

Tilly Day (continuity) 1903-1994

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BIOGRAPHY: Tilly Day worked on over 300 British films between the 1920s and 1970s, most particularly as 'continuity girl'. Her career began at Walthamstow Studios in the 1917 and she received her first credit in 1935 for *The Mystery of the Marie Celeste*. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service during WWII and subsequently returned to the film industry, working for Rank and Hammer studios among others. Her final film was *One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing* (1975). **SUMMARY:** This interview, conducted by Alan Lawson and Sid Cole, extends over two sessions - in the first session she speaks more qualitatively about her life and work, in the second session she is looking through photographs identifying various cast and crew members on different productions. Many of the stories told in the second session repeat material from the first session. Day is 84 years old at the time of this interview, and although she is alert and lively, she is liable to repetition. (Lawrence Napper, BCHRP)

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Interviewers: Sidney Cole and Alan Lawson

Interviewee: Tilly Day

[Tape 1, Side 1]

Sidney Cole: The copyright on this recording is vested in the ACTT History project. Tilly Day, continuity girl. Interviewed by Sid Cole and Alan Lawson on the 15th January 1988. Side one.

Tilly Day: Yes...in July 1917 I started...

Sidney Cole: Yeah, well wait a minute...are we? Now let me ask you a question to start with Tilly, if I may. Well Tilly, I'm going to start with a question that one is never supposed to ask

ladies, but since I first met you some fifty eight years ago, I think I'm entitled to say, when and where were you born, and all that sort of stuff?

Tilly Day: Oh yes. Well I was born in Walthamstow on August 31st 1903, and I started in the film business in July 1917.

Sidney Cole: How did you come to start in the film business?

Tilly Day: Oh...there was an advertisement in the paper saying, "Wanted, very bright secretary, very ladylike..." very this, that and the other, every sort of speciality in the world...

Sidney Cole: Everything you had in fact?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, and I had it... I thought! [Chuckles]. And so, unknown to my parents, because I was at school, you see, I was in High School...

Sidney Cole: Whereabouts were you at school?

Tilly Day: Higher Elementary, Walthamstow. I'd won a scholarship for the school and I didn't want to stay, I hated it! Hated it!

Sidney Cole: Ah-ha. Why did you hate it?

Tilly Day: Ohhh! And so I answered this advertisement, all on the sly. And of course, idiot that I was at that time, I never thought, if I got a reply that it would come home and they'd find out anyway!

Sidney Cole: Who was the advertisement from?

Tilly Day: A box number.

Sidney Cole: Ah!

Tilly Day: And of course, it came home, the reply, saying they would be very pleased to see me on the Monday morning and would I apply? So of course, there was a tremendous fuss when it arrived, the letter. My Mother said, "What can you do? Answering letters like this!" to my Father...because they were spring-cleaning. "This is shocking!" So, my Mother said, "Well, you know her. If she's made up her mind, she'll go." So anyway, to cut a long story short, I went for the interview.

Sidney Cole: Where was that?

Tilly Day: Wood Street, Walthamstow. The old Wood Street, Walthamstow film studio. I'd never heard of the film studio, I thought the pictures were made, you know, sort of somehow magically out of the air! Whenever I went to the pictures, which I was not allowed to do, I went in the exit, with a chum.

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. You mean you just went in, you dodged the payment?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Oh yes, I went in the exit door always. Then when I went for this interview, there was a man there named Savage and he interviewed me, and he seemed to think that I'd got all the - what they wanted for thirty-two and sixpence, I don't know - but he seemed to think I'd got everything! And so I was engaged and I started and I was terribly thrilled. I started the next day, which was a Tuesday. I started the next day. And it was a film studio; I didn't know what it was! It was incredible! There were all these paintings on the wall, there was a scene shifter there and a scenario painter, and I looked at these things and I thought, "Well this is a funny place, I wonder what they sell?" But of course, they didn't sell anything, only films. And the first films we made, that I saw being made, were 'Spratt's' Dog Biscuits, Lux toilet soap, (um, what was the name?) '4711' Cream for hands - my hands were used and...everything like that. This went on for ages and I learnt the industry slowly, you know. The cameramen interested me...there was Phil Ross, Lesley Everley, Bert Ford.

Sidney Cole: Oh, one of the Fords, yes?

Tilly Day: Old Bert Ford, yes - I'm gonna tell you a story about him - and old Bert Ford. And they used to tell me to count numbers, and I learnt how to count from trick photography.

Sidney Cole: You mean, how many turns of the camera?

Tilly Day: Yes, how many to count back. Because it was sixteen frames a second then, not twenty-four of course, because it was silent, you see. And um...I learnt all these things, and I found it so interesting. Then, after that we made a big film, which was 'The Burgomaster of Stilemonde' with Sir John Martin-Harvey.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: Of course I was thrilled to be on a film with Sir John Martin-Harvey! And in such close contact. I mean, he called me "my dear" every day, he was a dear old gentleman, too! And that sort of thing. Oh, I was thrilled to pieces! And even my Father, who thought it was a bit 'dicey' the whole thing, he was quite sure I was in the white slave traffic when I got thirty-two and sixpence! That huge sum! And he didn't know what I had to do for it, all the various things, all the... I'd worked harder than I'd ever worked in my life. And, anyway...

Sidney Cole: Did your Father come to visit the studio?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he did, he insisted that he must come and see this place where I was working. And he came, and he finished up at one o'clock in the morning, like I did, because we used to work incredible hours, until one o'clock in the morning. He finished at one o'clock in the morning like I did and took me home. Oh it was amazing.

Sidney Cole: So it was quite near your home, actually?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, it was just around the corner! Well, up the road and round the corner, you know. But um...and then we made 'The Burgomaster of Stilemonde', that was Sir John Martin-Harvey...um...

Sidney Cole: Who directed that, do you remember?

Tilly Day: Oh George Banfield. Then there was Fern Andra... Baroness Fern Andra. Now she was the mistress of the Crown Prince of Germany, the Kaiser's son, and, oh! I was thrilled to hear all this 'dirt'!

Sidney Cole: [Laughs].

Tilly Day: I'd never heard 'dirt' before, and I didn't know such 'dirt' existed, either! Oh dear, a mistress! Oh! Terrible! But anyway, that was that. Oh, and then, this George Banfield was a terrible man! I mean, he lived with everybody, he'd had affairs with everybody, he'd have had A.I.D.S. these days. He was terrible, but anyway...

Sidney Cole: But interesting?

Tilly Day: Oh very interesting! Very interesting indeed. And I used to cook kippers for him.

Sidney Cole: [Laughs]. On the studio floor?

Tilly Day: Well, in a little room off. It used to stink the place out! And, oh...'Power Over Men' with Isabel Jeans, that's the first time I met Isabel Jeans. And Wyndham Goldie and all people like that... What's the name of the man, Humphrey...?

Sidney Cole: You can't remember?

Tilly Day: An old man - not old, but I mean, he's dead now, I expect.

Sidney Cole: Well it'll come back to you in a moment.

Tilly Day: He was a famous... famous... And I met Lawrence Anderson, he was a famous Shakespearean actor, and he was Mickey Anderson's father.

Sidney Cole: Did you perform in any of these films?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I always used to.

Sidney Cole: What did you do?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! I used to... any costume that was left over, put that on and I'd be cooking kippers and doing various studio jobs, you know - what I was supposed to be there for, in costume! And then er...after that, let's see...

Sidney Cole: Was there anything like what you finally became famous for - continuity - in those days? Or didn't people bother?

Tilly Day: Oh no! I mean, my continuity was all in with er... and silent continuity was entirely different to... you had to make up your own continuity when you were 'sound', first of all. You made it up yourself, because there was nobody to teach you.

Sidney Cole: No.

Tilly Day: And in silent days, Lesley Everley told me what to do each time and how to match things. And it was much harder, because you used to have to match the facial expressions and their words that they said silently, you had to more-or-less learn, because they could put titles in, you see.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...and people learned to lip read in those days, didn't they? I mean, audiences...

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: So how long did that go on, at the...?

Tilly Day: Oh that went on for ages, and then um... eighteen months... at the end of about eighteen months, two years, it folded up, and I was left in by the liquidators. I was always left in by the liquidators!

Sidney Cole: Because they needed someone to show them where everything was?

Tilly Day: To show... yes... the accounts and everything, and I lived locally, so that was me. Somebody paid my wages, I don't know who, but that was that. Empty studio, it was rather eerie really, because they had glass roofs then, you know, and they used to rattle when the wind was on. And this great glass roof used to echo and the rain used to patter on it.

Sidney Cole: Sometimes in those circumstances, you were alone there, were you?

Tilly Day: Oh I was quite alone in the studio! I was quite alone then. And the telephone, when it rang, it had an eerie sound. And then, after that, they finally said that they had packed up, the liquidators had packed up and it became the London Chairbottle Cane Company, of all things! And I was out of a job, so my Father said, "That will teach you to be educated and learn a proper job!"

Sidney Cole: What was his profession, by the way, your father?

Tilly Day: A tea blender. And so I said, "Oh yes." No intention, of course, of doing it! Then I got a job, I could do shorthand typing, I'd learnt that much from my school days, although I was only fourteen years and ten months, I'd learnt from my schooldays. And then I went to... where did I go? It was a long time ago... I went to somewhere where I was there for two weeks and then

somebody 'phoned me up that they'd got a job at Twickenham Studios. I couldn't wait to get there!

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: I got there, and it was night work. And talking pictures had just started, and it was a George King picture called 'Leave it to Me' with Robin Irvine. And I went to Twickenham Studios and it was all night, and then I got the job on the day picture which was ('Leave it to Me'...) I can't remember the day picture. I must have been in such a bemused state! Because I used to come off of the night picture, go and wash my hands and face and go onto the day shift, to the day picture, and then I'd work all day. And this went on for a whole week. I was, sort of...

Sidney Cole: What were you actually doing? Were you doing continuity on that?

Tilly Day: Continuity! Yes! I'd learnt how to, sort of, put it together, this, that and the other, you know, and see that they'd - I'm sure it was wrong at times, but still - you know, how to put it together. And then... what happened? Oh, then, of course, I used to get jobs in between times, because there was an awful lot out of work, and I couldn't afford to be out of work.

Sidney Cole: And this would have been what, about 1930?

Alan Lawson: '30 wouldn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh no, it was before 1930. Oh wait a minute, no it wasn't.

Sidney Cole: Because of sound...

Tilly Day: Yes, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Because I was just thinking, Tilly, perhaps there's some films you've forgotten in between the silent days and...

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes. There was 'Burgomaster of Stilemonde'... those pictures might tell us?

Sidney Cole: Yes. Where did you go after all those pictures at...

Alan Lawson: You see, if Walthamstow closed after you've only been there two years, that brings us up to 1919.

Tilly Day: Yes, and there were still silent pictures then. 1919.

Sidney Cole: And, for instance, you see, sometime previous to sound, you worked at Stoll and places.

Tilly Day: Oh yes I did, I worked at Stoll's, that's right!

Sidney Cole: But how long, I don't know, how long were you at Stoll's?

Tilly Day: Oh I was there for... you see you've got to intermingle this with commercial jobs that I used to go and get the next day.

Sidney Cole: What, secretarial jobs?

Tilly Day: Secretarial jobs.

Sidney Cole: Yes of course.

Tilly Day: And then I would come back and I'd get another job... I always left them, right in the middle of whatever I was doing, and went to the studios.

Sidney Cole: Can you remember what you first did at Stoll's?

Tilly Day: What I did at Stoll's? I can remember the talkies at Stoll's.

Sidney Cole: Because when I started at Stoll's they were only just turning over to sound.

Tilly Day: I know, they hadn't turned over...

Sidney Cole: And what was the, um...what was the er...?

Tilly Day: They hadn't turned over when I was there.

Alan Lawson: It was 1930 they went onto sound.

Tilly Day: Ah yes, yes.

Alan Lawson: Because I went there on the first film, first soundtrack.

Tilly Day: On 'Danny Boy' were you?

Alan Lawson: Oh no, that's much later.

Sidney Cole: Much later, yes... that's much later.

Alan Lawson: Much later... I'd gone by then.

Sidney Cole: There was 'House of Unrest'?

Alan Lawson: Well it was 'Such is the Law'.

Sidney Cole: 'Such is the Law'.

Tilly Day: Ah yes.

Sidney Cole: Was that sound?

Alan Lawson: Yes... ah, it was using the material from the Frances Day film, 'Price of Divorce'.

Tilly Day: Ah...

Alan Lawson: Did you work on 'Price of Divorce'?

Tilly Day: No, I worked on a Frances Day film, 'You must get Married'.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, that was later.

Alan Lawson: At Stoll's... was it?

Tilly Day: No, no.

Alan Lawson: Ah ha. This was a silent?

Tilly Day: This was at Walton-on-Thames.

Alan Lawson: Ah ha. Are we getting out of date yet? We're getting our dates mixed up. But can you remember any of the films you were on at Stoll's in the silent days?

Tilly Day: I was on lots... always on advertisements.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Tilly Day: Yes... that's why I was so amazed when advertisements came back, sort of thing. But I was on so many advertisements, and it was always Spratt's Dog Biscuits... always!

[Chuckling in background].

Tilly Day: And, you know, I'm frightened of dogs, and they always had dogs, all sizes. They used to leap up at me, I used to think, "Oh God!"

[Chuckling].

Tilly Day: I loved the picture, making the pictures, of course, but I couldn't stand the dogs! And after that, there was '4711' beauty things, lots of beauty... Oh, 'Max Factor'... and they always used me for hands.

Sidney Cole: This is even after Walthamstow?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: ...that you're still doing commercials? Yes.

Tilly Day: And Dorothy... very round, smiling face... Dorothy...

Sidney Cole: Oh, I can... I know who you mean, but I can't think of the...

Tilly Day: Dorothy...

Sidney Cole: Anyhow, it'll come back. But can you remember the first features you did, round and about that time? Say, at Stolls or somewhere?

Tilly Day: No, they weren't features, they were four-reelers and two-reelers, mostly two-reelers. We did um... twelve two-reelers of Kenneth McLaglen in 'Dick Turpin.'

Sidney Cole: Oh yes?

Tilly Day: And we did twelve two-reelers of 'Ghostly Stories'... you know, 'Macabre' and all that sort of thing. They took some time, of course. I wasn't on a big picture, not a big silent.

Sidney Cole: There was a series about tying bits of string or fiddling with bits of string, somebody who solved problems that way. Do you remember that one?

Tilly Day: Tying bits of string?

Sidney Cole: Somebody who fiddled with bits of string while he solved mysteries, as it were.

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: Well I thought, perhaps... I was trying to jog your memory.

Tilly Day: No. Dorothy Boyd!

Sidney Cole: Dorothy Boyd! That's it, yes. Now I remember, she was at Stoll's, certainly in pictures at Stoll's.

Tilly Day: Yes, and er...then there was another Dorothy too... Seacombe! Dorothy Seacombe! She was before Dorothy Boyd.

Sidney Cole: Right, hmm.

Tilly Day: Dorothy Seacombe, she used to do the same sort of thing as I did, she used to do something in between and she used to skate in between. Because I know, I always learnt my first

lesson when I said, "Oh I remember you" when she came to do a picture, a two-reeler or a four-reeler. I said, "Oh I remember you," I said, "You used to skate on...(somebody or other's) pier."

Sidney Cole: Was that roller-skating, or ice-skating?

Tilly Day: Yes...

Sidney Cole: Roller-skating?

Tilly Day: Roller-skating.

Sidney Cole: Yes, it was opposite Stoll Studios, practically, at Cricklewood. There was a roller-skating rink...

Tilly Day: Yes...

Sidney Cole: Did she work there?

Tilly Day: She used to work there, yes. And she said, "I don't mention that."

Sidney Cole: [laughs]

Tilly Day: I said, "Oh!" I said, "I'm sorry!" So I learnt never to mention any, sort of, outside thing they did, ever! But she was very good, she was a very nice girl. Oh yes, and I got by with all these films. And the first talking I was on was... no, it wasn't Stoll's... wait a minute... it was Twickenham.

Sidney Cole: Hmm... that's what you were just saying.

Alan Lawson: Yes, with George King, you were saying.

Tilly Day: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: With George King, yes. He made a lot of films in those days, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh yes, lots. I was with him for, oh, about two years, and we did many, many films. Sort of...

Sidney Cole: Were you still living at home at that time?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I always lived at home.

Sidney Cole: So it was quite a journey to get to Twickenham?

Tilly Day: Oh I always lived at home! And then it got...

Sidney Cole: How did you manage, getting from Walthamstow to Twickenham?

Tilly Day: Oh, it was dreadful! Dreadful! But in the end, I used to get bedsit [???] near the place, you know. When I was at Stoll's I got a bedsit [terms???] opposite, and all that sort of thing. And then Walton-on-Thames, I got bedsit [terms???].

Alan Lawson: Those George King, were they 'quota quickies', those ones?

Tilly Day: Oh yes.

Alan Lawson: They were?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: How many days for each one? Do you remember?

Tilly Day: Ten days.

Alan Lawson: Those are ten day ones?

Tilly Day: Yes, four reels in ten days.

Alan Lawson: Four? Only four reels?

Tilly Day: Four reels in ten days. Yes, they used to be, um, you know...when I look back, um, they were quite a long time really, but they were considered terribly quick! Four reels in ten days.

Alan Lawson: I used to... I've worked with George King and we did, um, six reels in ten days.

Tilly Day: Did you?

Alan Lawson: I think so, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh, wait a minute... we did six reels too!

Sidney Cole: Yeah I think it probably was six reels that you did, because that was roughly the hour, you see, those 'quota quickies' were roughly an hour, yeah.

Alan Lawson: Yes... six-reelers.

Sidney Cole: Do you remember any of the technicians particularly, from those Twickenham days?

Tilly Day: Well of course, there was Desmond Dickinson, he always seemed to be around. I remember he invented the first back projection.

Sidney Cole: That's right, yes.

Tilly Day: That was very interesting...

Sidney Cole: But unfortunately, Stoll's never renewed the patent on it his original idea.

Tilly Day: No I know, I know. Yes that was very sad. Oh, and Charlie Knott who was on the sound... Desmond Dickinson...

Sidney Cole: So when did you first meet Thorold Dickinson... can you remember?

Tilly Day: Oh that was on 'High Command'.

Sidney Cole: As late as that was it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I didn't meet him until then.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: 'High Command' that was the first picture...

Sidney Cole: That was quite a long time later.

Tilly Day: Oh yes, that was about 1936

Sidney Cole: That's right yes, yes. I thought perhaps you'd met him, worked with him, before?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: You never worked with George Pearson, for instance?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: No, because that's where you might have met Thorold, I thought, you see.

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: When Thorold was editing for Pearson?

Tilly Day: No, I didn't seem to get in with the 'big lot', if you know what I mean. I always went round the edges and I was always terribly busy on these, I thought they were you know, the world's best, but they were the world's worst actually!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. And your job was enjoyable? You enjoyed continuity?

Tilly Day: Oh yes it was lovely.

Sidney Cole: Where did you start making comments on your continuity sheets? Because I remember...

Tilly Day: [Laughs]. Oh...

Sidney Cole: ...some of your continuity remarks on films I worked on with you, that were better not shown to some of the people you were referring to!

Tilly Day: [Laughing]. I know!

Sidney Cole: Where did you start doing that?

Tilly Day: Oh I did it right from the beginning, I think.

Sidney Cole: Did you?

Tilly Day: Yes, you see I had this idea that nobody was going to read these sheets, nobody took any notice of them anyway, so I thought I'd put what I thought! And little did I know, and I found out afterwards, that they used to read them avidly! They used to...

Sidney Cole: Yes, yes, they were the...

Tilly Day: ...they'd say, "Where's the continuity sheets? Where's the continuity sheets!"

Sidney Cole: If they'd all been preserved we could have had an anthology of Tilly Day's Continuity Sheets! I remember one, I think I kept it at home and have it still somewhere, which was on a later picture called 'Gaslight' that Thorold Dickinson directed...

Tilly Day: Oh yeah?

Sidney Cole: ...and there's a note - and I edited it - and there was a note from you saying about a close shot of Diana Wynyard, saying that, "Miss Wynyard's hands do not match with the mid-shot, although asked several times to make sure they did. What a trooper!" (Explanation point!)

[TD and SC laugh.]

Tilly Day: Oh yes, she annoyed me, she annoyed me terribly! Because she'd never do anything you asked her to do, oh no. And everybody said, "Isn't she a darling? Isn't she marvellous?" Oh...she used to make me [indecipherable]

Sidney Cole: [Laughs]. Who was your favourite actor or actress that you worked with, Tilly? Do you have one, or more than one? People that you really appreciated?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes, I used to like a lot of them an awful lot. I liked Michael Caine, he was a nice guy.

Sidney Cole: Oh that's really much, much later in your career.

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he was in the more modern days. But the old ones... Jean Simmons, I loved Jean Simmons...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, she was a nice girl.

Tilly Day: She was a dear.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, but even from earlier on, in your very early days?

Tilly Day: Oh early days...

Sidney Cole: What did you think of Frances Day for instance?

Tilly Day: Oh...she was a bitch, wasn't she? She was a bit...

Sidney Cole: Yeah...[chuckles].

Tilly Day: Yes, she was all right. Of course she was... Oh I had a lovely, a lovely pay-off from her. You see her name was... she used to sign, I suppose, 'F. Day', or something, Frances Day, and I always used to write 'Tilly Day' or 'T. Day'. And when we went on location in North Africa, I put, 'T. Day', and the first hotel we went into, she didn't go into, 'because she'd gone up country with her private sheikh. And um, I wrote, 'T. Day' and I had most fantastic suite of rooms!

Sidney Cole: Ohhh...

Tilly Day: ...Oh lovely! Private service, everything! And Teddy Edwards[?] and Biddy Chrystal said, "Why have you got this and we've only got a room in the attic?" So I said, "Well I don't know", and they knew I didn't know. And there it was, there was this lovely room, there was this service, there was a hot bath and everything! And when we went to - oh, we were months abroad - and when we went to the next hotel, that was in Oran, and when we went to Algiers, the same thing happened. I put 'T. Day' and, it was beginning to dawn on me then, that the 'T. Day', maybe they mistook for Frances Day - 'F. Day' you see? And so I thought, "Oh dear!" So I got hold of the chairman of the company and I said, "Look" I said, "I think I'm being mistaken for Frances Day." So he said, "But why?" he said, "You're not a bit like her!"

[SC Laughs].

Tilly Day: So I said, "No" I said, "Not that." I was darker then, you know, I was sort of 'gingery'. And so I said, "Well, I'm sure I'm getting her rooms and her attention and everything." So he said, "Jolly good luck" he said, "I hope you do!" He said, "you make the most of it, you've got my permission!" Because they weren't paying anyway - they never paid, they left the whole thing!

Sidney Cole: Who was, what company was it and what was his name, the chairman?

Tilly Day: The chairman of the company, now I think it was... I think it was Humphries. No, Basil Humphries was one of the producers. I can't remember the chairman's name. But anyway, I got the full treatment...

Sidney Cole: Jolly good.

Tilly Day: ...it was wonderful! Wonderful tour for me.

Sidney Cole: Leaping ahead a bit Tilly, you were in the ATS during the war, weren't you? Which was a different experience, tell us something about that.

Tilly Day: Well I joined up of course, on Thorold's say so, to make training films, and when I got in there, of course, Thorold, practically at the same time, left, you know, and went on his Indian whatever it was. And I couldn't get out of the ATS, I was left in. I took rather a dim view of that. But anyway, I had one good thing, they said that, my Father had died in the meantime, because we'd been bombed, and my Father died.

Sidney Cole: As a result of the bombing?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Oh dear.

Tilly Day: And they said that if I'd got - the authorities, the ATS authorities said - if I'd got somewhere to live, I could have my Mother to live with me. So I got this flat and I've been here ever since.

Sidney Cole: Really? Oh...

Tilly Day: ...that's how I got the flat, you see.

Sidney Cole: Very nice.

Tilly Day: And, we requisitioned the houses opposite, for the ATS, numbers six, seven and eight King's Drive. They're the larger houses opposite, you'll see out of the other window. And they, you know, they had all those houses, and the girls were in them, and I was here, as a Regimental Sergeant Major.

Sidney Cole: Oh! Were you very tough?

Tilly Day: [Chuckles]. Oh! Terrible! They all used to come over and cry on my Mother's shoulder [laughs]... or mine.

Sidney Cole: But you're not associated with films at all then, after Thorold?

Tilly Day: Well no, no.

Sidney Cole: I mean, in the Army?

Tilly Day: No, no, I wasn't. That was the point, you see, that I took rather a dim view of. And Thorold eventually came back from India - or, no, not India - Africa. Came back from Africa and (let's see, what happened now?) Oh, he got me out, he got me out. I was seconded out of the Army. That was two and a half years later.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: Because they were in Africa for a couple of years, you know.

Sidney Cole: Yes. What on? Do you remember what film that was?

Tilly Day: 'Men of Two Worlds'.

Sidney Cole: 'Men of Two Worlds', yeah, 'Man of Two Worlds'.

Tilly Day: Which, if course, they made when they came back, the interiors and they were seven months on the interiors.

Alan Lawson: Did you work on that?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I worked on that! I tell you who was really responsible for that was, (um...what's the name of the girl, woman?) Um, Thora Hird!

Sidney Cole: Thora Hird, really? How? In what way?

Tilly Day: She was great chums with the Dickinsons, with Thorold and Joanna, and she was a chum of mine, a great chum of mine. And when Thorold came back, I said, "He ought to get me on that, you know." "Oh I don't think he could get you on," she said. I said, "It's because of him I joined the Army." And the pay was dreadful in the Army, you know. I got (what was it?) Ten bob a day. It was much less than I got as a continuity, by that time. And so, anyway, she said to him and Mrs Dickinson, in front of me, she said, "Well I think it's disgusting and I think you must do your best to get Tilly back!"

[TD and SC chuckle].

Tilly Day: Pulling her fate, you know. And I think Thorold was very embarrassed, and get me back, he did. He got me out of the Army. And I wasn't, I was seconded, but I was not taken out of the Army. When you were seconded you weren't taken out.

Alan Lawson: You weren't de-mobbed.

Sidney Cole: You weren't de-mobbed, you were just seconded out, yes.

Tilly Day: Do you know, I remember, I was on a George King picture, quite a long time afterwards, when they suddenly called me back!

Sidney Cole: Oh!

Tilly Day: To the Army, they found they'd got me in the Army. And I said, "Oh, but you can't do this." So George King said, "In the Army? You? Regimental Sergeant M...?" [Laughs].

Sidney Cole: Thought it was a great joke!

Tilly Day: Great joy, you see. So I said, "But they have." And so, well, of course, they all got together and they all got me out.

Sidney Cole: Great. So what did you do? What was the next thing you did after you really got out of the Army?

Tilly Day: 'Men of Two Worlds'

Sidney Cole: After 'Men of Two Worlds'?

Tilly Day: Yes, I think it was the George King things, 'Gaiety George'.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes? And that was renewing an acquaintance from many years before the war?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, from long ago. And we had lots of - oh God! - the laughs we had on 'Gaiety George'! He'd got his third wife by that time who, of course, I didn't know. I knew the other two, and he lost this one while he was on (I think it was 'Gaiety George'). Anyway, we had lots of laughs. Then after 'Gaiety George' I was on Harold Huth. I think...oh no, Peter Ustinov's first film...

