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DAPHNE ANCELL

SIDE 1, TAPE 1

Copyright is vested in the BECTU History Project, Daphne Ansell, honorary member of ACTT, ACTT activist, one time chairman of Technicolor shop, interviewer Alf Cooper, recorded on 11 April 1989 at her home in Shepperton.

SIDE 1, TAPE 1

Alf Cooper: When and where were you born?

Daphne Ansell: 1926, in Battersea.

Alf Cooper: And where did you go to school?

Daphne Ansell: In a school at Witton

Alf Cooper: You'd moved?

Daphne Ansell: Yes, we moved when I was about 5, my parents bought a house, my mother had been saving up a shilling a week to get the deposit on this house and I went to the local school and so did my elder sister and she was a so and so, she used to play up like mad, she used to play up so I sort of got the overflow from it so my mother took us both away from there and sent Barbara to a Roman Catholic school in Twickenham, thinking the nuns might sort her out, and me to a church school, ST Mary's at Twickenham, so we finished up at different schools and I remember the head mistress once saying to me that there was a scholarship from St Mary's school, tied up to the church, to I think the girls part of Christ Hospital, and it was a boarding school, and I was so terrified that I might pass, I didn't take the note home, I tore it up, I never said anything. And one time my mother came up to the school, an end of term thing and the headmistress said Mrs Lebrum, we were very disappointed that you didn't reply to our note. My mother said what note and I was in trouble for that. But the thought of leaving my mother, I was terrible, the first time I went away from home I was 15, that was for a week's holiday and cried my eyes out, that was with Valerie, she thought I was mad.

Alan Lawson: Did you do any training at all after you left school.

Daphne Ansell: No, I got a job in a bank and they trained me there.

Alan Lawson: What as?

Daphne Ansell: In the ledger accounts, they didn't call it accounts, they called it ledger department, where youngsters of 16, no I was 15 and a half when I went there and they had really rigid standards, if you, you didn't have to use a rubber, you just had to have one on your desk and you'd be in trouble, nothing was rubbed out or

altered, everything had to be retyped, we did the ledgers on an accounting machine.

?

Alan Lawson: You'd learned to type?

Daphne Ansell: No, they had a school, it was run by national accounting machines, they should have had a training school in the bank and we were all trained there.

Alf Cooper: What bank?

Daphne Ansell: Glenmills

Alan Lawson: Very up market.

Daphne Ansell: Until I was in my early 20s I'd never been to a New Year's dance, because I never left there ever until after midnight, there was a rigid code there, New Year's Eve you had to balance to the last penny, not only that it didn't matter if you'd agreed your work, you all stayed until the last person had balanced and this was in the Earl of Jersey's house in the middle of Osterly Park, so it was a hell of a long, that drive was about a mile and a half, they just to allow us an extra 10 minutes to walk up it and it was a long way, we would all go at convoy at night, because this was during the war and we all had to be taken back to the station. But looking back now it was very very good training.

Alan Lawson: Where were you living at the time?

Daphne Ansell: Witton, all the time.

Then I left the bank to have my daughter.

Alan Lawson: This was after the war?

Daphne Ansell: Yes, 1948, then I had 10 months at home looking after Hilary until I could go back to work. And I went to a coal firm, Charringtons, doing the same sort of ledger work, at Twickenham, and I was there for about 10 months and loathed it from the first day. But it was handy, a penny or three halfpence bus ride, which meant I could get home at the lunch hour and see to Hilary.

Alan Lawson: Did you have a baby minder?

Daphne Ansell: No mum looked after her, even so I didn't like to leave her all day. And this girl Valerie, the one I said I went away with for a holiday, she had TB and she hadn't worked all the time I wasn't working, she was a union member as well. I remember her coming round with this advertisement and saying how about trying for this, she said it's a firm called Technicolor. And it didn't dawn on me it was Technicolor film. It said they wanted a national cash operator and a comptometer operator. I said yes let's try for it. We decided in our wisdom that we wouldn't let them know that we were friends, because you never know with companies, they might not like it so we didn't say anything so we both got the job

Alf Cooper: What year was that?

Daphne Ancell: 1950, that was when I started, in June, and came up for our 3 monthly review, you remember old Pully, the accountant, sarcastic perisher, he said I'm very pleased to see how you and Miss Reed have got on so well, I grinned and said well we did know each other before, he said why didn't you say so, never dreaming that the two who had been in our jobs beforehand had been absolutely at each other's throats, and the atmosphere in the office was terrible, so it would have stood us in good stead and we learned afterwards Technicolor was very much a family, people had their relations working there. but you never know so we kept it quiet.

Alf Cooper: In view of what's happened since were you politically active before you went there?

