by Concorde; he had to stay in the Henry V hotel in Paris; and he had to fly Concorde to London, and stay in – I can't remember - the Westbury or wherever, but they couldn't accommodate him because the beds weren't big enough, until they discovered John Wayne's bed was in some other hotel; John Wayne's bed was shipped from one hotel to his hotel, because that was the only bed that Orson could fit into, and I think he took the first limo ride in London to get him to the Guildhall.
That's the short version of the Orson Welles story. But he was wonderful. And after he'd given his speech and everyone wanted to meet him, after the dinner.

So after we'd swept away the alcoholics and everyone, he held court. And the only place he could hold court was in the gents cloakroom. It was the only room big enough outside the hall. So, there was a kind of table shaped like this [indicates shape] and everyone crowded in to meet Orson, and Orson sat at the top. And he played host to all these people. He was lovely to everybody – absolutely lovely. Puttnam was on the floor that side, drunk; Peter Morley was dead sober over here: he's just died sadly, yes. The late Peter Morley, he's just gone. He started telling boring stories, anecdotes to Orson, and I remember one where he said "Mr Welles, during the war I was a projectionist at the Dominion Theatre and we were showing *Citizen Kane,* and I was also the fire warden and every so often I had to go up to the roof and put out the firebombs and then come back and show *Citizen Kane* – it was a rather old print and frames of the film had fallen on the floor and I would pick them up," he said "and put them in my wallet, and put the wallet in my pocket and there I'd got *Citizen Kane* in my pocket, and then I had to rush up to the roof-" and Puttnam, drunk on the floor said "I know what happened Peter, you rushed up to the roof, and a bomb went off, and a piece of shrapnel hit you in your *Citizen Kane* wallet, and you were saved by the frames" and Orson Welles went "Ha has ha" [Clive gestures] as if it were the funniest story he'd ever heard. Gales of laughter. And Peter Morley, who had no sense of humour, poor chap, much as I

loved him, telling that story. The best bit was that Gordon Jackson had been in the stage play of *Moby Dick* in London: he played Ishmael; and he wouldn't come in. People were saying "Come on Gordon, it's Orson, you know him, he knows you." "No, he won't remember me." He was scared to death to come in, of Orson not recognising him, he just didn't want to come in and meet him. Finally, he was grabbed by the elbows and dragged into the room, and as he came through the door, Orson went "Ishmael, my Ishmael," and Gordon collapsed in tears. He could not – he was so overwhelmed. He was such a beautiful man.
Probably the hero – my all-time hero.

MW: We didn't talk enough about the various Directors of the BFI: there was a sequence wasn't there including Tony Smith? Sir Basil Engholm –

CJ: Well, he was Chairman.

MW: He had a big influence though

CJ: He was Chairman over Lucas, when Lucas was there. Lucas painted an appalling portrait of him as I remember.

2 hours 5 minutes

CJ: The succession was – when I came – the first one was Reed, Stanley Reed. A very nice man, not a big personality but he ran the place very nicely, got on very well with Ernest – they were a good team. He was succeeded by, erm, can't remember, maybe it was Lucas.

MW: I would have thought it might have been, he was old enough-

DS: When was James Quinn?

CJ: Oh, he was before.

DS: Denis Forman?

CJ: - and Forman, they were both before Stanley Reed – they were very influential in the ‘40s and ‘50s. I think Lucas must have – I know there was a hiatus, and it took them about six months to find someone and it ended up being Keith, God damn it!

MW: Then it was Tony Smith.

CJ: Then Tony, who was terrific.

MW: And Wilf.

CJ: Yeah.

MW: And we caught ourselves up.

CJ: Which is when I rejoined.

MW: 1990 presumably you must have been appointed just before 1990.

CJ: I was. I delivered the Berlin Film Festival stand and then I was appointed a month or two later, I think.

MW: And you were saying you didn’t much enjoy that period in the 1990s with top management-

CJ: Well, first of all, I had to get over the staff problems of my coming back under great suspicion. We got through that all right, and then eventually people like Elaine [Burrows] and so on were totally on my side. They liked my style and they liked the fact that I was going back to basics, and I did take Wilf on and I managed to res-establish the Deputy Curatorship which got me Ann Fleming, whom I stole from the Imperial War Museum.

MW: Oh, of course.

CJ: Quite ruthlessly. So, once it had settled down we were good for a while, but I did not like getting drawn into BFI management heavily and I began to fight bitterly with Wilf and [Michael] Prescott [BFI Deputy Director of the time DS]

because they started stealing my budget. I had secured a special fund for nitrate copying, which was still a priority then, and they kept stealing it from me. I'd look in the budget and find I didn't have this money any more, it had gone somewhere else. It was quite- it was very naughty. The management style was quite ruthless then.

MW: Was that when the National Audit Office got involved or was that later?

CJ: Yes, we had a huge National Audit there and a huge review of the Archive. Which was- Wilf was actually hoist with his own petard there: he thought by having an official outside agency review of the Archive, that he could cut us down to size. And, in fact the opposite happened. The Review: well, you know what these people do, they come in and ask you what you do and then they write that down and that's their report. This is what they do, even though you know what you do! [laughs]
But there was a huge backlash on that one, because they – we- became very, very friendly with the guy conducting the review, and we persuaded him how short-handed we were to achieve our objectives. When he recognised what our objectives were in terms of the amount we had to copy and things like that, he recommended a quadrupling of the staff virtually, and Wilf had to carry that out. And for two or three more years – that's when Henning [Schou] came in as Preservation Officer, we had a huge staff at the Conservation Centre which had already been built for us, by Getty money, and now it was fully staffed, it was a fully-fledged archival film laboratory. [We] copied our own nitrate at Hendersons [A film laboratory. DS], we did our own colour copying -it was extraordinary. We had a Repair Team which was about twenty people I think. So, that was the good side, but it didn't last unfortunately. Eventually it was dismantled and after I left, dismantled down to what it is now which us just a skeleton staff at the Conservation Centre.

MW: So, 1997, for one reason or another, you left.

CJ: Yes [sighs] again, ambivalently. I could have fought to stay on but I was manoeuvred out by – I think Wilf and I fought one battle too many from his point of view and he wanted me to go, because I was trying to get back to the basics of film archiving and [inaudible] management, and things like that. And one of the deals I made –

2 hours 10 minutes

CJ: I'd achieved quite a lot and I'd done two Summer Schools. FIAF international Summer Schools; I also negotiated – I got FIAF to agree that we could do the 1999 Congress, FIAF International Congress, but the Chinese gazumped me, and everyone wanted to be nice to the Chinese, so they let the Chinese even though they had promised it to me. I said "Okay, on one condition – I have the Millenium Congress, so I achieved the 2000 Congress that way. In London. So, I was kept on as Consultant Curator during this period on quite decent pay levels: I didn't have to do much except deliver the 2000 Congress. Meanwhile, Wilf had left. We had this Steadman? What was he called.

DS: Teckman. Jon Teckman.

CJ: Oh dear. Well, he was a nice chap – and that's all I can say. But he and others gave me no help whatsoever. Suddenly, FIAF – he didn't reckon FIAF, he didn't understand why FIAF; he didn't see the need for FIAF; he did not realise how important it was for the BFI to run this international film congress, and I had to do it almost as a lackey. I had to fight even to get money out of the BFI. The then Head of the Archive, Caroline Ellis, oh, she wouldn't even let me use staff to help run Congress-

MW: I want to hear about this, and about Congress, but was this the time that as you were moving out that there was what I call a sort of museums culture that was coming in to the film archive world – I think there were stresses at the Imperial War Museum as far as I understand it, and also in the BFI, where for some reason or other the museum curators who had got their own qualifications, and there seemed to be in that instrumental form of education, [an attitude of] "well I've got these pips on my shoulder, I can do this-"

CJ: Yes.

MW: It appeared that even curatorial titles like Registrar, all these sorts of things were coming in, were they during your period or that period when you'd just stopped, because it seemed to be a big culture change that was going on. How did you find it?

CJ: I wasn't aware of the aspect you are talking about, not particularly; all I can remember is that a whole different level of management was brought in, particularly financial people: business management. But Caroline's appointment was bizarre, and I can only put it down to the fact that Leslie, Leslie Hardcastle, when he quit, he had recommended her to replace him.

MW: Was this the time that the Museum of the Moving Image was closing down?

CJ: It had already closed.

MW: Already closed?

CJ: It was. I think it was just closing, yes.

MW: That's another bad moment.

CJ: Well, again, Joan Bakewell was Chairman at that time and she is the one who agreed to the closure, and she now regrets that herself. She thinks that was wrong. She was kind of pressured into doing it by the Governors and I don't know why that was killed off. Totally financial, I think. And there was this kind of empty promise to reinstate it in another form. Clear, clear lie. There's no way they were going to redo it. That of course affected Leslie and David profoundly. They were the creators of the museum. Very, very [bad].

MW: They were really bad times for the BFI.

CJ: They were awful. It saddened me, because one of my ambitions had been to go back as Curator, eventually, and I found it very disappointing.

MW: Now FIAF, we'll talk about a little bit.

CJ: FIAF, OK.

MW: Were there any important organisations simply based in France for one reason or another, Francophone countries?

CJ: *Le Septième Art*. They take film very seriously there.

MW: FIAF has proved to be a really important organisation to glue together the mission of the film archives internationally.

CJ: I don't think it's as important now as it used to be, except as an organiser of international symposia and so on. And it does knit together a family of national and independent film archives.

2 hours 15 mins

CJ: And it is still very important for the movement of film prints from cinema to cinema, cinematheque to cinematheque, and also technical co-operation with film restoration and things like that. It's no longer as important as a guide to cataloguing or the more mundane aspects of film archiving, but it still has an importance in that sense. But it's importance really peaked in the '50s and '60s when numerous new archives were coming in after the war, each with the same mission: to preserve a national product in particular, so that did have to be knitted together, and there, people like Lindgren were very influential, and the battle with Langlois and James Card – another maverick – was also highly significant because it was an ideological battle in FIAF then, and it was important from Lindgren's point of view to establish the ground rules for film preservation, which were totally contrary to those espoused by Langlois and his cabal, and Lindgren won and there was a period when the Cinematheque under Langlois, and James Card stayed out of FIAF for a period of years and it was only much, much later that La Cinémathèque Française came back in. Many, many years later, long after Langlois had gone.
So, it did reform itself. Became harmonious. For a while it was a highly contentious [organisation], FIAF, at that period. Lots of clashes, and they were mainly ideological.

MW: Iván Trujillo Bolio from Mexico whom I knew well at the time, he was President, was he President at the time of your Millenium Congress?

CJ: Yes, he was. I applied against him for the Presidency at that time. I applied twice, actually: I was outvoted by Michelle Aubert first time, in '95, by one

vote, I love by one vote, yes. Because the Francophones all voted for her – a bit like Brexit, I lost by that much [gestures, laughter], and then I decided to come back in Madrid which would have been 1999, but Iván wanted to be President, and he took me aside and said "Look Clyde, you shouldn't try to oppose me, I've got the whole of the Spanish world on my side, and the Francophones" and I would have been massively outvoted, so I declined to oppose him in the end. Probably just as well, because I wasn't working for the BFI anymore then, I was independent, but I did have to deliver the Congress the next year, so at least freed me to do that.

MW: And it was very successful.

CJ: Terrific. We, erm, first of all there was a very rare screening of *Napoleon,* and although the BFI had completely cut me off and made it difficult for me to deliver the Congress – I had some money from FIAF, but it wasn't very much. Until the day I said to Teckman "Dickie has agreed to be the Patron of the Congress, what do you think about that?" and Teckman nearly fell off his chair and said "How much money do you need?" and having roped in Dickie, the money started to flow and of course co-operation started to flow. So, Dickie was lovely, he was absolutely wonderful: hook, line and sinker, he was Patron for the whole of the Congress, he sat in the middle of the auditorium all through *Napoleon*, he came to the end party and thanked everybody. Absolutely lovely. It went off wonderfully well. *Napoleon* helped of course, starting off with a screening of *Napoleon*, which everyone wanted to see and then Roger [Smither] [BEHP Interview No 726] and I devised this programme which we called *The Last Nitrate Picture Show*. Which was an absolute coup. And we did seriously intend it to be the last time we showed nitrate films from around the world. A lot of archives said "Okay, but once, and only once. You can show this once and then that's going back in the vaults: it's never going to be shown again."
And we showed all these wonderfully rare [prints], and the two-day symposium was fabulous: all kind of stories from various archives about nitrate disasters and triumphs, all ending with Paolo Cherchi-Usai gave the final talk, which he called Film Fetishism. He said "For two days now I have just been listening to film fetishists" he said and he did this whole parallel story about fetishism and nitrate, and it was very, very, funny even though he was a passionate film fetishist.