Sidney Cole: Which one?

Tilly Day: Er, 'School for Secrets'.

Sidney Cole: Oh 'School for Secrets'? Yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, his first film. And um...'School for Secrets', and after that 'Vice Versa'

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: With little - what was the name of the boy? - Anthony Newley. I've got a picture of him there.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, became very famous afterwards didn't he?

Tilly Day: Yes he became very famous, and he's a little boy with me (there). Nice little boy, oh he was, he was such a dear. And he had no home, you know.

Sidney Cole: No? I didn't know that.

Tilly Day: No. He was cast around from foster parent to foster parent, and he was brilliant! When you talked to him. He was fourteen when he came for us on 'Vice Versa', and he used to sit at my desk, he always sat at my desk. He used to sit at the corner of my desk and he'd do wonderful drawings in the space of a second, and say, "There you are Till, what about that? There you are Auntie Tilly, what about that?" So I'd say, "That's marvellous, who taught you to draw like that?" He said, "Oh, the third man" he used to add up, he'd say, "Oh the third man I lived with and his wife," he said, "he was a scenic artist and he was a dear, oh!" he said, "He was such a smasher. But he used to drink, you know." So I said, "Oh." And he used to tell me these tales about how he came home drunk and all that sort of thing, and he used to knock Tony about... Anthony about. But he was marvellous when he was sober, and, you know, I learnt an awful lot about Tony's life then. And he remembered too, because when he was at Pinewood, years later, years later, I was sitting in the restaurant - the posh restaurant, you know - having my lunch and Tony Newley was in a (I forget which film he was on), but he was, of course, very grown up by that time. He had a brigand's hat on and, he came up and he said, "Oh there you are!" he said, "I've been looking for you all day." So I said, "Oh, have you?" He said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "Yes!" So he said, "Who?" I said, "You're Tony Newley." He said, "How do you know?" he said, "I thought I was disguised!" I said, "No they tell your eyes. You can always tell your eyes." So he said, "Oh, I must think about that." So I said, "You can't change those, Tony." He said, "I've wanted to see you, I've been asking all day where you were, because I said, 'I must see Tilly Day, because was so kind to me when I was a boy and her Mum was.' " Because he came home here, you see and he had food with us, and that kind of thing, and my Mother used to say, "Now don't you do (so-and-so)!" to Tony. "Now don't you take any notice of (so-and-so)" you know, she used to tell him about various men. She used to say, "Now don't take any notice of him!"

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles].

TD:...if she thought it wasn't right!

Sidney Cole: Yes, so...he had a, kind of, extra parent in you and your mother?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he was a dear!

Sidney Cole: What other directors... did you ever work with David Lean?

Tilly Day: No, I knew him very well. I knew him as a cutter.

Sidney Cole: But I know David has mentioned you in the past. I didn't know if you actually knew him?

Tilly Day: Yes, I knew him as a cutter, as an editor. He was on 'Matinee Idol' with George King.

Alan Lawson: That was at Shepperton, wasn't it? That was...

Tilly Day: No, 'Matinee Idol' was at Wembley.

Alan Lawson: Oh, was it?

Sidney Cole: Oh, the old Wembley Studios, yeah. Which are still basically here... I mean...

Tilly Day: Yes they are Lee[?] Yes he was um...

Sidney Cole: You mean you worked with David when he was a cutter?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: And I remember he gave a little speech about me in the cutting rooms.

Sidney Cole: When was that?

Tilly Day: And Margaret Yarde was on the film, and she had a very difficult part of throwing her hands about and that sort of thing, and they did all different angles on her. And when it was done, she said to David Lean, she said, "I don't know how you do one from the other like that, like you've done." So he said, "Well that, I might tell you, is entirely due to Tilly Day." He said, "She does such marvellous matching, I can cut it anywhere." And he said, "When I know Tilly's going to be on a picture, it's such a relief, I think to myself, oh God, I shan't have to go through miles of film!"

Sidney Cole: How very nice of David.

Tilly Day: Yes, it was very nice of him.

Sidney Cole: Well you always were very meticulous, as I remember, from 'Gaslight' and so on...

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: ...very insistent on matching, which is very important.

Tilly Day: Yeah.

Sidney Cole: What other editors do you remember working with that appreciated your skill?

[Slight pause].

Sidney Cole: I mean, apart from me, at that time!

[Tilly and Alan Lawson laugh].

Tilly Day: I don't know, I think they all did really. You'd sort of get... I tell you who I noticed the other day, Basil Dearden.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: I noticed he'd got a son, he's got a son.

Sidney Cole: Yes that's right, he's just written a script for a film.

Tilly Day: Script, yes. James Dearden. I was so - I suddenly thought, "God! he's grown up too!"
[laughs]

Sidney Cole: Well, Basil's been dead quite a while now.

Tilly Day: Oh he has, yes, I know.

Sidney Cole: I can't remember exactly, did you work with Basil at all?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes. I worked on a very good film with Basil, which I remember...

Sidney Cole: Which was that?

Tilly Day: 'Sapphire'

Sidney Cole: Oh, 'Sapphire' yes, at Ealing, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, and it was really before it's time, because it was about the coloured question, you know.

Sidney Cole: Yes I know that.

Tilly Day: It really was awfully good, very good.

Sidney Cole: Yes, well Basil would have appreciated, you know, your care in continuity, because he was a very, sort of, careful director himself.

Tilly Day: And, you know, I suddenly thought of this James boy. He was a terrible child, you know, terrible! And I remembered that Basil said to me one day, he said, "I'm gonna bring my son up tomorrow." He said, "I hope you don't mind, Tilly?" So I said, "No, I don't mind a bit." So he said, "He's a terror!" So I said, "Oh that's all right." Not thinking, you see. And so he brought him up, and this little boy was shocking!

Sidney Cole: What did he do?

Tilly Day: Oh he...well, you know how I used to collate my papers, along the desk at the bottom of my desk. First thing in the morning, it was my first job, I used to collate the continuity from the day before and if there were, seven copies there were, I think, then - I had seven there. All the sevens were together, you see, they were all, sort of... I had got them all beautifully laid out and was just gonna clip them all together, when this wretched boy came along and went "whup", and they all went up in the air!

Sidney Cole: What did you do?

Tilly Day: I stood there for a moment. I closed my eyes and, honestly you could have heard a pin drop in the studio. I said, in a suppressed voice...

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: ...I said, "Will you go away. A long way!!" And, even he was frightened. Well, he wasn't frightened, but he walked off and his father apologised afterwards [chuckling]. And I thought of that boy afterwards, last night, when he was on. I thought, oh God, "Will you go away...a long way!"

Sidney Cole: What do you know, just switching onto something else, a general point, Tilly, what in your long experience of movies, has been the major changes in them, as far as you have noticed and what do you think of the main changes?

Tilly Day: Well, of course, there was the 'talkies'... then there was... 3-D was there? 3-D.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, well, for a short time, I mean, it didn't really... They keep bringing it back as a [???], but it's never really worked...

Tilly Day: Yes, we had those, I was on one of those. 3-D. Colour, of course.

Sidney Cole: Were you, in the early days of sound, were you ever on those pictures where the sound, um...

Tilly Day: Was on disc?

SC:... people had to be in booths? Those funny booths?

Tilly Day: Oh God yes! Oh! And they used to move these booths. It used to take ten men to lift the [boom]!

Sidney Cole: Yes...

Tilly Day: ...the booth. Oh it was terrible!

Sidney Cole: And sometimes, the technicians inside them would faint...

Tilly Day: Yes!

Sidney Cole: ...because you had to...

Tilly Day: Basil, Basil um...

Sidney Cole: ...the takes went on for...

Tilly Day: Basil Emmett...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha...yeah.

Tilly Day: ...would be inside and they'd say, "Quick, quick! Get him out!" And he'd come out, he said, [TD does impression of weak, breathless voice] "Just in time...oh..." it was terrible!

Sidney Cole: Because they didn't have any ventilation I suppose, in those days?

Tilly Day: No, no ventilation at all, just a little glass, and this thick wood. And they used to say, "Move it over here" and there used to be two men this side and two men the other side...it was like a...they used to take the er, you know...

Alan Lawson: Block and tackle wasn't it?

Sidney Cole: Block and tackle, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh it was terrible! And it was built, a proper built thing, you know.

Sidney Cole: Oh, it didn't have wheels on?

Tilly Day: No!

Sidney Cole: No, strange that, isn't it?

Tilly Day: No, it was terrible.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Alan Lawson: Tilly Day, Side Two.

Sidney Cole: Right, we were talking about the changes you've seen in the course of your - the long time you've been in work - apart from the major ones, but in terms of your own particular job of continuity, what would you say have been the main changes, if any, during that time?

Tilly Day: Ah well it was of course from silent to talkies, that was the great change because, as I said before, we had, I had nobody to teach me and you just had to pick it up and, sort of, manipulate it for your own job.

Sidney Cole: But how many sheets - when you - in silent days, you did continuity sheets, did you?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: But how many copies did you do?

Tilly Day: Well you did your own headings...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: ...you had foolscap sheets and you put carbons in, of course, you had to, well I think...there was always six copies, at least six copies.

Sidney Cole: And you had to type all the headings in?

Tilly Day: Oh yes.

Sidney Cole: They weren't printed on forms?

Tilly Day: You had to type your own headings and they told me at one time that - of course, I was very good at continuity but I wasn't good at spelling - and they told me at one time that - oh! the Honourable Richard Norton

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: Lord Northcl...

Sidney Cole: Norton, yes.

Tilly Day: Norton, you know...

Sidney Cole: He used to keep his trousers tied up with a bit of string.

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he was fascinating, oh he was a lovely man. And he said, [Tilly imitates Norton's drawl] "I'm absolutely delighted, Tilly, that we're working on a yacht - yacht or 'yatch'!"

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And so they used to say, "Are you coming down to the yacht or 'yatch' in the morning?"

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And they used to say it quite ordinary, you know! And he said, "or the [phonetically] 'keew, kway or kwee'" [chuckles] Because it was the quayside, in 'The Mystery of the Marie Celeste', and that sort of thing - "Are you coming down to the 'keew, kway or kwee'?" And I know one - I always remember, a taxi man looked so amazed when we were at some quayside, and I was being given a lift by the director and he and I were both in the same car, of course, and he'd run out of petrol. And he said, "Oh God" he said, "how are we gonna get there?" And he saw a passing taxi, he said, "Oh quick! Taxi!" He said, "will you take us to the 'keew, kway or kwee'?" And this man looked at him in absolute amazement!

Sidney Cole: Hmm. Who was the director?

Tilly Day: George King was the director of that. And Denison Clift was the director of...what's-her-name? 'Mystery of the Marie Celeste' - Denison Clift. Then there was the director of - It was um, Leslie Banks, I think his name was, he was the same name as the actor...

Sidney Cole: ...as the actor.

Tilly Day: ...actor, yes. It was the New Zealand director...

Sidney Cole: New Zealand director, was he?

Tilly Day: Yes. He was the director of 'You must get Married' [actually, A. Leslie Pearce]

Sidney Cole: Hmm. That reminds me, have you been abroad at all during the course of - what locations abroad have you been on? You mentioned, just previously, going to North Africa.

Tilly Day: Oh yes, went to North Africa, um, went to Sark of course...

Sidney Cole: Sark?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Really? That was interesting...

Tilly Day: 'Toilers of the Sea'

Sidney Cole: Ah! That's a silent picture...'Toilers of the Sea'.

Tilly Day: Yes, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Yes. Who directed that, do you remember?

Tilly Day: 'Toilers...' [pause]

Sidney Cole: Well not to worry, can you remember...?

Tilly Day: I shall remember everything when you've gone! [Laughs].

Sidney Cole: Oh I know, it always happens that way! Can you remember who was in it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! 'Toilers of the Sea'... one of the McLaglens... Clifford McLaglen! Clifford McLaglen, and there were various big strong men in that, 'Toilers of the Sea'. I know we went back to... Oh that was when I buried the continuity!

Sidney Cole: Buried the continuity?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: How do you mean?

Tilly Day: Because I didn't get paid!

Sidney Cole: Ah!

Tilly Day: You see?

Sidney Cole: And so you said they wouldn't have their continuity until they'd paid you some money!

Tilly Day: No, not until they'd paid me some money.

Sidney Cole: Where did you bury the continuity?

Tilly Day: Well, there was a house there, on Sark, that was built on stilts...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: In the sand...in the cobbles...

Sidney Cole: Yeah?

Tilly Day: ...and it was built on stilts, quite high up, about that height, and there was all this muck underneath, the seaweed and the cobbles. And it was built on that, and it went on and on. And strangely enough, that was the one house - and I always put it down to, they used to put it down to my continuity being underneath it - that was the one house that was bombed by the er...

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling]. The Germans!

Tilly Day: The Germans, yeah. And also the hotel where I stayed, the 'Belle Air' [?] was bombed, the two places that were bombed. But this was... I buried the continuity because... Beaumont - Beaumont, that's right...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: He was the son of the Dame of Sark, his name was Beaumont. And he made this film, and he never paid us. And so I said, "Well, if I don't get paid, I shall bury - I shall take the continuity with me!" So they said, "Oh you can't do that!" So I said, "Can't I?" So they said, "No, because we shan't allow you to." So I said, "Oh." So I thought about it very heavily and I thought, "Well, if I bury it, I shall know where I've buried it." I didn't know, of course, about the war! And I [said] "If they pay me I shall come back and get it - It'll be OK, or I'll tell them where it is. But they won't get it!" I was determined they wouldn't have it! So they said, "You're finished, you're gone."... Right! So I buried the continuity. I waited until it was dark and I went to this house that was on stilts and I struggled, scabbled underneath all the stones...

Sidney Cole: Just with your hands?

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yes. I scabbled away for hours until I'd got it fairly deep and... a bit wet and mucky! And I put the continuity in an elastic paper bag that was, sort of more-or-less, weatherproof, and shoved it in there, and I covered it all over again.

Sidney Cole: What every copy - all the copies?

Tilly Day: Every copy! I thought, "Well that's that!" And when I came out, the next day was the day I was gonna go that was on the one boat, you see. So they said, "The continuity please, Tilly." I said, "I haven't got it."

[SC laughs.]

Tilly Day: So they said, "Where is it?" I said, "I don't know." So they said, "What do you mean, you don't know?" I said, "I don't know where it is." So they said, "Well, we shall bring a court case against it." So I said, "Oh well, all right then, you bring a court case against me." Because I knew they couldn't because they hadn't paid me! And anyway, to cut a long story short I was on 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery' with Thorold, and a girl came to get a job from him as a secretary, I think she was gonna be his secretary or something, Thorold's secretary. And he said - she was on the floor, standing, you know, by, watching, that sort of thing - so he said, "This is Miss (so-and-so), Tilly." So I said, "Yes, how do you do?" And I thought, "Oh, I think I know her!" And so, he said, "Have you see a film studio before, or anything to do with films?" So she said, "Oh yes, I had some continuity sheets to make out from some film. Oh," she said, "it was a terrible mix up, the wretched girl had not been paid, or something, and had gone off without... leaving the continuity." So I said, "Oh yes, that was me!" So there was a roar of laughter from Thorold, he said, "You?" So I said, "Yes, I buried the continuity!" So, of course, there it was.

Sidney Cole: So this girl had had to just make a backward job from the film...?

Tilly Day: From the film, yes.

Sidney Cole: ...and [make the features]?

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yes...

Sidney Cole: Must have been a terrible job?

Tilly Day: Oh it was a terrible job, and they couldn't do it anyway, it was never shown, 'Toilers of the Sea'.

Sidney Cole: What kind of film was the film on Sark then? 'Toilers of the Sea' you said...

Tilly Day: Yes, it was Victor Hugo's. It was a good idea! Victor Hugo's 'Toilers...'

Sidney Cole: Yes, but it never was really finished?

Tilly Day: No, it was never done. Because they never intended to be done really, they only wanted the money. So many of them used to start films that way, you know.

Sidney Cole: Ah, get some money and then not finish.

Tilly Day: Then not finish it.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: Always.

Sidney Cole: Then not pay people.

Tilly Day: Oh no! They didn't pay us, they kept the money!

Alan Lawson: There was a lot of that?

Tilly Day: Oh there was a lot of that!

Sidney Cole: Even on 'High Command' they ran, you know... the Gordon Wellesley and everybody, they ran out of money in the end on that picture. Didn't affect you...?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: But it did, when I was cutting that, they did run out and I know, I worked for about the last three weeks without getting paid on that one.

Tilly Day: Did you get paid eventually?

Sidney Cole: Well I'll tell you, I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been Thorold directing the picture, you know. Because I was a great friend of his and it wasn't Thorold's fault, you know. But the years went by, and years and years and years later, when I was - it was after the war, when I was working at Ealing, I was called in by Leslie Baker - Reginald Baker, who was the joint managing director...

Tilly Day: Yes, I know.

Sidney Cole: ...and he said, "You remember a picture called 'The High Command'?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "They owed you some money?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well here's the cheque, if you would please sign in full and final acceptance of the money owed?"

Tilly Day: And of course, you'll...

Sidney Cole: And I got a cheque for about [chuckles] twelve pounds, ten and tuppence!

Tilly Day: I know!

Sidney Cole: So, whatever it was... the sixty I would have had...I worked...it was three weeks at twenty pounds a week, or something...

Tilly Day: Yeah and you're so glad to get anything, and anyway, you'd forgotten it!

Sidney Cole: But this was, this was about twenty years later!

Tilly Day: You'd forgotten it by that time, you see, and it doesn't matter any more!

Sidney Cole: But where there any other pictures on which that happened to you, Tilly?

Tilly Day: Oh countless!

Sidney Cole: Really? There's quite a lot where you didn't get any money?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: What did you do? Did you ever do the... getting rid of the continuity sheets again? I suppose it was more difficult later on, with...working in a studio, to do that?

Tilly Day: Yeah... well, I tore them up.

Sidney Cole: You tore them up?

Tilly Day: Oh yeah. Oh I wouldn't let them, I wouldn't let them get away with it. They were very chary about, you know, about saying that to me afterwards.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: A couple of experiences of me tearing up and burying the continuity and they didn't want to know.

Sidney Cole: And then suddenly cheques appeared did they?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

[SC laughs].

Sidney Cole: Yes, this is useful for any, er...continuity girls that come after you, to...

Tilly Day: Well they didn't seem to come afterwards did they? Not with the Rank Organisation and one thing and...

Sidney Cole: Yeah, I mean to know what to do in those circumstances?

Tilly Day: Oh well, I was determined not to - no pay, no continuity!

Sidney Cole: But you say, reverting - when did printed continuity sheets come in, can you remember?

Tilly Day: Ah, not until I was at Pinewood.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: They sort of came in with their blocks and tapes and things, and no longer, as I tell you, no longer my headlines, my 'yact', 'yacht' or 'yatch' business, my 'keew', 'kway' or 'kee'! I had various... various... It never used to worry me, I used to think to myself, "Well the spelling doesn't get up there, you know. It doesn't worry anybody." It used to amuse them intensely!

[AL [?] laughs in background].

Sidney Cole: Did you ever have any big rows with directors or producers, or anybody on the floor, at all?

Tilly Day: Clues... Clues. Do you know somebody named Clues[?]?

Sidney Cole: Yes...

Alan Lawson: Yes I know, yes...that rings a...

Sidney Cole: ...strikes a note, rings a bell...

Tilly Day: That was before the war. Oh I had a stand up row with him!

Sidney Cole: What happened?

Tilly Day: He said that I'd put something round some way and he'd put it round... he knew that it had been round the other way. And I said, either he paid me to do the job or else he did it! And we had a real, right stand up row. And of course (I say, "of course"!), I turned out right because they did it back, you know, the next day, and I was right, of course. And so... He was a 'queer', actually. I don't know whether you knew him, did you? They used to have fellows in those days, lots of 'queers', lots of 'queers'.

Sidney Cole: Can you remember his first name?

[AL in background: [Clues...?]]

Sidney Cole: It certainly strikes a cord with me but I can't think...

Tilly Day: V. Clues I think, V. Clues.

Sidney Cole: Clues?

Alan Lawson: C.L.E.W.S ?

Tilly Day: C.L.U.E... yes, I think...

Alan Lawson: Oh, U, oh...anyway, I'm not sure.

Sidney Cole: No, I'm not sure. Anyhow, well you were always very much a stickler for...

Tilly Day: Oh yeah.

Sidney Cole: ...getting things right. And I should think it was very rarely... Can you remember any occasion on which you were seriously wrong, perhaps in your early days?

Tilly Day: No, I honestly can't.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm. Well I wasn't really expecting you to suddenly say, because I know you were very, very accurate. Because on 'Gaslight' for instance, I remember that you had a particularly tough job in some ways, because in that drawing room there were, I think...

Tilly Day: Oh...those...

Sidney Cole: ...I think it was counted once, there were about a thousand separate little objects?

Tilly Day: Objects yes...tiny objects (like those things there). All over the place, dotted. Oh yes, an awful lot. But they were good days...

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: I enjoyed it all. I made up my mind that when I worked on a film that I didn't like and I didn't like the director, I would leave, I would retire...

Sidney Cole: Really?

TD...and I did. Which was on er - I loved Peter Ustinov of course, but Peter Ustinov was in the film...'Ali get an'...um...

Alan Lawson: 'An Hotel in Sahara'?

Sidney Cole: No... 'Alligator'?

Tilly Day: No, no. Um... 'Dinosaur'!

Sidney Cole: 'Dinosaur'!

Tilly Day: Um, 'One of our Dinosaurs is Missing'.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha!

Tilly Day: I was on that film, and it was Robert... somebody or other... directing, and he was a nasty, tetchy little bastard!

[SC chuckles]

Tilly Day: Oh he was a horror! And I was seventy-three then and I hated that film! I hated every minute of it, except when Peter Ustinov was there. I hated every minute, and I thought, "This is me, I'm getting out." And I got out.

Sidney Cole: How long - how far into the film were you, when you left?

Tilly Day: Oh no, I waited until we were finished.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, yeah.

Tilly Day: ...oh I waited until I'd finished. I thought, "Oh when this finishes, I'm finishing." And I finished.

Sidney Cole: Well it must have been a great relief having Peter Ustinov around, because he's a charmer isn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Oh he was wonderful! He was a charmer! And he was so funny, and um, this Robert...whatever his name was...he used to get at him too. He said, "I quite see what you mean, Tilly." [Chuckling] Peter said to me one day, because I'd told him about the wretched man.

Sidney Cole: He was nasty to you was he, that director?

Tilly Day: Oh yes he was a horror, he was a horror. I mean ordinary work that I did, he would say, "Don't do that Tilly, don't do that!" I said, "But that's my job." "It isn't, it isn't!" Ohh...

Sidney Cole: Difficult...

Tilly Day: Horror!

Sidney Cole: Tilly, when in terms of ACT, as it was then, when did you first get involved in that?

Tilly Day: Well you knew that didn't you?

Alan Lawson: Yes, 1939.

Tilly Day: Yes, and I had been...

Alan Lawson: [??? Indecipherable, Tilly talks over]

Tilly Day: Yes, and I had been, I had been before that, and I'd let it lapse. I had been when George Elvin used to come around the studios, on a bike, and with plimsolls on, because he used to bike everywhere. And Desmond Dickinson was number four, his card was number four, and he said, "You must join this Tilly, because it's gonna be a great thing, and you'll need it," and I was persuaded by Desmond Dickinson, and I joined. And that must have been, oh - that was on 'Danny Boy'.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: And then I let it lapse, some year or two later, they didn't seem to be getting anywhere, you know? So I let it lapse, until you came along.

Sidney Cole: Alan came along, yes. That was on 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery' which is, what year?

Tilly Day: 1939.

Sidney Cole: '39, was it? Oh yeah. That was just the one before 'Gaslight' in fact?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes. And then you've done quite a lot of work, really, in subsequent years, haven't you? You were in the Continuity Ladies Section - weren't you Chairman, or something... Chairwoman?

Tilly Day: No! No...I never did much that way, but I went to the meetings and things, and...

Sidney Cole: You weren't on the Committee?

Tilly Day: No, no. I was always a sort of... they always used to look to me to mention things, you know. I was always a 'voice' as it were. [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Well you must have - the younger continuity people used to come to you, presumably, for advice down the years, didn't they?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Oh yes, they often used to come to me and sort of... Yes they were... It's funny, you know, you only remember the good things.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, well, fortunately in a way, I suppose?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Can you remember any of the continuity girls, really, you trained at all?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Yes, I was just going to come to that.

Tilly Day: There was um, the very first, now I trained her at British National, years ago.

Sidney Cole: Who was that?

Tilly Day: I think she's still around... Longhurst? Long?

Sidney Cole: Oh... Eileen... somebody? I can't remember.

Tilly Day: Well, there was her, then there was, [pause] there were quite a lot in... There was Walt Disney - now there was June - June Frost, and [pause] what was the name of the girl now? Um...can't remember the names.

Sidney Cole: Did you actually, there was a time when it was a custom, or a partial custom anyhow, for continuity girls to have an assistant...did you used to have...?

Tilly Day: Yes that's right, I used to have an assistant and teach her.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, yeah, I know we had it when I was at Ealing at one time, there was a tendency to have...

Tilly Day: Oh yes that was when Thorold said - I always remember Thorold - the first thing, Cecil Dickson said, "I'll introduce you to Thorold now." Because he'd got me the job through - oh what was the name of - oh God, what was the name of the man? The studio director...manager?

Alan Lawson: Bill Lott[?]

Tilly Day: Bill Lott!

Sidney Cole: Bill Lott, yes.

Tilly Day: I got the job through Bill Lott, and Cecil Dickson had got me on the floor, and Thorold... It was the first week of the picture and Thorold was in the middle of a crowd of people and he was putting one here, and one there, one there... And he was up there, sort of thing, far away, and so Cecil Dickson said, "Thorold, I want to introduce you to Tilly Day, this is your new continuity girl." So Thorold looked up with what I called his 'Wall of China' look and said, "I'd rather have had Diana McNab!"

[SC and AL laugh]

Sidney Cole: I remember Diana, yes...

Tilly Day: So I said to Cecil Dickson, I said, "That does it!" I said, "I'm not gonna work for him."

[SC chuckles]

Tilly Day: So, Cecil Dickson was laughing, you see. So I said, "It's all very well for you to laugh." I said, "As much as I want this job" (because I always wanted the job, because I was going to be out of work you see) I said, "I'm not gonna work for a man who...Diana McNab! Well, she's not even a continuity! She's an assistant!" Would rather have had Diana McNab... ohh I was so offended!

[SC and AL laugh]

Tilly Day: But anyway, I calmed down and I worked and, of course, in the end I liked Thorold, so it was all right. But I told him afterwards; he says, "I didn't Tilly!" I said, "You did!" I told him in front of his wife!

[SC and AL laugh]

Tilly Day: I said, "You did!" I said, "Joanna, he did!" She said, "It sounds awfully like him!"

[TD, SC and AL laugh]

Sidney Cole: Yes...good! So...

Tilly Day: Why don't you have a look at some of those pictures?

Sidney Cole: We will in a moment, we're just, another, what was I going to say? When did you, sort of, really retire from actual working, Tilly?

Tilly Day: Um, when I was seventy-three...

Sidney Cole: Yes, and what was the last picture you were on?