Daphne Ancell: No, I wasn't politically active but I came from, my father was very very union minded, he was father of the chapel of the London society of Compositors, and my father, he was a very meek and mild man as far as personal things were concerned but he would go miles to sort out anybody who wasn't operating a union concern. And we were never allowed, I think it was Bar and Tesco's we weren't allowed to shop at because he had something against them, I don't know what,

Alan Lawson: It wouldn't have been Tesco

Daphne Ancell: Perhaps not, but there were two places in Witten we were not allowed to go and invariably there was a pair of shoes in Bar that I fancied but I didn't dare ask for them. Until the day before the war broke out, because in the panic because my grandmother wanted me to go and stay down in Hampshire with her, in the panic they sent me out with some money to get my own shoes. I remember dashing into Bar and getting these shoes, presumably they had sweated labour I don't know. But all the things he told me about the unions and the labour party too.

Alf Cooper: He was a member of the Labour Party.

Daphne Ancell: Yes he was an active member of the Labour Party. Mum was, she started off as a member of the primrose league I think she said she was, a died in the wool Tory her family was. But Barbara, she's a member of the conservative party now. Pauline isn't.

Alan Lawson: You weren't politicised

Daphne Ancell: Not really

Alan Lawson: Until you got to Technicolor.

Daphne Ancell: I'd never worked with a union firm, but the bank had a staff association but I really didn't have much to do with it all. But Charringtons, things were so unfair there, and they

used to incense me, that the minute I bumped into Alf and he told me about the union, I couldn't wait to join. And even, at the time people have said to me when I talked to them about it, Technicolor was so good they didn't really need a union, but by god they did. If they hadn't had a union they would have got away with murder. In fact the company I'm working for now, they have rules you think would have been set up by a trade union and really there isn't one there although they pay for all their engineers, they pay for all their fees to join the union, but office staff doesn't matter sort of thing. But they are scrupulously fair, but even so you get people moaning, I think by god you don't know what it's like, you want to sit negotiating hours and hours and hours, and you finish up and you've moved half a percent or something. We get a rise very single year without asking for it and all they do is moan because they don't think that they've had enough. They just don't know they're born some of them. They suddenly doubled all the sick pay and I never heard one person say isn't that good.

But Technicolor when I first went there was about 630 and then it got up to 1300.

Alf Cooper: You came to us in 50 and you collared you for ACTT?

Daphne Ancell: You.

Alf Cooper: We weren't all that organised in the clerical side.

Daphne Ancell: I don't think the clerical side was organised at all.

Alf Cooper: We hadn't got rid of that stiff upper lip business, blue collar and white collar.

Daphne Ancell: It WASN'T ORGANISED UNTIL, 53 WAS IT, WHEN WE HAD THE LOCK OUT.

Alan Lawson: 54, I'm not sure. But we got you active.

Daphne Ancell: Great antagonism from the boss, not Mr Allen, he was always very time to me.

Alan Lawson: Allen was the company accountant.

Daphne Ancell: He was the company secretary, Pully was the accountant, he was the one who was so anti.

Alan Lawson: He ultimately became the managing director of Campion plugs

Daphne Ancell: Yes.

Alan Lawson: Which was a proper slave driving firm.

Daphne Ancell: It would suit him

Alan Lawson: You hadn't been there very long before you started doing union work, you were on the committee, you became our membership secretary and when did you first start getting going on the

general council

Daphne Ancell: I DON'T KNOW BUT I WAS MINUTE SECRETARY AT Technicolor AND I WAS MINUTE SECRETARY on the lab committee for a long time.

Alan Lawson: You carried that job for years, anyway it wasn't long after you got to Technicolor that we roped you in.

Daphne Ancell: No, I remember on that dispute, the lock out, I was there from about half past 8 in the morning till 6 o'clock at night doing the typing. Remember you had strike headquarters in the pub, the Bricklayers Arms.

Alan Lawson: Ray Sharp was convener, and I was chairman of the lab committee and you got chucked out didn't you, at Technicolor

Daphne Ancell: Yes I was locked out

Alan Lawson: And I had to go on strike because they didn't put the foreman on strike or the assistant supervisor or whatever I was.

Daphne Ancell: They had about 400 in.

Daphne Ancell: That's when you started getting jobs for the union, you got many jobs, I don't remember the dates myself but you finished off as the minutes secretary on the lab branch for many years and

Daphne Ancell: And on the lab negotiating committee

Alan Lawson: And you also started being voted to represent the ACTT at the women's TUC

Daphne Ancell: The women's labour party one.

Alan Lawson: You also became the chairman of the equality committee for many years.

Daphne Ancell: I think I was on the training committee or the journal, for the life of me I can't remember, it's one of those you get on the back of the book, they don't meet too often sort of thing. I don't think it was the journal.

Alan Lawson: Can you talk about the equality committee work?

Daphne Ancell: I was trying to think when it became, I'm hopeless on dates, I know I was chairperson, I felt this equality was a bit, I could never get wildly enthusiastic, I felt the balance was in the wrong place, I would never get enthusiastic about burning bras, it seemed so stupid to be.

Alan Lawson: It was the aggressive side

Daphne Ancell: It was not saying chairman, to my mind chairman has always said whoever's in the chair, never mind it's nothing to do with the fact it was a man or woman.