MW: Was this linked with This Film is Dangerous?

CJ: That came out of it, yes.

MW: That came out of it and that got the Krasner-Krauz award, or one of those-

CJ: It did indeed. Well Roger and Cathy [Surowiec] should be eternally thanked for that. Extraordinary. Wonderful. And it did emerge in concert with the Congress. We were able to show films about nitrate endlessly; first and last time they were ever shown, a lot of them. And thanks to Elaine for that, she scoured the world for these films she did a wonderful job. So, yes it was a triumph in the end, and that was my swan song, and at the end of that Congress I fully retired. Except I carried on as Archive Advisor to the festival, the London Film Festival – the restoration programme.

MW: I think … it's in your DNA.

CJ: It won't go away actually. People call me every day asking me to do things. I just have to say "no" now.

MW: But you're never going to retire from it totally.

CJ: Well even Sandra Hebron dragged me back out of retirement a week or two ago to teach at the National Film School. I had to give a lecture there about film programming, restoration: good fun.

MW: Clyde, I'm afraid that on this occasion we are running a bit out of time, and we may well do it again at another time.

CJ: No, please do. I'm very happy to go on doing it if you want to.

2 hours 22 minutes

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

MW: Well this is the second part of our interview with Clyde Jeavons, taking place on Friday, 14th of July 2017 for the British Entertainment History Project. Now Clyde, I realise that in our first discussion, we didn't really start at the beginning: where you were born, how you grew up and so on, so let's talk a little bit about that. Tell us – where did you grow up?

CJ: Well I was born in Surrey in 1939, before the Second World War broke out to what I would call mixed-class parents: posh father and, sadly they divorced when I was really quite young, and this led to my, working class mother, mother being a single working mother; she also for reasons we don't know – I think she was following the fleet, we moved to many, many, places during the war. I didn't have a settled childhood in that sense. At the end of the war we both ended up living with my grandmother in Canterbury, in Kent, and because my mother was a single working mother, she sent me to boarding school purely because she had social ambitions for me, probably based on the marriage to my upper class father. So, I went to prep school in Herne Bay, and moved from there to St Lawrence College in Ramsgate, junior school, and was meant to go to the senior school at St Lawrence but my mother couldn't afford it, so I ended up going to what was then the Drapery Trades charity school in Croydon. Warehousemen, Clerks and Drapers' School, now a very expensive co-ed and boarding school.
There I did well, academically: I was saved by sport, by cricket and hockey, which I loved playing, and I also fell in love with drama, at my school and started to act in *Julius Caesar, Midsummer Night's Dream* and things like that, and fell in love with the Theatre and when I went finally to college – I went to University College, London – my main function/hobby there was the Dramatic Society. With the intention first of all of becoming an actor, discovered that I wasn't very good at acting, at that level anyway: it took me two years to get a decent part, even at college, but I found out I was quite good at production, so I wanted to work in the theatre as a theatre producer. My study course was Scandinavian studies, main language Norwegian, which I took partly because I wanted to do a language course and…

2 hours 25 minutes

CJ: … and I already had enough French, as far as I was concerned, and I was interested in Ibsen, Strindberg and people like that. As a result of that I went to Norway for six months, working in the Norwegian State Travelling Theatre, with a children's play.

Again I came back still wanting to be in the Theatre, but I couldn't crack it for lots of reasons, and I did what most arts graduate end up doing in these cases: I became a journalist. I worked briefly on a financial paper, and I learned how to sub-edit. Learnt absolutely nothing about finance! And from there I was lucky to be taken on by Joan Werner-Laurie, at She magazine, when it was then quite an iconoclastic women's magazine, and for reasons unknown to me she took me on immediately as Chief Sub-editor, even though I'd had very little experience, until I discovered how little I was being paid [laughs] which was probably one of the reasons! I had five lovely years working there even though Joan died after a year, in a notorious plane crash with Nancy Spain, going to the Grand National.

I worked there for about five, years, I loved it, and during that time I began to review books and I also took over the film column, reviewing films. The film critic there was Elspeth Grant, who was very, very, good, turned in wonderful copy, but only in the months when she wasn't on the gin. So I stood in for her when she was on the gin and started writing film reviews. Got very interested in film; I was already in love with film but got more interested. Then I answered an ad out of the blue for a position in the National Film Archive, which I scarcely knew anything about, at the BFI, and to my surprise, got accepted and took quite a high-level job immediately which was Head of Acquisitions, Head of Film Acquisitions at the National Film Archive, under Ernest Lindgren.

I was interviewed by Lindgren and Colin Ford, and I discovered that part of my success in the interview was that I was a journalist, and they wanted someone who could write about the Archive, and publicity and raise its consciousness and indeed that's exactly what I did for a while, was mainly write about the Archive as well as performing my function as Head of Acquisitions. Lindgren was kind of long-term, he was the original founder of the National Film Archive. He secretly wanted to make it independent from the BFI, which of course never happened, so he had that more-or-less constant fight on his hands to do that. He was wonderful employer and he gave me the latitude during my first two years knowing my inexperience, he said he wanted me to do nothing else, but to go at least twice a week to the Archive, at Aston Clinton and watch film collections. He said "We have all these film collections we have acquired,

nobody's looked at them. Somebody had to go through them, where you will learn and appreciate silent film and early sound film, and sort out our early film collections." And I did that for about two years. It was just – can you think of anything nicer, actually? [Laughs] I had the time of my life.
And then I was – the Deputy Curator, Colin Ford, left: he went to work at the National Portrait Gallery under Roy Strong, to create a photography and film department [there], which didn't really happen but it set Colin Ford off on another track.
There was a messy period when the job of Deputy Curator was not filled until David Francis came along, and even though I'd wanted the job at the time, Ernest Lindgren died, and David became Curator of the National Film Archive: I eventually then became his Deputy Curator, and that's how we progressed really through the '70s, the 1970s with that framework in the Archive.

MW: Can you say a little about some of your colleagues in the Archive at that time, because I seem to remember there were some fairly interesting characters, the likes of Scott Meek, Roger Whitney and others. I just wondered if you could do a quick resume of the rest of the team from what you remember.

2 hours 30 minutes

CJ: Yes, the set-up then, from an acquisitions point of view, selection and acquisitions point of view we had four clear departments: Feature and Fiction films, which was my job; History; Television; and Science. Those were the four acquisition departments all run by a singular Head, with or without an assistant, as I recall. These all had Selection Committees where we – this was Lindgren's idea, where we all had to be accountable, and he was very hot on ensuring that, because we are a National Cultural Institution we had to show that we were doing our job properly, so he didn't believe in autonomous curatorship, like a museum curator would be, he wanted committees of experts and professional people, to help with our selection of films. He also realised that with limited finance – and the Archive had very limited finance – it had barely enough money to copy nitrate films at that time, we needed to be very selective about what we acquired, so that we collected the right things on a priority basis. He even had a sort of ABC system of acquisition. It never worked in practice, partly because we were too maverick to reject offers of films and

film collections: there was never time to sort through them selectively, we just took the lot, and if they went under the bed we still took them, and one or two earlier employees of Lindgren had got into trouble and Liam O'Leary was one of them; and David himself had been there before as the first TV Acquisitions Officer. They both left because they had issues with Lindgren's selection policy. The rest of us, we followed his selection policy, and didn't, at the same time. [laughs] but we cleverly skirted around those problems. And I developed a relationship with film collectors at that time which – Lindgren didn't really like film collectors, but I realised they had a value, and although they were often secretive and paranoid, and hated institutions, there were ways to woo them and befriend them and some of them did become useful friends and contacts.

Again Lindgren was very keen to employ people who first of all had a proper degree, university degree and knew their subject matter, so that people such as Vicky Wegg-Prosser and Roger Whitney, who both ran [the] History Selection Department; Steve Bryant from the BBC – he wasn't a Lindgren choice, he came later: he ran the TV section, and so on and so on. So people were very carefully chosen for their credentials – except me, funnily enough, because there were no credentials for acquiring feature films, except knowing the films and knowing the subject matter. There were no archival qualifications at that time, none of us were trained archivists, we learnt on the job, and even the great Harold Brown, technical genius of the Archive was self-taught and self-trained, and that's how it was then and that's true of all the archives throughout the world, I think. None had official formal training, except in a bureaucratic sense, in administrative sort of things.

MW: I wonder if we should say more about that. I mean – because it seems to me that film archivists nowadays, in the UK, I'm not sure where they actually do go to be formally trained in film archive management. Or television archive management for that matter.

CJ: Yes, well thanks to the evolution and development of FIAF – International Federation of Film Archives, slowly and progressively over the years, began to set up training courses, and summer schools, and – to teach archivists how to do their job. Usually they weren't for new entrants, they were for archivists that existed, who'd already taken – they were in archives, but they simply needed to know how to do their job more efficiently and summer schools

happened quite early on, in the mid ‘50s and ‘60s and eventually at the annual congresses, there were symposia and so on, which helped to act as training courses as well.

2 hours 35 mins

CJ: And eventually now, this has developed to a stage where many archives as well as training people on the job now can take trained archivists who’ve been on some of these courses: the most famous one presumably is the Selznick course in what’s now the George Eastman Museum, but there have been other courses like that. The National Film Archive in the ‘90s ran two of the summer schools. The summer schools have rotated round the archive and they are a kind of two or three-week intensive course of archival training for new, neophyte archivists. But still, there’s no ‘College of Archive Training’ or anything like that. It’s not a university course: you can do hairdressing at university now but you still can’t do film archiving so it’s still something where you more or less train on the job and enter courses while you are doing that at the same time. That’s the system I believe.

MW: There are MA’s and so in in Archive Management, but they tend to focus on vellum and print-

CJ: And paper-

MW: And very little to do with moving image content. Which is a bit of a sadness in a sense.

CJ: Well, that’s also based on the lack of education on moving image in schools, school courses. It still doesn’t exist. There’s no real schooling or education in what we call ‘The Seventh Art’ at all. It’s totally ignored in schools. There are media courses of course now, but they are long, long, way away from what I would call proper film courses and archiving courses.

To Lindgren’s eternal credit, the one thing he did institute which spread throughout the world’s film archives was professional cataloguing, and he insisted that film cataloguers should be as trained as library cataloguers, and he made his cataloguers go on library courses and become qualified as librarians,

in order to do cataloguing properly and set up proper professional systems for film cataloguing, and that was highly influential, possibly one of the most influential things he did during his long tenure at the archive.

MW: Without a decent catalogue a film archive is in real trouble. While can's labels fall off…

CJ: It's even more important than a book: a book, you can still flip it open and look at the index, and simply read it but film, that's a hidden quantity until you actually analyse it, and catalogue it and describe it, and there is no access without cataloguing.

MW: Now when we spoke last time, I think we went through quite a lot about your career at the BFI, we also talked about various Directors and so on of the BFI, and their influence: remind me about the building and the John Paul Getty Centre up at Berkhamsted. It seemed to me from my memory – and you must put me right on this – I've a glancing sort of relationship with the BFI – under Tony Smith, he managed to get John Paul Getty junior interested in the Archive and sufficiently to provide quite a lot of money to build that centre and maybe it was David Francis who was there as Head of the Archive at that time.

I was wondering if you could reflect slightly on that whole development at Berkhamsted and the other bits of the estate which were part of the Archive, from that period onwards.