Tilly Day: 'Dinosaurs'

Sidney Cole: Oh 'Dinosaurs', yes, yes. So, 'One of our Dinosaurs is Missing', and then it was a question of, now our dear Tilly Day is missing from the studio?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I...

Sidney Cole: But have you been, have you visited the studios at all since those days, since you retired, formally?

Tilly Day: Only once, I went with er...the girl Wilcox.

Sidney Cole: Pamela?

Tilly Day: No, not Pamela. No, she was his girlfriend, she was Wilcox's girlfriend, Pamela...

Sidney Cole: Oh? No, not Pamela, no, no.

Tilly Day: You mustn't make that mistake! [Chuckles].

[AL laughs]

Sidney Cole: Oh goodness knows. Oh, you mean... you don't mean the one he married?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Anna Neagle!

Tilly Day: No, not Anna Neagle, she wasn't married to John Wilcox!

Sidney Cole: Oh John Wilcox? I thought you were talking about Herbert Wilcox!

Tilly Day: No!

Sidney Cole: Oh, John Wilcox. No, I don't know, do you know, Alan?

Alan Lawson: No, no I don't.

Tilly Day: Well anyway, she was continuity and I went with her to a studio. John was a producer on it, a production manager, so we went in there, at BIP, well EMI...

Sidney Cole: EMI now. Did you ever work at BIP?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes? Can you remember what you worked on down there?

Tilly Day: 'Poison Pen' - Paul Stein. Oh do you know, it was lovely with Paul Stein. You know he had fractured English, very fractured?

Sidney Cole: Yeah I remember...

Tilly Day: And we were on 'Poison Pen' and he... I was going to lunch with... I was at British National then...

Sidney Cole: Oh, just across the road?

Tilly Day: Just across the road. And Paul Stein came across, and we were going to lunch, he'd asked me out to lunch. And we were going to lunch and we met, er...what's the great singer?

Sidney Cole: Is that Richard Tauber?

Tilly Day: Richard Tauber! We met Richard Tauber and the great thing between Richard Tauber and, of course, Paul Stein and they spoke in their own language, and I sort of stood there. And then a little boy came up and he said to Richard Tauber, he sort of tapped him, he says, "My Mum says you can sing 'You are My Heart's Delight'" He said, "Can you?"

[SC laughs]

Tilly Day: So he looked down at this little boy, he said, "I can." So he said, "Oh, will you?" He said, "Because my Mum says you sing it beautiful - more beautiful than anybody!" So he said, "Oh! Did she say that?" So he said, "Yes." And he started at once to sing, in the middle of Elstree, Borehamwood, just outside the studios, in that High Street, that one little High Street that was, and he sang, 'You are My Heart's Delight' and it was really beautiful.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: And, you know, it was like, almost the - what's the name of the man that leads the kids through the mountain?

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, the 'Pied Piper of Hamelin'.

Tilly Day: Pied Piper, it was like the Pied Piper. He had all these children, they gradually came all out of their houses, in Borehamwood, and the women came to their gates, and they came, and they, sort of, all hung onto him, all looking up at him. And he sang this 'You are My Heart's Delight' and it really was beautiful.

Sidney Cole: What a marvellous memory. You were saying, about how that, you know, that High Street at Borehamwood was very little, I mean, compared to what it is now...

Tilly Day: Ohhh...

Sidney Cole: There was just 'The Crown' at the top of the... by the station...

Tilly Day: There was 'The Crown', yeah...

Sidney Cole: ...and then there were a few houses, otherwise it was pure countryside, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: And it was all corrugated iron buildings, just like something left over by the gold rush.

Sidney Cole: Yes, yes.

Tilly Day: It really was. And when I saw it when it was all, sort of, Woolworth's and everything else, oh, unbelievable, unbelievable!

Sidney Cole: What was the name of the... Wally... do you remember Wally Patch?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Wally Patch! [laughs]

Sidney Cole: He was almost a sort of un-crowned king of Borehamwood in those days.

Tilly Day: Oh yes... Wally Patch, he was on 'Comedy Man' with me, which Alvin Rakoff directed...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes?

Tilly Day: ...at um, Shepherd's Bush, I ... [correcting herself] at Shepperton. And um, I remember, he was at a bar, he had to be at a bar, 'The Salisbury Bar', he had to be there as a sort of stock person, always there. And every time we used to leave off filming, I would run to him and I'd say, "Do you remember (so-and-so and so-and-so)?" And he would say, "Oh Tilly, do you remember (so-and-so)?" And the person who used to always join us was Alvin Rakoff, he was fascinated by all our reminiscences, you know, and he used to sort of...

Sidney Cole: Yes, Borehamwood days, yes...

Tilly Day: "Ohh dear, isn't that marvellous!"

Sidney Cole: What other pictures, can you remember down at Elstree - Borehamwood, rather - in those days? What else did you work on, can you remember?

Tilly Day: 'Poison Pen', that was the first time I met Flora Robson...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes?

Tilly Day: Thought she was wonderful. Um...no I can't, without seeing my pictures.

Sidney Cole: Well, shall be break off and see...

[break in recording]

Sidney Cole: Tilly, we were just talking before we resumed, or you were just talking about a Matheson Lang picture you worked on in the silent days, and there was a certain interesting catastrophe that happened when you were seeing the first viewing of that picture...

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: ...could you tell us about that?

Tilly Day: Yes...strangely enough, Earl St John was asked to this, because he was a young man then and he was the producer of... I can't remember what. But anyway, we showed this picture and I was detailed in there, to take notes of what the various people said, and there was only the two stars and the producer and the director, and a person from the public - alleged! And it was a silent picture and the film came up. The whole picture went through, very quietly. The whole picture went through and the title came up 'My Woman' and it was Matheson Lang, and Mary Dubris said, "My Man!", and then the projector fell to pieces, so that was the end of that.

Sidney Cole: And then there was a comment from somebody?

Tilly Day: Oh, "My Christ!"

Sidney Cole: Who said that?

Tilly Day: [Chuckling.] The electrician said that when the projector fell to pieces!

Sidney Cole: So it was a question of, "My Man, My Woman..."

Tilly Day: ... "My Christ!"

Sidney Cole: [laughs] You were telling us another story, too, about when they pulled your leg, I think it was at Denham, when you were waiting for the set to be lit?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Could you tell us about that?

Tilly Day: We were all sitting in a half moon circle, oh, quite famous people...

Sidney Cole: Who were they?

Tilly Day: Ursula Jeans, Roger Livesy...

Sidney Cole: And the director?

Tilly Day: Then the director...

Sidney Cole: Was, Roy Baker[?]

Tilly Day: I was sitting next to him, of course, and um, there was the whole rest of the people... we were waiting for something to happen.

Sidney Cole: You were waiting while the cameraman...?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! It was so dreary and we were, sort of, looking round...

Sidney Cole: Who was the cameraman?

Tilly Day: Irwin Hillier.

Sidney Cole: Oh Irwin Hillier yes, he was very painstaking.

Tilly Day: Very slow, yes, very slow. And we were watching and then we got tired of watching that. And the door opened suddenly, the double doors opened, and a young man stood there, a very fresh looking, healthy, beaming with enthusiasm. And he rubbed his hands and he looked round and then his eyes seemed to fix on me, but I thought, it couldn't be. And he came over and he said, "Are you Tilly Day?" So I said, "Yes." He said, "The Tilly Day?" So I said, "Yes." He said, "My name is Bert Bord, I think you worked with my grandfather."

[SC chuckles]

Tilly Day: Well of course, the whole studio collapsed! It was incredible! And they all, sort of, after that, they were saying, "Now, careful how you go 'Till', be careful. Careful. Now, you got enough light there?" And this and that. Then they, at the finish, they saw me out of the studio and they had a lovely big car and a whole lot of flowers they gave to me, and that was the end of that!

Sidney Cole: And you said, what did they say? They said to the driver of the car?

Tilly Day: Oh... "Be careful with her."

Sidney Cole: As if you were a really very ancient lady?

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yes, "Be careful with her, go kindly."

Sidney Cole: Yeah; and this was, what year roughly, would that be? That was, sixties sometime?

Tilly Day: Oh no, that was fifty...

Sidney Cole: Fifties?

Tilly Day: Yes. Oh, I was reasonably young then!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling] Oh yes... jolly good... yeah.

Sidney Cole: [to AL] Did we record the Tauber story?

Alan Lawson: No we didn't.

Sidney Cole: Oh there's a marvellous story, another marvellous story, you told us before, which was about when you were...

Alan Lawson: Oh you did...no you did, didn't you?

Sidney Cole: Did?

Alan Lawson: Did do, yeah.

Sidney Cole: Did do that one...yeah. I thought we had. Sorry, Tilly, I interrupted, you were about to follow on from that story about being...?

Tilly Day: At the studio, at the silent picture studio, they did six films on ghost stories, and one of them was the story of 'The Vanished Hand'. And the thing is, you see, that Hugh Dempster and Cynthia Merter[?]. And, she is going along on horseback... [corrects herself], he is going along on horseback, on the cliff's edge and he looks down and he sees her in the rowing boat and she lifts her hand to wave to him and he waves back. And, to his horror, the boat overturns and she dies. And she just waves her hand out of the water, you see, 'The Touch of the Vanished Hand'. Well, when the studio saw - the few collection, you know - saw this, Earl St John said that, that wouldn't pass for children. So they said, would I go out and get all the children I could get hold of, bring them back to the studio, to this - morgue - and show them the picture and see what they said, what their reactions were? There wouldn't be any grown-ups there, only me. So I went and I collected these children, and it was very difficult, collecting children in Wood Street, Walthamstow, might I tell you, because it was at the ragged period. There were no shoes and stockings - they were really, really poor. So anyway, I managed to get about eight of them and we turned back, you see, went into the studio. And I showed them this picture, I'd promised them a large bag of sweets, which I had to take with me, to show them!

[SC chuckles]

Tilly Day: ...a large bag of sweets, which would be divided amongst them - after they'd seen the picture and told me what they thought about it. So they... all these children - smelly children too, they were - we sat and watched this picture, and they watched it right through. Two reels, and they watched it right through... right through, to the hand going up, the vanished hand, waving. It went down and the lights went up. And the little girl, who was evidently the leader, she stood up, she turned round and she found out where I was sitting, and she said, "Where's the sweeties?"

[SC and AL laugh.]

Tilly Day: Well of course... how could I go and tell the bosses that she'd said, "Where's the sweeties" as her only comment!

Sidney Cole: Did anybody else say anything?

Tilly Day: Well I got them afterwards, I said, "Now what did you think of the picture?" So a little boy, who was about four, he said, [TD does child's cockney accent] "All the water went down the drain!"

[SC laughs]

Tilly Day: I said, "Oh." That was another comment, what could I say about that? No, it wasn't a success. It certainly wasn't a success! I wasn't sent out to find any more children! [Chuckling].

Sidney Cole: Talking of children, you were mentioning a boy actor who was very famous, briefly, in his day... Vincent...

Tilly Day: Tony Newley?

Sidney Cole: Winter.

Tilly Day: Tony Winter?

Sidney Cole: Not Tony Winter...er...

Tilly Day: Vincent Winter!

Sidney Cole: Vincent Winter, yes, on a picture called 'Kidnappers'.

Tilly Day: Yeah!

Sidney Cole: Could you tell us something about that picture?

Tilly Day: Oh well... there was... there was one thing there. One of the...Jim Sutherland, his stepson was drowned on the picture, and that was very sad, very sad indeed. We all thought, you know, did he fall or was he pushed?

Sidney Cole: Oh...

Tilly Day: It was a very sad story.

Sidney Cole: What happened?

Tilly Day: Well, this child - this boy who was about ten or twelve, he went - was supposed to be paddling where the waterfall was, and then he wasn't seen any more, and his body was found about three days later.

Sidney Cole: How sad. [Slight pause]. That was quite a good picture thought, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: And the director was Phil Leacock?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes...he was wonderful to work for.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, it was a big success in its day, that picture.

Tilly Day: Yes. We finished up in the band room, I might tell you. We were the poor relations, oh we were turfed off anywhere. "Oh it's only that kid picture" and it turned out it saved Denham!

Sidney Cole: Yes...hmm.

Tilly Day: Because it made so much money, so it was fantastic.

Sidney Cole: Now that was shot in Canada?

Tilly Day: Scotland!

Sidney Cole: Scotland? Oh it wasn't shot in...?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: No.

Tilly Day: No, it was shot in Scotland.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha. Did you like Scotland?

Tilly Day: I didn't at that time because, of course, losing the child, you know, it sort of coloured the whole thing, and so I was glad to get away. But my nephew now lives in Scotland and I love it. My nephew and my sister, my older sister.

Sidney Cole: Is that the only time you've been on location in Scotland?

Tilly Day: No, no, no. I've been other times, where have I been in Scotland? Glen Affric. Oh, all over. Like, I went again to Sark.

Sidney Cole: Oh you went again to Sark, to the island?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, and it was funny, because they were all looking for the buried continuity!

Sidney Cole: Yeah, I was gonna say, you didn't go just to try and find the continuity sheets?

Tilly Day: [Chuckling.] Yes, they were all trying to find them. I told David Niven, and he said, "Oh Tilly, it's such a story!" he said, "where was it?" And I pointed out where the house had been, you see. This was on 'Appointment with Venus', we went...afterwards. Which, of course, was after the war, and... So they used to come up and say, "Til, I think we've seen where that house used to be." But of course, they found out that there were two places that were bombed, which was this house and... which they used to say was my continuity, because I used to type the top in red, and underneath in black, and any dialogue that was said, in red, so with the black and the red, it used to look most spectacular.

Sidney Cole: Hmm...and they never found, nobody ever found the... ? No. Do you think it would have rotted away by now?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I should think so.

Sidney Cole: Yes, I should think so. Because after all, it would have been there for a great number of years, wouldn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Still, that was fun. How did you get on with David Niven?

Tilly Day: Oh wonderfully! Oh what a charmer! They say this other boy'll be the same type, you know, but he won't. He's not got the charm, not the charm of David Niven. Oh, fantastic! I remember when we were in the 'Lush', quite different from the stone 'morgue'...the 'Lush' projection rooms, the theatres at Pinewood - no, Denham, I'm sorry, at Denham. And we were watching something or other, and then George King - it was on a George King production - he said to me, "Oh Tilly, I'll introduce" - doing me a great favour - "I'll introduce you to David Niven." I said, "Yes." So, he really thought he was doing me a big favour, and when David Niven came into the production room he said, "Oh David, this is Tilly Day, she's continuity... I

don't know whether you know her?" So David Niven said, "Know Tilly?" He said, "My dear boy, we fought this war together!"

[TD and SC laugh].

Tilly Day: Which was very funny because, actually we did, we came across each other quite a lot, you know, at Curzon Street House, when he was doing his, sort of...sort of 'secret stuff'.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm...what, during the war?

Tilly Day: Yes, and I was doing a bit of 'secret stuff' too.

Sidney Cole: When you were a Regimental Sergeant Major?

Tilly Day: That's right, yes, always good for a laugh.

Sidney Cole: Yes, what rank was he then?

Tilly Day: A Major.

Sidney Cole: A Major? Ah ha.

Tilly Day: And he... what was it? Yes, "We fought this war together!" George gets... [Tilly pulls facial expression?]

[SC laughs]. Yes...

Tilly Day: ...Very amazed!

Sidney Cole: Yes, very. You were talking about er... Well, we were looking at some fascinating stills that you have in your collection, and one of them was a scene in Ceylon. That was a picture called 'The Beachcomber' wasn't it?

Tilly Day: 'Beachcomber', yes.

Sidney Cole: And who was the star in that?

Tilly Day: Glynis Johns and Robert Newton.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, you had some stories about Newton to tell, I think?

Tilly Day: Well yes. Dear old Robert, you know, he used to get 'sloshed' quite often. But um...

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 3]

Sidney Cole: Just before we had to change sides Tilly, you were about to talk about Robert Newton on 'The Beachcomber', when you were on location with him, on that picture, in Ceylon...

Tilly Day: Yes. Well, unfortunately he used to get 'sloshed' of course and one time, when I was being 'voice-off' for Glynis Johns, he insisted that I said every line just as it should be said, as though by Glynis Johns. And it was frightful, the acting that I had to put on, and I'm not an actress, you see, and he would insist. And the whole place was... stifled laughter, when he was 'pegged out' on the floor. And I was sitting by him with the script and reading the lines off, and he would say, "No Tilly, no, no, that's not right. You've got to give me something to go on!" And he would say what he thought I ought to say.

Sidney Cole: Why wouldn't Glynis Johns...?

Tilly Day: Oh she, no, she wouldn't read a voice-off, because she'd put up with so much from Robert, you know, being 'sloshed', that everything she could get away from, she got away from.

Sidney Cole: Because normally, I'm sure Glynis would feed the lines...

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: ...as most people do, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh, Glynis, yes, Glynis was marvellous, she was wonderful. I was great friends with Glynis.

Sidney Cole: Were you? Yes, she's a nice lady.

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, we used to get along famously.

Sidney Cole: Did you know her father, Mervyn Johns?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, Mervyn Johns, yes...

Sidney Cole: He was a nice man, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes...

Sidney Cole: What did you work with Mervyn on, can you remember?

Tilly Day: 'Next of Kin' of course...

Sidney Cole: Oh 'Next of Kin', yes. Well he... that was one of his most important parts, wasn't it, on that picture?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Tell me about 'Next of Kin', because it had a lot of controversy about it, didn't it, after it was made? Churchill was worried about it, and all that...

Tilly Day: Yes well, it apparently turned out all right, because there were rubber boat scenes, I remember. Where people, there were two or three people went out in a rubber boat. But, that had been cut out, and they wanted some other people in the rubber boat, and when they got these people in the rubber boat, it looked exactly like the first lot!

[SC chuckles.]

Tilly Day: So they said, "Oh well, you can use any of it then."

Sidney Cole: [Laughing]. Yes. But...

Tilly Day: I was on a picture called 'Prepare for Ditching'[NB 'Ditching: Before and After'], down at Bure Island.

Alan Lawson: Oh there were studios there weren't there?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes that's right.

Tilly Day: Called Bure Island and um...

Sidney Cole: What was that picture about?

Tilly Day: 'Prepare for Ditching'? Oh, I was gonna say, we had a... it was a...'Prepare for Ditching' and they - it was teaching the new recruits in the Air Force, how to let the rubber dingy out of the aeroplane so that it turned up the right way.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: And they could never do this, and I said, "Well that's" - I must say, I said this myself - I said, "Well that's silly, because you've got it packed the wrong way." So they said, "What do you mean, packed the wrong way?" So I said, "Well, if you packed it like this", and I packed it like you pack up a child's handkerchief when you do a...

Alan Lawson: You mean a rabbit?

Tilly Day: A rabbit, yes...

Sidney Cole: Yeah?

Tilly Day: I said, "If you pack it like this, it's sure to turn out right, it does always." So they said, "Oh!" And so they tried it and they said, "It works, it works!" And they went, oh, ecstatic! And I got a special letter from the Air Force about that.

Sidney Cole: Do you still have the letter?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I got a Golden Leaf, or whatever you call it.

Sidney Cole: Oh great, good.

Tilly Day: Above my Sergeant Major one.

Alan Lawson: Mentioned in dispatches!

Tilly Day: Yes, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Oh how nice, good. Did you do many, sort of, training films of that type, or just...?

Tilly Day: No, no...I just did these, with Harry Hughes, and um...

Sidney Cole: Oh, Harry Hughes, yes.

Tilly Day: and, um... Ginever.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Ginever?

Tilly Day: Aveling Ginever.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, I remember...

Tilly Day: You remember him?

Sidney Cole: Yes, he did a number of other pictures, didn't he? Yes. So that was, what? That was for the Army film unit, was it?

Tilly Day: No, no, that was for Aveling Ginever for...

Alan Lawson: AKS

Sidney Cole: Oh for AKS, oh yes...

Tilly Day: Yes, AKS.

Sidney Cole: ... Because that was the outfit Thorold was with, yes.

Alan Lawson: The rival concern.

Sidney Cole: The rival concern, to the others, yeah! [laughs] Anything more about 'Next of Kin', by the way? Because that had some interesting locations, didn't it? Even though it was in war time...

Tilly Day: Yes. We were on the beach at um - now where was that? It was in Devon. We were on the beach and it was thick fog - mist. It was so thick, you couldn't - when you sat down you couldn't see that far, it was so terrible. And we got down there at eight o'clock, seven o'clock in the morning, and prepared for another day. We'd had this, by the way, for six days running. And the first day we got down there, and I had the 'Daily Mirror' of course, my paper And I was holding it up here and reading it and all of the others were reading their papers. And I put my paper down for a minute or two, and when I looked, it had gone. I said, "That's funny" I said, "I put my paper down there, where's it gone?" So I said to the boy next to me, Reggie - Reggie somebody or other - I said, "Reg, where's my paper?" So he said, "Well" he said, "it's passed down." And apparently, everybody wanted to read the 'Daily Mirror' and nobody had the guts to say so!

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And nobody had the guts to bring it out with them! I was the only one who bought the 'Daily Mirror.'

Sidney Cole: Were they looking at 'Jane', that famous strip cartoon in there?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, of course! Well, I don't know whether 'Jane' was on then, was she? Yes, she was!

Sidney Cole: 'Jane'? Oh yes, very much so, yeah.

Tilly Day: And I passed it down, and they got it all the way round!

[SC laughs]. Oh golly! So you had to wait six days before that mist lifted, did you?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, oh yes, it was terrible.

Sidney Cole: And where did they stage all the, you know, the raid stuff, the sea-born raid? For instance, like the raid on Zeebrugge and things like that?

Tilly Day: Ah they were...

Sidney Cole: How was that done?

Tilly Day: ...they were original newsreel.

Sidney Cole: Were they, most of that? Ah, yeah...

Tilly Day: Yeah.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: You see, you haven't seen any of those pictures, there's so many pictures there.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, well we've been seeing a lot of the pictures and, of course, the trouble always is to identify...

Tilly Day: Oh I can identify them.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, but I mean to identify them in a written form, which I think we must try and arrange to do, so that, you know, people who are, shall I say, not as experienced as we are...

[TD laughs].

Sidney Cole: ...came into life a little later...

Tilly Day: Yes, just a little later!

Sidney Cole: ...would be able to know who they are! [Chuckles]. Yes. What do you think, looking back, what do you think, on the whole, about your whole career? Would you - if you had to start all over again, your life - would you still go into movies, do you think?

Tilly Day: Well, in my lifetime you see, in my early life nothing was ever planned. Nobody ever said to you - especially if you were a woman, if you were a girl - nobody ever said to you, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" Because there wasn't anything that you could do, barring get married.

Sidney Cole: Sure.

Tilly Day: And, you see it was always. Oh I was gonna get married, of course, it was presumed I was going to get married. And my Father, right up until the day he died, thought I was gonna get married.

Sidney Cole: Yes, Because that was the thing that was expected of women then, yes.

Tilly Day: That was the thing! There was no career or anything like that.

Sidney Cole: If you hadn't - in the sort of rather accidental way that you have told us about - got into films originally, what would you have...? You'd have done secretarial work, probably, would you?

Tilly Day: Oh, I'd have gone from pillar to post, I suppose, and been a very inferior invoice clerk - very inferior!

Sidney Cole: I don't know, I'm sure you would have kept the invoices very correctly and neatly, like you did you continuity sheets!

Tilly Day: No, I should have been a very inferior... I think I was very lucky actually. Because I was very happy.

Sidney Cole: You enjoyed it all?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I loved every minute of it!

Sidney Cole: Even the few bad moments?

Tilly Day: Oh well, they passed. But I was very happy and it was a lovely life as far as I was concerned.

Sidney Cole: Oh well I'm sure that everybody who worked with you would agree with that, Tilly.

Tilly Day: Yeah.

Sidney Cole: You know, because we all enjoyed working with, you were quite [indecipherable]

Tilly Day: But really, actually, right up until the end, when the nasty bastard um...

[SC and AL laugh!]

Sidney Cole: Yeah...oh dear! Why did you decide to retire?

Tilly Day: I said! When I came across a film that I didn't like...

Sidney Cole: Oh that one? Yes, 'The Dinosaur'...

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: ...you thought that was the time to put the shutters up?

Tilly Day: Yes, I thought, "Oh well, this is it. This bastard!" And so I, sort of you know, I called it a day.

Sidney Cole: Did you ever regret?

Tilly Day: No, no I didn't, because I thought seventy-three was quite a time to do continuity, you know, and I was doing it right until the finish, and I thought it was, you know. You get a bit tired after that time.

Sidney Cole: Yes that's true...one does. What else? Anything else you'd like to say? You have such an amazing amount of experience that it's - there must be other areas that we haven't touched on?

Tilly Day: Oh yes there are, there's other stories, but um...

Sidney Cole: Well if you'd like to - any that occur to you that you'd like to tell, here's the chance.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: I don't think so. Can't think of anything off hand.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha. Well, shall we pause then, or stop?

[break in recording]

Sidney Cole: Right Tilly, you thought we were stopping but in fact you realise that there is a horrific period of your career that you hadn't mentioned, which was with Hammer Horror?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Hammer Horror, yes, I was there for two and a half years, and I remember vividly. We were sitting - it was eight o'clock in the morning, and Brey, where the studio was, was unheated, it was viciously cold!

Sidney Cole: That's the studio by the river?

Tilly Day: Right by the river! And it was terribly cold and, it really was frightful. And I was sitting at a long, beautiful table, Martita Hunt was sitting at the head of the table, and I was being

'voice-off', sitting at the side. And as she sat down she said, [Tilly puts on husky voice] "Tilly dear, would you like a nice glass of warm wine?" And I thought, "God! Warm wine, at eight o'clock in the morning?" I said, "No thank you very much Martita." But they were wonderful days because they really were horrors and they were done so quickly, but they were very, very good.

Sidney Cole: Did you work with Terry Fisher?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! I worked with him nearly all the time!

Sidney Cole: He was their great director, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' and - there's a picture over there of those.

Sidney Cole: 'Frankenstein'?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes - no, not 'Frankenstein'. I didn't work on 'Frankenstein'. I came just after 'Frankenstein.'

Sidney Cole: Ah... Because Terry directed 'Frankenstein' yeah. And it was Tony Hinds wasn't it, who was the producer?

Tilly Day: Yes, Tony Hinds.

Sidney Cole: Yes...and what was the writer of many of those? Sangster!

Tilly Day: Sangster, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, they were all very nice people, weren't they?

Tilly Day: Oh they were terribly nice, they were awfully nice! They were quite different to the characters that were played, which were horrific, you know, and terrible. Blood and stuff all over the floor!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. Oh yes.

Tilly Day: And I always remember, the first picture I was on there, was 'Slaughterers of Bombay'. And a hand came out of the window, past my nose, you know. And then an arm came out, past my nose, and then - oh, it was terrible!

[SC Chuckles].

Tilly Day: And I said, "I can't stand this" I said to Tony Hinds, I said, "I can't stand this." I said, "I don't think I shall be here long." So he said, "You will... you will, you wait and see." And he

grinned and walked away! And, do you know, I thought of what he'd said because, a couple of pictures later, I was saying, "Er, move that eye a bit to your left!" And, "No, a little more blood there, please... No, that's not quite right... there!"

[SC and AL Laugh].

Tilly Day: And [Tony Hinds]...

Sidney Cole: And, "The mark on the girl's neck is not quite right!"