Alf Cooper: You are the same opinion as I am, do you remember me telling

them once there was a lot of difference because scratching your arse and tearing the skin off. But that is typical, they were always over, they never accepted that we had negotiated the same rates for women as for men.

Alan Lawson: Your attitude is exactly the same as Kay Manders. A person is a person.

Daphne Ancell: When I used to go to the women's TUC and women's Labour Party, equal pay had been on the agenda for years and years and years and I don't think it's properly in now, and it needed pushing.

Alf Cooper: You had equal pay in the film industry

Daphne Ancell: I had, but what I never had was equal opportunity to men because you cannot counteract and I worked with someone who was a real chauvinist pig and that was Malcolm Wenham. A he was dead against union and he was dead against women, so if you got the two together, I think he has even come out of the Conservative party since Margaret Thatcher came in he was so against women. Other things I felt so strongly about, the way the income tax people used to treat women used to send me round the bend. I remember coming back from a meeting once and it was quite late, about midnight, Bob was in bed. I opened this tax thing and I read it all the way through and after I'd looked at all the questions and answers and when I got to the bottom it had the audacity to say if you are married and living with your husband ignore this and pretend it was written to him. I went upstairs and woke Bob and went on about this thing, to my mind that was absolutely, I got speechless about some of the things like that. A lot of the people on the committee were very much upmarket from me, job wise, they got all these glamorous jobs and I could never get used to these lovely voices suddenly effing and blinding in the middle of it.

I used to pretend to try not to notice.

Alf Cooper: Can you imagine being a man in that position?

Daphne Ancell: I thought Alf was very brave.

Alf Cooper: I sat on that committee for years and they used to make me vomit. They never gave an ounce of credit to ACTT as a union, right from the word go they demanded a rate for a job whether they put a woman on it or a school kid. But if you got the job you got the rate for the job. That was all ignored. And then when they have an annual conference, they didn't even want a male photographer. I said for Christ sake, if you can't stand a man there, how do you expect to work in a man's world.

Daphne Ancell: Roy used to organise that committee and I got into trouble because I used to presume he would be there. They said we don't want men here, I don't know if it was that one but it was some workshop or seminar they were holding down at the National Film school and I was chairing that and suddenly I got up and referred to them as being ladies, I got into trouble afterwards

for being patronising. She said it very nicely, I forgot which one told me. She said you have upset them, I said oh dear why, you've been so patronising calling them ladies, I said I'm sorry, I must be out of a different time, my mother I can remember telling me how rude it was to call people women and not ladies. So I didn't make that mistake again. That was the sort of thing I couldn't get excited about anyway.

Al:

Daphne Ansell: I used to try but I didn't like being chairperson. no I didn't.

Alan Lawson: Why was that.

Daphne Ansell: I suppose I was nervous to start with, but I got on with it better than I expected but I was always worried I wouldn't be firm enough,

Alan Lawson: There was a bloke

Did you ever see in action at the conference, a load of secretaries and a load of filing cabinets behind him, it's easy to chair a meeting like that.

Daphne Ansell: I was always worried, I thought if they get stroppy would I have the presence to tell them to sit down and shut up.

You probably remember this occasion, do you remember the lab committee where they all turned up because they'd got together to get you and I off it, that was the funniest thing, the whole committee, we had more people attending that meeting that we had seats, and Alf as Chairman was so pleased and got up and made a speech and welcomed them, and said how delighted he was to see so many representatives. This was at the beginning of the meeting. It became patently obvious during the course of the meeting that the whole point was to get Alf off the chair and me out of secretary thing. Then they had some voting, that was Ricky Novak and his sister was there and someone else, and Harry, they put him put as chairman, on the Sunday general council, did we have our meeting on the Tuesday

Daphne Ansell: Monday

Alf Cooper: On the Sunday they'd had a get together at the general council, and they'd organised this

Daphne Ansell: They did this voting and Alf and I got slung off. I was doing my English act, not letting anyone know it bothered me at all, I said congratulations to the one who got my place. Alf got up and said thank you very much, I know when I've been dropped in the bloody shit, thank you for it.

Alf Cooper: I did promise to give them all the help I could. Harry, when he got up and accepted this business after the vote, when he agreed to take the chair, I subsequently found out that they had

a big get together on the Sunday. Something I'd never done. I got elected year after year as chairman, and then he comes up to me after this, would I please remain chairman of the lab negotiating committee.

Daphne Ansell: I don't think he could have coped.

Alf Cooper: Next year there wasn't anybody against us, we were back in. But I didn't go like that.

Daphne Ansell: You did. I think it was so funny.

Alf Cooper: I remember wishing them well, but I thought it was a stinking way to behave.

Alan Lawson: Round about the time Winifred Crum Ewing and the newsreel man, this was late, trying to pack a general council meeting.

Daphne Ansell: But there don't seem to be the characters around there used to be at the AGM, also the government has so tied the union it seems to have knocked the stuffing out of them somehow.