CJ: What we had at the time, pre-Getty, pre-Tony Smith, or even pre-David Francis I believe, we had an original repository for nitrate film at Aston Clinton and Aylesbury and these were among the first bespoke nitrate film vaults, with proper air-conditioning and anti-flammable structures and so on, and that also contained a smallish working laboratory run by Harold Brown. It wasn't really a laboratory it was like a workshop, where he did his own specific work on nitrate film. At the same time a new storage centre was set up at Berkhamsted to separate the safety film from the nitrate film, to set up massive storage for the bulk of the collection which increasingly was becoming safety film.

2 hours 40 mins

CJ: But that was also quite a passive storage centre – not very much work, hands-on work was done there it was storage mainly, but it was a big beautiful estate in Berkhamsted, with a little manor house and so on. That's how it was for a while until – the Archive wanted, and Tony Smith very much wanted this, was to give the archive laboratory independence; it was so dependent on farming out preservation and restoration work, copying work, to laboratories at great expense, that one of the aims was to set ourselves up as an independent preservation and restoration laboratory, all the way through to having a unit reclaiming silver from nitrate film and so on and so on and, and in particular a colour laboratory for specialised colour work on obsolete colour systems and things like that.

We did, under David Francis also but a laboratory, Henderson's Laboratory in South Norwood which dealt a great deal with the nitrate copying work, but at the same time Tony Smith realised that in order to achieve conservation then we needed a lot of money and we were never going to get it from the government, and that's when he began to woo John Paul Getty junior. Initially the wooing was done at The London Clinic, where Getty mainly resided, eating tomato salad and drinking beer, and Tony spent a lot of time sitting with Paul to persuade him to write cheques towards the work of the BFI, which Paul did do willingly, because of his love of film. What he expected in return, was not so much credit as a stream of video copies of all his favourite films, both from the National Film Archive and from other archives, and Tony enabled us to do that, mainly through David Meeker, and it began to work. Eventually Paul got out of bed and married a splendid woman, Victoria, who more or less brought him back to real life and got him on his feet and during that period he gave a lot of money, partly in love and gratitude to Tony's friendship and the BFI, not only to underwrite the archive but also the National Film Theatre and other areas of the BFI. The result was the John Paul Getty junior Conservation Centre, which was built and developed on the Berkhamsted site, so instead of just massive cathedral-like vaults which we had, we also developed a large laboratory system there for all the objectives that I've described.

At the same time, Aston Clinton had become too small and too dangerous for the local population. It was too close for health and safety reasons. This was a time when there were some highly dangerous chemical hazards in Britain I remember; there was one particular one, I can't remember what it was – a huge chemical disaster in the midlands I believe.

MW: Not Flixborough? That was about then.

CJ: Was it Flixborough? Yes, well one of the results was a government edict about the first real edict about health and safety in this area, and one of the stipulations – and that's why we get all these things on chemicals now, and trucks and things – well one of the stipulations was that nitrate film was earmarked as highly dangerous, which indeed it was, and there were places all over London with vaults on the roof, things like the Norman Collection in Soho. A villain for me, because I just went round London, all these condemned vaults, picking up all their nitrate content and got a massive amount of film that way. The biggest coup was the Rank Film Laboratories storage at Denham, who had to get and unload all their nitrate film. They tried just to get rid of it, but I walked in and acquired it, acquired the lot, which was the only thing we could do, but anyway, the result of that was that we had to have new nitrate film vaults away from Aston Clinton, away from people and these were set up eventually in Gaydon, in Warwickshire. That was funded by the BFI itself but the government helped with that because of the necessity of protecting the UK film from this hazard, and that's when we moved into the nuclear bomb vaults in Gaydon in Warwickshire [laughs] and set up the repository there again with bespoke film vaults, newly built, and so on and so on.

So we ended up with a massive £4 million conservation centre-

2 hours 45 minutes

CJ: - nitrate vaults at Gaydon in Warwickshire and the London end of the operation. Those were the main areas, and those are the ones that still exist today, although the Gaydon Conservation Centre has been virtually run down as a laboratory centre, it has gone back to mostly specialist restoration work on benches by very few people, and a very much enlarged what was a television and video unit, for television purposes and now DVD purposes and the continuation of massive vault space for television and safety material.

MW: Can you say a little more then about television within the NFTVA if we add the 'T'? David [Francis] was the Curator of Television I believe, in his early days. That curatorship moved on, was it Paul Madden –

CJ: Yes.

MW: - who was one of the curators? Tell us about how that became a greater part of the Archive, because it built up over time, didn't it?

CJ: Yes it did.

MW: In the 1970s perhaps, late '70s?

CJ: Well, Lindgren, again, to his credit, he was a visionary in many ways – he was an anti-visionary in some other ways! – but largely speaking his eye was always on the future: I loved the way he said, contended, that film wasn't just celluloid, it was any kind of moving image on any medium, now or to come and he knew there would be new technical media to carry film, to carry images and so on and he wanted to ensure that film archives were ready for that, so from quite an early stage and certainly by I arrived in the late sixties he had spotted that television needed to be selectively preserved.

Now, all you could do with television in those days was preserve the film, anything that was shot on film; all outside broadcast television was shot on film so it was relatively convenient for the film archive if they could to acquire televised film material. A great deal of it of course was not recorded, it was shot straight into camera live and all the studio work was not recorded, unless it was shot, filmed, from the [TV] screens themselves, which was often the case: telerecording. Very poor quality but recorded none the less. So he began a Television Section which acquired what it could from filmed television. That developed: the job first went to David Francis, again before I arrived. It was a brief tenure but it did establish the need for a television acquisitions officer. David left to go into television himself, into BBC2. He was the creator and founder of BBC2's film channel, showing subtitled foreign films among other things and Chaplin at the right speed and so on. He was himself a pioneer of showing films on television. So Lindgren appointed someone else – I can't remember who that was: it might have been Yvonne Renouf, but I think she might have been History. [Laughs] I can't remember any more, but eventually the job was taken over by Paul Madden, who became quite a key figure because he was the first person to develop the television section, by which

time television was making its own records through two-inch quad tapes and things like that.
The only snag with that, well two snags at the BBC: one was that they claimed that they preserved everything themselves, which was not true, they wiped a lot of stuff, and the fact that all recordings, although they still filmed a lot of stuff, all the recordings were made on very expensive two-inch quad tapes, and the BBC recycled them a great deal. So, they would wipe and recycle two-inch quad tapes and eradicate quite important material: jazz material, drama, things like that that were on the tapes. So there was a bit of a controversy and a bit of a fight went on there. Paul was very good at winning those battles, very often and when two-inch went to one-inch, a much cheaper system.

2 hours 50 minutes

CJ: And then finally it was to half-inch? I can't remember, it became easier and easier to acquire copies of recorded television material but not so much from the BBC – only if the BBC were throwing things out were they meant to offer them to the Archive. So that remained controversial, but on the commercial side life became much, much, easier: the ITV companies recognised the value of the Archive of taking and preserving as long as they could get it back again when they needed any commercial television material, and to cut quite along story short, this became - not under Paul Madden, but under his successor Steve Bryant, who actually came from the BBC Library section, [it]became almost a legal deposit system with the ITV companies. We achieved the right to copy any commercial material ourselves from ITV and all the ITV companies. We could record these items ourselves, and with Channel 4 it was virtually a legal deposit system. They agreed that we would be their wholesale archivists of Channel 4 material, and that has fortunately persisted, and as far as I'm aware now, under Charles Fairall, most if not all non-BBC material is recorded for preservation or acquired for preservation, and all BBC output is recorded for access, for study and access and sometimes for continual preservation.
So that's been one of the great success stories, and, as a side note, that's why in the '90s I proposed that we change the tile of the National Film Archive to the National Film & Television Archive, to express the equal priority that we now gave to the moving image system of television, which was the correct thing to do I think, and some other international archives have followed that course: Los Angeles for example and places like that.

MW: Talking about the international dimension, of film archiving and television archiving for that matter, I suppose the UK might have been regarded as one of the leading places for establishing a film archive, a national film archive, but within the FIAF community there were other peaks of activity, in France, perhaps in Germany – could you say a little about, in your perception anyway, how the activity in these nations from what you know from FIAF? For instance from my perspective certainly I see that the French are being rather more vigorous in preserving their what might be called Francophone legacy of film: they seem to digitise so much. It appears that even La Reunion, in the middle of the Indian Ocean, which is a *Department*, you know of France, you can access almost every French, Francophone feature film. I wonder if you could reflect on that, whether we are in the middle of the wave, the front of the wave or are we at the back of the wave, and how we move through time in that sort of league?

CJ: Well, FIAF, and the BFI's relationship with FIAF has been a fickle and shifting story the whole time. When FIAF was created by four of the original archives, that was ourselves, Museum of Modern Art, the French, the Swedes and the Germans actually- the Swedes were not founders of FIAF but they were one of the original recognised national film archives – that was before the Second World War, it developed from that in a very formal and careful way as different nations decided to join the Federation. War interrupted that, the German ? film archive evaporated because of the war and was reborn later with East and West repositories and slowly under Lindgren and his colleagues it was in FIAF for many, many, years. There was even a year when I think it was David Francis had joined and for some reason he was not voted onto the Committee that year, but the Committee decided that the National Film Archive had to be on the Committee and they co-opted him as a member of the Committee irrespective of whether he'd been democratically voted in or not.

2 hours 55 minutes

CJ: That was the status we had at the time. It was only later under later regimes, who will not remain nameless because they were called Stevenson and Prescott [laughs] who downgraded the relationship with FIAF, but not as much as even later regimes and there came a point where the BFI simply failed

to believe that FIAF was important to the BFI's policies and needs, and ambitions, and the result was that even within FIAF itself, the Archive's status lessened to quite a considerable degree, and I will digress into one of the Congresses in a minute if you like – so the position now is that FIAF is a huge worldwide organisation with a hundred and twenty countries or more having membership of one kind or another, but still the variations in how each country behaves are extraordinarily diverse. You can imagine in America for example there are at least half a dozen FIAF archives if not more now, not competing, but all doing complementary work coast to coast and having differing policies, whether it's the Museum of Modern Art who literally consider film as an art form and acquire accordingly, the Library of Congress, which is the national archive with some forms of legal deposit and so on and so on.

France is a very strange case indeed. France is full of small film archives of all kinds. Specialist film archives, there's an Army Archive, there's this, that and the other. There's Toulouse and so on, but the two main archives historically have been the original French Film Archive, which was Langlois' Cinémathèque Française, as controversial as you can get in film archiving terms, a private collector with a private collection at odds with his funders the entire time with secret repositories, and no regard for film preservation at all, no regard for copyright laws and so on. [laughing] An extraordinary maverick.
And then there is the National Archive, the Centre Nationale of which the Film Department is a part of the cinematic and photographic archive of France. That's the official film archive. Often – sometimes – at odds with the Cinémathèque Française but they do collaborate on some [things] and co-operate quite a lot now, and it's thanks to one of the BFI's ex-staff, Michelle Aubert, who died not very long ago, who eventually left the UK – she was French – she had been Deputy Curator, and went to run the film department at the CNC and she totally reformed it and developed it in a very systematic and important way so she took great care of nitrate, acquired all the nitrate she could get, made sure it was in proper vaults at the CNC. She restored the whole of the Lumiere Collection for example and so on and she took great care of French Francophone countries and archives to the extent that the place you mentioned were all inclusive as far as she was concerned. She founded and protected the smallest French-speaking archives from round the world and although they might not qualify as FIAF members, they certainly qualified as

part of her colony of film archives and she protected them and funded them as best she could.

MW: In a way I suppose she was a protégé of Lindgren or of the BFI's…

CJ: She was certainly a 'Lindgrenite'. She followed all the precepts, she worked under Lindgren as well, she ran the Stills Department not immediately, after Sheila Whitaker, so under Lindgren and David Francis. She admired them both and learned everything from them and maybe a little bit from me, I hope. She did acquire the full spectrum of proper archival procedures and policies, and she carried those over to France; and more or less in contradiction or in contrast to the Cinémathèque she imposed them on the French.