Tilly Day: Yes! But [Tony Hinds] came up to me and he said, "I told you, didn't I?" [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: A nice person - actor you must have met then, was Peter Cushing?

Tilly Day: Very nice, very nice. Oh he was very nice, a gentleman, you know?

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: ...very few. Trevor Howard was a nice man too.

Sidney Cole: Did Trevor work on some of those?

Tilly Day: He never worked down at Brey.

Sidney Cole: No, that's what I thought. What did you work with Trevor on?

Tilly Day: Oh lots and lots of pictures! Trevor and Jack Hawkins.

Sidney Cole: Oh Jack was a nice person too wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Yes, I worked with Jack on 'Next of Kin', of course...

Sidney Cole: Yes...

Tilly Day: ...and several, several pictures, and when he lost his voice, of course. It was so sad, because I remember, at one time, we were on a picture when he'd lost his voice - when he'd had the operation - and, some words or other had to come forth that he had to say, and he suddenly put the script down and walked away. And the tears were coursing down his face and I said - I went up to him later, because time was allowed to pass - and I went up to him. I said, "What's the matter, Jack?" He said, "It's the words, they're so beautiful and I can't say them." It was some Shakespearean thing he'd got to quote. It was a shame.

Sidney Cole: What a shame, yes.

Tilly Day: It was a shame.

Sidney Cole: Because, as you say, he was such a nice man.

Tilly Day: Oh such a nice man.

Sidney Cole: You heard that Trevor died just the other day?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes! Trevor. He was on so many pictures I was on. He used to say to me, "Of course Tilly, I don't think you'll ever surpass yourself than when you threw that, shepherd's pie, at Mrs Carrier?"

Sidney Cole: What was that?

Tilly Day: Oh, that was another thing! We all stayed at the same digs, you see, because it was during the war and, you know, lodgings were scarce and hard to come by and so were rations. And we stayed with a Mrs Carrier.

Sidney Cole: What picture was this on?

Tilly Day: [Pause]. Thora Hird was on it and Gordon - what's the name of the man who's risen right up now?

Sidney Cole: Gordon Jackson?

Tilly Day: Gordon Jackson! He was just a young boy then. And we were all in the same digs and I imagine there was some insult, or something, I can't really quite remember. But I know I got so infuriated, I picked up the shepherd's pie that she'd made - inevitably, not that she could help it - and I threw it at her!

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And she had several chins, and it, sort of kept - came on her chin! [Laughs].

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: It was a shame! [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: So the multiple chins became a kind of waterfall of shepherd's pie!

Tilly Day: Yes, yes...Trevor Hinds [NB Howard?] said he never forgot it! And Gordon said so too!

Sidney Cole: And that was all your fault? That was a real movie trick, wasn't it? Like the old custard pie!

Tilly Day: [Chuckling]. Yes! But it was - I did an accurate throw, usually I throw wide of the mark!

Sidney Cole: And Trevor remembered that?

Tilly Day: Always remembered that, he would always bring it up! I always remember, when we were at Denham, I think, and I was going to a premiere of a picture I had been on, Trevor hadn't been on it at all. And Trevor was working on the picture that I was on, at that moment. And I was just asking the boys at the camera if anybody was going to town, because could they please give me a lift? And they were saying, "Oh no, Til, sorry, nobody's going." You know, they all sort of, lived out that way. So, Trevor came up, he said, "Did I hear you, Til, asking for a lift to town?" So I said, "Yes." So he said, "I'll give you a lift." So I said, "Will you really?" So he said, "Yes, of course." So he said, "All right, meet me outside." So, I met him outside the stage and he said, "Come and have a couple of drinks," always, as the usual, you see?

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: So I went and had a couple of drinks, and then we came out to his car, which was a Lagonda and it had a moveable top that you had to put over, you see. And he put this over, because of my hairdo, because I was sort of rather done up, for the premier. And he put this top over and we'd only gone about, I should think, fifty yards, when the top blew off!

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: So he said, "Oh dear, oh dear!" And he grabbed at the base and he got this... and he held his breath, he said, "I'm afraid, Til, I have to ask you to hang onto it with that hand, if you don't mind?" So I'm hanging on with my left hand, like this you see, sitting in the seat, hanging on, and it went mad, you know, with the wind! And we were going up and down, and then something went wrong with the clutch or something, and he said, "Would you put your finger on there?" And there's me - like this! I thought, "I'm gonna look a sight when I get to the premier!" And we go [chuckling] And he said, "Oh, there's a lovely empty road, this'll make some time up!" And we go up a lay-by! And of course, I'm in hysterics by this time, and he's laughing too! Of course, it was a couple of drinks, no doubt! And he said, "Oh isn't this shocking?" He said, "I shall get you there in time, don't worry." I thought, "Yes...and how!" But I can't tell you the things that happened to that car as we went along!

Sidney Cole: What else happened?

Tilly Day: Oh, a bit dropped off at the back! I said, "Don't ask me to go round the back and hold something on!"

Sidney Cole: [Laughs]. Oh dear...so did you finally get there?

Tilly Day: Oh I got there, in a style. It's a good thing I've got curly hair! Oh it was a shocker! It really was, but I enjoyed it!

Sidney Cole: Well it was a very nice intention on Trevor's part anyway!

Tilly Day: Oh yes, it was lovely! [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: What was the picture that you were going to see the premier of, can you remember?

[pause].

Tilly Day: I used to go to the premieres every time then. It was one of them.

Sidney Cole: Yes. Did you go - apart from going to premiers of pictures you'd worked on, did you go to the cinema much yourself?

Tilly Day: Yes, when I had the time.

Sidney Cole: Yes, sure. Well it could be very difficult, because we often worked very late in those days, yeah.

Tilly Day: Yes, because you never had the time. I'm catching up with them now, I might tell you, marvellously!

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: I think, "Oh I never saw that!"

Sidney Cole: Yes, because it's good the way they repeat some pictures on the box and so on...

Tilly Day: Yes, yeah. 'Next of Kin' has been on a couple of times.

Sidney Cole: Yes, yes, and 'Gaslight' not so long ago, yes.

Tilly Day: My Father was in 'Next of Kin'.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Sidney Cole: Was he?

Tilly Day: Yes! Oh yes, he became a great favourite, with the directors. Because he had this wonderful sort of luminous, interesting face. Do you remember my Father?

Sidney Cole: What was his first name?

Tilly Day: George Day.

Sidney Cole: George Day? Hmm...

Tilly Day: He was at 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery'

Sidney Cole: Was he?

Tilly Day: Yes, he'd been ill and he sat on the camera trolley, and he was quite a - I think - a good-looking man, little man. He was thin with a sort of aquiline nose, very good.

Sidney Cole: When did he actually start acting then, your Father?

Tilly Day: Oh he was only doing sort of extra...

Sidney Cole: Oh I see, yeah...

Tilly Day: ...that sort of small parts.

Sidney Cole: Yes, and not as a regular thing, no, no? Just occasionally

Tilly Day: Oh no, no. Only the ones I was on, and I would ask him, "Dad, they want..." you know, so-and-so and so-and so.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, how nice, yes.

Tilly Day: Yeah. Oh he thought it was easy money. Ohh! He never had had anything so easy! When they had him on - now what was it on? He went to Ealing, a picture I was on at Ealing, and he came and he did his bit and I warned them at the restaurant that my Father was coming across. And they rather liked me at Ealing, and they said, "Oh, Til's Father is gonna be there," you see. So I said, "Yes." So anyway, he went across, and they'd saved him a special dinner! It was so nice. And he said to me afterwards, he said, "Do you know? Everybody knows you." So I said, "Do they?" I was a bit surprised and I said, "Why, did they know you?" So he said, "Yes, the girl said to me, before I could speak, she said, 'you're Tilly Day's Father.' So I said, 'How do you know?' She said, 'Oh well you can tell, you're alike.'" But we weren't alike, you know, I wished I was, but... we were alike apparently, same expressions or something, you know.

Sidney Cole: So you were really, you were instrumental. It's usually the other way round, it's usually a parent that, perhaps, inducts its offspring into the business, but you did it the other way round?

Tilly Day: Yes, and converted him, indeed! Because I was quite sure when I first went into the film business, from fourteen years and ten months, that I was gonna be kidnapped at any time and transferred to the white slave traffic!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling]. Yes!

Tilly Day: That's what my Father had told me, and that's what it was!

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: And I shall never forget when we first went on location to 'Men of Steel', and it was Graham White's 'Alacrity', a millionaire's yacht (Oh, we moved in those times!). And we'd got on this yacht and I had borrowed a costume, or something from the wardrobe, and I was dressed up, you know, as George King's secretary, I'd got to be very nice. I didn't get the money, but still! There'd been ballroom dancing, there'd been this wonderful band and everything, oh it was wonderful! And I went to bed at night, I had the 'Primrose Suite' - you always had different suites, you see - I had the 'Primrose Suite' and I looked out of the window, and it was marvellous, the sunset over Bure Island (I think it was). And it was simply fantastic, I thought, "Oh, this is wonderful." And I went to bed, you know, full of champagne and dreams, and went to sleep. And I woke up in the morning and there was no island! I looked... Because I looked out of the window to see the island, and there was no island! Panic! Immediate panic! I thought, "Oh, white slave traffic...this is it," you see!

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And I tried the door, and of course, in my excitement the latch must have slipped or something, and the door wouldn't open! Oh - mad - bashed at it! I eventually got it opened and I rushed out, in my night-dress, mark you, I rushed out and there, leaning over the deck, leaning over the balcony of the deck, was Cecil Dickson, smoking a cigarette, (like this)... far away. So I rushed up, I said, "Oh Cecil! Oh thank God you're here!" He said, "What's the matter with you?" So I said, "Oh... oh" I said - and it all came out, you know! I said, "White slave traffic, I'm sure it was white slave traffic!" He said, "What are you talking about?" So I said, "My Father said that I would be sure to be taken away by the white slave traffic." So he looked at me and he started to laugh, you see! And I said, "Oh dear!" And I looked down at myself, I said, "Oh I must go now!" And I went off and went back to the... And, of course it went round this... all round the yacht! Graham White, everybody, got that story! And you see, all those things made great fun!

Sidney Cole: Sure. Cecil Dickson you mentioned, of course he had a great sense of humour, didn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh wonderful, yes, yes! I know an Aunt of his left him a hundred pounds at one time, and he came on the set with a will, supposed to be, and a great big diamond on his finger. And he

said, "I can't speak to anybody, I've inherited!" Because it was an Aunt he didn't care much about! [Chuckles].

[AL laughs].

Sidney Cole: Because, with the disappearing... What had - how had the island disappeared? You'd just put out to sea, had you?

Tilly Day: Oh we'd turned round!

Sidney Cole: You'd turned round, had you?

Tilly Day: We'd turned round on...

Alan Lawson: On the anchor, swung round on the anchor.

Tilly Day: On the anchor, yes, that's right. Swung round on the anchor.

Sidney Cole: Oh of course. For a moment you see, when you were telling that, and that the island had disappeared, I thought you had gone into panic, because you thought it was your fault because you'd made a mistake in continuity...

Tilly Day: [Chuckling]. No!

[AL laughs].

Sidney Cole: So that you'd be able to say you'd lost - somehow managed to loose an island! Never lost an island in your life!

Tilly Day: No, it was my own personal bother that time! Oh no. It had turned round on his anchor you see. Oh God! I shall never forget my panic, though.

Sidney Cole: That's a great story, yeah. Anything else you've got... that you'd forgotten? Like you forgot the Hammer Horrors...?

Tilly Day: Well, I expect there is a lot I've forgotten, and I shall remember in time.

Alan Lawson: We'll come back to you.

Tilly Day: But that won't be any good to you, will it?

Alan Lawson: No, we'll come back! [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Do you remember, because I've a personal interest in it, do you remember anything else about 'Gaslight', apart from finding...?

Tilly Day: 'Gaslight'? Oh, did you ever hear about Diana Wynyard and me?

Sidney Cole: Well you said one thing about Diana, but probably this is one we don't know. What happened?

Tilly Day: Well I was sitting by the camera and I was writing in my book, as I did, during, you know, rehearsals and that sort of thing, to take as much as possible down.

Sidney Cole: Sure.

Tilly Day: And I was doing this, and Diana Wynyard suddenly stopped, in the middle of everything, and she turned round to me and said at the top of her voice, "What the hell do you think you're doing?" And I was so taken aback, and I was so in what I'd been doing, I just looked at her. And one of the blokes from up at the top was very incensed - you know, they used to be all the way round -

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: He looked down and he said, "What do you think she's doing, writing home to Mother?"

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And so, the tears came down my face. It's the only time I've ever cried. And the tears came down my face, because it was so, you know - unjust. The tears coursed down my face, and I got up and I walked away and went back to my desk. Well, nothing more was said. Thorold didn't take any notice, didn't take my part or anything. And we went on and - continued on, when I came back, and at lunchtime, everybody, all the men and some of the girls - well no, there were no girls, were there? - All the men said, "What will you have Tilly?" "Do have a drink." You know, "Oh do! We think it's most unkind of her." And I could have got drunk! And anyway, when I came back at lunchtime, she was standing there by my desk, with an enormous bouquet of flowers. "Oh Tilly" she said, "I'm sorry, I'm quite sorry, because I didn't realise that you were in what you were doing, if you'll accept my apologies?" And, very graciously, "These are for you" you see. So I said, "Oh thank you very much, don't apologise." And then, of course, I put my foot firmly in it. I said, "Don't apologise, I've had a wonderful time!" So she said, "A wonderful time?" Taken aback. So I said, "Oh yes, all the men wanted to buy me a drink, and some of them wanted to take me out." I said, "I've had a wonderful time!"

[SC Chuckles].

Tilly Day: So she said, "Well anyway, here's the flowers." [Chuckling]. So I took them. And they were, they were wonderful, carnations and everything else, you see. So, that was that...

Sidney Cole: Yes, well, it shows what an emotional business movies can be at times, doesn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yeah, yeah...

Sidney Cole: Remember any more instances of emotional upsets, one way or another?

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: Well...not really...?

Tilly Day: I remember when you fell off the rostrum!

Sidney Cole: Oh, when Alan fell off the rostrum?

Tilly Day: The camera fell off and you fell off after it! [Chuckling].

Sidney Cole: What was this on 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery'?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm... Tell us something about that, because one of the stills you showed us was very interesting and made you look like a sort of, player-manager of the Arsenal football team, in those days. Because there was the whole Arsenal team there and you were sitting on the ground in front of them, looking very, very athletic, with a football at your feet, looking as if you were about to lead them in the cup final or something!

Tilly Day: No, they said - they were then having their photographs taken and they said, "Oh let's have Tilly in it, let's have Tilly in it!" And so I said, "Well where? Where will I sit?" Because there were all of them, and they said, "Oh come on, here!" And they made a place for me.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. You were saying, an interesting fact, and not connected directly with movies, about what, these days seems an extraordinary small amount of money those high class pros got in those days, how much was it?

Tilly Day: What, the er...?

Sidney Cole: The Arsenal team were getting, their wage?

Tilly Day: Oh, eight pounds a week.

Sidney Cole: Eight pounds a week?

Tilly Day: Eight pounds a week. Ted Drake, all of them! All the famous names, they got ten, eight pounds a week!

Sidney Cole: Which is nothing really, even in those days?

Tilly Day: Oh no! It wasn't then, because I remember George Allison telling Thorold that they got eight pounds a week, and he seemed to think that it was quite good!

Sidney Cole: Hmm, I think that was the maximum they were allowed to earn, actually.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Did they get any - you probably wouldn't know whether they got any - they must have got something extra for being the film, of course?

Tilly Day: Oh I don't know about being filmed, I don't know whether they got extra for that?

Sidney Cole: I should think they must have, should have done, shouldn't they?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes, was that an enjoyable film?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Lots of fun?

Tilly Day: Very, very enjoyable, lovely. George Allison fell for me.

[AL chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Ah ha? Well tell us about that, come on Tilly!

[All laugh!]

Tilly Day: Well, he sort of pursued me at every corner. He would turn up with a bunch of flowers or a bottle of champagne, or something. I know the first time I...

Sidney Cole: And you said "no," of course, to the champagne? [Chuckles].

Tilly Day: Oh yes! The first time I noticed it was when we were in 'The Chairman'... Do you remember 'The Chairman' - the pub, in Wardour Street?

Sidney Cole: Yes, The something and Two Chairmen?

Tilly Day: 'The Chairman', I'm sure it was 'The Chairman'?

Sidney Cole: Was it just 'The Chairman'? Yeah. There's so many pubs.

Tilly Day: Yes, and we all went in there. There was Thorold, myself and George Allison and a couple of other characters, higher up, you know, sort of official blokes. And George Allison said to me, "What would you like to drink?" So I said, "Oh champagne," you see, never dreaming that he'd buy it! And he said to the woman behind the counter - who knew him very well - he said, "Champagne please, the oldest bottle of champagne you've got." And so she said, "Right." And she got a bottle of champagne, which he looked at, and he said, "Oh yes, that's a good year!" He said, "Got any more of that?" So she said, "Yes, I've got some by the side." So he said, "Right." So we had this bottle of champagne and - well Thorold sort of laughed, when I said "Champagne" of course, and he - Thorold said, when that had finished, he said, "Well let's have another bottle!" So we had another bottle, and then we had another bottle! And then George Allison bought another, couple of bottles. And I thought afterwards, "Well, that's funny, I think he must be a bit gone on me!"

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: I didn't think it often, but I really thought this time, he really was! And, he was an ugly man - did you know him?

Sidney Cole: Hmm?

Tilly Day: Did you know him?

Sidney Cole: Who?

Alan Lawson: Allison?

Sidney Cole: Allison... yes.

Tilly Day: George Allison. He was an ugly man, wasn't he?

Sidney Cole: Yes, I didn't know him personally, but he's a very famous man, as a manager, indeed...

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he was famous! And then, after that, he always used to sit next to me, and then he asked us - four of us - to lunch, and I was one of the four. And I thought again, he sat

next to me, and I thought, "Oh yes, I think so!" But I didn't take any notice, I thought, "Well, its in company." So, we carried on, and then, he did, he asked me - what was it? If I would have a flat or something - or some sort of proposition, I know...

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: I was propositioned! And, I said, "Oh well, you know, I mean it's very unexpected. " (Unexpected!) And so, we sort of left it. And then, do you know what happened? Talk about saved by the bell! The war, of all things, happened!

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: They declared war, and so that put an end to that! [laughs]

Sidney Cole: So in a way, you and George Allison were responsible for the Second World War!

[All laugh].

Sidney Cole: Oh that's an amusing story, yes. So then, what did you do between that and - because 'Gaslight' must have followed very soon after that?

Tilly Day: Oh it did, yes.

Sidney Cole: Didn't it? Yes...

Tilly Day: Yes, I did something else in between. I can't remember. Because I was getting well known by this time, and there weren't many continuity girls, you know?

Sidney Cole: No, I know.

Tilly Day: Not good ones, anyway.

Sidney Cole: No, that's right.

Tilly Day: And so, I sort of, got quite a lot of work.

Sidney Cole: Really? Any more stories? Is that the only time you've been propositioned?

Tilly Day: Oh no!

Sidney Cole: No, I shouldn't think so!

Tilly Day: [Laughs]. Oh no, in a long life, Ducky!

[Slight pause].

Sidney Cole: Any other thoughts you have about the business generally? I mean, do you find it rather sad, looking at it today, compared to what it used to be?

Tilly Day: Well to me it is, of course, to me it is. Because there doesn't seem... I don't see how you can possibly, let's face it, have a good time like I did, as well as do your job and you lived in the good time.

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: You see, if you see what I mean? You didn't neglect your work, that always came first, but there was a good time wrapped up in it.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm. Because there was a fair amount of work going around too, which helped of course, so that you could earn some money to enjoy yourself, to some extent, at any rate?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, you see, and you earned this money, and you had to buy your clothes haphazardly rather, you know, sort of here, there and everywhere, wherever you happened to be. And sometimes you overspent, but it didn't matter because you knew you'd get it on the next picture.

Sidney Cole: Hmm. Talking of clothes, did you all - did you, in general, have a kind of special way of dressing for actually working on the floor, as opposed to, you know, your life outside the studio?

Tilly Day: Well I was always, sort of, you...[chuckles]. When George King asked me to be his continuity first of all - [correcting herself] his secretary - secretary in the office, and when he went on the floor, continuity, you see. And I wasn't sure what a perfect secretary should be. So, I went to Woolworth's and they sold a lot of books then. 'How to be a Perfect (so-and-so, so-and-so, and so-and-so)' and there was one, 'How to be a Perfect Secretary' I thought, that's me! So I picked it up, (it was this size), and I read it. And it said, "The perfect secretary," I remember the opening, "The perfect secretary is like the perfect butler." So I thought, "Ah, now I must model myself..." I was a great 'Jeeves' fan at that time... I thought, "Now, I must model myself on 'Jeeves'." So I said, "Yes, Sir, no Sir, three bags full!" You know, and everything, everything was like this. I bowed slightly, knocked on the door, and all this sort of thing. And George King got a bit fed-up with this!

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: I knocked on the door, perfectly straight faced, you see. I said, "Mr King?" He said, "Yes, Miss Day?" Miss Day it was, too!

Sidney Cole: Yes?

Tilly Day: He said, "Yes, Miss Day?" I said, "There's a Mr Odds to see you, outside. Shall I show him in, or say you're not here?" So he said, "Ah, now," he said, "that all depends" - perfectly seriously. So I said, "Yes?" He said, "Has he got his partner with him?" I said, "His partner?" So he said, "Yes, Mr Sods!"

[All laugh!]

Tilly Day: Which of course, broke me! It really took me, it took me down, you see! It made me laugh so much, that I creased up. And I tried not to laugh because, you know, perfect secretary, she never laughed or anything, so I went outside, I said, [whispers] "I think you're wanted inside." [Laughs]. Oh dear....

Sidney Cole: Were you used, in those days, and in view of your youth, the word 'sod' is something you were not supposed, your Father would have supposed that you weren't familiar with?

Tilly Day: Pardon?

Sidney Cole: The word, such words as 'sods'...

Tilly Day: Oh I knew the words!

Sidney Cole: ...you weren't supposed to be familiar with!

Tilly Day: Oh, I knew the words!

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: That's what curled me up! Oh dear! I knew all the words, of course. Well, you don't have to know about murder to commit one do you?

Sidney Cole: No, that's true! No, but I was thinking from your family point of view, that they assumed you were a very demure, innocent...

Tilly Day: Oh I know...oh no...we never had language, bad language at home, no...no. But one had heard it, of course.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, sure, at school, I suppose, yeah?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, Wood Street, Walthamstow believe me! Where I went to school...

Sidney Cole: Yeah. Did you ever go back to the site of your school? Does it still exist, would you think?

Tilly Day: Well it did, when I was last there.

Sidney Cole: Yes?

Tilly Day: They had, um, Belgian refugees there during the First World War, and it was still there when I saw it.

Sidney Cole: What was it called? What was the name?

Tilly Day: Wood Street, Walthamstow.

Sidney Cole: Wood Street, Walthamstow? Ah ha, yeah.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: But you didn't really like being at school?

Tilly Day: [Takes sharp intake of breath!] Oh, I didn't mind the infant school. Oh I didn't mind that, that all went in with everything, you know, and I... Oh, I'll tell you a funny thing, I had two boys to look after me, because I could never remember to put my hat and coat on.

Sidney Cole: This is when you were in the infants?

Tilly Day: When I was in the infants. And so the teacher said, "Well, you'll have two boys to look after you." One was [Teddy Berry] and one was [Willie Frazer], and they took it in turns. Well, when I was on 'Next of Kin', the Major who was our advisor, because we had a whole battalion of soldiers, he said, "Oh Miss Day, do you know, Tilly, do you know, my lieutenant has been to me with a most extraordinary story about you." I said, "About me?" So he said, "Yes, he said that he knew you when you were a little girl and that you haven't altered a bit, and that he used to see that you put your hat and coat on."

Sidney Cole: How extraordinary!

Tilly Day: So I said, "What's his name?" He said, "Berry." I said, "Teddy Berry?" So he said, "Yes...Edward Berry!" He said, "Well!"

Sidney Cole: How extraordinary!

Tilly Day: I said, "That's right!" I said, "he did!" So he introduced me, and I would never have known him! He was a big, fat, heavy man! And he said to me, "You haven't changed a bit, you know!" And I thought, "Well mate, you have! [Chuckles]."

Sidney Cole: What an amazing coincidence!

Tilly Day: Wasn't that funny though?

Sidney Cole: Yes, indeed.

Tilly Day: He said, "Yes, you went to Wood Street, Walthamstow." So I said, "How strange." That was one of the strange things that really happened.

Sidney Cole: Have you ever regretted not having gone further with education? I mean, not having stayed longer at school? What was the school leaving age then, fourteen I suppose?

Tilly Day: Fourteen!

Sidney Cole: Yes, but you couldn't... Was there any chance you could have gone on?

Tilly Day: Ah, well, I should have been sixteen when I left my secondary school, you see.

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: But, oh I saw no future in it. I should have [indecipherable] I couldn't have stood it!

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: Or so I thought.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, interesting. Still, you learned a lot in the course of...

Tilly Day: Of life, yes...

Sidney Cole: ...in your life, haven't you?

Tilly Day: And I, I doubt if I should have been as happy. I should have been in different circumstances and everything, to what it is now - what I was then, rather.

Sidney Cole: Well you've spent your life doing what you really like doing, I suppose?

Tilly Day: Yeah...

Sidney Cole: Yes, which is great.

Tilly Day: And the funny thing was, you know, I never thought about retiring. And it was only when this picture happened and I thought, "Well this is it, I'm seventy-three, it's about time I retired." And I'd bought this five thousand-pound thing...

Sidney Cole: The annuity thing, then?

Tilly Day: Yes, which was fourteen pounds and something a week, I thought, "Fourteen pounds and something? I'm a fool, what am I hanging around here for?"

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: It seemed to me a lot of money, and now, of course, it's nothing!

Sidney Cole: I know. That's a bad thing.

[End of Tape 2, Side 3]

[Tape 2, Side 4]

Alan Lawson: Tilly Day, second session, recorded on 30th January 1988, Side four.

Sidney Cole: Right...Tilly, I believe that before you actually started working in films as such, at the old studios at Walthamstow, you, in fact, played a violin in a cinema?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I played the violin at the Victoria Palace, Walthamstow, and I played on a Friday and a Saturday evening and I got three shillings a night. And I played for about three hours each night. Eddie Dryhurst was the pianist and well, he used to rather look after me, so he must be a bit older than I am.

Sidney Cole: You know he's just written a biography?

Tilly Day: I'd love to read it, I'd love to see if I'm in it. Because if he's spoken the truth, which I doubt...[chuckles].

Alan Lawson: But, Eddie Dryhurst wasn't his name at the time, was it?

Tilly Day: No, it was Ted Roberts!

Sidney Cole: Ted Roberts?