Alan Lawson: Do you remember anything which took place when you were representing up at the various trade union conferences, you attended quite a few, didn't you.

Daphne Ansell: Yes, usually outside the conference, coming back from somewhere

Alan Lawson: You got various resolutions passed.

Daphne Ansell: I think even this cervical cancer, I got it on there as well, because Alan had asked me to, because Ellen, just at the time they were trying to get it through so they were pushing it on all avenues.

Alan Lawson: How effective do you think the Women's TUC was, I think it got a lot, I don't think it was terribly good when I first started going there but it got. I know there has always been this argument that it wasn't effective, but things which were passed by law had to go to the main TUC so at least they were heard. The point was particularly we had a small union, we never had that much representation on the main TUC, at least it gave another platform, we were entitled to about 4

Alan Lawson: We had 3 representatives, because I remember I used to go with George Elvin and Ralph Bond.

Daphne Ansell: I think it was 2 at the Women's TUC. But at least it was another platform, I know they couldn't take the decisions to implement them, it had to go to the main thing. But I think it was worth while.

Alan Lawson: When you were a delegate did you have any difficulty getting leave from Technicolor?

Daphne Ansell: Not really?

Alan Lawson: You didn't have to take it as holiday?

Daphne Ancell: I started off by doing so, or unpaid leave, and then I remember George Elvin writing to Mr Allen saying I was the only one of the executive who didn't get paid for doing union business, so they altered that, I got it then. I was delegate to East Germany, that was for three and a half weeks, and I took 5 days of my own which was owing me.

Alan Lawson: Didn't you get paid, I thought I got it for everybody, I always got paid. Alan went with you that year.

Daphne Ancell: I got 5 days which I had as holiday so I used that, and the other unpaid with a note to say don't say this is a precedent, you've gone once, you're not going again.

Alan Lawson: I thought you got paid automatically, you didn't tell me.

Daphne Ancell: I never expected to. Technicolor never paid me anything over and above they had to.

Alan Lawson: How is it that you never told me that. I assumed that you always got paid the same as I did.

Daphne Ancell: Looking back now on Technicolor, 30 years there, 13 operations and never once did they send me a flower. I think that really is, every, the union did.

Alan Lawson: Even after I retired,

Daphne Ancell: This time I was only in hospital for 2 or 3 days and I had a big bunch of flowers from , every time I've been ill, when my mother died I had a letter from the director,

Alan Lawson: it should be in our union?

Daphne Ancell: It really should, if you read the book you'd think it had been set up by a trade union, it's got all the jargon in it, all the calculations about how they do their wages

Alan Lawson: I was saying my their name it would be part of our union

Daphne Ancell: Television Security.

Alan Lawson: Do you remember any exciting times to do with activities in the labs.

Daphne Ancell: I can remember the conference at Beaver Hall, that was Harold Anscombe, and we were on the prescribed list not to be voted for, and I was quite flattered, I never think I was anything less like a communist, I know he lived at Richmod because I bumped into him there once, I suppose he's dead now, he was quite old

Alan Lawson: THAT was with , he was a newsreel cameraman

Daphne Ancell: Ken Gordon was newsreel as well, is Winifred still alive

Alf Cooper: No, she was a detestable cow, she tried to woo me, how the hell she thought she was going to get me.

Alan Lawson: What were the highlights as far as you were concerned of your union activities.

Daphne Ancell: The negotiations, the national ones, I think they stand out, and also having got the negotiations over, having the mass meeting at the cinema to put it over to them

Alf Cooper: Sell it.

Daphne Ancell: I remember the only year we got it slung out was the year when there was the proposal to scrap the cost of living.

Alf Cooper: I was against it, I'd always been against it. They forced it through.

Daphne Ancell: But the point was that it was there, and they wouldn't have it and we were sent back to renegotiate it, because they were very, that cost of living bonus, they've still got it haven't they

Alf Cooper: They gave it up and they've got it back again

Daphne Ancell: I know they froze it but they were quite exciting if a bit worrying.

Alf Cooper: Can you remember any of the antagonists on the other side.

Daphne Ancell: Pully was my earliest on and then Malcolm Wenham, I think

Alf Cooper: That was departmental wise.

Alan Lawson: No I mean negotiating committee.

Alf Cooper: There was a bloke from Norwood who was a bit of a bastard

Alan Lawson: Case

Alf Cooper: No, Case never turned up, he was horrible. This bloke was, he was a little fellow and against anyone having anything always. Did you come on the team when we had Harcourt as Chairman, before Oliver.

Daphne Ancell: No, I didn't have a lot to do with Oliver really.

Alf Cooper: Harcourt, actually I got to respect the bloke in the end. Although he was tough, he had a job to do and he didn't go out of his way to lie to you which is a big thing.