These stories are throughout the world: there are poor archives and relatively not so poor archives…

3 hours

CJ: Most countries, many countries, have more than one kind of film archive: the Germans have the Cinémathèque in Berlin, [Deutsche Kinemathek DS] but that's relatively small, although it looks after what you might call Berlin's art film, but then there is the Bundesarchiv which is the state for all German made films and documentaries and so son, in contrast to what used to be the East Berlin Film Archive which has now become part of the Bundesarchiv since the collapse of the Wall [Berlin Wall]. It's a shifting thing the whole time, but I think now the world of FIAF has learned to come to terms with the basic needs of keeping, preserving all its own countries' production if possible, if not other people's as well; and also an awareness of the hazards of having film archives in poor overheated countries: tropical archives and things like that.
These are still major issues in FIAF but FIAF does now have a – within the very small constraints of its finances – tries to protect the little film archives by waiving subscriptions and things like that and trying to 'adopt' smaller film archives because I remember Anna-Lena Wiborn in Sweden used to adopt film archives and look after them from the Swedish point of view. And that worked very well. It's also a way of making these smaller archives feel wanted, and then entering training programmes and doing that job properly. Slowly, although I have many, many, historical issues with FIAF myself, which we

needn't go into [laughs] it has been an extraordinary organisation and has always managed to retain a family feel – it is a family of film archives, on relatively good terms with itself but not always. There have been many, many, controversies and Langlois of course has been at the centre of one of those – I think we went through that last time.

MW: I wonder if you could say something about the tension in the funding of national film archives, and the television archives for that matter. It seems to me as bystander that we appear culturally and in a scholarly fashion, to appreciate text a great deal more in funding terms, than film and television, and so on. We appear not to invest in quite the same way as the centre so there is a tension: it appears that there are those who would see film and television archives as a source of money, as a commercial asset, rather than as a scholarly asset: the way the British Library would regard its books.
I wonder if you could say something about that because it seems to me that as monetarism came in, following Margaret Thatcher's appointment as Prime Minister that a number of places suffered, and I think possibly the National Film Archive suffered from that monetarist lot coming through, and how moving image might be regarded as something other than the scholarly-

CJ: Well, to start at the end, I think actually the BFI is now better funded than it was for a period, but to go back to the beginning of that – and this was Lindgren's main, one of his main, issues was the poor funding of what he regarded as the great new art form of the twentieth century, and in relation to the way other arts were funded, if not magnificently, at least adequately, including print and the libraries and so on. That's why he wanted legal deposit and the tensions were created by first of all the general attitude to film as art and culture which it was not regarded as; it was regarded as an ephemeral commercial system and never taken sufficiently seriously as an art form despite the many manifestations of film as art, and that was a fight he constantly had, needing- and also in contrast to the other arts, film was always very expensive to preserve – to keep and preserve, and yet at the same time the counter to that was "well look at the film industry it makes, it spends all these millions of pounds and makes multi-million productions.

3 hours 5 minutes

CJ: Why can't the film industry fund film archiving?" And Lindgren's contention was, first of all they won't, they don't care; and also we need to remain independent, totally independent of the commercial film industry. They can help us all they like and I wish they would, but we have to be very careful about getting into bed with them in the wrong way. So he was always opposed to the European system of kow-towing to the producers so that even if they put films into a film archive, they could take them out again willy-nilly and Lindgren said that's never going to happen in the National Film Archive, there will be firm agreements about deposit of films and the owners, even if they are the copyright owners, cannot make use of them. So that battle has been continuous, and in the seventies, strangely, I never had any budgetary problems for the Archive in any, not in any hurtful way. There was always enough money to run the offices, and pay the salaries, and every year the budget on those – I think that was general actually, everyone got an inflation rise in those days, and even the money that went towards preserving the films eventually did cover the copying of nitrate film even to the extent that we had too much money in the end to copy nitrate films. I had to own up and say "We don't actually need all this for copying nitrate film, We are doing the job so efficiently that we have reached the stage where we don't actually need that amount to cover it." But no money to acquire films. That was the real bug and that's why Lindgren wanted legal deposit instituted and that's a fight I continued right up until my retirement – and never finally succeeded.
I think we went through this but even when the British Library was invited to look at the new forms of literature, electronic writing and things like that, and what were they going to do with their, to extend their legal deposit system: we were invited on that as an appendix, to look at, to consider legal deposit of film once again, but I got nowhere. I wrote the appendix, I wrote what I thought was a wonderful legal deposit system, it wasn't going to cost anyone anything, and still it was never instituted. In fact, the Arts Minister of the time, Smith was it?

MW: Chris Smith.

CJ: Yeah.

MW: It might have been earlier that Chris Smith.

CJ: No I think it was Chris Smith when I was on this committee. When I said "Look here is a cut and dried system which doesn't cost anyone anything" he was so scared of the Americans he said "Oh let's try it out first as a voluntary system.", and I said "Chris, we've had a voluntary system for seventy-five fucking years, we don't need to continue trying it out you know?" but I never got anywhere with it so it died a death. And that's the one area where Wilf Stevenson was very, very, supportive, I will have to say that.
So, it's always been this tension. The budget area became very critical in the '90s, particularly for two reasons: one was we all suddenly had to become accountable for what we spent and how we spent it. We no longer got those end of year bonuses when the Treasury would turn round and say "Well April's coming, we've got about £250,000 left here that we have to spend before the end of March, can you find a way of spending it?" And we did. But you had to spend it on capital things, you couldn't spend it on boosting staff or salaries, but you could go out and buy a machine or two and things like that. That happened every year. That all dried up, and money became very, very, tight. And also in the '90s the BFI's budgetary arrangements became rather too fluid for my money. It was very difficult to get money earmarked for specific purposes such as nitrate copying and so on. Well we won't go too far into that, the financial shenanigans of the '90s [laughs] but it was hard work keeping your budget.

MW: [inaudible] of budget.

CJ: I will say, progressively under the new regime, Amanda Nevill and her staff, the funding of the BFI has improved quite dramatically, but it is also heavily revenue based.

3 hours 10 minutes

CJ: It is important – it's statutory now – that institutions like the BFI, arts institutions, have to find their own money through revenue as best they can, and through sponsorship, things like that. So it's kind of a double system now, government granting, allied to and dependent on being matched by revenue and sponsorship.

MW: You mentioned at one stage that when the laws changed, the health and safety laws, about nitrate and all these film companies had nitrate in probably inappropriate storage and you had to provide a home for that content, it seems to me that almost as film itself became a dying medium of production, a lot of the laboratories were closing down, with negatives and all sorts of master materials kicking around: I wonder if you could say something about that? Maybe it was a period outside your tenure-

CJ: No, on the contrary, I was right in the middle of it when it all, to coin a phrase, 'blew up', and it was a battle because the laboratories and the film companies did not want to give their nitrate material straight to the Archive: the people on the ground did, but not the executives, who were too scared of copyright and losing ownership, and so on, even of materials that no longer seemed to have an owner, so there were constant battles to persuade, acquire, bring in, now, nitrate collections which were threatened with destruction under the new laws.

As I said, I went round London emptying roof vaults and so on wherever I could and I even went out and rented new nitrate vaults to put them in, wherever I could. We ran out of space, but to take Rank for an example: they immediately panicked and dumped all their material into the car park, in the rain… it was an absolutely astounding thing to do, and it included a huge amount of American material. So my battle was two-fold. It was a) with Rank and its storage problems and [b)] with the American film companies. And I'm not scared to say this now, but I had battles with people like MGM and Universal when I had to accuse them of cultural vandalism because they were going to destroy extremely good quality UK held material which they didn't have in the States, and finally I had to make friends with the vault manager at Rank – who was a very strange man indeed – but I managed to woo him secretively to giving me most of the material for which he could not get permission. But he, in some cases I think signed 'write-off' documents to the company to say "Yes, I've destroyed all that." He gave it to me. So I've filled the National Film Archive, and was later accused of over-filling the National Film Archive with all this nitrate material, when there was no other recourse.

So, it was later the new technology started to come in which helped to rectify or alleviate that situation. Did that answer your question?

MW: Not entirely because there is a second wave in effect, as film itself became- sort of obsolete.

CJ: Well, what happened – yes I'm with you now. A lot of laboratories closed down and slowly converted to non-photochemical laboratories, and some laboratories like Hendersons – which had a fire, which didn't help, closed down completely, went out of business. To some extent, that's one of the reasons why even the Conservation Centre, the Archive's Conservation Centre kind of down-sized a little bit because it didn't have to go on copying film all the time. So, there's been this huge shift in laboratories which is towards the new technology, and photochemical work is very specialised now in some laboratories and usually allied to back catalogues, which still need film handling and film restoration in order to get to a digital level. So that whole shift has now happened and even within the National Film Archive, only specialist work is done on film, again at the Conservation Centre and then it's handed over to digital technical laboratories for the end result, if you like: so the annual showcase restorations at the London Film Festival for example follow that system.

3 hours 15 minutes

CJ: Film handling – initial photochemical restoration work if necessary is done in-house and with the collaboration of a specialist laboratory and then its handed over for final transfer and final digital projection purposes to a specialist laboratory and that happens throughout the world now. In the States it's a whole new industry: perhaps we'll digress a little bit there into the States, because uniquely the huge shift in the States started to happen in the '80s, partly kick-started by Puttnam when he was at Columbia very briefly. He recognised the way the UK studios neglected their own repositories, their own materials. He even got me to write a review of the Columbia Studio's collection not that I knew all that much about it, but I could do an in principle piece on it which I did. Suddenly there was huge shift in America towards major studios turning round, looking at their back catalogues, looking at what they had in the vaults, and beginning systematically if not to preserve all the film, at least to start restoring some of them because it became commercially viable again, because of the new access technologies: television, home viewing and so on and so on. And that of course has galloped and galloped and developed and

expanded now to an extent that there's hardly a film that hasn't been restored. I use the word restored with many reservations: or at least remastered, or recopied from existing film material that has sat in the vaults for so long. The leader in this was initially Columbia, with the great Grover Crisp, who collaboratively persuaded his own company to fund a huge restoration programme for all Columbia's back catalogue going back all the way to the first Capra films, Columbia's first silent films and so on – and that has been one of the great triumphs in America.
The Academy Film Archive was created to acquire and preserve all awarded films in America; the Library of Congress set up a register of important films. I think it was twenty titles a year or something like that, and other studios followed suit. Universal. Strangely not so much MGM, but certainly Universal, Paramount, Fox all now do a modicum of restoration work, usually on selected titles. But it does mean they are looking at catalogues, and beginning to find not just great well-known films but minor 'bread and butter' material which is now being preserved and restored systematically.
That of course cannot be reproduced in all the countries of the world, because some of them have singular production systems or very few production systems, and the financial aspect is far, far, different. Even in the UK, where or are the production sources still don't – they rely on the BFI to do this work for them, largely.
With some exceptions. There are companies like Park – is it Park? - who collaborate with copyright owners of all kinds [but] mainly Anglophone, English and American films. They help to sponsor and support restoration of films which they then put back onto the screens, and I think Park Circus is a leader in that. And a very important one. So, many of the restorations you see in festivals will be owned by Park, but they will do their job properly in ensuring that there is a perfect restoration, as perfect as it can be and then they'll put it back on the screen.
Got there in the end did we on that one?

MW: I think so. Absolutely.

CJ: [laughs] Good.

MW: We've talked about the relationship with FIAF and so on. There are other organisations that have a glancing interest in film and television archiving,

outside of film and television archives themselves. I'm thinking of organisations like the Film Archive Forum, which you were there at the start of, I think, where the Regional Film Archives in the United Kingdom started to come together.