Tilly Day: Yes, his name was Ted Roberts, that's - I've started at the wrong end of the stick! I remember, his name was Ted Roberts and, later on when I was at Walthamstow studio, and I'd

grown up, to my thought - I was fifteen or sixteen - there was a knock at the door, and I opened the door, and there stood Ted Roberts, and I said, "Hello!" So he looked at me quite blankly, through his large tortoiseshell glasses, and they weren't worn in those days, you know. They were rather awe-inspiring! And he said, "Good morning!" So I said, "Good morning!" So he came in. So I said, "You are Ted Roberts aren't you?" So he said, "No, I'm not." So I said, "That's funny, I thought you... You're just like him, you're his double." So anyway, nothing more was said, and he went on. And my boss, George Banfield told me that he was bringing over a writer from Hollywood, a very famous man, who'd written a lot of stuff, and his name was Eddie Dryhurst. And this was Eddie Dryhurst! Because, later he came back, the door opened, and cheeky face looked round, without the tortoiseshell rims, and said, "I'm Eddie Dryhurst. I really am Ted Roberts, but I'm Eddie Dryhurst now." So I said, "Oh" - I wasn't used to this kind of thing at all, you know. Apparently it was all in a day's work to him! [Chuckling]. And so, Eddie Dryhurst he became! And he said, "Sorry I fibbed to you" he said, with such a charming smile, he said, "but I couldn't help it - you know what things are, don't you?" So I said, "Oh yes" and I didn't know at all! And anyway, that was Eddie Dryhurst.

Sidney Cole: And did he do something at that studio?

Tilly Day: Oh well, he wrote several pages of various things, but I don't think anything was ever accepted because, later he disappeared. Whether he tried to borrow or something, I don't know.

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. Was he famous for that then?

Tilly Day: Well no, he wasn't then, but he was later. [Chuckling].

Sidney Cole: Ah, good, when did you encounter him again?

Tilly Day: Oh...

Sidney Cole: Long time after?

Tilly Day: ...much later. Let me see, the next time I saw him. [pause] No, I don't remember. The next time, I think, was at Wembley before the war, when he was writing and he was getting money for it. And he was very, sort of accepted as Eddie Dryhurst, the writer. And he had two little sons, one became later Mike Dryhurst, very well known director, and um... Yes, he was at Wembley; that's right.

Sidney Cole: I remember I met Michael, I don't know what happened to him in later years.

Tilly Day: Mike Dryhurst? Yes, he went to Hollywood, he became very well known. And I told him about his Father and he wasn't a bit amused, I don't think he wanted to know. But I told Chris, the eldest son, who was a very nice bloke, and he was so interested, and he said, "How lovely." And I think he'd been to a different school, he was sort of, well spoken and not so... um, brash.

Sidney Cole: He was in the business too, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, for a little while, for a little while. Not, I don't think, for long because I don't remember him for long. Anyway, later I met Eddie Dryhurst in a pub, and he was playing a piano.

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: Yes, it was very strange because...

Sidney Cole: How did that happen?

Tilly Day: Well, my Mother said to me - I said, "Let's go and have a drink," so she said, "Oh let's go to that pub where I hear the music coming from." So I said, "Oh yes, that'll be fine!" So we went up and we traced the pub with the music in. I pushed open the door and went in and my Mother came in, and um, I went - I said, "You sit down." And I went to the counter and ordered a couple of drinks, and as I raised my eyes, I looked into the mirror opposite. They'd got an over-mantel, that they used to have in pubs in those days, and there was glass and things in it. And I looked right into the eyes of Eddie Dryhurst. I felt, "That's not true!" And it was Eddie Dryhurst playing the piano! I sort of turned my head cautiously and looked, and it was Eddie Dryhurst, and as I went by him I said, "Hello!" He said, "Hello... What are you gonna have?" [Chuckling]. And, there we are, that was Eddie Dryhurst.

Sidney Cole: When about would that be? That wouldn't be before the war?

Tilly Day: Oh that was, no that was after the war. That was when I was at Denham.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha. Hmm...

[Slight pause].

Alan Lawson: And he appeared again at Denham, didn't he? Oh no, at Pinewood, you were saying...

Tilly Day: Pinewood, oh Pinewood. Pinewood. He, there was a very large car drew up and there was the label on the VIPs notice, 'Eddie Dryhurst'. I thought, "It can't be, he hasn't come up again?" And, sure enough, there it was, it was Eddie Dryhurst and he stayed, oh, for a very little while. But he was supposed to be financing Brian Rix in his last film, but it all went wrong, of course, as it did, because they found out that Eddie had no money at all. So the large car disappeared and Eddie disappeared and...

Sidney Cole: And no picture?

Tilly Day: ...no picture. Oh, there was a picture eventually, they...

Sidney Cole: Not with Eddie Dryhurst?

Tilly Day: Not with Eddie Dryhurst.

Sidney Cole: Hmm. Do you want to look at the pictures now? Yeah. Tell us about this lady, what's her name Fleur Andrea?

Tilly Day: Baroness Fern Andra. She was the mistress of the Crown Prince of Germany.

Sidney Cole: This is at Walthamstow?

Tilly Day: Yes, at Walthamstow. She took the leading part of 'The Burgomaster of Stilemonde'.

Sidney Cole: Here's another one...

Tilly Day: That was Sir John Martin-Harvey...

Sidney Cole: Oh who played - was the lead in that picture of course...

Tilly Day: Yes he was the lead. That was Baroness Fern Andra...

Sidney Cole: And who's the other one?

Tilly Day: That's George Banfield...

Sidney Cole: He directed it?

Tilly Day: He directed it.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...great. And is that a still from the actual production?

Tilly Day: That's 'Dick Turpin'...

Sidney Cole: Oh that's 'Dick Turpin'

Tilly Day: That's Kenneth McLaglen.

Sidney Cole: Kenneth McLaglen

Tilly Day: Betty Siddons

Sidney Cole: And whose that?

Tilly Day: James Knight...

Sidney Cole: Oh, James Knight?

Tilly Day: Do you remember him?

Sidney Cole: Yes, vaguely...

Tilly Day: Jimmy Knight.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: That's me...

Sidney Cole: Oh that's you dressed up, at the top of the stairs there?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes...

Sidney Cole: Playing a part?!

Tilly Day: Oh yes, always, yeah.

Sidney Cole: How old were you then, you look about twelve actually, there, but you must have been a bit older than that?

Tilly Day: I was a bit older than that, but I used to have to dress up in all the things, and I'd go about for the rest of the day, doing my usual duties, and then dash in when they wanted me.

Sidney Cole: Still in costume, yeah. Recognise any of these in the background? Perhaps they're just extras there.

Tilly Day: No, I think they're extras.

Sidney Cole: Anyhow, what is this? This is er...

Tilly Day: Ah, that's 'Dick Turpin'...

Sidney Cole: That's 'Dick Turpin'?

Tilly Day: ...in Epping Forest.

Sidney Cole: Ah, yes. Because Epping Forest was just at the back of the studio virtually, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes, just at the back of the studio. There's Ken McLaglen ...

Sidney Cole: Yeah?

Tilly Day: I'll get my other glasses.

[break in recording]

Sidney Cole: Right. Can you recognise anybody around the camera, the camera crew?

Tilly Day: Ah, Joe Rosenthal...

Alan Lawson: Ah, that's lovely...

Tilly Day: Joe Rosenthal. There's the old fashioned camera...

Sidney Cole: Yes, you don't remember what make it was?

Tilly Day: Mitchell.

Sidney Cole: It was a Mitchell, was it?

Alan Lawson: Oh that was up-market!

Tilly Day: Oh yes it was! It was a new one, they paid two thousand pounds for it...

Alan Lawson: Wow!

Tilly Day: ...they'd just bought it. I don't know what they paid with, I'm sure!

Sidney Cole: A promissory note, probably!

[TD chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Anybody else?

Tilly Day: That's me...

Sidney Cole: That's you, by the camera there, yes.

Tilly Day: There's Dan Burt, do you remember Danny Burt?

Alan Lawson: Yes!

Sidney Cole: Dan Burt? Oh yes, I didn't realise he was that old, good gracious.

Alan Lawson: What did he do?

Tilly Day: He was the camera boy.

Alan Lawson: Ah...

Tilly Day: And he did the camera and the loading up, and he was the first one I ever met who took drugs.

Sidney Cole: Took drugs? Really?

Tilly Day: Yes, he took um - I shall remember it in a minute - an old fashioned drug, and I didn't know it was a drug...

Sidney Cole: Ah, anybody else?

Tilly Day: No, I can't remember anybody else.

Sidney Cole: Ah now, here's another, here's a still, somebody in this...

Tilly Day: Ah, that's Fern Andra.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

Tilly Day: ...and Robert - who's the leading man to Noel Coward - a young, good- looking boy?

Sidney Cole: Oh, Robert...ah. Anyhow, he's the one with the ulhan[?] helmet, isn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh well he's the German, you see, and she's supposed to be saying goodbye to him and they...

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: ...but because she was so old, she was really old you know. Well, she was, I mean, she was thirty-five (ish)!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]...oh that was old! She was very old, yes, because you were about, what, fifteen at the time?

Tilly Day: Yes, and so that's her, saying goodbye to her dear old son - her dear son.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, yeah. Well the name will come back, Robert - I remember yes, I know who you mean, that was a great friend of Coward's.

Alan Lawson: That's Graham White's yacht.

Sidney Cole: Graham White's yacht, you remember? That's where you told us the story on the other recording, wasn't it?

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Yes, that's Geoff Faithful, Arthur Grant[?], that was the clapper boy...

Sidney Cole: Who was he?

Tilly Day: Um, Arthur Grant...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes, the clapper boy.

Tilly Day: I don't know who that was. No, he was the electrician standing by. That was the clapper boy, Alan White?

Sidney Cole: I don't know Alan White, could be?

Alan Lawson: Yes, that's right.

Tilly Day: And that's me.

Sidney Cole: That's you in front of the camera with that - what do they call those hats? Cloche hats, or something?

Tilly Day: Yes that's right, white cloche hat.

Sidney Cole: Yes, yeah jolly good.

Tilly Day: That was on 'The [indecipherable]

Sidney Cole: Now here's, [indecipherable - talks over Tilly]

Tilly Day: Oh, that was the old fashioned still, yes, that's the old fashioned still. That was um...

Sidney Cole: Was that at Walthamstow?

Tilly Day: Yes...that's Arthur Griffin. He was the man who was in the negative rooms at the back, which were all dripping wet, and they hung it up, on nails, and had great seven-league boots, always.

Sidney Cole: That's because they did - in those days - the studio had it's own laboratory and did it's own processing.

Tilly Day: It did it's own, yes, had it's own, yes.

Sidney Cole: Did you go to see rushes?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: When did they see them - what, first thing in the morning?

Tilly Day: Oh no, whenever they were finished.

Sidney Cole: Oh I see, in the evening, when they had processed during the day?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, during the day. Oh yes.

Sidney Cole: Anybody else, there's somebody here you said you recognised?

Tilly Day: Leslie Eveleigh.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: Phil Ross. Woodrow - what's his name? Someone from Woodrow, the big building people...

Sidney Cole: Oh really? Hmm.

Tilly Day: Yes...he was learning the trade. That was Stefan, he was Russian.

Sidney Cole: What did he do?

Tilly Day: Well, he mostly walked about the place and we were warned about him because he'd got something wrong with him...[chuckles].

Sidney Cole: You mean he was a bit odd?

Tilly Day: Oh no...he had venereal disease, actually.

Sidney Cole: Oh, oh, I see.

Tilly Day: That was me. That's Womack, he was head electrician.

Alan Lawson: What was the film? Do you remember that film?

Tilly Day: This...'Burgomaster of Stilemonde'.

Alan Lawson: Oh it is?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah... but Martin-Harvey isn't in that still, is he?

Tilly Day: No, no.

Sidney Cole: Just mainly the crew, really then?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Who is that, though?

Tilly Day: That's George Banfield's wife.

Sidney Cole: And who is that, the other lady there?

Tilly Day: That's Baroness Fern Andra.

Sidney Cole: Oh that's the Baroness? Yes, she really is a handsome lady...

Tilly Day: Except her nose!

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, what was that, too big?

Tilly Day: Yes, very Roman.

Sidney Cole: Oh, here's an aeroplane, now what's that for?

Tilly Day: Ah, that's a George King production - seven reeler, quota - camera and aeroplane, very early thirties. This was in...

Sidney Cole: What was the picture called?

TD and

Alan Lawson: 'Deadlock'.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

Tilly Day: Starring Stewart Rome...

Sidney Cole: Oh Stewart Rome? I remember Stewart Rome...

Tilly Day: Marjorie Hume, Janice Adair. She was married, Janice Adair was married to Alf...
Alf - the cutter....

Sidney Cole: Alf Rume[?!] Alfred Rume[?], yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, she was married to Alfred Rume[?].

Sidney Cole: Now on the picture side here, you've got the names here, could you tell me, repeat them to me?

Tilly Day: Yes...that was Faith - that was um, Charles Bennett's wife...

Sidney Cole: Now Charles Bennett - what, the writer?

Tilly Day: Yes, there he is.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, he's the one that worked with Hitchcock a lot, isn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he worked a lot. And Geoff Faithful, Arthur Grant, Alan White, Marjorie Hume, George King, Charles Bennett, Faith Bennett.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, that seems to be all, good.

Alan Lawson: Who's this one?

Tilly Day: Oh he was a make-up man.

Alan Lawson: Ah yes! Yes!

Sidney Cole: Can't remember his name?

Tilly Day: Hill.

Sidney Cole: Hill? Ah ha.

Alan Lawson: That's right, Hill, yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: And who's that, somebody called - Harry somebody - that one?

Tilly Day: Hay Plumb.

Sidney Cole: Hay Plumb, an actor?

Tilly Day: He was a silent picture actor - originally, but he came later into talkies.

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: But he wasn't much good, because he couldn't talk!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. Well, like a lot of people in that position, weren't they, when we went over to sound?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Now here's another still.

Tilly Day: Ah, that's um...

Sidney Cole: Now this is, where?

Tilly Day: That's um...

Sidney Cole: That's the name, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Er, Robin Irvine.

Sidney Cole: Irvine, that's the one you were trying to think of just recently?

Tilly Day: Yes. Diana Napier.

Sidney Cole: Diana Napier, yes.

Tilly Day: Allan Dwan, the director...

Sidney Cole: The director, yes. He's an American director.

Tilly Day: And Ida Lapino, Robin Irvine.

Sidney Cole: That's interesting. What was the film?

Tilly Day: 'Her First Affaire'.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha. Now Ida Lapino must have been very young indeed then, she was about...

Tilly Day: Yes she was fourteen.

Sidney Cole: Fourteen?

Tilly Day: Hmm.

Sidney Cole: Gosh! And who's that, do you know?

Tilly Day: That's Diana Napier.

Sidney Cole: Oh that's Diana Napier? And she, afterwards, married the singer...

Tilly Day: The singer, yes...

Sidney Cole: Richard Tauber?

Tilly Day: Richard Tauber, that's right. Robin Irvine, he was the producer. Cecil Dickson.

Sidney Cole: Oh Cecil Dickson. Now tell me about Cecil, he was the assistant director, was he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes. Oh he was fun, he was great fun. I always remember him leaning on the balustrade of the ship, 'The Alacrity' in - what was that picture? Anyway. In 'Men of Steel', and we were on Graham White's 'Alacrity', all of us, and it was heaven, it was absolute luxury, luxury personified. And I had the primrose suite for myself and in this primrose suite everything was primrose, oh it was beautiful! And there was a little bathroom and there was the bedroom, of course. And I remember when I went in there at night, I was the teensiest bit sloshed, you know! And I remember looking out of the window and thinking, isn't this heaven? Aren't I lucky? And I was looking out of the window at the wonderful scene, it was the sunset on the island, Brownsea Island, and it was so beautiful. And I went to bed full of dreams, and when I woke up in the morning, I thought, the first thing I'll do is to look at the beautiful scenery. And I got up and I looked out of the window and the island had gone - It had gone! I panicked! I looked around, I thought it's gone, it's gone! An island can't go, just like that! And I rushed to the door - immediately my Father's upbringing came to me, white slave traffic! "Yes," I thought, "this is it! White slave traffic. Oh! why wasn't I more careful?" And I got to the door and it was locked, the lock had dropped, or something - and the lock had dropped and I rattled it. Eventually it came open. And I rushed out, and the first thing I saw on deck was Cecil Dickson standing there, gazing down at the sea and smoking a cigarette. And I rushed up to him and I said, "Oh Cecil, thank God you're here!" I said, "Oh..." And I babbled all about white slave traffic and everything like that. And he said - looked at me very calmly and he said, "Don't you think you'd better go and put some clothes on and then come back and tell me all about this white slave traffic business?" So, of course, I realised that I was in my nightie. I went back and I got dressed, and I came out again, and I told him. I was calmer by that time. And I told him how I'd been brought up on - everything - "Be careful of everybody, because they were all out for the white slave traffic." So that was that!

Sidney Cole: And he assured you that there wasn't anything?

Tilly Day: Oh of course! Well I knew, seeing him, that it wasn't [Chuckles].

Sidney Cole: [chuckles].

Alan Lawson: You've worked with him a lot, haven't you?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, I did work with him quite a lot, quite a lot.

Alan Lawson: Tell us a bit about him.

Tilly Day: Oh he worked at Ealing...

Sidney Cole: What did you work on at Ealing with him?

Tilly Day: Um, 'High Command'. I remember at Ealing, I was at home and the 'phone rang and it was Cecil Dickson saying, could I come at once? I said, "But I've only just left Ealing." I'd just finished 'To Brighton with a Bird', George King's penguin picture. So I said, "But I've only just left there" I said, "I came on the last train." So he said, "Well they want you back again because Bill Lott's got a job for you." So I said, "Oh, all right." So, of course a job was the first priority. So I rushed off to Ealing again and he said, "Oh I've got to introduce you to Thorold Dickinson, because he wants a continuity girl, so I said, "Oh yes." And Thorold - they were in the first week of 'High Command' and Thorold was standing in the midst of a crowd of people, and he was right up, you know - big place - he was right up in the middle of these people. And he was saying, "You there! You there! You there!" - doing my job really. And so Cecil said, "When you've got a minute, Thorold, here's the new continuity girl." So Thorold looked up and gazed at me with a blank expression on his face and said, "I'd rather have had Diana McNab." Well, of course, I said, "Oh would he?" I said, "That finishes it! As much as I want this job, I'm not gonna stay here if he wants somebody else!" And I was really very cross! But anyway, it came down to it, and then Thorold and I became very good pals, and I told him about it afterwards, and he didn't believe it! But it was true!

Sidney Cole: Well I remember that picture, because I cut that picture.

Tilly Day: Ah, did you?

Sidney Cole: And it was Thorold's first direction, that one, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: That's right, yes. Oh yes, it was a very good picture actually.

Sidney Cole: It was very good, yes. Did you go - you didn't go to Africa on that, though did you?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: He went, just with a cameraman. I'm trying to remember...who was the cameraman on that?

Tilly Day: Um...George...was it George Martin?

Alan Lawson: Bob Martin.

Tilly Day: Bob Martin!

Sidney Cole: Er no, it wasn't Bob.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Jack?

Sidney Cole: I'm not sure, I thought - I can't remember.

Alan Lawson: Anyway, carry on about Cecil, because, again, you were speaking about...

Tilly Day: Yeah, Cecil was on that. I don't know... through the years...

Sidney Cole: He used to wear some rather strange things?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Tell us...

Tilly Day: Sort of wind-cheaters, when wind-cheaters weren't done, and sort of big Mackintosh things, oh he was very strange.

Sidney Cole: And some very odd shirts sometimes?

Tilly Day: Oh yes - violent shirts, with great big pearl buttons, exaggerated.

Alan Lawson: But it was on the - don't you remember the famous occasion on 'The Arsenal Murder Mystery'[sic] with him in his Union Jack shirt?

Tilly Day: Oh yes...no, no! That wasn't 'The Arsenal Stadium Mystery', that was when we were in Ireland. We were in Ireland and we crossed - this was before the troubles were really bad, you know, this was before the war!

Sidney Cole: And this is on 'High Command'?

Tilly Day: No, no.

Sidney Cole: No?

Tilly Day: No, this was before the war...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: On this Jimmy O'Dea, Harry O'Donovan picture. [NB 'Blarney'/'Ireland's Boarder Line']

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, ah hmm.

Tilly Day: And Harry O'Donovan was taking Cecil and I to the next location, which was across the border. And the moment we got across the border, Harry O'Donovan said, "Well, we're across the border now, you're in England." And so Cecil Dickson said, "Oh well, that's done it!" And he drew on this Union Jack shirt!

[SC laughs].

Tilly Day: And he had this great Union Jack all over his front, all over his back. And he struggled into it, put it on and said, "Oh, now I feel at home!"

[SC and AL laugh].

Sidney Cole: Very good! [Slight pause] Here's another still...

Tilly Day: Ah, that's...

Sidney Cole: Now there are some interesting people there, tell us about them.

Tilly Day: Yes, Warwick Ward...

Sidney Cole: Oh, Warwick Ward, yeah...

Tilly Day: Er, Charlie Bird, er Mabel Poulton's sister, Mabel Poulton, me, him, I've forgotten - they're probably on the back - and George King. Frank Perfitt [reading off the back].

Sidney Cole: What did he do?

Tilly Day: Actor.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: Rex Howarth - he was the sound.

Sidney Cole: Of course Warwick Ward played in pictures in Germany, didn't he? If I remember rightly.

Tilly Day: Yes, oh he was a very noted silent picture actor, Warwick Ward.

Alan Lawson: Where was that film taken?

Tilly Day: Er, Walton-on-Thames.

Alan Lawson: Ah ha, yes, because it was by Fidelitone wasn't it? Rex Howarth, yeah...

Sidney Cole: And didn't Warwick Ward have something to do with controlling the studio?

Tilly Day: Ah, no, Walton-on Thames - [TD corrects herself] - Worton Hall.

Sidney Cole: Worton Hall.

Tilly Day: He became - to our amazement - he became studio manager.

Sidney Cole: That's right, yes, that's what I thought, yes.

Tilly Day: But he was always, up to then, a very well paid director - um, actor.

Sidney Cole: Here's another interesting still.

Tilly Day: Oh that's 'Midnight'.

Alan Lawson: John Stuart.

Tilly Day: John Stuart.

Sidney Cole: Yes...and who's the girl?

Tilly Day: Ellen Pollock.

Sidney Cole: Oh gosh, in her young days, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes. And that's Harry Weeks, an old man. That's Rex Howarth, that's me, that's Bill Saunders.

Sidney Cole: Ah!

Tilly Day: There's Geoff Faithful.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: And he was something to support the camera. John Stuart - nice man.

Sidney Cole: Yes, that was where? That was at Worton Hall?

Tilly Day: No, Walton-on-Thames.

Sidney Cole: Walton-on-Thames, yes. Yes, I'm fascinated by how young Ellen Pollock is there!

Tilly Day: That's Franklin Bellamy.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Franklin Bellamy!

Tilly Day: He disappeared, he went on a cruise, and he disappeared through a porthole.

Sidney Cole: Oh golly! Was that - they thought it was he'd jumped overboard?

Tilly Day: Well nobody knew, it was all wrapped in mystery. But he was a wonderful 'heavy'.

Sidney Cole: Hmm...yeah, I remember.[Slight pause] Who is this?

Tilly Day: It's on there somewhere, Robin something, I don't know - Robert...

Sidney Cole: Can you read it, Alan?

Alan Lawson: Douglas!

Tilly Day: Robert Douglas!

Sidney Cole: Oh Robert Douglas, yes.

Tilly Day: He was a very well known artist.

Sidney Cole: Yes, very good!

Tilly Day: He was at Ealing, that was Ealing - 'Secret of the Loch'.

Sidney Cole: 'Secret of the Loch'. Ah now, here's a motor car...

Tilly Day: 'Death Drives Through' - on Brooklands[?].

Sidney Cole: Is that an actor, or is that the actor's double?

Tilly Day: Miles Mander, yes.

Sidney Cole: Miles Mander! Of course! Yes, Miles Mander, well known wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Miles Mander!

Sidney Cole: And a director as well as an actor!

Tilly Day: Well he was an actor then.

[Break in Tape].

Sidney Cole: We realised, at least Alan did, that it was Otto Heller who was the cameraman on 'High Command'.

Tilly Day: On 'High Command'. And I remember when war broke out, just when they were sending all the - what do you call them?

Sidney Cole: Well, people who weren't British - aliens.

Tilly Day: Yes, all the aliens back and Otto was crying, because he had to go back. And he was going back on this day, on this afternoon, on the - alien's train - he was going to Southampton, and we went and saw him off. The man who was on, was the cameraman on the next production, Monty - [TD corrects herself] Pennington Richards!

Sidney Cole: Oh, Penni Richards, yes!

Tilly Day: Penni Richards. Penni and I went and saw Otto off at Southampton. And when he saw us there, waiting for us, he cried again, poor man. And I gave him what I had in my pocket, a lucky sixpence I called it. It was a decorative sixpence from Ireland, with a greyhound on the back. And I gave it to Otto and I said, "This will bring you luck, you keep it always." And do you know, he kept it, and he reminded me, when he came back after the war - long afterwards - we were (oh! he was on 'Men of Two Worlds' for a little while), and he showed me, he said, "I've still got your sixpence" and he took it out of his pocket and showed it to me.

Sidney Cole: Marvellous. What had happened to him during the war, did he tell you?

Tilly Day: I don't know. Oh he was, um, he was a Czech.

SC and

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, he went back to Czechoslovakia, and he was in a camp.

Sidney Cole: Ah. Poor man. And he survived anyhow, which is great.

Tilly Day: Yes, he survived.

Sidney Cole: And, of course, he's worked on a lot of pictures over here after the war, didn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Did you work on any of them?

Tilly Day: Oh I must have done, yes, I'm sure I did. And I always met him, you know, in the train, going from - the train that goes from Baker Street to Uxbridge - he was always on that, and I used to get in at Wembley Park, the same train. And we always used to meet up.

Sidney Cole: Yes, well you certainly did bring him luck by the sounds of it, with your sixpence. Well now, going back to earlier days, here's a still from 'Danny Boy' at Stoll Studios...

Tilly Day: Oh yes...

Sidney Cole: Who do you recognise?

Tilly Day: Forbes-Robertson.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: The great, you know, from the family of the family of the Forbes [NB Forbes-Robertsons] 'Danny Boy'. He went on a scheme for boys to Canada, when he was older.

Sidney Cole: Can you remember his name - who played 'Danny Boy', it's not on the back actually I'm afraid, don't know if you remember?

Tilly Day: No, afraid not. No I don't remember his name, but I know that he, out of his pocket money, he made a raffia, and gave me a raffia purse, and I kept it for ages.

Sidney Cole: Oh how nice of him.

Tilly Day: It was lovely.

Sidney Cole: Whose the...

Tilly Day: Dorothy Dicks[on].

Sidney Cole: Oh Dorothy Dicks. yes, and who's this?

Tilly Day: Challis Sanderson.

Sidney Cole: Challis Sanderson. And that's you...

Tilly Day: That was me.

Sidney Cole: Now, the cameraman, of course is Desmond Dickinson...

Tilly Day: Ossie Mitchell.

Sidney Cole: Ossie Mitchell was the director, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes. Um... Gracie Field's husband - Archie Pitt.

Sidney Cole: Archie Pitt? Ah yes, her first husband.

Tilly Day: Oh, ghastly little man!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. Now who's that? That's Charlie Knott.

Tilly Day: Yes, Charlie Knott... Frank...

Alan Lawson: Hauser!

Tilly Day: Hauser.

Sidney Cole: Frank Hauser[?].

Alan Lawson: yes.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Er, somewhere here there is...