Daphne Ancell: There was somebody from Technicolor who was a so and so, oh

I know, Ingram. It was later

Alf Cooper: He was just an ignorant pig, and he hadn't got a clue

Daphne Ancell: Another one I remember was Millett, he was a real gentleman, I liked him but I was the only one who did like him and I remember

Alf Cooper: This was a sexual attraction

Daphne Ancell: No, it wasn't he was courteous and he was the only one who called me over as a union representative and told me when new staff was coming and this sort of thing. He was on that negotiating committee. I don't know if you remember this, something Paddy was talking about and he and Paddy were arguing, and it was holding up the whole of the negotiation, Paddy said I've got it in writing from his predecessor, so Miller turned round then and apologised to the meeting, in that case ladies and gentlemen I'm very very sorry, I'm taking up your time, I've been given wrong information and I must apologise. I knew it had never been agreed and I said to Paddy, where have you got this, what are you going to do, you haven't got anything. He said you type it up and I'll sign it. And I never knew to this day how Paddy got out of it. But Miller issued this real climbdown and apology. I thought how is Paddy going to wriggle out of it and I never heard another word about it. Whether Paddy did get a piece of paper and put something on it I never knew. Paddy was a match for Millet, he was really put in to break the union or stand up to the union.

Alf Cooper: He was a security bloke wasn't he?

Daphne Ancell: No, he was assisting company secretary and doing personnel work before we both took over. And when it came to the crunch, instead of the management backing Millet they didn't, although they put him there to do a job on the union, because he failed they left him standing there and he was out. I always felt it was rather a shame, I felt sorry for him.

I can remember incidents with Monica which were funny. Invariably we finished up at Blackpool for the women's TUC or labour party and then we finished up in the most terrible storm one night, we were literally blown from one place to another, I couldn't stand up in it. We got blown into this sort of music hall I suppose. When we got to the hotel Monica always had her double gin and I had a tea or coffee, and about midnight I went upstairs and I put the key in the door and I had to get this poor old thing out of bed. And on another occasion, Monica, she was funny to go away with, we were standing on Blackpool station and the train had just pulled in and Monica leant down to get something and kicked my heel and the shoe fell off under the train and they had the back the train out of the station while a porter got down and got my shoe. Monica nearly wetted her knickers laughing on the platform. They say women didn't get an equal chance but whether from a novelty aspect, if you stood for a committee in those days you had a 90% chance of getting in, don't you think so Alf.

The voting went in women's favour because it was a novelty thing because unfortunately there weren't a lot of women which you can understand, it takes up a lot of time and women do have to get back and get meals and this sort of thing.

SIDE 2, TAPE 1

Alan Lawson: You were saying women had to get back and get meals.

Daphne Ancell: When Bob and me got married I was well established in my union procedure so it was clearly understood I went on doing that and he didn't expect me to come back and get him a meal if I was going to a meeting. If you married on a different basis I don't suppose some of them found it very easy coping with, Monica, he was very good, he was very understanding.

Alf Cooper: When you went to Germany what was the reason you went, FISTAF

Daphne Ancell: No it was before FISTAF, we were actually the guests of the German chemical union, we had a few days in Berlin and then we went to the Oberhof Mountains, and I suppose it had been a schloss and then they turned it into this workers thing. There delegates all over the world from there, it was very nice, it was a lovely time, Alan used to get up in the morning and crawl from one table to another and say mass break outs tonight. And there was women I remember there, she was from some union up north and it didn't matter what form of transport it was, it seemed as if she had a clockwork going, as soon as the engine started she would sing and she was telling us about how she had to chose between being an opera singer and being a trade union official, and the minute she started, and she had a n awful voice, about Polaris submarines or something, Alan used to sit, lower himself in the seat and do these clucking noises like a hen. She said to me afterwards, she said when I get back I'm going to write to your union and say what a very nice person you are and what a shame is you're landed with that shit as a general secretary, he did take the rise out of her. It was really funny, it really was a nice holiday. It was a holiday, you had one day organised and you had one day you could do anything you liked.

Alf Cooper: Did you attend any meetings.

Daphne Ancell: Not meetings but we went to different factories and different things like that.

Alf Cooper: No discussion groups about industrial conditions.

Daphne Ancell: No.

Alf Cooper: When I went out there we went through all that, especially the business, you remember we got the north of England for a long term study on the toxic chemicals we were using, we used to discuss all that thing when we were out there. I sat in, they were doing a project out there in one of the factories and I sat in on a discussion group when they stopped a multi million mark project because they weren't satisfied with the conditions. And the staff wouldn't let this project go along until the union committee was satisfied that all the natural safeguards for the workers health were OK and I found that very

interesting.

Daphne Ancell: This was a long time before FISTAF, and why I went, I 'd been off work for a long time, it was the year I had my rib out, and I'd just gone back to work on the Monday and I think it was the executive on the Wednesday and there was an invitation from Castro to go to Cuba and I was nominated and I panicked, I thought I daren't go, because Technicolor will say I want time off, and like a fool I said no, and George Elvin said to me afterwards, you never say no, if you say yes and you can't go there's always half a dozen other people waiting and you know who went in my place, , George said look who we're stuck with now. And when I thought what I'd miss, I though I'll never say no again, and about 2 weeks later the East German thing came up, I thought to hell with Technicolor, yes please. I'd still loved to go to Cuba.