3 hours 20 minutes

MW: Born out of the one in East Anglia and then the one in the North West Film Archive and so on. And of course the Scottish Film Archive started based around the Scottish Film Council. I wonder if you could reflect a little on all that, there being the BFI, or at least the National Film & Television Archive being part of that development which seems to be a healthy one, keeping regional content in the region-

CJ: Well perhaps, with the exception of France, the UK has been honourably unique, again, thanks to Ernest Lindgren, in recognising all film as important in the twentieth century. After all we are only in the first what one hundred and twenty years of, since, the birth of cinema and so much has been lost and Lindgren recognised, and I took it on board straight away and was fascinated by the fact that film wasn't just a commercial occupation but that everyone in all walks of life made film of some kind, created moving images: home movies, corporation films, industrial films, science films, history films and so on and so on. All of which deserve to be selected and acquired if possible – and part of that system was the fact that there were what was then unrecognised local film archives of one kind or another, either as it were state funded like the Scottish Film Archive, provincially state sponsored, which was an official repository, and East Anglia, which wasn't. It was a private collector's archive. Then there was Yorkshire which was an academic film archive; North West Film Archive. I think there were some in the west country which have a fairly low profile even now. There was the Brighton Film Archive-

MW: Getting higher! There's a lot there.

CJ: OK, Good. And it was a difficult gestation to bring all these together, but mainly thanks to the diplomatic work done not only by ourselves but also by the Scottish, and also David Cleveland, they all began to become friends and co-operate and recognise that what they were doing was ensuring that their local moving image history was being acquired and kept in all its different ways,

so it might be technically based like David Cleveland's archive, or culturally based and documentary based like the Scottish Film Archive, and so on and so on. In the case of the North West Film Archive they just loved any film that showed the North West; and subsequently the Midlands Film Archive, which is run now by an ex-History Acquisitions Office at the BFI. [James Patterson. DS]

MW: Now retired from that, but never mind!

CJ: Now retired. Only very recently.
So, eventually we were able progressively to bring all these organisations together into what you correctly refer to as the Film Archive Forum, and that was done I think by me and Janet [McBain] originally. The Scottish Film Archive. We brought those together and everyone wanted to join in, actually. That was the best bit – they didn't want to be left out [laughs]. Its now become a very collaborative and useful organisation. For years I wanted to do a programme or a project called A Gazetteer of the United Kingdom, and I wanted to find film of everywhere, locally, and join it all up into one big map. A gazetteer of film imagery of the twentieth century in the United Kingdom, and eventually, not long ago the BFI started doing that, I think. Well, one or two programming ideas based on that idea: so, you might get a Durham Miners' Gala and Morris dancing in East Anglia and whatever, and you just located in a specific place and you just brought all that together and showed how important film was as a record of the entire life in the United Kingdom over ten or more decades. I still think it's a good idea.

MW: And it has been partially done, I think. On-line and through broadcasts.

CJ: Well, there's London Live now of course: television which does that for London, its own region.

MW: Right. No, you're right: it's become Film Archives UK, and it has got momentum.

3 hours 25 minutes

MW: The British Universities Film Council*. I mean obviously I was close to that for some time, I wondered whether you'd like to say something about the relationship between the Archive and that group because it seems [inaudible]. [*re-branded as Learning on Screen in 2015.DS]

CJ: Well again we go back to Lindgren, who was more in love with non-fiction film than fiction film, I think, and I acquired a similar – I loved them both, obviously, but for entirely different reasons. The sheer pleasure of enjoyment of film as entertainment and sometimes an intellectual satisfaction has stayed with me all my life, obviously. But, at another level, I remain absolutely fascinated by all kinds of non-fiction film and that includes news film and record film and so on and I think that's where Lindgren and subsequently me and others felt we could get very close to BUFVC for those reasons. Unknown film. Lost film. Hidden film. There's a whole iceberg out there of film material which BUFVC kind of sponsored and espoused, and I think that was very, very, important, particularly in the news film area, I think. And then seeing that used as an educational tool, which it has done successfully but it still hasn't cracked the school system sadly, well, even the university system sadly except through societies and things like that. It's been of extreme importance and that it has been a battle, as you know to keep it properly funded and recognised over that entire historical period, and I don't think the BFI has been sufficiently influential enough in supporting the BUFVC over the years except through the Archive possibly but that's only secondary influence, and I think the BFI could have been more helpful [rueful chuckle] – I don't know how you feel about that.

MW. BFI – well I think it was a good – well perhaps another occasion where we could discuss that but there were other grant-in-aid bodies of the British Film Institute at the time, certainly in the late '70s that were gradually being cast adrift.

CJ: Yes, that's right.

MW: One was the British Federation of Film Societies*, and that seemed a strange decision in a way because the relationship between the BFI and the [*Rebranded as Cinema for All in 2014. DS]

National Film Theatre, and their regular screenings for the film societies which were quite a powerful – and still are I think – quite a powerful movement and it was unfortunate that they were unhitched; and the BUFC as it then was unhitched from the BFI as well.

CJ: Yes.

MW: And the Society for Education in Film and Television, SEFT, was the other one, the three left. Did the BFFS interest come across your [desk]

CJ: Well I think part of the problem –

MW: Hang on – the British National Film & Video Catalogue-

CJ: Absolutely. Which we did save.

MW: - was part of the BFI, that somehow-

CJ: [Interrupts] Well I personally saved and held onto that, for quite a while. Until as it were its Keepers left. And eventually had to let go of it. [to the British Library DS] But I still thought it was the most valuable work.
But I felt that about all these acronyms, actually. I felt they should all be kept under the umbrella of the BFI and funded to at least a minimum extent to keep them going, because they all had incredible supplementary value to what we were doing centrally, and even the National Film Archive couldn't keep all those balls in the air the whole time, particularly from an acquisition point of view: [it was] complicated and we were having too many fights with institutional collections and so on, like British Rail and waterways, and coal and god knows what else. We cracked them all in the end but that was only because we had to ignore other areas as well, but it wouldn't have stopped us keeping them under our umbrella. They were very well run independently – with the exception of the BFFS - if I may be indiscreet. It wasn't so much my attitude, but it was generally thought that it was run in a very amateur way; and it was all about 16mm film, which wasn't terribly attractive to the National Film Archive, except when … films were uniquely on 16mm.

3 hours 30 minutes

CJ: And we felt it could get by on its own terms and should be able to get by though its own terms through its internal funding structure, and so on. We didn't think very much of the magazine, unfortunately – I mean I could have spent a whole lifetime editing that damn thing [laughs] – and I don't know how to say this, it sounds kind of smug and superior to think of it as too amateur to be under our wing, but I do think we felt that a little bit. And the BFI-

MW: The BFFS [they talk over one another] had a purpose, I mean it seems to me now that my mother who is 88, lives in south Somerset, relied really for her cinema experience upon these groups, who – like Movieola showing some content in villages.

CJ: Yes, yes, but they have survived.

MW: They have in a way.

CJ: We sort of kept a little weather eye on it, you know as to whether or not it would survive and it seemed to thrive in its own little way; but it had lots of cinemas close down and it had to – but we also had provincial theatres and we felt that they were the ones who should be doing that job, as well as the amateurs in front parlours and things like that. I didn't think neglecting them to that extent did them much harm, quite honestly, because the British are very good at having hobbies that carry on.

MW: Serious hobbies.

CJ: Yes, serious hobbies. And they don't always have to be nationally supported I don't think. I think that's one of the good things about the British system. Amateurs often thrive better when they are not interfered with. And I could say that right full stop frankly.

MW: Well, maybe you're right. And you alluded earlier to the world of film collectors and they are by and large amateurs. I mean sometimes they have been in the profession, and become collectors because they love the work that they were involved in, and collect because it's part of their own life really, and I think we may have already discussed this but it seems to me that the tension in

the relationship between the national collection – like the British Museum and a metal detectorist: you know perfectly well that the museum is the official repository of great Roman artefacts, and there are metal detectorists out there who find stuff and somehow there has to be an accommodation between the two.

CJ: Sutton Hoo.

MW: Well I think that was a semi-professional-

CJ: I think that was , yeah. Edith Pretty. But there have been ones like that, yeah. Hence this wonderful sitcom about detectorists, that's on TV now.

MW: Yes, quite.

CJ: It's very close to the truth. I love it.

MW: In the world of film you've mentioned – in fact we've had a discussion, I think you have been reviewing a book, based upon an early film which must have been in the hands of a collector.

CJ: Mm. [agrees]

MW: And possibly the only print, maybe. It's an interesting conundrum where someone who is an amateur who is just interested in collecting things end up with the only print of a certain film because-

CJ: [interrupts] It wasn't the only print in this case but kind of as an exemplary case, well, let's go back to when I started under Lindgren. One of the first things Lindgren warned me against was film collectors. He didn't like them. He thought they were in opposition to his beliefs that the National Film Archive should have the right to acquire and preserve all films, all film materials and they should not be left in the hands of collectors, who didn't preserve them, just played with them and traded in them. I quickly came to recognise that this was a two-edged sword, and although I officially obeyed his policies about collectors, I did find myself being interested by them, strange though they were, difficult though some of them could be, paranoid that some of them

could be, I knew I had to woo them occasionally because they had materials that we didn't have. And, to a very small degree, they were doing some of the work that the studios and producers should have been doing themselves, which is hanging on to the films on their shelves. Collectors were doing that for them in a very fragmented way.

3 hours 35 minutes

CJ: But sometimes collectors held complete copies of films that had disappeared entirely from the commercial shelves, and they were of – from a cultural point of view and my point of view – extreme value. So I had this relationship where – slightly secretive – but I did manage to persuade Lindgren that I had, sometimes to accommodate a collector who actually offered things. So I didn't go out looking for them, but there were a lot of offers: mainly trading offers. The two trade-offs were either money, for a reel of film, or "can we see it, properly projected in the theatres; and I tried to accommodate both those. I couldn't always show that reel of film, because they were too shrunk and damaged, but sometimes I could give them a little film show. And some of them turned out to be quite nice; and some of them turned out not to be quite nice, but at least they walked in with a reel of film from time to time.

There was one man who came in who was very good at finding reels of films on market stalls and things like that for some reason. He was an Australian. He came in one day with about three reels of film one of which I ran and it was a kind of 1917 self-promoting documentary about a man called Pemberton-Billings who was a maverick, right-wing – like a [Nigel] Farage of his day, a posh MP, independent MP, who designed motor-cars and aeroplanes, and his wife kept bees, and he was incredibly right-wing and he sued someone who had played in *Salome* on the stage, for obscenity and things like that: quite extraordinary, a fascinating reel of film historically, and I showed it many, many times, and I was allowed to buy that for £4 – that was my money limit that Lindgren Imposed on me for any reel of film.
And slowly, I began to woo recognised film collectors like Ronald Grant (BEHP Interview No 809), who was very, very, suspicious of any relationship with the BFI, even with me for a long time: we are now close friends. Malcolm Billingsley, one of the nicest collectors it is possible to imagine, who was totally co-operative with me whenever I wanted anything to copy. None of the

collectors would give you stuff, but they'd let you copy it if you managed to reach that level of relationship, and quite a number of films through the years have been saved through collectors having them in their collection. If you want a full story of that you should talk to Kevin Brownlow, himself obviously a collector, and part of the great circle of collectors, he knows them all and has known them all, and he has been part of that circular lending and borrowing and screening of collectors' films. I never got into the inside like that. Partly I didn't want to and didn't want to be caught up in that regime all that much. I just wanted to make sure that if and when I knew about films in film collectors' hands, I at least had the possibility of negotiating for them if I wanted to. I have to admit I had to create a relationship with quite dreadful people sometimes [laughs] in order to lever some films out of them, but I did it, I did it. I had a certain amount of diplomatic charm, which seemed to work on many occasions.

I remember sitting with Sheila Whitaker – we went to visit a man in an old farmhouse, somewhere in Essex or Sussex, I can't remember, who had invited us to come and see the films he owned [he'd seen] some publicity. We went down there in my car and this man spent the afternoon sitting in front of an open roaring fire unravelling his reels of nitrate (!) in front of the fire and Sheila's going [clutches face] "aaaagh!" I tried to ask him politely not to do that – and he was smoking at the same time [laughs]. Fortunately the stuff he had wasn't all that exciting. But there were occasions when – one of my first coups actually, when I'd been at the Archive for two minutes – another anecdote, when Colin Ford had been called by someone who had film memorabilia, machines and things like that, and he said "Oh I think I have some cans of film here if you are interested." So, we went down, just to have a day off really. We went to Whitstable, had some seafood, it was very nice and…

3 hours 40 minutes

CJ:…Colin got very ill afterwards but never mind, and we met this man – they are always called Edwards for some reason: I never understood why – he might not have been an Edwards and he did, he had some very interesting equipment, home movie equipment and things like that, and some cans of film.