Alan Lawson: There's Dan Burt[?] in there...

Sidney Cole: Den Burt[?] is over here somewhere...

Tilly Day: Yes, wait a minute...

Sidney Cole: Over here somewhere, is that him?

Tilly Day: There's um... he later directed films, he was on the sound...

Sidney Cole: That was...

Alan Lawson: Oh, Lance Comfort!

TD and

Sidney Cole: Lance Comfort!

Alan Lawson: Lance Comfort, I was wrong, it isn't Dan Burt[?].

Sidney Cole: It isn't Dan Burt[?] - Lance Comfort.

Tilly Day: No, Lance Comfort. And um, Gus somebody, he was an assistant director, he was very good. Now here is Betty Driver, do you remember Betty Driver?

Sidney Cole: Betty Driver, yes indeed, yes, a comedienne wasn't she?

Tilly Day: Yeah, and she's now in Coronation Street, you know, the great big woman. She had some very sad stories to tell about him.

Sidney Cole: About Driver?

Tilly Day: Archie Pitt.

Sidney Cole: Of Archie Pitt?

Tilly Day: Yes, he was imprisoned.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Sidney Cole: Was he? What was he imprisoned for?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he was imprisoned for um - young girls.

Sidney Cole: Oh dear! Is that why Gracie broke up that marriage, perhaps, Gracie Fields? Now here's a fascinating one, with a train

Alan Lawson: That's Stoll's too, isn't it?

Sidney Cole: That's Stoll's, but it doesn't say what picture, can you remember what picture it is?

Tilly Day: This is um... 'Cock of the North' with George, um - I told you this morning...

Alan Lawson: Delarus? No, no...

Tilly Day: No! George, um...oh, he was a famous variety man...

Sidney Cole: Not George Formby?

Tilly Day: No!

Sidney Cole: No, George... can't remember who that would be then.

Tilly Day: Is it written on there?

Sidney Cole: No.

Tilly Day: Um, Marie Lohr

Sidney Cole: Marie Lohr, yes...now who is that, next to Marie Lohr? I know that...

Tilly Day: Oh, he's one of the first Black and White Minstrels.

Sidney Cole: Oh, really? I know him so well, I can't think. And who's that?

Tilly Day: [Slight pause] Can't remember...

Sidney Cole: She's an actress, I'm sure.

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yes.

Sidney Cole: Can't remember. That's the - you were saying, Harry...

Tilly Day: Harry - something

Alan Lawson: Charnoch[?].

Tilly Day: Charnoch[?].

Sidney Cole: Charnoch[?]. Yes, he was what? Head electrician?

Alan Lawson: He was chargehand.

Tilly Day: That's right.

Sidney Cole: Chargehand electrician, yeah. Now who are these then...?

Tilly Day: That's Ossie Mitchell.

Sidney Cole: Ossie Mitchell.

Tilly Day: That's me, of course.

Sidney Cole: That's you, yes. Who's that?

Tilly Day: Challis Saunders.

Sidney Cole: Challis Saunders, yes.

Tilly Day: George Carney!

Sidney Cole: Oh, George Carney! Yes that's right, yes, yes.

Tilly Day: He had a famous - he had a son, you know. His son was six feet six, he was handsome! He was the handsomest man I've ever seen, before or since! He was a great big, tall, handsome man, and do you know, he was a queer!

Sidney Cole: Oh, oh well. Did he act? Was he an actor?

Tilly Day: Yes, then he committed suicide.

Sidney Cole: Oh poor man!

Tilly Day: ...in the finish, because it was before they were, you know, before it was - gay...

Sidney Cole: Before it was all right, yes. That's sad.

Alan Lawson: Now that's - that's something...

Tilly Day: Ah!

Sidney Cole: Ah, this, now we know who that is!

Tilly Day: Ah yes, that's um...

Sidney Cole: Mickey Powell!

Tilly Day: Mickey Powell, when he was a young man, when he was on the sound.

Alan Lawson: He was on the sound?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Alan Lawson: Because I knew he was a still photographer, but on the...?

Tilly Day: No, he was on the sound, then.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Tilly Day: He was on the boom.

Sidney Cole: And that was at - where? What studio was that at?

Tilly Day: At Walton-on-Thames.

Sidney Cole: Walton-on-Thames, yes.

Tilly Day: That's Sewell.

Sidney Cole: Yeah?

Tilly Day: Vernon Sewell.

Sidney Cole: Vernon Sewell, yes. That's you...

Tilly Day: That's me, yes. That's [Howarth] again...

Alan Lawson: Rex Howarth, Rex Howarth.

Sidney Cole: Rex Howarth, yeah. Do you know who that is?

Tilly Day: Yes; that was Mad Mac! I can't remember his name...[Chuckling].

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling]. Mad Mack! And who's that, do you know who that is?

Tilly Day: I can't remember.

Sidney Cole: Ah, here's an interesting still, in a large...

Tilly Day: Ah that was um...

Sidney Cole: You, looking very attractive, my dear.

Tilly Day: Thank you.

Sidney Cole: With - and who's the large gentleman?

Tilly Day: He was one of the men we - he wanted to be in pictures, so he financed his own picture..., you know what those days were!

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: And he made a two-reeler, and he was really a tulip -grower in Leicester!

Sidney Cole: Well he must have done well, he looks as if he's able to live very well, he's so large!

Tilly Day: Oh yes, he did, very well. And um... Norman Taylor, that's right, 'Sink or Swim'.

Sidney Cole: Golly, well he looked jovial. Did you enjoy that?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Yeah, you look as if you did! [Chuckles].

Tilly Day: That got on the front page of the 'Daily Mirror'.

Sidney Cole: Ah, that still of you with Norman Taylor?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Now this is er...?

Tilly Day: Oh this was a picture with children - we had children, and they were right up on mini pianos, right up the stages, it was built up, as you see...

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: Right up to the top, and on the top, by himself was the great pianist... Mike...

Alan Lawson: Mazowiech[?]? No?

Tilly Day: I'll remember later [chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Yeah, you will. Was this shot in a real theatre?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: It looks like it, yes, because there are boxes there...

Tilly Day: And all these children were right up here. And, do you know, it was a lovely moment, where all the mums were sitting down in the foyer and they had these - these children were all in their party clothes. And there were boys up one side and girls up the other.

Sidney Cole: What was the picture, can you...?

Tilly Day: It was a John Baxter picture.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes. And where was the theatre, do you remember?

Tilly Day: Um, I think it was somewhere around Walton-on-Thames... or between...

Alan Lawson: Or was it near Croydon?

Tilly Day: No.

Alan Lawson: Not near Croydon?

Tilly Day: No. And all these children were up on these pianos and they were all in their dresses, and they would all, sort of, sit up and they were so excited. And then one of them said, "Now!" and they all played 'When Day is Done' - altogether. And you could have heard a pin drop in the theatre. It was so lovely, these kids all sort of loving every minute of it.

Sidney Cole: And playing with this famous pianist at the same time?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, he was very good.

Sidney Cole: Hmm. Is George Baxter - [corrects himself] John Baxter, I mean - in the still, there?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes...

Sidney Cole: Where? Yes, he's behind there...

Tilly Day: No that's um, that's... [pause]

Sidney Cole: It'll come to you in a moment, it was a cameraman, was it?

Tilly Day: No, no. He was second director - assistant director - but he was directing that part, because it was up on the rostrum and John Baxter didn't like rostrums.

Sidney Cole: [Chuckles]. Ah ha...yeah!

Alan Lawson: Was that made at British National, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Yes, I thought so, yeah.

Tilly Day: British National! That's right.

Sidney Cole: Now, who's that?

Tilly Day: That's Seymour Hicks.

Sidney Cole: Seymour Hicks? Gosh!

Tilly Day: Yes, in 'Secret of the Loch'. Yes, marvellous man!

Sidney Cole: That was, where was that shot?

Tilly Day: Oh, that was...on 'Secret of the Loch'.

Sidney Cole: No, I mean where was 'Secret of the Loch' made?

Tilly Day: Oh, Ealing!

Sidney Cole: At Ealing? Ah ha.

Tilly Day: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Seymour Hicks was a nice man, you were saying?

Tilly Day: Except he used to go up into terrible tempers!

Sidney Cole: Ah?

Tilly Day: Oh, frightful tempers! And I remember once, it made us all - well I laughed anyway, I used to laugh a lot in those days! He had to stand behind a door and come in on the cue, you see. And he stood there and, of course, we all expected him to come in on the cue, which was after a

bit of conversation this side, you see. And the door burst open and he stood there, and he raved and ranted! It was terrible! Because he wanted to be first, he'd got to be first. How dare he wait behind a door? [AL chuckles in background.] How dare he!

Sidney Cole: Yeah, oh well! Well, of course, he was a very, very famous actor in his day, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Yes. Now here's...

Tilly Day: Oh that's on um...that was on a Greek ship.

Sidney Cole: Ah which? Now tell me...

Tilly Day: 'We must get Married'. That's Friese-Green?.

Sidney Cole: Oh Friese-Green Yes, Claude George Friese-Green.

Tilly Day: Yes. Basil Fenton-Smith[?], he's dead.

Sidney Cole: Who's that one?

Tilly Day: Um, Jimmy Wright, the boy...

Sidney Cole: Oh Jimmy Wright, the boy who went blind?

Tilly Day: Yes, lost his eyes and everything.

Sidney Cole: Oh, yes...oh.

Alan Lawson: That's Jimmy is it?

Sidney Cole: Oh well, how sad. How did he loose his sight?

Tilly Day: Oh in the war!

Sidney Cole: In the war, it was, yes, I thought it was, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, he was flying and shot down by an aeroplane.

Alan Lawson: Shot down.

Sidney Cole: Ah what a shame Because he always attended all the ACT annual meetings, I remember, you know, from the platform, when I was in there, he was - Jimmy was always there, wasn't he? Who else here? Who's that...any idea?

Tilly Day: Oh he... Moss, Gerry Moss.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Gerry Moss! Oh yes, yes. Right, 'cause that's er...what picture was that, then?

Tilly Day: Um, 'You Must get Married'.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: What's written there?

Sidney Cole: Oh, Claude Friese-Green.

Alan Lawson: Dead centre, yeah.

Sidney Cole: Dead centre, is that? Yeah.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, it's written there.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. Now here's another one.

Tilly Day: Ah, Jimmy Wilson, Harry Waxman, me, Harry Hughes...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, Harry Hughes, the director.

Tilly Day: Leslie Perrins.

Sidney Cole: Oh Leslie Perrins, yes.

Alan Lawson: And what's the film? Does it say?

[Slight pause]

Sidney Cole: No it doesn't say. Can you remember? Anyhow, one should be able to find it from Harry Hughes...

Tilly Day: 'Brent Pays' [?] that was called.

Alan Lawson: 'Rent Pays'?

Tilly Day: 'Brent'.

Alan Lawson: 'Brent Pays'.

Sidney Cole: 'Brent Pays'. Oh yes, it's on the board, on the clapperboard, which is just down at the bottom of the still.

Tilly Day: Yes...

Sidney Cole: Yeah, with Jimmy's name, yeah. Ah, here's an animated scene. This is a very glossy looking set. Does it... it doesn't say anything on the back.

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: Can you remember what this was?

Tilly Day: That was two famous dancers were dancing there. You had an awful lot of men around didn't you, in those days? I mean there were lighting blokes, you know...

Alan Lawson: Hmm, electricians all around the rails here...

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: Oh, an awful lot there used to be.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, where was that, do you remember?

Tilly Day: Um, let's see...

Alan Lawson: Was that Wembley?

Tilly Day: No, I think that was Shepperton. That's Joan Davis, she was the um, she used to choreograph the dances.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm. But she acted as well, didn't she?

Tilly Day: Joan Davis? No, no.

Sidney Cole: No? I'm thinking of another one.

Tilly Day: Another one, yes. That's me.

Sidney Cole: Who's the cameraman, do you know?

Tilly Day: Jimmy Wilson.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Jimmy Wilson again. And the director was, who - any idea? Is he there...and if so, who he is?

Tilly Day: I think it was John Baxter but I'm not sure.

Alan Lawson: Oh well, we can sort that one out. [NB likely to be 'The Common Touch'] I think we'll make a break.

[End of Tape 2, Side 4]

[Tape 3, Side 5]

Alan Lawson: Tilly Day, Side 5.

Sidney Cole: I think you know this one?

Tilly Day: Yes, that's 'You Must get Married', and there was Robertson Hare.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm!

Tilly Day: Who was a dear. There's Teddy Edwards. That's Mickey Anderson...

Sidney Cole: Anderson, yeah, looking very young there.

Tilly Day: He was fourteen there.

Sidney Cole: Really?

Tilly Day: That of course was me. And this is Dickey Bird

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: ...and he was a stage impresario.

Sidney Cole: Ah...who was that?

Tilly Day: Jack Waller.

Sidney Cole: Oh Jack Waller, oh yes, he was very famous in his day...

Tilly Day: Yes he was very famous...

Sidney Cole: ...at the New Palladium wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, very famous.

Sidney Cole: Yes. And who's that?

Tilly Day: Oh that's the stand-in for Robertson Hare, that's why I put Robertson up there.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, you can see, yes...

Tilly Day: He's the stand-in...

Sidney Cole: Yeah, the stand-in, you can see why because neither of them have any hair at all, practically!

Tilly Day: At all, yeah [chuckling].

Sidney Cole: Yes right.

Tilly Day: Robertson Hare, he was a dear little man.

Sidney Cole: And here's another one...

Tilly Day: Ah, that's Irvine Asher, Mario Zampi.

Sidney Cole: Ah yes, Mario Zampi, he was a very good dresser...

Tilly Day: Um, what's the name of the boy who led the um - oh, I had his name just then - Leeder, Ralph Reader!

Sidney Cole: Oh, Ralph Reader, yes, who did the Boy Scout shows?

Tilly Day: That's right.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, what are they called? The Gang shows, yes.

Tilly Day: That was some man who was a heavy - thrower-out thing. That was Doc Solomon...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: ...George King and...

Alan Lawson: Carroll Gibbons.

Tilly Day: Carroll Gibbons

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, Carroll Gibbons what, the um, Savoy Orpheans?

Tilly Day: That's right, yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes and that must have been at um...

Tilly Day: Warners - Warner Brothers First National.

Sidney Cole: That's at Teddington?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. Gosh, here's an enormous crew!

Tilly Day: Ah yes.

Sidney Cole: Now which one is this?

Tilly Day: That's Arsenal, surely?

Sidney Cole: Oh is that 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery', is it?

Tilly Day: Yes, yes!

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, gosh!

Tilly Day: There's George Allinson, who had a thing about me.

[SC chuckles.]

Tilly Day: Oh, he actually provided a flat.

Sidney Cole: Did he?

Tilly Day: Yes, which I didn't take, of course!

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling]...Ah well! And there's Thorold, yes, beaming all over his face. And er...

Alan Lawson: There's Cecil...

Sidney Cole: Is that Cecil?

Alan Lawson: Dickson's there.

Sidney Cole: Dickson is there, somewhere - must be - there he is! Who else, who's er - who photographed that?

Tilly Day: That's me...

Alan Lawson: Dick...

Tilly Day: ... there's Alan...

Sidney Cole: There's Alan, there, yes...Alan Lawson. And there's Dick the other side of you...

Tilly Day: Desmond Dickinson.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, there you are, great.

Alan Lawson: John Dennis, I think, is there too.

Sidney Cole: Was he the soundman?

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Tilly Day: Yes he was there.

Alan Lawson: And Percy Dayton[?]

Sidney Cole: And Percy Dayton, oh Percy Dayton[?!]

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Fabulous Percy Dayton.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Where is he?

Alan Lawson: I think he's there. And Mack, who became the dubbing mixer, he was there on that one, I think...probably.

Sidney Cole: Mack?

Alan Lawson: He was the dubbing mixer down at Pinewood, finally.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, oh yes, I think I know who you mean, yeah.

Alan Lawson: McCullum...was it?

Sidney Cole: McCullum! Yes, I know...very good.

Alan Lawson: David McCullum[?].

Sidney Cole: Nice man, yes.

Tilly Day: Where's he?

Alan Lawson: I think he's there...

Sidney Cole: Somewhere, yeah... Big crew, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh enormous!

Sidney Cole: And this was Arsenal, the team isn't there, though - oh yes it is...

Tilly Day: Yes it is.

Sidney Cole: I can see, yes the team is all there.

Tilly Day: Yes it's all there, mixed in.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, all mixed in, yes. And that, of course, is shot at Highbury itself, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. And here's another - oh this is a good crew too, that's...

Tilly Day: That's Tommy Trinder, I think.

Sidney Cole: That's the Tommy Trinder picture we were talking about.

Tilly Day: Yes; that's Tommy Trinder, yes.

Sidney Cole: What was it called?

Tilly Day: Er, 'Laugh it Off'.

Sidney Cole: 'Laugh it Off'. You had a story about it being the only film...

Tilly Day: Oh yes. War had broken out then, it was September the 5th and the cinemas were shut - oh everything was shut. The shops were shut, oh the lot. And everybody wanted to know, where was this one film being made? So they said, "Oh, we'll tell you what we'll do, let's 'phone Tilly Day, because she's sure to have the only film."

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: And they 'phoned me and I was! They 'phoned my Mother and I was, on 'Laugh it Off'. And of course they were all opened later, sort of thing.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, where was that?

Tilly Day: Um, Walton-on-Thames.

Sidney Cole: Walton-on-Thames, hmm.

Alan Lawson: Um, Sid Stone's there on the edit, on that crew...

Sidney Cole: Oh, he was the editor, was he?

Tilly Day: Yes, he was the editor.

Alan Lawson: He's there, yeah.

Sidney Cole: Is he there somewhere near you?

Alan Lawson: Yes, in the front, in the front here somewhere - there he is.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, ah yes, I know, he was quite young then, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Oh yes.

Sidney Cole: Who else was in it, apart from Trinder?

Tilly Day: Oh Jean Colin...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: She was, in it. And um - can't remember anybody...

Alan Lawson: Who directed it?

Tilly Day: John Baxter surely?

Sidney Cole: There he is, there's John.

Tilly Day: Yes, John Baxter.

Sidney Cole: John Baxter, with his glasses and his round face.

Tilly Day: Yes, John Baxter.

Sidney Cole: Yes, yeah...

Tilly Day: He directed it.

Alan Lawson: Now we've come back into the war years.

Sidney Cole: Ah yes, here we are, gosh! Right, what is that, Tilly? Where is that?

Tilly Day: Ah. We were on Bure Island then...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: And I was in civvy street. Cecil Dickson was there. Tommy - sound?

Sidney Cole: Tommy Otter?

Tilly Day: No, Tommy somebody, who was on the sound. And, we were on this island. I don't know whether you know Bure Island, do you?

Alan Lawson: Tommy - he was the sound mixer at Walton studios.

Tilly Day: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Ah, can't remember. It'll come back.

Tilly Day: But we were on Bure Island and... (there's Geoff Faithful).

Sidney Cole: What were you making there, a war film?

Tilly Day: We did a film called 'Prepare for Ditching'[NB 'Ditching: Before and After'], and it was an Air Force film. We were allocated a crew, a crew that had been on - what do you call it? Exercise, on actual bombing...

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: ...and they were put there for a rest. And we had this lot, and they had to find out, they were trying to find out how to fold, in an envelope style, the er...

Alan Lawson: Rubber dinghy, wasn't it?

Sidney Cole: Rubber dinghy!

Tilly Day: The rubber dinghy, rubber dinghy, that was later to be let out, you see. But um, they couldn't find out how to do it!

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: And I said, "Well look, why don't you fold it like this?" And I did it like an envelope. And they said, "Oh, oh that's not bad" and they put it in, and they yanked it, and through that I got a Gold Leaf in the ATS, when I joined later

Sidney Cole: Oh, very good. Who's that? Looks familiar...

Alan Lawson: Cecil Dickson!

Sidney Cole: No, no, it's a girl. Wait a minute, round face.

Tilly Day: No, I don't know her.

Sidney Cole: Some of these faces look familiar, yet you can't put a name to them.

Tilly Day: Yes, there's a good - they've got, sort of, general faces - what I call!

Alan Lawson: That's a just...

Sidney Cole: Oh this is a wartime one too?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, Lieutenant Colonel Rainer

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, I remember him.

Tilly Day: And Hector Coward.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: Oh, Lieutenant Colonel Rainer.

Sidney Cole: And that's him, yes that's him, yes, I recognise him, yes. Anybody else you recognise?

Tilly Day: Major Dallander, Hector Coward. Oh I know them all really, but um... Oh that one! That one! I always remember him.

Sidney Cole: Who's he?

Tilly Day: He's Lieutenant somebody-or-other. I always remember him being... We had a great big tree just outside our flats - enormous old, old tree that had an enormous trunk. And I remember coming by there one night [chuckling], and there was one girl who wasn't in, and I was looking for her, you see. And there she was, up against this tree with this man!

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: I said...(what shall we call her? Robinson.) I said, "Robinson! What are you doing there? Come out at once!" He said, "I am (so-and-so and so-and-so), Lieutenant Colonel (so-and-so)." I said, 'I don't care if you're the King of England!'

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: "You come out of there" - to her, and she came out, oh yeah.

Sidney Cole: This is when you were the Regimental Sergeant Major?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Yes...

Sidney Cole: Yeah...so you were very tough?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! [Laughs].

Alan Lawson: Um, that one?

Sidney Cole: It's another group...

Alan Lawson: If you can get...

Tilly Day: Ah that's when...

Sidney Cole: This is in the Air Force?

Tilly Day: No, that's when we were, all the crew of 'School for Secrets' and...

Alan Lawson: Go along the row...

Tilly Day: ...we had not been de-mobbed. That, I can't remember, Mickey Anderson - Private Mickey Anderson. He was a Major, he was the production manager, he was the art director...

Alan Lawson: Do you remember what his name was?

Tilly Day: [Pause]. Peter Ustinov, Private.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: [looking at photos again] He was in the Air Force, he was a Squadron Leader... so was he. He was Hawsley, he was in the art department. This was a girl, she was production secretary. That was - what was the name you said to me the other day?

Alan Lawson: Gill Taylor.

Tilly Day: Gill Taylor. Oh, I'll tell you a funny story about him!

Sidney Cole: Oh do.

Tilly Day: Do you know, we were all working on pictures, and it was very early Denham days. And there was a crowd of us in 'The Swan and Bottle', and we were there solely because - somebody, I shall remember his name in a minute - he was quite a boy! And his wife was having her first baby, and he was in such a state and he was staying there until he got the word through that all was well. Well, he'd disappear every so often to telephone, then he'd come back and he'd say "No" and so we'd all say, "Have another drink." And I noticed that, over there in 'The Swan and Bottle', you know, it's a big place? And on a far table, a man was standing, by a table with his hand on the table, sort of surveying the scene - he was a long way from us - and he was still in uniform. And it was Gill Taylor, but I didn't know it was, at the time. And he was looking at us all, and he was looking at me especially. And he came up to me a little later and he said - tapped me on the shoulder and he said, "Excuse me, could I speak to you for a minute?" So I said, "Yes, certainly." So I said, "excuse me boys..." So nobody took much notice, you know, there was such a crowd of us. So I got up and I walked over to where this man was standing, so I said, "Yes? You're going to be on our next picture?" So he said, "Well it wasn't about that I wanted to speak to you." He said, "Would you sleep with me tonight?" I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "I don't believe in beating about the bush."

[SC and AL chuckle].

Tilly Day: He said, "Will you sleep with me tonight?" So I said, "No... no thank you very much!" And I turned and walked away! [Chuckling]. I've never had such a funny encounter in all my life! And I went back, I said, "Who's that man over there?" They said, "Oh that's Gill Taylor." So I said, "Oh... oh" So, well, I...

Sidney Cole: Do you recognise anybody there?

Alan Lawson: Yes, there's - you know, that's George Brown isn't it?

Sidney Cole: Oh George Brown.

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, that's right.

Alan Lawson: George Brown, Georgie Brown. This chap was a...

Tilly Day: Ralph Brinton!

Alan Lawson: Ralph Brinton.

Sidney Cole: Oh Ralph Brinton yes, the art director.

Tilly Day: Tilly Day, Harry Waxman...

Sidney Cole: Oh Harry Waxman, he looks a bit kiddo there in his funny hat!

Alan Lawson: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and this chap was in the RAF film unit, he was an art director too, Sid Powell or Howells. [NB Possibly John Howell?]

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, he was...

Sidney Cole: Cowells, yes?

Tilly Day: ... assistant to him.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, yeah, very good.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, fine. Um...

Sidney Cole: This one?

Tilly Day: Oh that was 'Toilers of the Sea', that's where I buried the continuity!

Alan Lawson: Oh, this is it? Yeah...

Sidney Cole: Oh that's the one you told us about? Yes...

Tilly Day: Yes! That was before I was white haired. That was the director, now what was his name? Jean Choux, the French director, Jean Choux. And he was the production manager, and we were looking at something or other...

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: ...and that was on 'Toilers of the Sea'.

Sidney Cole: That was - when was that?

Tilly Day: Oh, 'Toilers of the Sea' was about 1936.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Alan Lawson: There's one with Til on a tank.

Sidney Cole: Oh there you are, on a tank!

Tilly Day: Ah yes, that was during the war, that was about 1942.

Sidney Cole: Ah yes there you are, you're looking as if you are in charge of the tank, actually. You weren't were you?

Tilly Day: [Chuckling]. No! That's Thorold.

Sidney Cole: That's Thorold with the wind blowing his hair practically off his head.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, you wouldn't remember what that was on?

Tilly Day: That was a - he was a Major.

Sidney Cole: No, but in what film, what occasion it was?

Tilly Day: Oh, um...

Sidney Cole: A training film, was it?

Tilly Day: Um...

Alan Lawson: A 'careless talk' thing, wasn't it?

Tilly Day: No, no - yes! 'Careless talk'.

Alan Lawson: Yes, it was on 'careless talk', yes.

Sidney Cole: Ah it was about 'careless talk'. Was it the thing that eventually became then...?

Alan Lawson: Feature film.

Sidney Cole: 'Next of Kin'!

Tilly Day: 'Next of Kin'!

Sidney Cole: 'Next of Kin', marvellous film, the one that Churchill wanted to ban.

Tilly Day: Did he?

Sidney Cole: Yeah originally, I believe.

Tilly Day: Did he really? Why?

Sidney Cole: Oh because it was defeatist, he thought - but he was persuaded better.

Tilly Day: I should jolly well think so!

[break in recording]

Sidney Cole: Are we going?

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Sidney Cole: There's 'Malta Story'. This is just um, a sort of brochure about it. Tell us about...

Tilly Day: Yes, that's the Tranmere the programme. Here we are, look...

Sidney Cole: Ah, there you are, you've got it in there, haven't you?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Who directed that?

Tilly Day: Brian Desmond-Hurst.

Sidney Cole: Oh Brian Desmond-Hurst, yes. Who's that?

Tilly Day: Ah, Muriel Pavlow, Jack Hawkins...

Sidney Cole: Oh Jack Hawkins, yeah, nice man.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Hey, is that, er, who is that?

Tilly Day: That's um...

Sidney Cole: No, this one I mean.

Tilly Day: I don't know, can't remember. That, that is - what's the famous man - here you are...

Alan Lawson: Guinness.

Tilly Day: Alec Guinness.