Alf Cooper: There was talk about me becoming personnel manager and George said to me if you take that job Alf I'll never speak to you again.

Daphne Ancell: You'd have to have resigned then, you couldn't really be on two sides.

Alf Cooper: That's why I never became supervisor.

Daphne Ancell: That's silly because the bosses are still in the union, it's not the same thing in the labs.

Alan Lawson: Wasn't that because a lot of the bosses had come up through the ranks.

Alf Cooper: The first chairman of the laboratories actually became the managing director of Pathe. I joined 36.

Daphne Ancell: When did you join Alan

Alan Lawson: 32.

Alf Cooper: You joined in 32, George Elvin wasn't there then.

Alan Lawson: No. It was Captain Cope.

Alf Cooper: I was hoping you would be able to remember some of our meetings better than I could. Some of the things we pulled off were fantastic. We got the 40 hour week.

Daphne Ancell: Some of them took an awful long time.

Alf Cooper: We got the sickness payments.

Daphne Ancell: I don't know I made a note of all those Alf. Holidays was a terribly slow issue.

Alf Cooper: Do you remember when we got the one week off for not having any sickness.

Daphne Ancell: That was before my time.

Alf Cooper: That was something the union got at Technicolor. I tried to get 3 weeks holiday. I couldn't get it because it was too much and I accepted a condition which went against the grain personally, I thought it was the thin end of the wedge. People were taking liberties with sick pay. You got sick pay very good, anybody who hadn't had any sickness. The people were actually phoning down to the wages officer to ask how much more sickness they had to come. I had to uphold their right to know what they had due, in the finish we did a deal with the management that anyone that hadn't had any sickness had an extra week's holiday. These were the people who didn't need any holiday. But I thought to myself in my stupid way, this is the thick edge of the wedge, once they get into the habit of having four weeks

Daphne Ancell: Do you remember it, the holidays for a long time were only two weeks.

Alf Cooper: I remember that. I can't remember the date we got it but I was battling with the management and with my own members over that. But 2 years of that we got our extra holiday.

Daphne Ancell: But even that you had to have done so many years for two days or something like that. And it was a long haul to push them up on holidays. Often they would have given up a lot if we'd given up the cost of living bonus, that was the sticking point. I mean some of the redundancies at Technicolor were stupid. Because America dictated how many had to go regardless whether we could do it or not,

Alan Lawson: In relation to output.

Daphne Ancell: Yes, they were just numbers, get rid of so many, and on two or three I remember, by the time the people actually went, they were leaving on the Friday and reemployed again on the Monday and they were driving in new cars. Paddy negotiated a loyalty agreement of 12sh/6d a week and I had it till the time I left. The ones who didn't volunteer for redundancy got this 12sh/6d a week, and from then on it was always extra. When I was working everything out on the wages, you never got something on it or it didn't count when you were having a rise, 12sh/6d is paltry now but then it wasn't bad, money is so different now.

Alf Cooper: Do you remember the managing director who was an American, Melvy Wood. He wasn't a bad guy. When it first started there was a bloke called Oakes and then Kay Harrison who were the joint managing directors. Harrison was the guy who bought all the land and got the franchise because and when the war broke out Oakes ran back to America a bit smartish. Kay stayed on and then he used to do 25 weeks in this country and 25 weeks somewhere else and was his secretary, and used her toilet and came out laughing and we wanted to know why and she said she's got a mink toilet seat. Who was the other woman we had there, tall thin woman with Barbara Wilcox, she had a daughter working

there. I remember we had a canteen on top of the roof, oh it was before your time, we're talking about the 40s, 47, when the labour party got in, this woman was very right wing, oh if the labour party gets in I'll die, well they get in and she died

Daphne Ancell: She did.

Alf Cooper: Yes, she did, I'll never forget that.

Alan Lawson: What ACTT activities have given you the most satisfaction?

Daphne Ancell: probably THE EXECUTIVE I think.

Alan Lawson: How long did you serve on that?

Daphne Ancell: 8 or 9 years. I wonder if I was still on it, I think I volunteered for redundancy in the end, it just wasn't like Technicolor, I just suddenly decided that's it, I've had it.

Alf Cooper: It went down as a place to work.

Daphne Ancell: Everybody said the same.

Alan Lawson: What do you think was the reason?

Alf Cooper: Leadership at the top.

Daphne Ancell: Definitely, I'm trying to pinpoint it to anyone in particular, there was just

Alan Lawson: Was it anything

Daphne Ancell: It might have been to do with the computerisation, it just got so impersonal.

Alan Lawson: Was it anything to do with the advent of videos.

Daphne Ancell: They weren't in general use when I was there, we're usually a couple of years behind everybody else. We had an audio visual department.

Alf Cooper: Vidtronics.

Alan Lawson: That had nothing to do with it.