There were two lost films there: one was Cecil B. DeMille's *Maria Rosa*, the first film he made with Josephine [Geraldine DS] Farrar no, Farrar, something like

that: a great opera singer. In a silent film! That was *Maria Rosa*, she went on to make *Carmen* with DeMille, which became a big hit, so then he released *Maria Rosa.* The Americans didn't have *Maria Rosa:* there was a beautiful tinted nitrate copy of *Maria Rosa.* I never bettered that, actually. And then he had a Russian film, documentary by a film maker called Roman Karmen, who was quite well known in documentary film. Those were the kind of little happenstances that could occur if you were nice to collectors and at least tried to find out what they had, you know.

And in America this has been an essential part of – particularly in sound, early sound: the number of collectors in America who kept sound discs, and sometimes the film to go with them. Robert Getz [?] spent half his life worrying Collectors, particularly for early sound material, matching sound to mute film and things like that. For example, before *The Jazz Singer* – whose name will come to me in a moment – Al Jolson (sorry, I'm getting very old now), before Al Jolson made *The Jazz Singer* and said "You ain't heard nothing yet", he made a short film called *On the Plantation,* where he sang Swanee or something like that, and in it he says "You ain't heard nothing yet" and this is a short film made before *The Jazz Singer* which wasn't the first manifestation of these famous words, and Bob, it took him years to find a disc for the mute film he had for *On the Plantation* and when he did find it, it was hanging on someone's wall in a frame and broken in about seven different places, and then glued together with epoxy glue, and he had to dismantle that and with early-

MW: Rebuild it?

CJ: Yes, and with early digital means and not very sophisticated means, recording technique he was able to put it back together, he was able digitally to iron out the little blips that came where the cracks were, and did a magnificent job. But collectors, collectors, you know. There's a whole society of disc collectors in America that Bob had wooed. They are important globally. These people.

MW: So they are a key part of the whole mix.

CJ: Well I wouldn't want to overstress it but they are a very important footnote to film archiving.

MW: Going to the other end as it were, well maybe that's not the right expression, focusing now on some of the leading figures and personalities who had an influence on the BFI and perhaps on the Archive, I wondered if we could talk a little bit about Dickie Attenborough and others, because clearly there were one or two who were associated with the growth of the BFI who were good supporters of the Archive and very much in tune with the needs going forward of its development and so on. And maybe David Puttnam was one of those.

CJ: Oh, very much so.

MW: I know he said to me once that his father was press photographer, I think, and indeed he was very keen on our [BUFVC] Researcher's Guide to Film and Television Collections if he wanted find places to look for things. And I just wondered if we could talk to some of those personalities in the British film scene who had helped out. There may be people I'm not mentioning there as well.

CJ: Well, one or two. I used to be at college with Tony Garnett, and we even acted together in the dramatic society when he wanted to be a great actor – and became profoundly disillusioned after a while: he played Hamlet once and I was his father The Ghost. We're old friends Tony and me, and he reminded me – or did I remind him, that he was the first ever contact of mine in the film industry to agree to giving a Premiere copy of his film, pre-production, to the BFI, but the reason that never worked was because he was always in thrall to financiers and accountants who wouldn't let him do it.

3 hours 45 minutes

CJ: Cheap though that would have been at the time – taxi money. But he was the first to agree to that thing that producers should do. David Puttnam took the same view, he loved the Archive, we got on famously. He used to introduce me to preview screenings to comment on the films he'd made: *The Killing Fields*, I remember watching that in the studios, and he similarly thought that it was absolutely essential that producers should give a copy of their film to the Archive straight away, and before it was even screened. The best he could do

was offer us the standby prints in first-run West End cinemas: There was always a standby print in case the main print broke down. They were hardly ever used, and we always got that at the end of the run and it did work. Early films of his like *Stardust* and so on we got straight away. Very rare, I'm afraid that this happened. There was a lovely man at, what were they called? Friendly? No. A nice little distribution company. I wish I could remember what it was now. But the man who ran that couldn't wait to give us a print. It was a used print, but the best he could find. He said "You've gotta have this." It might have been his second distribution print or something like that – he passed over to me. Even one or two companies like Columbia at least gave us a print or two when the time came, but wooing named people hardly ever helped. Until the new breed came along like Puttnam and Garnett, because they were independent so they were desperately concerned to see their films preserved. Studios couldn't care less. Rank couldn't care less. [The] film had its run and no further use for it. Although its changed now dramatically, as we've already gone over.

Until Dickie [Richard Attenborough] came along, and Dickie was a key man in this because when he became Chairman of the BFI, if he hadn't done before, he took up the Archive cause, with Tony Smith – they were a great team – to try to ensure that all his colleagues in the industry would give and honour their productions by giving them to the Archive. The trouble was, he was so busy he only touched down four or five times in this country, I think, that he couldn't go round spreading this propaganda deeply enough, so his actual on the ground effect was not all that great but he was a terrific morale booster and extremely supportive and it did create an atmosphere of independent film makers giving one eye to the BFI and trying to help out. But he was just incredibly supportive in many other ways.
This is probably not for publication: I love Dickie, he was extremely friendly, he would do anything for you. When I held the annual FIAF Congress in the year 2000, I'd already retired from, or been retired from, the BFI, but I was kept on as Consultant Archivist, and that was to end when I'd finally delivered the 2000 Annual FIAF Congress in London. That's when we published This Film is Dangerous, we had the Last Nitrate Picture Show; the last great screening of Napoleon, and things like that, and I got no help from the BFI whatsoever. Teckman wasn't interested; the woman who was supposedly in charge of the Archive wasn't interested, and I couldn't squeeze money, even though this was about FIAF and our membership, and how we were doing the Annual Congress;

I wasn't offered any help from the staff of the Archive. I had to engage Anne Fleming [BEHP Interview No 698] and Elaine Burrows secretly to work on the Congress for me. They were magnificent, but they couldn't let it be known they were doing so, they were moonlighting. I had to engage an assistant out of the pathetic amount of money I did get out of the BFI: it just about paid for her, and she was magnificent as well.

3 Hours 50 minutes

CJ: Until the day I told Teckman that a) Dickie Attenborough was presiding over the screening of Napoleon; b) Dickie Attenborough was opening the Congress, personally; and c) Dickie Attenborough was closing the Congress personally at the London Museum, and Teckman nearly jumped out of his chair and startred pouring money into my budget because Dickie was on board. I mean that was the kind of rubbish you had to go through at the time but that showed what a highly influential figure he could be, in a kind of overview sense, but: Dickie's flaws. His main flaw was John Mills funnily enough and although they would profess to be the best of friends – and I'm sure they were, you know – I'm sure they were extraordinarily good friends, they grew up together, they shared films together, they made their first films together and so on… but Dickie had a thing about John Mills. I spent three years trying to get one of the new Fellowships for John Mills. Of all the people in the British film industry shouldn't we be making John Mills a Fellow of the British Film Institute? And Dickie would say "No, I don't think so darling, just an actor. We don't do actors." And I said "But Dickie, you're an actor and you're a Fellow of the British Film Institute. I know you direct films as well, but mainly you were an-" "Yes, I know darling but I've been administratively terribly important-" and so on. We used to have these arguments about John Mills. And I couldn't crack it! Until the day Dickie has resigned from the Chairmanship and immediately Jeremy Thomas and I got together and I said "Don't you think John Mills should get-?" "Course he should get one!" he said and that was it. Immediately, and I hosted the ceremony and it was wonderful. He got his Fellowship.

But Dickie always opposed it, even though we had actors coming out of our ears who were, like Maggie Smith, you name it they were all Fellows of the British Film Institute; and then I went to a memorial event for John Mills after he'd died, at BAFTA and Dickie was chairman or vice-chairman of BAFTA or

something and so Dickie was given the job of presenting this memorial tribute to John Mills, post-mortem, which he did with tears and everything. Absolutely fabulous, you know and I remember sitting at the back, and behind me there was a man humphing and gerumphing and I turned round and said "What's the problem?" and he said " I've been with Dickie on the BAFTA committee for several years now and every time we proposed a tribute to John Mills while he was alive, Dickie would veto it, or postpone it or something: "No I don't think we are ready for a John Mills tribute…" and apparently Dickie had opposed all attempts for BAFTA giving Johhny an event while he was still alive. He was jealous of him – they were rivals in that sense. John Mills would never have even- it would never have occurred to him that they were rivals in any way: they were just great buddies. But John Mills was the sweetest, most articulate actor I think I 've ever encountered apart from Dickie himself.

MW: He won an Oscar for his acting didn't he? I wonder whether Dickie Attenborough did.

CJ: Well, he got one as a director.

MW: He did.

CJ: But not as an actor, no. Well Johnny was very clever, he played a demented cripple, and you can always get an Oscar for playing one of those. [laughs]

MW: He did yes.

CJ: In *Ryan's Daughter,* yes. Make yourself mute and crippled, you're bound to get an Oscar at least a supporting Oscar, anyway. He was also in *War and Peace*. I don't know if I said this to you last time, he told me this story: he had this cameo in *War and Peace* – the big one, with Henry Fond and so on – and he was the peasant in the snow in the great march back from Moscow and so on and he had these scenes with Henry Fonda, and a dog. Nobody knew him in Hollywood particularly – they knew Hayley, but they didn't know him for some reason, and then one day Henry summoned him to lunch, invited him to lunch in the commissary, and John was absolutely staggered: "Golly, Henry Fonda, he doesn't know me, but he's invited me to lunch in the commissary. What a day."

3 hours 55 minutes

CJ: So he went along to have lunch in the commissary, and Henry even before they'd ordered said "John, I wanted to have lunch with you today, because I wanted to say one thing to you: in the scenes where we are acting together, please do not look me in the eye. You've been looking me in the eye. When I'm doing a scene I do not like to be looked in the eye." And that was it! That was the subject of lunch, was to tick John off for having looked Henry in the eye during their scene together. John said "But in acting you always look the other person in the eye, that's what acting is all about." And yet here's a man, one of the great screen actors of all time doesn't want to be looked in the eye. He was so disappointed: he'd had a very awkward brief lunch with Henry Fonda and he'd been reprimanded. I just thought it was such a lovely story.

MW: How upsetting. Shall we take a swift break there? Just for a moment.

CJ: Sure.

MW: One thing I've been conscious of, I've been conscious of your chair squeaking a bit.

CJ: Oh, I'm sorry.

MW: It sounds on your-

Dan Thurley [camera]: I hadn't noticed it.

MW: Oh, if its okay that's okay. I just heard it.

CJ: I should have oiled the chairs! Your probably right, I'd forgotten about that.

MW: That's a Chippendale, and this is a later model [they laugh]. Let's do that. [Very brief break]

CJ: [mid sentence] He was a champion of the D'Oliveira episode.

MW: Yeah, right.

CJ: Wrote leaders about it and everything, in opposition to the MCC. He was very, very hated by the MCC at that time.

MW: I must say, as a youngish person growing up – I've forgotten the exact date – it was a shock to a lot of people, I mean D'Oliveira, it was a terrible, terrible thing. How could it be?

CJ: Well there we are, that's the Boers for you.

MW: Right yeah. We're rolling. Well we are just picking up some threads from our last discussion., and we agreed that we skipped over the story-

CJ: Well it was really the Film Finders and Philip Jenkinson were the key figures. It was really to bring the collectors thing up to date really.