Sidney Cole: Alec Guinness. Oh yes, of course, yes.

Tilly Day: That's Alec Guinness. Reg, Reg, um...Morris, Ossie Morris's brother. He later went to Canada. Bert Batt, George Pollock...

Sidney Cole: Oh George Pollock, yeah.

Tilly Day: Peter DeSarigny...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

[Pause].

Tilly Day: They just become faces, you know.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, well... not to - don't bother.

Alan Lawson: Never mind.

Sidney Cole: Ah, 'Malta Story', was that er...? Did you go to Malta?

Tilly Day: Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Yes? Tell us about that.

Tilly Day: Oh that was beautiful. We went - I must say, though, I was a little astounded. I was always astounded at the countries, the different way they are described, before you go to them, and when you go, usually you get terribly disappointed. Because we went to Malta, and nobody had described to me that it was just a great lump of rock, and it was rocks all over. It was rocky pavement, if there was a pavement, and you went right up the mountainside and it was all this rock, this excavated rock that you looked down into. And it was marvellous, marvellous, wonderful, but I hadn't expected red rock, and that's what it was.

Sidney Cole: How long were you there, can you remember?

Tilly Day: Oh, about twelve weeks.

Sidney Cole: Really? You shot the whole film there?

Tilly Day: Oh yes. Well most of it.

Sidney Cole: Most of it, yeah - a few studio scenes, yeah.

Tilly Day: Some of it when we came back.

Sidney Cole: Great. Now here's another one...

Tilly Day: Oh that's Donald Peers.

Sidney Cole: Oh Donald Peers next to you and er...

Tilly Day: Er, Gibb...

Sidney Cole: Gerry Gibbs, yeah, looking very stern and er...

Tilly Day: And um...

Alan Lawson: Peter Gramscard[?]

Tilly Day: Peter Gramscard[?], that's right. And er - the cameraman?

Alan Lawson: Um yes, you told me, he was tall, very tall and handsome...

Tilly Day: Very handsome!

Sidney Cole: Oh well, Graham somebody!

Tilly Day: Yes...[chuckles].

Alan Lawson: Yeah...[chuckling]. No, I don't know.

Sidney Cole: There's another still. Where is that?

Alan Lawson: I think it tells you on the board.

Tilly Day: Oh that's 'Too Many Crooks'.

Sidney Cole: 'Too Many Crooks', yeah...

Tilly Day: Yes. That's Mario Zampi...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: Um, what's-er-name? Fraser - the little... she's grown up now, Liz Fraser.

Sidney Cole: Liz Fraser, yes...

Tilly Day: Yes.

[Slight pause.]

Sidney Cole: Who's that? Next to er...

Tilly Day: Brenda De Banzie

Sidney Cole: Oh Brenda De Banzie, what a nice lady!

Tilly Day: Yes, Brenda De Banzie. Terry Thomas...

Sidney Cole: Oh yeah, there's you...

Tilly Day: Yes. George Cole...

Sidney Cole: George Cole - oh, you're...

Tilly Day: ...on George Cole's lap!

Sidney Cole: Ah, I was going to say, you're sitting on George's knee, aren't you?

Tilly Day: Yes. Bernie Bresslaw...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Alan Lawson: Who's the cameraman on that one?

Tilly Day: Er, let's look for somebody

Sidney Cole: Does it say on the board.

Tilly Day: Ah, possibly.

Sidney Cole: Does it say on the board?

Alan Lawson: Stan Pavey.

Sidney Cole: Stan Pavey, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh, so it was!

Alan Lawson: Dear old Stan, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes! So it was, Stan Pavey, that's right.

Sidney Cole: I'm just wondering where he is.

Alan Lawson: He must be there - round face.

Sidney Cole: Is that him?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: Should be there - ah there he is!

Tilly Day: There he is, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Behind, right behind the director.

Tilly Day: That's right, Stan Pavey.

Sidney Cole: Yes, great. Here's another unit still. Which is this? Doesn't say. Again this is er...

Alan Lawson: 'White Corridors'.

Sidney Cole: 'White Corridors' - oh with Pat Jackson.

Tilly Day: Yes, this was the first of all the hospital pictures...

Sidney Cole: Yes?

Tilly Day: ...the first one that started them off.

Sidney Cole: Googie Withers?

Tilly Day: Googie Withers, yes.

Sidney Cole: That's Pat...

Tilly Day: Yes, Pat, Pat Jackson, and er - forgotten his name - remember it in a moment. Kit Gowan[?]....

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: Joe...

Sidney Cole: Joe, what is he, and actor, or what?

Tilly Day: No, he was a stills cameraman.

Sidney Cole: Oh a still cameraman.

Tilly Day: But he was the son of a famous actor - Alan...Jeayes! - Joe Jeayes!

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, Joe Jeayes, Alan Jeayes, yes. Alan Jeayes was in 'High Command'.

Tilly Day: Yeah, Joe Jeayes, he was very...

Sidney Cole: Who's that, with the spectacles on?

Tilly Day: Don't know - forgotten. That was Janni.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Joseph Janni, yeah.

Alan Lawson: Er, 'Vice Versa', the third from the left is Sash Fisher.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, there he is, Sash, yes.

Alan Lawson: And the third from the right is Tilly [chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, there's Tilly. So...

Alan Lawson: Peter Ustinov is in the middle.

Sidney Cole: Peter Ustinov in the middle, yes.

Tilly Day: George Brown...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, George Brown, yes. Who's that?

Tilly Day: His Mother, Peter's Mother. Nadia...Nadia...whatever her name was?

Sidney Cole: Benois?

Tilly Day: What?

Sidney Cole: Benois?

Alan Lawson: Yes I think it is.

Tilly Day: I think it was, yes. She was quite famous for painting. Jackie Hildyard...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, there's Jack yes. Now who's that? I know him...

Tilly Day: Oh you know him! It's the one I'm trying to think of...um...

Sidney Cole: You know him, I know him so well...

Alan Lawson: Yes...assistant director.

Tilly Day: No! Assist...er...cameraman!

Sidney Cole: Yeah...yes, not Arthur?

Tilly Day: Arthur Ibbetson!

Sidney Cole: Arthur Ibbetson!

Tilly Day: Arthur Ibbetson, that's the man! It was him we were waiting for in the bar, to have the baby!

Sidney Cole: Ah yes! He's a nice chap, yes...

Tilly Day: We always agreed afterwards that the wrong man had got the job. Arthur Alcott had got the job and it should have been Herbert Smith...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes...

Tilly Day: ...it should have been Herbert Smith, 'cause Herbert Smith was at Denham.

Sidney Cole: Who is that? She looked familiar, sitting next to Sash. Can you think who it is?

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Carmen!

Sidney Cole: Carmen Dillon?

Tilly Day: Yeah.

Sidney Cole: Yeah I thought it was, yes that's right, Carmen Dillon], next to Sash. That's useful in terms of, you know, Peter.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Ah here, that's an interesting still, that's you with...

Tilly Day: Oh that's um Mai Zetterling

Sidney Cole: Oh Mai Zetterling?

Tilly Day: ...and Terence Young.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, on which picture?

Tilly Day: 'Tall Headlines'.

Sidney Cole: 'Tall Headlines', yeah.

Tilly Day: Nice picture, that was a very good picture. That's 'Appointment with Venus'.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Tilly Day: On Sark.

Sidney Cole: Sark, yeah...

Tilly Day: That was David Niven, of course.

Sidney Cole: David Niven, yeah.

Tilly Day: And Jack Hildyard is behind the camera there - myself...

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

Alan Lawson: Who directed that?

Tilly Day: Um, Ralph Thomas.

Sidney Cole: Ralph Thomas, yes he must be in - no he's not shown.

Tilly Day: No he's not in that.

Sidney Cole: Here's another one, er...

Tilly Day: That's um...

Alan Lawson: George More O'Ferrall picture's, that - isn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes, 'A Woman For Joe'.

Sidney Cole: 'A Woman For Joe'. And who's the girl?

Tilly Day: Diane Cilento.

Sidney Cole: Oh of course, Diane, yes!

Tilly Day: And that's George Baker.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, anybody else?

Tilly Day: David Kossoff!

Sidney Cole: David Kossoff - yes, I knew he looked familiar.

Alan Lawson: Now, those three, I think are all - no two, rather...

Sidney Cole: Two are the same

Tilly Day: That's on Marseilles - Marseilles waterfront.

Alan Lawson: Yes, 'The Clouded Yellow'?

Tilly Day: No, no, no, it wasn't - Oh, is it?

Alan Lawson: Yes, 'The Clouded Yellow'.

Sidney Cole: Yes it's typed out, so that it's a...yeah.

Tilly Day: Oh gosh!

Alan Lawson: What can't speak, can't lie! [Laughs].

Tilly Day: It can't!

Sidney Cole: It's a still by Ian Jeayes, that you mentioned just now...

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, Jean Simmons.

Sidney Cole: ...with Jean Simmons, yeah. Who directed that, 'The Clouded Yellow'?

Tilly Day: Um, Ralph Thomas.

Sidney Cole: Oh, that was Ralph Thomas?

Tilly Day: That was [???

Sidney Cole: That's the same setting? On that picture, 'Clouded Yellow', I think, isn't it?

Alan Lawson: Yes, it's the same crew, yes. You can...

Tilly Day: No, Guy Green. That was 'House of Secrets'.

Alan Lawson: Oh really?

Sidney Cole: Oh, not 'The Clouded Yellow'? It was 'House of Secrets', was it? With Guy Green - what, directing?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. It hasn't got anything on it?

Tilly Day: Guy Green, 'House of Secrets'.

Alan Lawson: Who was the camera crew on that, can you recognise any of them? No, they're all back viewed aren't they?

Sidney Cole: Yeah it's very difficult because you can hardly see. Where are you? Here somewhere...

Tilly Day: There I am.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, but I think it's difficult to check any of the camera crew...

Tilly Day: They're all back views, yes

Sidney Cole: All the back views, yes.

Alan Lawson: We'll have to talk about 'House of Secrets'.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: There's me...

Sidney Cole: The old 'House of Secrets', Can we ask you? This other still with Guy, can you recognise anybody else there?

Tilly Day: That was me, of course...

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

[Pause].

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: No? Oh well...

Tilly Day: I must have known them all very well...

Sidney Cole: Yes, of course. Where was that shot, actually?

Tilly Day: That's on the waterfront.

Sidney Cole: Oh I see, it has that sort of embankment thing going around, yeah?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: The waterfront at?

Tilly Day: Seine, on the river Seine.

Sidney Cole: On the river Seine, and not at Marseilles?

Tilly Day: No - well it might be Marseilles...

Sidney Cole: There's you...

Tilly Day: And Alma Taylor.

Sidney Cole: And Alma Taylor.

Tilly Day: That was when she did a film comeback on 'Lost'.

Sidney Cole: On 'Loft'?

Alan Lawson: 'Lost'!

Sidney Cole: 'Lost'!

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes!

Alan Lawson: Who directed that?

Tilly Day: Guy Green.

Alan Lawson: Oh Guy Green!

Sidney Cole: Guy Green. Now where was that taken?

Tilly Day: Somewhere in the City, in London.

Sidney Cole: In London? Yes, it's a nice still. Had you known Alma Taylor earlier?

Tilly Day: Oh I knew her in earlier days, yes...

Sidney Cole: In silent days, did you?

Tilly Day: ...at Broad West.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes? Yes.

Tilly Day: You see, I knew her then, and I knew her at Walton-on-Thames, and it was a great get-together.

Sidney Cole: Yes, would be.

Tilly Day: And then, of course, she came in George King days too, the beginning of George King days.

Sidney Cole: Because she was a big star in her day, wasn't she?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Yes.

Sidney Cole: Now here's an interesting one.

Tilly Day: Ah this is 'Jacqueline'.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: That is Geoff Unsworth...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: That's Jacqueline...

Sidney Cole: What was her name?

Tilly Day: ...the little girl? I don't remember.

Sidney Cole: Don't remember her?

Tilly Day: No. Now behind, is the boy - what was the name of the fellow that...?

Sidney Cole: ...that we were talking about?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Richard O'Sullivan.

Tilly Day: Richard O'Sullivan, yes.

Sidney Cole: What about the story you told me about this little girl and...?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, Richard O'Sullivan. He was about ten and he came - one day he was looking terribly miserable. I said, "What's the matter, Richard?" So he said, "Nothing." I said, "Well, now come on, tell me truly, what's the matter?" So he said, "Well you see, it's Jacqueline." So I said, "Well, what's the matter with Jacqueline?" He said, "Well, she keeps on kicking me." So I said, "Kicking you?" He said, "Yes, look" and he showed me his leg and there were great lumps and bruises on it. I said, "Well, you know what you want to do?" He said, "No?" I said, "The next time she kicks you, you kick her back...hard!" So he said, "But she's a girl!" I said, "That doesn't

matter" I said, "you kick her back!" So he went off quite satisfied, I didn't think anything more about it. But the next day he came to me, he said, "I did what you said." And I thought, what did I say, what did I say? ...Kicked her hard, she was crying, and she never touched him again!

[SC and AL laugh].

Sidney Cole: Very good!

Alan Lawson: I think this is the same film, is it?

Sidney Cole: That's the same film by the looks of it...

Tilly Day: Yes!

Sidney Cole: Yes, there's young Richard and the little girl that - they're both looking quite happy, so the kicking thing probably was a good idea?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, oh yes, it died down.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...and that's er...

Tilly Day: Oh John Gregson.

Sidney Cole: John Gregson, yes.

Tilly Day: John Gregson, yes, he was the 'father' of Jacqueline.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, who's that?

Tilly Day: That's - they always used to have him for the Irish, when they wanted an Irish actor.

Alan Lawson: Oh yes! Arthur...?

Tilly Day: Hugh? No...

Sidney Cole: I know who you mean...

Tilly Day: You know who I mean.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, oh well...

Tilly Day: He was with Jimmy O'Dea and Harry O'Donovan, when the two little men walked up and down Wardour Street. One tall - one very tall, one short, raising their bowler hats and saying, "Have you seen Tilly Day?"

[AL chuckles].

Tilly Day: So they said, "No." And then one man had [chuckles], and he got in touch with me.

Sidney Cole: Was it a birthday or something?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: It's a little girl's birthday?

Tilly Day: It was a little girl's birthday, yes.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Alan Lawson: That's all from the same film, is it? I believe you said was a Jack Buchanan film?

Tilly Day: Yes, that's 'As Long as They're Happy'.

Sidney Cole: 'As Long as They're Happy'?

Tilly Day: Yes. That was in a house somewhere around Pinewood.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes? With all those cut yew trees, shaped yew trees, yeah.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: So it was Jack Buchanan, who else was in it?

Tilly Day: Oh, the lot! Brenda De Banzie.

Sidney Cole: Is that Brenda?

Tilly Day: No, that was a young girl, she's Nick-what's-it's wife now.

Alan Lawson: Nick Roeg's wife?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Is that Theresa Russell?

[Pause].

Alan Lawson: Ah hmm, ah hmm.

Tilly Day: Well that must be the second wife, then.

Alan Lawson: Yes, second wife.

Tilly Day: Ah well, she was his first wife.

Sidney Cole: And this is the same, similar thing. See anybody you recognise in this one from that film? There's you doing your work...

Tilly Day: No, they're back views aren't they?

Sidney Cole: Yeah, it's difficult when they're back views, or not fully...

Alan Lawson: Now there's...

Tilly Day: Ah...

Sidney Cole: What is this?

Tilly Day: That was 'Weaker Sex'.

Sidney Cole: What was the film?

Tilly Day: 'Weaker Sex'.

Sidney Cole: 'Weaker Sex', oh yes.

Tilly Day: That was Paul Soskin was the producer and Roy Baker...

Sidney Cole: Roy Baker directing?

Tilly Day: Directing - Roy Baker.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: Er, there was a - I don't remember the girl...

Alan Lawson: There was Ursula Jeans you say...

Sidney Cole: Ursula Jeans.

Tilly Day: Ah yes, Ursula Jeans, she wasn't in this shot.

Alan Lawson: Hmm, but you had a very interesting story about Ursula Jeans in your sum-up. Can you remember? When her first husband died?

Tilly Day: Ah yes!

Sidney Cole: What was it, Tilly?

Tilly Day: Years ago, when I was on a silent film, there was a young, very young, very good-looking man, and his name was Robin Irvine, and I met him later in a George King picture, he was the lead. That was Robin Irvine, very good looking, though. And he was married, secretly, first of all, to Ursula Jeans, and then about three months later, it all came out in the press, it was front page stuff, you know..., "Ursula and Robin Married." And it all came out how they went their separate ways on the set, very quietly, but all the time they were married. And then, later, I worked with Ursula on, 'You Must Get Ma...' [corrects herself] on um...

Alan Lawson: 'Weaker Sex'?

Tilly Day: 'Weaker Sex', and I said to her, "Oh..." - She said to me, "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" So I said, "Well yes, you saw me on a Robin Irvine picture." So she said, "Oh yes...Robin." So I said, "I've got a picture of him at home." So she said, "Have you, Tilly?" So I said, "Yes, I'll bring it up, if you like?" So she said, "Yes, I would like." So I said, "Right." So I took up the picture I'd got of Robin Irvine. And she stood and she looked at it a long time, she said, "Yes, that's Robin." So I said, "You can have it, if you like." So she said, "Could I? Could I take it home and show Roger?" Roger Livesey was her second husband - she'd married him about five years after Robin had died. And so I said, "Yes, you can" and so she took it home and she - I know she valued that an awful lot.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, that's nice. Now here's another one in a...

Tilly Day: Oh that's Ralph Thomas.

Sidney Cole: That's Ralph Thomas, yes, in the middle.

Tilly Day: And there's um, what's-his-name? You know Ernie Steward!

Sidney Cole: Ernie Steward yeah, anybody else?

Tilly Day: There's um [Anouk]...

Alan Lawson: What's the film?

Sidney Cole: [Anouk]?

Tilly Day: And Jean Simmons.

Sidney Cole: [Anouk] and Jean Simmons, what...?

Tilly Day: She was a friend of Jean Simmons at the time.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha.

Tilly Day: That was Jean Simmons.

Sidney Cole: [Anouk] wasn't on the picture?

Tilly Day: Oh no!

Sidney Cole: No. What was the picture?

Tilly Day: That's 'Clouded Yellow'.

Sidney Cole: 'Clouded Yellow'?

Alan Lawson: It is 'Clouded Yellow', is there - right on the negative.

Sidney Cole: Who was directing that?

Tilly Day: Ralph Thomas.

Sidney Cole: Ralph Thomas, of course - oh there he is, yes.

Alan Lawson: That's the Royal Command Performance...

Sidney Cole: Ah!

Tilly Day: Oh yes, there was Anthony Asquith...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, there is Anthony, yes.

Tilly Day: Um, Sophie Loren.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha...

Tilly Day: William Holden. You know I am amazed I remember all these names!

[SC and AL chuckle].

Sidney Cole: Who is that? Is that Jack?

Alan Lawson: There's Tommy Steele there too, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Jack Hawkins isn't it?

Alan Lawson: Hmm.

Sidney Cole: Isn't it?

Tilly Day: Yes, Jack Hawkins.

Sidney Cole: Golly!

Tilly Day: Tommy Steele yes, you said.

Alan Lawson: Hmm.

Sidney Cole: And that was um...?

Tilly Day: Command Performance.

Sidney Cole: Command Performance?

Tilly Day: We went, you know - we actually - they did, instead of the usual sort of show that they had in front of a Command Performance, they had a film being taken.

Sidney Cole: Ah I see, yes.

Tilly Day: ...and we did that.

Sidney Cole: Yeah. Ah, what is this?

Tilly Day: Um, 'Laughing Cavalier'. [NB Actually "Cardboard Cavalier"]

Sidney Cole: 'Laughing Cavalier'?

Tilly Day: Margaret Lockwood, Sid Fields.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha! Yes...

Tilly Day: And they said, Sid said - wait a minute, there's one here - Sid said, "Let's say 'prunes' instead of 'cheese'!"

[SC and AL laugh].

Alan Lawson: That's the unit er...

Sidney Cole: That's the unit on that one, is it?

Tilly Day: On 'Laughing Cavalier' yes.

Sidney Cole: There's Maggie Lockwood, yeah, hmm...

Tilly Day: Oh that was a lovely film to work on except, of course, Walter Forde and Culley.

Sidney Cole: Oh really? Were they...?

Tilly Day: They were dire!

Sidney Cole: Were they? Why? What did they do?

Tilly Day: Well um, Walter Forde was on at Sid Field all the time, you know, sneering at him.

Sidney Cole: Oh?

Tilly Day: Because um, Walter Forde considered himself the leading comedian of his day, you see?

Sidney Cole: Yeah, in silent days?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

Tilly Day: And he was always sort of, sneering at Sid...

Sidney Cole: Oh...

Tilly Day: ...oh no, he wasn't nice. And then Culley Forde - oh God, Culley Forde was dreadful!

Sidney Cole: Is she in that picture?

Alan Lawson: She's bound to be.

[Pause].

Sidney Cole: Down the front somewhere?

Tilly Day: She's in a bath-chair, wherever she is.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha?

Tilly Day: Oh she must have been at the hospital.

Sidney Cole: Ahh.

Tilly Day: She used to go one day a fortnight or something, for the gold cure for her rheumatism.

Sidney Cole: Who photographed that, do you remember?

Tilly Day: Jack Hildyard.

Sidney Cole: Jack Hildyard? Yeah...

Tilly Day: He's there somewhere.

Sidney Cole: Who's that? Looks familiar - oh I keep seeing faces, they remind you of someone...

Tilly Day: Jack Hildyard.

Sidney Cole: There's Jack yeah. Right.

Alan Lawson: That's 'Top of the Form'.

Sidney Cole: Top of the Form'?

Tilly Day: Yes, Ronnie Shiner.

Sidney Cole: Ronnie Shiner, yeah...

Tilly Day: And he was the big um, actor of those times, I can't remember his name.

Sidney Cole: That one?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Um...yes, he played in the television series of - you know, the magnet thing, Harry Wharton thing. I've forgotten...what did they call it?

Sidney Cole: Ah, yes...I can't get it I'm afraid.

Alan Lawson: No. That's another one with John Paddy [NB Carstairs]

Sidney Cole: Oh, John Paddy yes.

Tilly Day: John Paddy, oh yes! Um - forgotten her name, such a nice girl - Jack Hildyard and Bob Thompson...

Sidney Cole: Yeah?

Tilly Day: Jack Hildyard.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, it's great of Paddy isn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yeah.

Alan Lawson: In that one, there's one of the girls that Tilly taught...

Sidney Cole: Ah! Which one is that, Tilly?

Tilly Day: There! Lopy Stevens.

Sidney Cole: Oh Lopy Stevens, yeah.

Tilly Day: Lana Stevens's daughter. Lana Stevens was a bitch but er, Lopy was a nice little thing.

Sidney Cole: Yeah!

Alan Lawson: That's another John Paddy...

Sidney Cole: Which one is that?

Alan Lawson: Um...

Sidney Cole: Do you know?

Alan Lawson: 'Just My Luck', isn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, that's Norman Wisdom.

Sidney Cole: Oh Norman Wisdom, yeah.

Alan Lawson: Yes, 'Just My Luck'.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Now I put that in because I think that is rather good.

Sidney Cole: Ah! This is a travel notice...

Alan Lawson: On 'Beachcomber'...

Sidney Cole: On 'Beachcomber', anything you want to say about that?

Tilly Day: Oh we used to receive these, pages of them, before we went on location.

Alan Lawson: That's Bob Atwell. [chuckles]

Tilly Day: Yes, Bob Atwell.

Alan Lawson: [Chuckling]...signed that for Hugh.

Sidney Cole: Oh, telling you everything you had to do from dawn 'til dusk!

Tilly Day: Yes, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, anything special anywhere on it?

Tilly Day: No, inoculations, currency regulations, "not more than five pounds in cash or notes"! [Chuckling].

Sidney Cole: Oh those were in those austerity days?

Tilly Day: Yes! Oh yes!

Sidney Cole: Not allowed to take much money away with you?

Tilly Day: Oh no, five pounds was the limit. 2Tropical clothing will be provided as soon as possible after arrival."

Sidney Cole: Where was that going to?

Tilly Day: Er...

Alan Lawson: Ceylon?

Tilly Day: 'Beachcombers'...

Alan Lawson: Ceylon.

Sidney Cole: Oh Ceylon, yes.

Tilly Day: Ceylon, yes.

Alan Lawson: That's the unit photograph...

Sidney Cole: There you are. I remember you had some stories, somebody you didn't get on very well with on 'Beachcombers', am I that right?

Tilly Day: No I don't think so.

Sidney Cole: No? Was Bob Newton on that?

Tilly Day: Yes!

Sidney Cole: You had some stories about Bob earlier?

Tilly Day: Ah yes! When we were all - when um, Robert Newton and Glynis Johns were nailed out on the ground, the sand - nailed out, you know, right, full length - the elephant was going to walk over them you see?

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: ...Walk on them, and they'd got some dialogue to have beforehand. And I was standing in, or rather, lying in, for Glynis. And Bob Newton was terribly tight, and he would insist that I did everything right and just as Glynis would have done it. And he would say, [slurring her speech as though drunk] "No, no, Tilly, that's not right, you've got to say (so-and-so)" and he would try and wave his arms and he couldn't, because they were all pinioned down. And he'd say, "No, you've got to say...(so-and-so)...heavy...you've got to be breathless." And so I would...instead of doing the ordinary reading back, I was trying to act, and me trying to act, is very funny!

[SC and AL chuckle].

Tilly Day: The whole of the crew was in hysterics!

Sidney Cole: But you enjoyed it, on the whole?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Muriel Box, she directed it.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes? Oh Muriel was nice?

Tilly Day: Yes. Reg Wyer...

Sidney Cole: Oh Reg Wyer?

Tilly Day: ...was the cameraman.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

Tilly Day: There he is.

Sidney Cole: Yes.

[Slight pause].

Alan Lawson: I'm not sure what that one is?

Sidney Cole: What one is that, do you know? Is that the same picture?

Alan Lawson: No...no, no.

Sidney Cole: No, it's got sort of, palm trees in the background...

Alan Lawson: Not the same picture, no - different crew even...

Tilly Day: No, no, it's got Muriel Box, it must be, I think...

Alan Lawson: Really?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Did you shoot some interiors, or did...?

Tilly Day: Yes we did shoot interiors.

Alan Lawson: Oh it would have been then, but it looks like a different crew.

Tilly Day: No, it's the same crew.

Alan Lawson: Oh it is?

Tilly Day: Yes, there's George Pollock.

Sidney Cole: That's right, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes; that's the same picture. That was in the studio.

Sidney Cole: Yeah must have been. What was that, Gainsborough?

Tilly Day: No, no, Pinewood!

Sidney Cole: Oh the studio at Pinewood, was it?

Tilly Day: Yeah.

Alan Lawson: Now that's er - this is from 'The Secret Place'.

Tilly Day: Ah...yes!

Sidney Cole: 'The Secret Place', now you tell us about...who can you recognise?

Tilly Day: Um...[pause]...

Sidney Cole: Who directed that, anyhow?

Alan Lawson: Clive Donner.

Tilly Day: Clive Donner, that's right.

Sidney Cole: Oh, [Clive Donner]? Yeah...good director...yes...

Tilly Day: Here he is.

Sidney Cole: And who are the...?