?
Daphne Ancell: No, that was a nice department, a very nice man who ran that. It all got so terribly impersonal.

Alf Cooper: It kept getting taken over.

Daphne Ancell: That's it, there was no continuity of ownership. And everybody was, when I say everybody I mean the management and supervisors, they always seemed to be frightened of America, probably they had reason to, because where the ordinary people had the union to back them up, if the supervisor had got the sack there was nothing anyone could do about it, look at Littlejohn,

he was off so quickly, wasn't he, he was managing director. Once they got the push they were just gone. I think it probably does stem from America.

Alf Cooper: We had such a lot in reserve. First of all they went public and they sold, the shares were owned by about people who were people like Kalmus who created the process and people like Harrison, and two or three film stars, big shots, male and female, and the Prudential had some money in it, and they built up a terrific reserve. They suddenly went public and they turned their 10 bob shares into £1 and they sold half of them, and the 10 bob shares when to the staff for 10sh and 9d, and you were allowed so many.

Daphne Ancell: I HAD 120.

Alf Cooper: I didn't buy any on principle because I deplored the thing they were up to, and I said to the people, the fact was they halved their shares originally to 10 bob, and still kept control of the company, and these people were buying these shares. And some one wrote an article in the commercial world and the shares went , and I said to the people who had got them it was the time to sell them, because they went down again, and those that sold them made a bob or two. It was always these people looking to take over, and then that drunken Irish git from the Ship razer blades, and then he bought it up, and from then on it was sell this bit and sell this bit and sell something else. And then Saltzman and Cubby Broccoli got it and he was really stripping out, Saltzman, and from then on in you never felt safe.

Daphne Ancell: It reminds me, I hadn't long had the shares when we had the trouble, the lock out, because I went to the board meeting at the Waldorf Astoria with Ken Williams and George Elvin, because the union had 4 shares I think, and I remember Pully, my boss accountant, he was on the door and he said to me, I was done up in a hat, I thought dress up to kill. And he said name, I said Daphne Lebrun, and he said how many shares and he just looked through me as if I hadn't existed, and I said 120, and he said to George name, and how many shares, 4, and we got in there and Mr Allen was on the platform and he kept winking at me all through the meeting. And there was another man on the platform who just kept grinning at me, and I kept waiting for them to bring something to eat and drink round, I kept looking round, when are they going to do it, anyway after the votes to adopt the accounts, oh they gave this terrific speech about the future, how much profit they'd made, because they had made an enormous profit, it was the best year they'd ever had, and the next one was going to be better. No one mentioned the fact that the place was practically closed down. It came to adopt the report so George Ken and I voted against it, it came round again, how many shares, this rigmarole, we didn't win, outside there were demonstrators with banners up there, it made it worth while. This marvelous man came up to me who had been grinning at me. He said do you always go in for lost causes, I said I'm surprised none of you asked why so many people had been locked out and some on strike, whether you knew anything about it. He didn't make any comments.

Alf Cooper: I thought George would have said something about it.

Daphne Ancell: You couldn't actually say, you could have caused a disturbance and shouted it out but there wasn't the facility on the agenda to ask, all you were doing was passing the chairman's report.

Alf Cooper: You couldn't query.

Daphne Ancell: No, we just voted against it.

Alf Cooper: At arbitration I got told to shut up. It's surprising, these things are all fixed up before you go.

Daphne Ancell: I think you're right, it was coming from America, everybody was cutting each other's throat,

Alf Cooper: They tell me it's still the same thing there now, they're all very unhappy.

Daphne Ancell: I haven't been up there for ages and ages. One of the girls came to see me a couple of months ago. I think the ones still there are earning fantastic salaries. But that isn't everything.

Alan Lawson: Coming back can you say what gave you the most satisfaction.

Daphne Ancell: The biggest thing was concluding a decent agreement. It was getting the good agreements going, and committees, I used to enjoy the executive meetings, I like that.

Alan Lawson: Any other highlights.

Daphne Ancell: Various conferences, they were very individual things, it was just a way of life wasn't it Alf, I know it was for you as it was for me.

Alf Cooper: We used to spend an awful lot of time. I was hoping you could remember some of the significant things, the mass meetings we held at the laboratories when the knives were out. Some of us old lads, including you, started building Ricky Novak up to take over from, we knew we were getting old and we wanted somebody who was going to be union, we built Paddy O'Gorman to take over at Technicolor. Then we decided we ought to build up Ricky Novak because he looked the most likeliest to take over, the next thing he was up the governor's backside wasn't he. It's such a mistake.

Daphne Ancell: Here again it's a personality thing. I remember when Valerie and I joined the union, it was when Franklyn Gollins was treasurer and he was very dishy and Valerie and I used to sit there and gaze at him and he thought god he's dishy, and he delivered a speech, I don't know whether it was at the AGM, but the whole theme of it was his personal integrity, and Val said if he's got that much personal integrity we might as well forget it, he was married. And his personal integrity wasn't much cop later on. Some time my idol had feet of clay. John was

another one.