I happen just to have reviewed a book which celebrates and contextualises this new restoration of *King of Jazz* which was a failure at the box office at the time but it was a unique musical review film, made wholly in two colour Technicolor in 1930 by Universal and I noticed when reviewing the book, which is a magnificent book by the way, that one of the major credits and in fact a whole mini-chapter puts you onto Philip Jenkinson, who was one of the crucial possessors of an element of *King of Jazz*: he had a sixty-three minute reissue print on 16mm but in Technicolor, which had obviously been printed from a 35mm version, so he's at the centre, he's a very well-known collector, not a hidden collector, and a highly regarded collector, who was often used by Hollywood as a consultant, particularly on musical films because he was very fond of early musical films and part of a whole mysterious thriller story about finding parts of *King of Jazz* and some of them are still mysterious, because even more nefarious collectors are involved like Raymond Rohauer who also had a copy from somewhere. And somewhere along the line one of these collectors had a 35mm copy called the 'Mussolini Copy', and that was a disguise for anyone trying to find out the real source of the prints. Somebody invented this story that it came from Mussolini's private collection. Or something like that. But Philip's an interesting case because Philip was a highly regarded collector – a bit like David Shepherd in the States, collectors are much more

honoured there and used as consultants because they knew their stuff, and Philip was one of those.

MW: Philip appeared occasionally I think on *Late Night Line-Up*, he was sort of a Barry Norman-

CJ: Well he was a front man for that and he was a front man for one of the film programmes. He was very well regarded at the time. He could be difficult, particularly from an archival point of view. We did negotiate with him for various materials but he was hugely influential on me as I say in my review actually. One of the first things I remember seeing at the NFT was a programme of early musical items from Philip's collection, and they were unique, a lot of them. And where he'd got them from we never asked, and one of those was this fragmented copy of King of Jazz which profoundly influenced my view of the genre of the time-

4 hours

CJ: -which was musicals, reviews, the first sound films, studio reviews and I've loved them ever since. So its only taken me fifty years to see the restored version, after all that time.

MW: I remember I used to watch [The] *Old Grey Whistle Test* and see – if they didn't have somebody in the studio – they'd run it was Film Finders: who the hell's that? And of course it was Philip Jenkinson.

CJ: Yes, Philip Jenkinson.

MW: I mean we've just skirted over Barry Norman – I didn't know whether you'd had any contact with Barry Norman at all, recognising he only passed away last week.

CJ: [Talking over] well, yes, I knew him in two ways: when he ran his film programme, he reviewed – and he hardly ever reviewed books – but he reviewed my book on war films, and fortunately, not just because it was a good book as I will say, but because the endpapers happened to be from *Dunkirk,* which was directed by his father Lesley Norman. So he opened this book and

proudly showed the endpapers of Lesley Norman's production of *Dunkirk.* [laughs] and then reviewed the book as being quite good, as a book about war films. But I got to know him quite well when he was a Governor of the BFI and he was a nice man, but I think he's got – he started to fade into dementia at the end. I bumped into him and he didn't recognise me, and then, sadly, he faded away a couple of weeks ago. Yes, nice man and I think, apart from early Parkinson, who initiated film programmes on TV, his was the best and the best balanced, I think. The best audience-friendly film approach. Now you get a bunch of amateurs [?] who don't really know enough about film and these things.

MW: I'd been looking at his obituaries and it seems he'd been hired for three months to present *Film,* and it went for twenty-one years.

CJ: Good. He always denied that he ever said "and why not?", but actually he does once or twice. I think he denied saying it frequently. He said it once or twice.

MW: Well, his autobiography is called "And Why Not?".

CJ: Well he kind of got the thing. I mean Mae West never said "Come up and see me some time." She never said that. What she said was "Why don't you come up and see me?" But later on in newsreels she used to quote it as the popular quote: she used to say to the camera "Why don't you come up and see me some time?" as if she'd originally said it – but she knew full well what she was doing.

MW: Well, it's all good publicity. We were also talking about John Mills and I think you wanted to –

CJ: Well I only wanted to add – again there is a slight negative aspect about Dickie about this because I was originally invited to present Dickie's 80th birthday tribute at the NFT, and then I was gazumped by David Robinson, which, I was quite miffed about that because I had been properly invited to do it and I know that Dickie lied about that when we talked about it and pretended it hadn't been his decision but I know he wanted David Robinson and not me, but never mind it doesn't matter. But, at the same time I was

presenting a twenty-film tribute to John Mills in New York, Museum of Modern Art. And again, you do these things in New York, no-one's ever heard of who you're doing: they did that with Anna Neagle once and they'd never heard of her. But the journalists come out, the bag ladies come out, everybody's come out to find out who this person was and the New York Times will do a half-page review of these people and that happened with Anna Neagle and eventually happened with John Mills. A very curious audience turned up, and his favourite film was *Hobson's Choice*, so I opened with that. Hayley Mills came along and said a few words and so on and so on.
John couldn't be there because of his condition: by this time he was in a wheelchair, he could hardly see, he could barely hear and he was almost paralysed. And I think I did the last interview with him because I wanted to take something with me to New York to show the audience, which I eventually did. I went to interview him in his house in – beautiful house – in Denham Village. I knew upstairs was Mary Hayley Bell who was very ill with dementia. I had a cameraman and just me; and eventually John was wheeled in to his living room. And in came this waxwork, really, just wheeled into the room and sat down in front of me. I don't know if it was like Popo the Puppet, [a reference to a song made famous by Danny Kaye. DS] so the cameraman would switch on the light and the sound and get the camera ready and "zoom" John Mills suddenly came alive. It was quite extraordinary – he 'lost' twenty, thirty, years just by being in this environment suddenly, this film environment.

He had an introduction already, in his head, saying how grateful he was to the Museum of Modern Art giving him this honour – I didn't provoke any of this: "I'm very grateful to you Clyde, allowing me, allowing my work to be presented at the Museum of Modern Art. What an honour." And so on and so on, he just went on like that. He then launched into – I didn't have to question him – he launched into so many stories of his early career and his life, including the Henry Fonda story. It was extraordinary, articulate, funny, youthful. He appeared to be able to see me, he appeared to be able to hear me, and I knew neither was true. And then we stopped for tea after about 25 minutes, and [indicates slump] back he went into his condition. It was quite extraordinary. The we did about another 25 minutes afterwards and he came alive and told some more wonderful stories, but I'm sure that was pretty much the last occasion he was interviewed. He died quite soon afterwards. He died even before his wife who was already galloping away upstairs.

Sad, but I'm very happy that I was able to do that one last interview with him because I liked him very much.

MW: Where is that interview now?

CJ: It's with me, it's never been used in any way except it was used that once on the stage. Maybe I can lend it to you?

MW: Maybe the History Project might like to have it?

CJ: Yes, why not? Yes it fits very nicely into what you were saying. I could let you have a copy of that. If you like, yes. I'd have to find it. It's in there somewhere. Remind me, and I'll fish it out. OK.

MW: Finally from my point of view, you were talking about Michael Parkinson, and you were going to say a little more about him.

CJ: Well, it's purely anecdotal but I made friends with Michael when he first ran the Granada, his Granada film programme, [*Cinema*. DS] with Johnny, oh can't remember his name [Possibly John Hamp, who was one of several producers on the show. DS] and he walked in one day because he wanted to do a programme about the Archive, and the work it did, and show some clips and so on, but he also walked in with a package of 360 stills from westerns and showed them to me, and said "I've been asked by Hamlyn to write a history of westerns based on these stills. A picture history. I haven't really got time for that, can you do me a research manuscript?", he called it. So of course I agreed, so I wrote the whole damn thing as a research manuscript, and he said "Clyde, this is so good I think we'll use this as the text for the book." [laughs] So I had to go through it all again and make sure it was in style and so on and so on, and I think as I have already told you he ended up just writing an introduction, which – I'm sorry Michael, I have to say this, you got the film title wrong that you mentioned in the introduction and I had to correct that. But I had equal billing on the book and it did me a lot of good, which meant I could go on and write two more books for Hamlyn, which were pretty good I think.

And then I kept up a relationship with Michael over the years and there was strange episode when BFI had adopted television, not just in the Archive but

generally, culturally, so they developed good relationships with the BBC2 presenter – what's his name, BBC2 cultural presenter, has his own programme. Little man, baggy trousers and a long raincoat. You know who I mean he is an executive of BBC2 and documentary programmes: cultural documentary presenter. I've just forgotten his name.

MW: My minds racing through people like Clive James but he's mainly ITV-

CJ: Who else?

DS: Derek Malcolm?

CJ: No, no he's much more serious than that.

DT: [Alan] Yentob?

CJ: Yes, thank you. Clearly you knew it. Well he was the –

4 hours 10 minutes

CJ: See BFI wanted to extend their Fellowships to [Alan] Yentob and [Lynda] La Plante was it?

MW: Oh yeah. Script writer.

CJ: And someone else, some person from TV. And the Committee were racking their brains about who should present these on the stage, and I think it was Colin McCabe who came up with "I think we should get Michael Parkinson to do that because he's good at that kind of thing isn't he?" and I said "Think on a moment. You're going to give Fellowships to these three relatively new television personalities, and you're going to ask Michael Parkinson to present them and you are not going to give one to him?" I said "If anyone deserves a Fellowship it's Michael Parkinson." And I fought my corner and they agreed and that indeed is what happened. And I remember Parky calling me to discuss this and through this conversation "Hang on" he said, "That was you who did that wasn't it?" So he did know I'd put it in his direction. [laughter] But we haven't

spoken much to each other in the last few years, I must say. Anyway, that's my party story.

MW: Very good. Now I'm going to hand over the next part of the interview.

CJ: Okay. Thereby hand many tales. [slight noise].

DS: We'll do FIAF, a bit of FIAF. We are going, okay.
Right. Clyde, you've talked quite a lot about FIAF already and there were just a couple of things I was interested in finding out: you were on the Executive Committee from 1991 until about 1997. I just wondered if there was anything during your time on that committee that you feel particularly proud of or indeed disappointed about. So, over to you.

CJ: Well I was Treasurer for some of that time – not a particularly rewarding job, there was very little money going around, but I was the only Treasurer to raise some money, and that was from Getty, oddly enough. FIAF had no money except what came in as membership subscriptions, no other money at all and it needed money for guest speakers, lecturers and so on, and I asked – I said I would ask Mr Getty in return for film copies from various archives, anything he wanted, to get him. I asked him for an enormous sum of money, and I ended up getting £15,000 I think which was a lot less than I'd asked for, but he'd passed through his peak of generosity by then, and felt less strongly about what FIAF was. I don't think he understood what the organisation was all that much. But at least his was the first proper contribution that FIAF ever got, you know, as a donation from a private source and it was used to invite speakers and things, quite important ones.
I raised lots of issues at that time about legal deposit, and they were strongly discussed at FIAF. The only positive result of that was I'm about to give to the BFI a complete survey at the time of the legal deposit situation world-wide in every country, which is at least historically interesting even if it doesn't lead to any kind of positive outcome, least of all in our own case. And I guess legal deposit is a bit redundant now with new technology, and so on except retrospectively.

DS: Yes, yes.

CJ: Apart from that, no. FIAF was developing and growing and its main issue at the time was whether or not to allow commercial interests to 'invade' FIAF affairs. Great reluctance for that to happen except in America of course, where collaboration between commercial studios and the archives was absolutely paramount, it was essential to their relationship, and it was an extremely positive relationship. Some of the studios gave their entire back catalogues to the Library of Congress and things like that. So there, the relationship was very, very, healthy unlike Europe and unlike ourselves, there hardly was a relationship even then between them, except for the new breed of independent producers there was hardly any relationship between the Archive and the producers, and it was still unhealthy.

4 Hours 15 minutes

CJ: That issue did come up and eventually it did improve. FIAF did start to relax its attitude to at least a couple of the American studios and commercial interests, and allowed one or two of them to even become members. So those were the main issues of the nineties I think.

DS: Okay. The £15,000 that was from Getty, was there any corollary between how many prints he thought [he might get]?

CJ: No. I'm not even sure if he asked anyone for anything. I said "the offer is there Paul, anything you want to see that's held in any other archive, just let me know. But I think he had his own hot line to places like that.

DS: Oh sure. In relation to the Congresses and all the Summer Schools at the BFI are there any memorable things from that?