Tilly Day: Um, Belinda Lee and a man who committed suicide later on - he didn't wait to become famous because, he would have done if he could have hung on.

Sidney Cole: Oh, let me look.

Tilly Day: He was young...

Sidney Cole: I know who you mean, because I think he was on a picture that I did at Ealing...

Tilly Day: Quite possible.

Alan Lawson: Ronald Lewis?

TD and

Sidney Cole: Ronald Lewis!

Alan Lawson: It says so on the back! [Chuckling]. I'm not being clever!

Sidney Cole: Ah, Ronald Lewis, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, he committed suicide.

Sidney Cole: Oh, it wasn't the one I was thinking of, it was somebody else.

Alan Lawson: I'm going to change the cassette.

[End of Tape 3, Side 5]

[Tape 3, Side 6]

Alan Lawson: Tilly Day, Side 6.

Sidney Cole: Tilly, here's a very cheerful looking picture, of you laughing your head off with Wilcox.

Tilly Day: Herbert Wilcox, yes, an unknown publicity woman and that was on the film...[pause].

Sidney Cole: It doesn't say...

Tilly Day: Ah...

Sidney Cole: What was it, can you remember?

Tilly Day: Ah, 1952 that was um... Oh, he's the well known heartthrob.

Sidney Cole: Male or female?

Tilly Day: Male

Alan Lawson: Not Jim Bollinson?

Tilly Day: No!

Alan Lawson: Not that one?

Tilly Day: No, no...no. 'Heart of Man'.

Sidney Cole: 'Heart of Man'...

Tilly Day: Yes, and it was...

Sidney Cole: Was it a British actor or...?

Tilly Day: Yes a British actor, oh, he's well-known, he's very good looking and, at the end of singing - at the end of singing, he kicks up his foot.

Sidney Cole: Michael Wilding?

Tilly Day: No!

Alan Lawson: You don't mean Frankie Vaughan?

Tilly Day: Frankie Vaughan!

Sidney Cole: Frankie Vaughan? Oh yes.

Alan Lawson: What's it called, the film?

Tilly Day: 'Heart of a Man'.

Alan Lawson: 'Heart of a Man', ah ha. Now there's a story on that one...

Sidney Cole: There was a story on this, with this helicopter?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! Yes.

Sidney Cole: Tell us.

Tilly Day: That's me, sitting mending my gloves, I think.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, why did you have to mend your gloves?

Tilly Day: Oh, because they got worn out, and you never renewed anything in Czechoslovakia - we were in Czechoslovakia, by the way - you never renewed anything, because you couldn't buy anything, you couldn't get anything. But...

Sidney Cole: Ah ha...what was the film?

Tilly Day: but we - Bernie Knowles was directing - and we wanted a helicopter, and so Bernie said to the cameraman, Max (somebody or other), he said, "Max" he said, "Do you think we could borrow a helicopter, is that possible in Czechoslovakia?" So Max said, "Borrow? Why yes! What colour would you like?" Well, that was rather a saying out at the time - "Yes, what colour would you like?" So Bernie sort of laughed and said, "Well, any colour you like!" And to our great astonishment, Max took us into a great, great field and he gave an order, and some men threw back the doors - there was vast numbers of helicopters! But, vast numbers, I can't tell you, it was more than the eye could see! Twenty, thirty - and there they were, red, white, blue, pink, yellow, green - so we had red ones!

[SC and AL laugh]

Sidney Cole: Oh great! What was the picture?

Tilly Day: Um, oh it was...

Alan Lawson: What does it say?

Tilly Day: 'Hell is Empty'.

Sidney Cole: 'Hell is Empty'?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, 1966.

Tilly Day: [looking at a picture] Self before take-off.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha...oh, you went up when they were photographing from it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, yeah...

Alan Lawson: That's a Disney film, but can you remember what one it was?

Tilly Day: There was Mike Reed...

Sidney Cole: Yeah...I remember Mike Reed.

Tilly Day: That was an assistant that I taught.

Sidney Cole: Yes, who was it, do you remember?

Tilly Day: She was my last assistant actually, and I can't remember her name.

Alan Lawson: I wrote on there, there's Chris Doll on the far side of the camera.

Sidney Cole: That one?

Alan Lawson: Hmm.

Tilly Day: Oh yes.

Sidney Cole: But we don't - who's that?

Tilly Day: That's me.

Sidney Cole: Oh that's you! Yes...

Tilly Day: That's me!

Sidney Cole: Gosh, didn't recognise you for a moment.

Tilly Day: [Chuckling]. That's me, you can tell by the hair!

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Alan Lawson: You don't remember the film?

Tilly Day: Mike Reid. No, I don't remember that.

Alan Lawson: That's your three hundredth film.

Sidney Cole: Oh, your three hundredth film!

Tilly Day: Yes, that was being taken at Hammer Horror.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, down at...

Tilly Day: Brey.

Sidney Cole: Brey, yeah.

Tilly Day: And I'd done three hundred films and they gave me...

Sidney Cole: Oh is this - there's the cake, with it...

Tilly Day: ...a cake and champagne...

Sidney Cole: Oh how nice! Who's that giving you the, um...?

Tilly Day: Oh, Tony Hinds.

Sidney Cole: Tony Hinds, oh yes - what a nice occasion.

[Slight pause].

Sidney Cole: Ah. What is this one?

Tilly Day: [Sharp intake of breath]. Oh...

Alan Lawson: 'One of our Dinosaurs is Missing'.

Tilly Day: ...'Dinosaurs is Missing'! Paul Beeson...

Sidney Cole: Oh yes, Paul.

Tilly Day: Peter Ustinov and myself.

Sidney Cole: And who's that?

Alan Lawson: Your 'bette noir'!

Tilly Day: Oh, my - yeah.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Robert Stevenson - Robert Stevenson, yes...who was married to Belinda Lee [corrects himself] - Anna Lee?

Tilly Day: Anna Lee.

Sidney Cole: Anna Lee.

Tilly Day: ...one time.

Sidney Cole: One time, yes.

Tilly Day: That's five times later!

[SC Chuckles].

Tilly Day: Fifth wife he was on then!

Alan Lawson: Now we come to personalities

Tilly Day: Ah! Frankie Vaughan!

Sidney Cole: Frankie Vaughan, yes.

Tilly Day: That's right.

Sidney Cole: Big, big in his day, wasn't he?

Tilly Day: Yes very, very famous.

Sidney Cole: Yes. Now who's this?

Tilly Day: Nora Swinburne

Sidney Cole: Oh what a beautiful, beautiful lady.

Tilly Day: Yes, she was married to um - later, not first of all - she was later married to Esmond Knight, after he was wounded.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes! Yes, well he lost his eyesight for some years, didn't he?

Tilly Day: Yes, oh yes. She was married to him then.

Sidney Cole: Who was her first husband?

Tilly Day: Um, oh he was well known. I mean he was in the 'upper strata', you know, he was...

Sidney Cole: Yes, but not an actor?

Tilly Day: Oh no. He was Lord somebody or other.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha. She was a very beautiful lady.

Tilly Day: Oh she was, she had a lovely face.

Alan Lawson: Not Norton?

Tilly Day: No!

Alan Lawson: No... no, that's er...

Tilly Day: That's Alf Goddard.

Alan Lawson: One of the...

Sidney Cole: Oh there's Alf Goddard, one of the - he was one of those...

Alan Lawson: Shepherd's Bush Rep!

Sidney Cole: Yeah...

[AL chuckles]

Sidney Cole: Yeah... he was in all - every film, yeah!

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, that was Alf Goddard.

Alan Lawson: Now that is...

Sidney Cole: That's er...

Tilly Day: That's um...

Alan Lawson: Tony Newley.

Tilly Day: Tony Newley...

Sidney Cole: Tony Newley.

Tilly Day: ...when he was a little boy.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: That was me, he used to sit on my desk and he sort of, he used to draw, very rapidly. He'd have papers on my desk and he'd draw very rapidly. And I suppose one day, I said, "Oh Tony, mind that," or something. And so he said, "Now don't get short Auntie Tilly, don't get short!"

[TD and SC chuckle].

Sidney Cole: How nice - you seem to get on very well with the young...

Tilly Day: Oh yes...

Sidney Cole: ...with the child actors?

Tilly Day: ...with the child actors, oh yes, yes. He came home with me. He liked my mother very much. And much later, when he was famous, very famous, he was at Pinewood and, apparently, he was asking all round, because he was on some other picture. And he said, "Where is Tilly Day?" So they said, "Well she's on another stage." And so, lunchtime, I was sitting in the posh restaurant, you know, having lunch, and a figure came over and said, "Ah! I've tracked you down at last! Tilly Day..." So I said, "Hello, Tony!" He said, "So you know me?" So I said, "Know you? Of course I do!" Because he'd got a Brigadier's hat and, all sort of done up and everything, you see. So I said, "Of course I know you." So he said, "How could you tell?" I said, "I could tell by your eyes - I can always tell by your eyes." And so, he was so pleased, because he said, "Your mother and you were very kind to me."

Sidney Cole: Yes, what picture was he on then, 'Stop The World'? Was it that one?

Tilly Day: I don't know. Name some other picture.

Sidney Cole: Well I don't know, he didn't make them in a great number, did he?

Tilly Day: No...

Sidney Cole: No, I don't know.

Alan Lawson: That's Lopy Stevens isn't it?

Tilly Day: Lopy Stevens? Yes...

Alan Lawson: That's Lopy Stevens.

Tilly Day: That's Lopy Stevens.

Sidney Cole: That's a nice picture of both of you.

Tilly Day: The girl I taught, yes.

Alan Lawson: And that's another one, but you can't remember, can you?

Tilly Day: That's another girl I taught, but I can't even remember her name, I think her name was Pauline something or other.

Sidney Cole: She looks familiar to me, but I couldn't put a name to her.

Tilly Day: But she was at Merton Park.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha? Oh yes...

Alan Lawson: Oh well, at least that's something - you know she was at Merton Park.

Tilly Day: Oh yeah.

Alan Lawson: Um, before we go onto this other album on the 'Marie Celeste' which is going back in fact, to pre war days, um... What do you reckon is the most important thing about a continuity girl?

Tilly Day: A memory! Oh definitely a memory, yes.

Alan Lawson: Anything else?

Tilly Day: Well you've got to be popular to a certain extent, you've got to have people like you.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Sidney Cole: You were saying earlier though, when we were not recording, you were talking about a compliment that David Lean paid you.

Tilly Day: Ah yes! He said, "Any time I'm on a picture and I know Tilly Day is on the continuity, I think 'Thank God for that!' Now I can cut it where I want to, not because I've got to cut it in a certain place." Because I always matched everything, you know...

Sidney Cole: I think that was very important, because you'd mentioned the actress that you said was rather given to...

Tilly Day: Margaret Yarde? She was always waving her arms about, you know.

Sidney Cole: What - differently in different set-ups?

Tilly Day: Oh yes, yeah.

Alan Lawson: It's a photographic memory really, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Oh yes! I had a photographic memory. If they - I could do that much better than my notes. And they would say to me, "What was (so-and-so) doing at (so-and-so) moment?" And I would shut my eyes and say, "Well go over it a bit" and they'd go over and I'd say, "She was doing (so-and-so), he was doing (so-and-so)" and I could remember.

Sidney Cole: As if you had your own sort of movieola in your mind? Yes...

Tilly Day: Yes, in my brain.

Sidney Cole: Hmm, hmm. And do you think you're born with that in a way, or do you - I suppose you can acquire it, because you taught quite a number of people didn't you?

Tilly Day: Well you see, from fourteen years onwards, I'd got used to watching and not talking - just watching people, and it was always photographed in my mind.

Alan Lawson: So it's observation? Yes.

Tilly Day: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Critical observation.

Tilly Day: Hmm.

Sidney Cole: Now we've gone back to 1935...

Alan Lawson: With this album here, yes, we'll turn the pages over - you made up...

Tilly Day: Ah, now this I made up. I made this up and I put things on it, because this was in my - you know, when I was, sort of, enthusiastic.[laughs]

[SC and AL chuckle].

Sidney Cole: Come on, you never stopped being enthusiastic!

Tilly Day: That was on the 'Marie Celeste', of course. 'Mary B. Mitchell', [pointing to photos in the album] that was the 'Mary B. Mitchell', that was the 'Mary B. Mitchell', that was the 'Mary B. Mitchell'. That was various sayings, you know, on it.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, but you've got those pretty well documented, haven't you?

Tilly Day: Yes. Ah! There's the figurehead of the 'Mary B. Mitchell', that's rather lovely. There's the 'Mary B. Mitchell' at sea.

Sidney Cole: Where did you actually film this when you were at sea?

Tilly Day: We went right out at sea from Falmouth.

Sidney Cole: Ah, hmm. Here's some more of, sort of, rigging and things of the ship...

Tilly Day: Yes, all that sea rigging. The ones that are missing, I gave to people when their own people died, you know.

Sidney Cole: Ah yes, when they um...?

Tilly Day: Yes. Oh! Eric Cross was on that.

Sidney Cole: Eric Cross? Oh yes...

Alan Lawson: Looking very young, isn't he?

Sidney Cole: Isn't he looking young?

Tilly Day: Oh well he was young, wasn't he? [Chuckling].

SC and

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Cecil Dickson.

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm, yes we talked about - you talked about him before, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Some of the technical staff.

Sidney Cole: Yes, these are still on 'Marie Celeste'. [NB 'The Mystery of the Marie Celeste']

Tilly Day: That's the 'Marie Celeste'.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, they're all pretty well documented.

Alan Lawson: I think all that album is 'Marie Celeste', yes.

Sidney Cole: Is it?

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Sidney Cole: There's some nice shots.

Alan Lawson: Lovely shots.

Sidney Cole: Who did the - did you take it - did you take your own stills?

Tilly Day: I took these on my five bob camera!

Sidney Cole: Oh...

Alan Lawson: Really?

Tilly Day: That was the funny part of it! Agfa, when I was at Broadwest, the Agfa, the man who used to come and do the canvassing, you know, the sort of selling business?

Sidney Cole: Hmm, the contact man...

Tilly Day: ...the Agfa film man - I can see him now. He was a big man and he was dark and he was rather fat, and he gave me a camera, a five-bob tin camera! And he said, "Now you keep that" he said, "Because that'll take wonderful photographs." And, my God, it did! Do you know, when I took it abroad, I was the only one who got any film! All these people with these

wonderful cameras with this diffusion and the other diffusion and bellows and things, they got sand in them and all sorts of things!

[SC chuckles].

Tilly Day: I didn't get anything in my tin camera! Except the photograph!

[AL chuckles].

Sidney Cole: Yes, they're very good.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes, very nice. Now that's it...

Sidney Cole: No, that is it. Now these are wartime things, are they?

Tilly Day: No.

Sidney Cole: No?

Alan Lawson: No, no!

Tilly Day: That's the crew...

Sidney Cole: Oh that's the crew? Yes. of course, yes.

Tilly Day: That was Michelle.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha? That's a nice shot.

Tilly Day: Oh! We nearly bumped into that!

Sidney Cole: Into the rock there? Yes...

Tilly Day: Yes! Oh we missed death by inches!

[AL chuckles].

Tilly Day: The number of times at that ship that wasn't A1 at Lloyds!

Alan Lawson: [Chuckling]. Oh was that the one, was it?

Tilly Day: Yes!

[AL laughs].

Tilly Day: There's me in my Fathers' um - he sent that with me for luck - that was his waistcoat, his fur waistcoat.

Sidney Cole: Ah ha, very nice. And here you are off Gibraltar, taking pictures of Gibraltar.

Tilly Day: Yes, that's right. Oran

Sidney Cole: In Oran.

Tilly Day: This was on 'You Must Get Married'.

Sidney Cole: Oh yes.

Tilly Day: Gerry Moss[?] I think his name was...

Sidney Cole: Gerry Moss yes. Then suddenly, you went to, Algiers!

Tilly Day: Yes, Algiers. Oran, Algiers Bougie[?], the island of Bougie[?].

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm. Mickey?

Tilly Day: Mickey Anderson.

Sidney Cole: It is Mickey Anderson, yes, when he was an assistant, huh?

Tilly Day: Well he was a boy, he ran about and did errands.

Alan Lawson: He was the runner?

Sidney Cole: He was the runner.

Tilly Day: He was only fourteen.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Tilly Day: I'm afraid I must go upstairs...an awful saga!

[Break in tape].

Tilly Day: [whispering] Harry Waxman!

Sidney Cole: Right, that's the still... that's the director...

Tilly Day: Yes, Harold Huth.

Sidney Cole: Nice man.

Tilly Day: Oh a very nice man! Yes, a rather sad thing about him really...

Sidney Cole: What was that?

Tilly Day: Um, we'd had the location caterers, but they weren't Phil Hobbs, which they were usually in those times. It was a man who had two bull terriers, and he used to have them with him up in the front of the cab of the catering car. And um, I'm terrified - I make no bones about it - I am terrified of dogs, especially bull terriers.

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: And, anyway these pink eyed bull terriers - oh, dreadful! And I said, "Oh" I said, "I can't stand those." So he said, [TD imitates 'luvvie' accent] "But Tilly, darling" - you know how he was, so very, very charming - He said, "But Tilly, darling, they won't hurt you, they won't hurt you at all. Look, you'll see... come along dears, come along, come along..." And this bull terrier leapt out of the cab and bit his nose!

Sidney Cole: Oh...

Tilly Day: And I can't tell you, the blood that was about the place! And they had to take him to the local hospital and he had to have three stitches in it. And, do you know, he was most vain! I mean he really was rather proud of his appearance.

Sidney Cole: Appearance, yes...

Alan Lawson: I'll bet, yeah.

Tilly Day: He was an actor, let's face it!

Sidney Cole: Yes he was an actor...

Tilly Day: He was famous.

Sidney Cole: He was very well known in his day as a romantic actor, with Joan Barry.

Tilly Day: Yes! I mean, he was the heavy wasn't he?

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: ...of those days.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, hmm. And here's the cameraman...

Tilly Day: Oh, Harry Waxman, yes.

Sidney Cole: And who is that? That's...

Tilly Day: Roy Goddard!

Sidney Cole: Roy Goddard, yes.

Tilly Day: Oh that was 'Porky', the electrician.

Sidney Cole: [Chuckling]. Ah...just making fun...

Tilly Day: Oh, he was wonderful! I always remember him, we had a film called 'Tall Headlines', with Sally-Ann Howes and, um... who was the...? Martita Hunt!

Sidney Cole: Oh the crazy lady?

Tilly Day: Yes. And Martita Hunt was very tall, as you know, and what's her name? The little actress...

Sidney Cole: What, Sally?

Tilly Day: No, not Sally-Ann Howes. She was a little tiny actress and she used to speak in whispers like this [Tilly puts on mock voice]. She always the wonderful leprechaun.

Sidney Cole: You don't mean Joan - Joan Greenwood?

Tilly Day: No...

Alan Lawson: No, not Joan Greenwood.

Tilly Day: Anyway, they were the two sisters, this great tall Martita Hunt and this little one, and the little one used to trot about after her!

Alan Lawson: Not Mary Morris?

Tilly Day: No. And the little one used to trot about after her all the way through and she used to do various things. And I know, one time Martita Hunt was doing something or other and I said, "Excuse me, Martita," I said, "no - you must get the letters, the love letters and tie them up with a blue ribbon and put them back on the shelf." In those days nobody said "bloody" to me, I mean you know, after all, one's reputation went before one!

Sidney Cole: Hmm.

Tilly Day: And she said, "Well I would tie up the fucking letters if I had the fucking ribbon, wouldn't I?"

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: And this went on "fucking" every two seconds, and I was frozen in horror! And you could have heard a pin drop on the set, I mean everybody stopped hammering even, and they looked at me to see how I was taking it. And I was so aghast...my mouth was open, my eyes were open - I was absolutely astounded.

[SC and AL continue to laugh in background].

Tilly Day: And when she'd finished, Porky said, "Well Til, I told you, you would vote Labour!"

[They all laugh!]

Tilly Day: It was in 1945, when we'd just got the um...

Sidney Cole: Got the first Labour... the Labour government after the war, yes.

Tilly Day: Yes, yes, oh that was funny! Everybody remembered that for years!

Sidney Cole: Right now, here's another picture.

Alan Lawson: Oh that's an old one isn't it?

Sidney Cole: A very old one.

Tilly Day: Anne Hughes.

Sidney Cole: Annie Hughes.

Alan Lawson: That's pre-war, that is! [Chuckles].

Tilly Day: Er, Eve Gray, Esmond Knight.

Sidney Cole: Yeah.

Alan Lawson: Oh, he's a very young man indeed.

Tilly Day: Yes!

Sidney Cole: And who was on camera?

Tilly Day: Er, Harry Hughes - Jimmy Wilson!

Alan Lawson: Yes, Jimmy Wilson...

Sidney Cole: Ah yes, yeah... And these...

Alan Lawson: Those are personal, I think....

Tilly Day: Oh that was Robin, Robin...?

Alan Lawson: Irvine?

Sidney Cole: Irvine?

Tilly Day: No, somebody or other, Robin somebody - 'David Copperfield' - that was after the war.

Sidney Cole: Ah.

Tilly Day: This was before the war...

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: [sorting the photos] That was before the war, that was before the war, I can tell by my coloured hair, you see.

Sidney Cole: And that's from...?

Tilly Day: Oh that was from Tony Pelissier, do you remember? Faye...

Sidney Cole: It says Cyril!

Tilly Day: Faye Compton's son - it was one - the second film he directed was (Tony), was um, 'Rocking Horse Winner'.

Sidney Cole: Oh, 'Rocking Horse Winner'? With um...

Tilly Day: At Denham, with John Howard Davis.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, John Howard Davis, he's now a TV director!

Tilly Day: Yes, now directs, and um...

Sidney Cole: Johnny Mills was in there?

Tilly Day: Yes! Johnny Mills was the gardener, and it was a wonderful film, and Tony Pelissier was marvellous to me.

Sidney Cole: Who is this?

Tilly Day: Oh that's Vivienne Hillborough[?]....

Sidney Cole: Ah hmm.

Tilly Day: It was her birthday on the same day as mine, and my birthday was on the same day as hers, and we had a cake.

Sidney Cole: What is that one?

Alan Lawson: Doesn't say there.

Sidney Cole: Have to rely on your memory, because it doesn't say.

Tilly Day: Ah! John - G H Singer [corrects herself] - G H Scott! Scott!

Sidney Cole: Ah yes.

Tilly Day: Scott, the famous Scott man in 'Jane Eyre'. [NB: George C Scott]

Sidney Cole: Ah yes...hmm.

[Slight pause].

Tilly Day: Ah, we're back now to...

Alan Lawson: That's Sir John, isn't it?

Tilly Day: Sir John Martin Harvey.

Sidney Cole: Yeah, and is that, who is that?

Tilly Day: Fern Andra, George Banfield.

Sidney Cole: Banfield, yes.

Tilly Day: Do you know, I remembered a film Arthur Rook directed, 'Blue Peter'

Sidney Cole: Oh yes?

Tilly Day: That was before - that was silent, of course.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, yes, yes.

Tilly Day: And he directed up in Southport. They made Southport beach the sand dunes and things of the desert, and then there was... Oh, that was when um, we had the film in the - we showed the film through in the little projection room in Walthamstow. And it was an ice-cold barn, well it was a little room and it was like a vault, and it was ice-cold, it was stone all over, and there was a little torn curtain at the back to hide the projector. And the projector was there and he looked through a hole in the curtain, like that - cut out. And that was Skeltie[?], and it was terrible - the film came up and it was a very good film, the 'Blue Peter'. And it came up, and the closing scene was -there was a close-up of Mary Dibley and she held out her arms and said, "My man!" And Matherson Laing held out his arms and said, "My Woman!" And Skeltie at the back, the projector fell to pieces and he said, "My Christ!"

[SC and AL laugh].

Tilly Day: ...Which made me laugh so much! Because the projector was so old. It was two pounds ten to start with and he held it together with pinchers and there were red-hot flames coming from it and, oh, it was dreadful! It clanked all the way through!

Sidney Cole: Who's that?

Tilly Day: That's Barry something or other.

Sidney Cole: What is he? Not an actor?

Tilly Day: In 'The Clouded Yellow'.

Sidney Cole: Ah yeah, he was an actor, was he?

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: But he painted?

Alan Lawson: Well...

Sidney Cole: He tried to paint!

Tilly Day: Tried to paint, yes.

Sidney Cole: Right. There's that same - we looked at that one. That's the 'Arsenal Stadium Mystery'

Tilly Day: Yes. That's Isabel Jeans.

Sidney Cole: Ah yes.

Tilly Day: That was in silent picture days.

Sidney Cole: Yes...wow!

Tilly Day: Marie Lohr.

Sidney Cole: Marie Lohr.

Tilly Day: ...silent picture. Diana Napier.

Sidney Cole: Oh, Diana Napier, yes.

Tilly Day: Ida Lupino, when she was fourteen.

Sidney Cole: Gosh! Wow! Look where she is now. And that's - who's that?

Tilly Day: David Farrar.

Sidney Cole: Oh Dave Farrar? Yes...

Tilly Day: Yeah...

Sidney Cole: What was the picture, can you remember?

Tilly Day: Oh, 'Night Must Fall' I think, or something. No, no, 'Stars In The Night' or something. That's Leo Genn.

Sidney Cole: Oh Leo Genn, yes. He was a lawyer, wasn't he, as well as an actor?

Tilly Day: Yes, he was at the Nuremberg trials.

Sidney Cole: Who's that?

Tilly Day: Hayes, Helen Hayes.

Sidney Cole: Helen Hayes.

Tilly Day: That was on er, 'Dinosaurs'.

Alan Lawson: Was that the one you were thinking of? The actress that you...?

Tilly Day: Yes, Helen Hayes, yes. Because when she was young - I didn't know her when she was old!

[AL laughs].

Sidney Cole: Oh, too sad.

Tilly Day: She looks so different, because she was so beautiful when she was young.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes, yes.

Sidney Cole: Who's the little boy?

Tilly Day: Oh that's Tony Newl... ah, Tony um - Vincent Winters!

Sidney Cole: Oh, in 'Kidnappers'?

Tilly Day: In 'Kidnappers'. Oh, he was a dear little boy, then when he grew up, oh dear!

Sidney Cole: Really? Not so nice?

Tilly Day: No!

Sidney Cole: Who is that with you?

Tilly Day: She was the eldest girl in 'Innocent Sinners', a nice child, very nice child.

Sidney Cole: Can you remember her name?

Tilly Day: No, she never came to anything, although they sent her to RADA and everything, but she was just the one picture.

Sidney Cole: Hmm. Well that's it!

Tilly Day: Yes.

Sidney Cole: There you are, Tilly.

Alan Lawson: Thank you Tilly, very much.

[Tape Ends].

Tilly Day

Continuity

Part One

1917 - Starts at Walthamstow Studios 1920s - Various 1930s - Numerous George King productions 1939 - "Arsenal Stadium Mystery" 1940s - Joins ATS during war 1950s-60s - Numerous productions 1975 - Last film - "One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing"

NB. During her career, Tilly Day worked on over 300 British films. This interview was conducted over two sessions - in the first session she speaks more qualitatively about her life and work, in the second session she is looking through photographs identifying various cast crew members on different productions, chiefly useful in compiling a filmography. Many of the stories told in the second session repeat material from the first session.