Alf Cooper: What about Paddy.

Daphne Ancell: Paddy who?

Alf Cooper: The guy who pushed you around at Chaplin's do.

Daphne Ancell: John , he was the camera section. The camera section were always very scruffy but very a very glamorous sort of scruffy, he was blond, of German origin

Alan Lawson: Perhaps he was South African.

Alf Cooper: When was this, had I retired?

Daphne Ancell: This was going back quite a long time, when Ray Parslow and Hugh Salisbury were cameramen. A little girl in our office, Pat, she had a real crush on him. She thought he was absolutely wonderful, she used to go red when he came in. I thought yes he's rather nice, I remember reading in the journal and it came up in the appeal's committee, he had gone on to be a director or something like that and had got a camera crew and left them stranded or something like that. He paid them no wages, I thought there must be something in me because I thought he was everything. Evidently he used to ride into Technicolor, with George Gunn, when he used to ride his horse in, and John Von Cox, he used to exercise his horse for him in the lunch hour. I don't think I actually spoke to him, I thought he was so glamorous, I don't think I even spoke to him.

Alan Lawson: Do you have any regrets?

Daphne Ancell: No, I miss the union but when I come back to the MGM I think how did I ever sit through so many meetings, you still like meetings do you Alf, I must say the less I go the less inclined ?I am, unless it's me, the AGM is so dull compared to what it was.

Alf Cooper: The people who are at the helm now, and I'm not talking about the paid staff, the people who are elected into positions have never had to fight for what they've got. They came into something that was a gold mine as a union agreement.

Alan Lawson: This is the label of a successful agreement, so long as they can maintain it

Alf Cooper: They don't know what the early people had to go through to get what they've got.

Daphne Ancell: I don't know if it's that or so the legislation has so cut the leg's from under the union, there's no fire.

Alf Cooper: But it had gone out before then.

Daphne Ancell: I'd forgotten it was going to be a biennial thing, I was trying to sort out the dates with my holiday and suddenly realised there isn't an AGM this year. I still go to it every

time, but I have been disappointed at the last couple. The whole structure of the union is so different now. I couldn't tell you which committee fed into which ones, a whole tree of it. I really don't know how.

Alan Lawson: You've reverted back now to being an ordinary member and the ordinary membership

Daphne Ancell: Never did know

Alan Lawson: It's them up there. Was the honorary membership a pleasure.

Daphne Ancell: It was lovely. That was very nice. How did Stan Wharby's go.

Alf Cooper: Very well He was very pleased. There was a fellow who had done a lot for the union and not many people knew about it.

Alan Lawson: Is there anything you haven't done which you would like to have done.

Daphne Ancell: I always tossed up, I was nominated several times for vice president, and I always felt that it was such an important job that this was some time ago, I felt really it should go for the most experienced people, so I never stood for it. But when I've subsequently seen the people who stood for it, who to my knowledge have never even been on the executive, that to me is out of all proportion, I feel you have to do your apprenticeship before you stand for an office like that. I wish I had stood for it one year. I might not have got in. Monica made a really good vice president But now it's such a weird set up, it is only one isn't it, you haven't got, it's one president and one vice president.

Alf Cooper: Now the elect the VP from the executive, don't they. The membership direct at annual conference don't the VP.

Daphne Ancell: We seem to be having an awful lot of staff, I'm always reading about someone new, these regional people, but I would have thought in numbers the union was getting smaller.

Alan Lawson: Outside in the regions there, more and more. That's why they want the people in the regions, someone there.

Daphne Ancell: But they still have people here.

Alan Lawson: That's overall.

Would you like to change your life at all.

Daphne Ancell: I don't think so, looking back at it now, I think why didn't I try to get out of office work and into some other part of the business. The reason I stayed at Technicolor all those years, it wasn't really for Technicolor, it was for the union. I'd always done office work and office work it was only in the labs that office work was covered by our union. If I'd gone to a

television company or a film company it would have been NATKE or something like that.

Alan Lawson: What would you like to have done in the film industry.

Daphne Ancell: I don't know really, because I don't know that much about it. It would have all been new to me because I didn't know much about what Technicolor do, I always had such a full time job, that I never had time to do the rounds, I never did. I was always working to the last minute and overtime as well so I never got a tour of the place to see what all the departments did, which I would like to have done.

Alf Cooper: I know one thing she did the labs a lot of good because she was our minute secretary for years, and she did us a lot of good organising the girls in Technicolor, you haven't recalled that

Daphne Ancell: It was just part of the job.

Alf Cooper: I can never remember incidents. I remember the worries we used to have, going to mass meeting and coming back, what we were going to say, the things we had to do to make sure we got something through, because we considered what we'd negotiated

Daphne Ancell: People in the right place in the audience.

Alf Cooper: I can't remember, I could only remember, things like Ken Williams used to say to me, I always believe in a democracy, this is a democracy, shut up and sit down. And that sort of business at different meeting. I can never remember these incidents.

Alan Lawson: Thank you very much Daphne.