CJ: Yes. I thought the Summer Schools were very important because as we discussed the opportunities for training film archivists properly were practically non-existent, until [L] Jeffrey Selznick (son of [David O.]), he funded a school of archive training at George Eastman Museum which still exists. There was another one in UCLA, which was far more spasmodic and only an annual event. The Selznick Training School is permanent now and has become extremely important and there are many young archivists throughout the world now who have been trained at Selznick, but that was still in its infancy. I knew Jeffrey

quite well and remember when – he had two things he wanted to do: one was set up a preservation archive in Texas at the university there, and in fact he offered me the job of running it, which I would have loved to have done, but his committee in Texas vetoed the whole idea, so he transferred the money hae had on offer to George Eastman house to run an archive there. Paolo? Managed to gazump me and persuade him to give all his money to the George Eastman Museum, but why not? As somebody would say.
I ran two of the Summer Schools in succession and they were a fantastic success because we had the Conservation Centre to do it in.

DS: Yes.

CJ: so we had all the facilities that an archivist would need for all forms of archival training, and the important thing from my point of view was that it would be broad based.

DS: Right.

CJ: They would learn a bit of everything, including cataloguing, acquisitions and even some programming, as well as all the laboratory techniques and so on, and I had one or two young archivists who thought this was all a bit beneath them, who were already in an archive and thought they were well trained, and actually we won them round particularly by the energy and the collision of all these archivists there. It was very, very, healthy indeed comparing notes – they had a lot of fun; and they both were resoundingly successful: one or two romances that came out of it.

DS: Oh, right!

CJ: They have become permanent! [inaudible]

DS: That must have been quite hard work for the staff of the Archive. Did you get the kind of co-operation you wanted from the staff by and large?

CJ: Reluctance at first.

DS: Right.

CJ: But once they'd started – and they prepare for it very well I must say. They all did prepare their talks and demonstrations very well in advance. They were quite well behaved, my staff-

DS: Good.

CJ: -when I got them to be. I mentioned the Chaplin episode where for three months they downed tools and worked on nothing but the Chaplin unknown out-takes when I presented them to them. It is the same with the Summer Schools, they did put all their energies into looking after- I think they enjoyed it actually, it was a break from the routines of what they were doing, so they could carry on working but at the same time they could demonstrate and join in with the students and help with a bit of social time with them. And it was a terrific environment to do it in. They didn't have to come into London very much except to visit the BFI and one or two things like that.

4 hours 20 minutes

CJ: So, yes, they were very co-operative and it worked very, very, well. And in the end they loved it and they couldn't wait to do it a second year.

DS: Yes.

CJ: And so on – but it's a moveable feast the Summer Schools, they move from country to country. They had been in East Germany originally, under Wolfgang Klaue and some of our staff had gone to those so they knew roughly what the procedures were.

DS: Yeah, okay. The Code of Ethics, the FIAF Code of Ethics? Were you involved in that?

CJ: Yes I suppose I should have mentioned that, one of the at least theoretical achievements of FIAF, whether the Code of Ethics is enforced I don't know. Roger Smither [BEHP Interview No 726] and I, when he was Secretary of FIAF and I was Treasurer, we collaborated on writing the document called the Code of Ethics because we had so many new archives coming in and they didn't

really know the ground rules for behaving as a proper independent archive, particularly in the relationships with the commercial industry and things like that; and also the Europeans relationship with producers was not a healthy one, we didn't think, so we very carefully composed and wrote a code of ethics for FIAF which – well this document still exists and is still a very, very, 'proper' document I think. There isn't anything there that I would change. All the moral codes you need to observe as an archivist –
DS: Even if they're not necessarily being observed –

CJ: Impossible [to know]

DS: - They have a base to work from.

CJ: Well if you needed to reprimand anyone, there is a document there to give you strength to do that. I mean even prior to that, FIAF had as it were had downgraded the American Film Institute from full FIAF membership, because it didn't have a film collection.

DS: Ah, right.

CJ: It had an influence over film collections, and so on, but it didn't itself preserve films, and I remember when we let them in in 19, erm, early '70s I remember representing Lindgren at the FIAF Congress in Bucharest. I think there were about twenty of us around the table – that was FIAF Congress – now there's about three hundred, and I remember Sam Kula who was then Head of the American Film Institute, sweet talking his way into full FIAF membership, and I know Lindgren was unhappy about it, and I said "Well he's an awfully nice chap" – Sam Kula had also worked for Lindgren as Deputy Curator and Lindgren's contention was exactly what eventually happened: "but they don't actually preserve films, do they Clyde?" "Well, he seemed to do a good job." [laughter] and I talked my way out of it. But they survived for quite a long time, until FIAF finally said "Look, you have too much influence on the Committee without having the credentials", so they were downgraded to Associateship Membership.

DS: Oh.

CJ: Anyway, that's a margin note really.

DS: But it is significant.

CJ: They tried very hard to honour their own Code of Ethics and things despite the deals that the Europeans did with producers, which was the only 'awkrad' part of it.
DS: Okay, that's FIAF, that's enough on FIAF. The other thing I wanted to ask a little bit more about was Cinema City, which, let's start with what do you recollect about Cinema City which was within about a year of you starting at the BFI?

CJ: Well, it was one of the first things that I got involved in. When I began at the Archive, as I told you one of my jobs was to try to promote The Archive more efficiently. We did that by writing articles for film journals and things about the work the Archive did, but at the same time Colin Ford was very entrepreneurial – always was and always has been – he wanted The Archive to celebrate 75 years of cinema.

DS: Yes.

CJ: And I think it was the first celebration of its kind.

DS: Right.

CJ: I can't even remember a fiftieth. There might have been one, but I don't remember it. And he had, fortuitously, got into bed with the Sunday Times colour supplement which was a relatively new thing and George Perry, the film historian wrote…

4 hours 25 minutes

CJ: …on the Sunday Times Colour Supplement, there was a strange Frenchman, who was brought in as a designer, unfortunately I can't remember his name – you've probably got it there –

DS: I may have it somewhere yes. [Emile Gamba. DS]

CJ: and [it was] a collaboration between The Archive, The Sunday Times and the Frenchman. It had huge ambitions but was very ill-timed because, one of them was first of all use The Roundhouse [a disused engine-shed/turntable in Camden: now a respected arts venue DS] – totally inappropriate for film, I'm afraid.

DS: Well it's quite dark!

CJ: It was quite dark, but one of the elements was rooms in which, on the upper level, rooms with different themes like The Western, The Musical, The Thriller, and so on and so on, each with its own computerised projectors showing loops, 8-minute loops showing clips from these and I was asked to do The Western. Unfortunately, this was very early, primitive computer technology and you cannot run a 16mm projector with a computer, I'm afraid, we discovered and every room broke down. So we compiled these wonderful clip programmes and I loved mine – I still love it, I still wish I could show it.
But it never worked, it was supposed to be synchronised so you could walk from one room to the next, for the beginning of each. It never worked.
And also it wasn't soundproofed, so wherever you were in the Roundhouse, you could hear different things going on: shooting in the Western room, musical numbers in the Musicals room, and [James] Cagney in another room, you know, it was an absolute shambles, but it was a kind of heroic shambles I think, you could say.
Where it did work were the evening screenings, the afternoon and evening screenings of classic films, where Colin and George were able to persuade Hollywood stars and everyone to come to them. So, Gene Kelly came to *Singin' in the Rain*, for example and I remember Schlesinger, watching *Billy Liar,* from the projection room and cynically – it was Columbia, I don't know who owned the film, I think it was Columbia at the time – had sent a crap print, a worn-out print of *Billy Liar,* very cynically and I remember John Schlesinger picking frames of the projection room floor as they fell off the projector and he posted them back, as a protest to the film company [laughter] and he went on stage.

We had Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor on stage, with Joseph Losey, who'd just made a film called – it wasn't a very good one, it doesn't matter – and they had tried to present a script they wanted to do to another film company, and

they read portions of the script with the responses from the film company, which was hilarious. It was rejected project, and it brought the house down, it was just wonderful.
And we had Parkinson doing the interviewing and things like that.
So all the stuff in the auditorium was fabulous, and I sat in there all day long and loved it, with all these wonderful people turning up.
But half of it worked, half of it didn't. We all wrote pieces for the Sunday Times Colour Supplement, I've got all my cuttings of that, so at certain levels it was a magnificent show, and it certainly looked it and got lots of publicity. It just didn't work technically.

DS: The publicity side I'm quite interested in because I wondered if in fact it created its own momentum of more people then suddenly becoming aware of The Archive and then looking to donate materials, or whether it-

CJ: In a word, no.

DS: Okay.

CJ: People didn't make the connection. This was 'showbiz' although a high level of showbiz, this was the culture of film and cinema albeit at quite a popular level. So, it worked at a sort of BFI level, and I think the BFI got quite a lot of mileage out of it, but it didn't connect people to the Film Archive and what they were doing necessarily. It certainly didn't influence the industry – on the contrary.

DS: I partly asked because the brochure credits quite a lot of BFI staff in one way and another and indeed there are photographs of Harold Brown and people like that.

CJ: Oh they were all involved, yes.

DS: And I guess the thing I was going to ask you was, was there a big burden on the archive to get this show on?

CJ: I don't think so because we enjoyed it so much. I spent a lot of time getting together my Western room, but I did it in work time on the premises, it was just a distraction from my daily routine.

4 hours 30 minutes

CJ: It was very enjoyable, I must say and very exciting.

DS: Yes.

CJ: It was just we were very disappointed that it didn't quite work, technically. But all the staff pitched in. The only fly in the ointment, and sad to say, was Lindgren.

DS: Oh, Okay.

CJ: Who wasn't a great supporter of it and he was a little bit wary of where the money was going, of having to help fund it; and in the end he and \Colin fell out over it.

DS: Okay.

CJ: And that's one of the reasons Colin left.

DS: Because it wasn't too long before he left was it?

CJ: No it wasn't. And then he had this offer from Roy Strong, so he took the offer and marched, but he'd really seriously fallen out with Ernest, badly. He still feels sad about it, thinks he was bit heavy-handed about the whole thing and should have been far more supportive than he was. But he sort of gave Colin a free hand but he didn't really want to be part of it. He wasn't involved at all.

DS: Do you recall how much money was spent by the BFI on it, or…

CJ: It wasn't a vast amount, I don't think it was more than ten or fifteen thousand pounds, I don't think. It wasn't a great deal. I mean given the value at the time it probably was quite a lot at the time, but it wasn't a vast sum, no.

DS: Do you have any feel for the kind of audience that turned up, was it packed out was it…?

CJ: The audience was the cognoscenti and mainly Camden Town public for all I know, but it was mainly cognoscenti who turned up – people who knew film and loved film: what you might call a super-NFT audience, or a Hampstead audience, you know – that kind of thing. But it was full. Everyone turned out for it, and had a good time, yes.
DS: Okay, I think that's covered it really.

CJ: Okay.

DS: I just wanted to get a bit more about it, because I see it as a bit – not lost exactly, but almost forgotten piece of the history of cinema, in you know, trying to celebrate in this country.

CJ: We did, I remember in a smaller way, fifty years of British sound cinema I think, in the 1980s, with Dickie's support, I remember and I was executive producer of a BBC2 documentary, called *Fifty Years of British Cinema,* I think as I recall. I've never seen it since. I've no idea what it was like. I'd also done one for Channel Four on the British on holiday, called *Are You Having Any Fun?* [*High Days and Holidays 1896-1964]* That was the full extent of my production work!

DS: Okay. Well the BBC one was probably wiped; and Channel Four?

CJ: Ah, probably! So we did sort of build on that idea, and then there was the BFI anniversary in 1983, at the Guildhall, which we've covered I think.

MW: Which we've covered.

DS: Yes. And there have been several commemorations for the Centenary of Cinema.

CJ: Yes. I think someone said it was the first of its kind.

DS: Right, well okay I think that's all I have to ask, so I can say "thank you" on behalf of Murray and myself, and the Project.

CJ: I've enjoyed it.

DS: Well thank you for giving of your time.

CJ: Thank you, Mr Cameraman.

END