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DORIS MARTIN

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Doris Martin, continuity, interviewer Sid Cole, recorded on 16th August 1988

SIDE 1, TAPE 1

SC: Can we start at the beginning and find out something about your schooling.

DM: I was born in Harringay and went to a local school and then we moved down to Lea on Sea, that's where George Elvin lived, I lived more the other side, he was up on the high part, the newer part, I didn't know him, only at meetings, this was before the war, before we moved to Lee on Sea I went away to boarding school, I was born in 1906, so I'm 80 although I don't like to admit it.

SC: When did you leave school.

DM: I was sent away to boarding school after my little brother died because there were only the two of us, my mother was very upset and went back to business and anyway they thought I'd be spoilt being the only one, so it was quite a change.

SC: Where did you go.

DM: Cliftonville, by the sea, it was nice, it was before we moved to Lee, and I left there when I was 16, and then I went to Pitman's for a year, took a business course, shorthand and typing.

SC: Did your parents have any connection with the film business.

DM: None at all. My father had a small printing business and my mother was in the post office, but she had a cousin who had a connection and that was how I got in.

SC: What was the connection.

DM: She was the secretary to the head of Paramount all over Europe, you know that big building in Wardour St., it was a kind of PA job but they just called it secretary and it was a very good job. But the time I left Pitmans she'd heard, her mother was my mother's aunt, yes she was a first cousin to my mother, a good bit older than me, the mothers obviously got together, you know, Doris gets a nice job kind of thing, and her mother spoke to her and she got me a little job in Paramount, and I started as working as a secretary to Earl St John, before he went to Paramount, before the theatre was built, I've got a ticket for the opening of Paramount, it was gold plated but it's got a bit rusty now,

SC: When would this be

DM: 23 I think, he was the exploitation manager then, and he used to travel round a bit but there was awful a very nice woman,

Lilian Brind, who was on, not exactly the script department but she had to read all the new books

SC: What we called a literary editor,

DM: Read all the stories and made a precis of them, I used to type them for her and they went to America, to someone who vetted them over there, Paramount of course, so I had the two because Earl wasn't there a lot, I can't remember what happened to Lilian but I think she left because I was still in the offices, Earl St John went when the Plaza theatre opened, he was already in the opening when I was there and there was a woman there who was older and more experienced than I was and she was his PA when he went there. I stayed with Lilian Brind, in the new building, the big building, oh I remember what happened, I had a shocking row with a man there and I left.

SC: What was the row about.

DM: When Lilian left for a time I was with a department, it was to do with the London branch, vetting contracts for films and I was the senior of the girls and the woman who was in charge she left and I should have been in line for the job and he put somebody else, we always thought he was a nasty type, nobody liked him, and this one was being placed there because she ran and told all the tales. Anyhow the woman who was leaving was very upset, I said anyhow I'm not going to do this so I went in to see him and I'm a very quiet person normally and I don't lose my temper, but I really told him, my daughter wouldn't speak to me like this, I'd been there about 3 or 4 years.

SC: So you left there and then what happened.

DM: There wasn't much around. I did temping and then I got a call, and you know the theatre department had offices in Oxford St and the secretary of Paramount, I didn't know what was going on but they were all delighted I'd put him down, and there was a job going there and he sent for me, oh Doris there's a nice little job coming up take it, it was working for a talent scout, America had appointed a talent scout, Donovan Pedelty, I worked with him and we got on very well, and everyone was delighted, everybody was coming over - and he didn't find out for a long time and he was furious but he couldn't do anything about it because he had no control over them. I worked for him for sometime, he wrote scripts and I used to type them in my spare time. And he used to give me about £5 for typing a script which was a fortune then, he had a house at Hampstead Garden suburb and I used to go out there sometimes and stay the weekend and type them and we did very well. Then he wanted to direct, and by this time I'd heard about continuity work in the studio and I thought that's a job I'd like, I didn't know anything about it, I'd never been in a studio but anyhow I mentioned it to him, and I must say he was very good I owe my start to him, he said well if I get a chance I will. Well he got a chance to direct one of his films but we still had this talent scouting and I had to hold the fort for him, and he didn't want to give up the job because it was hit and miss, he said I'll get you down as often as I can and I went down and I stood by and there was a very nice woman doing continuity then, she was married to one of the Keys brothers, her name was Ann something and she was so helpful, it was some time

before I got a chance of course, because I had to dash back to the office, we had offices above Paramount, the Plaza theatre,

SC: What was the film, can you remember.

DM: Yes, it was called The Fiery Cross, it was about the Highland custom of running around with the burning cross.

SC: Where was it being shot.

DM: B&D I think, mostly in Scotland. It was a long trek out there.

SC: Was it a silent film.

DM: It was the beginning of sound. Anyhow eventually he left and formed a company one was Crusade, Crusade was the first and we got an office across the road in Jermyn St and I was made secretary, the accountant said I'll look after it. That was why I didn't join the union before the war because I was part of the company, but when they gave me a chance to do something. And the first day I ever had in a studio on my own I will never forget. It was, I had a class full of children, and you can imagine, I went round religiously taking their names and just before we were about to shoot Don said I want a close-up of that child, move him there move them there, he didn't give me a chance to make, being more experienced I would have said wait a minute, the first assistant would have done

SC: You were doing continuity on this film.

DM: This was my first break. He took a chance on me, I stood by on another film before but this was my first break. And it was at Highbury, I can't remember much about the film, unfortunately I didn't start keeping unit lists for some time and I go back to 50s but nothing before the war so I can only vaguely remember, I only remember that terrible day in the classroom. When I got there a very cocky little man came up to me and said I'm the head props, my name's Ted, I've just come from so and so, what have you done, I thought I'll never fool him so I did the other thing and threw myself at his mercy and said I'm just beginning and I'm terrified, leave it to me girl, and he did, he was wonderful, in the end I even got the sparks on the rails calling down, it got a bit confusing, but they all meant so well, people are lovely, I wouldn't have had another career for anything.

SC: Tell me about the continuity sheets in those days, did you have to do many copies.

DM: Oh yes, about 6. I don't know if you did when I started but when I came back after the war it was more organised.

SC: In those days when you started I suppose a lot of people had to invent their own method of dealing with things.

DM: No, they did sheets, I remember when I first started passing a table and there was a sheet in there, I remember trying to linger to see what it was, there were proper sheets and they had forms on top. We did but they were more stylised, organised after the war,

SC: How long did you stay in the North, the whole of the war.

DM: The whole of the war, I wanted to come back but by this time there was conscription here and I was well set. We had the PRO, because he came over and they wanted someone who knew about it and we used to have to vet all the newspapers, some of them were so funny these country newspapers, I'll never forget one, it was a description of a funeral and it said the occasion was marred by an unfortunate occurrence, the brother of the deceased having been taken had the misfortune to fall into the grave and break his leg, but we did have to spot them because some of them were very anti. Some weren't.

SC: What happened when the end of the war came.

DM: I came back as soon as I could, I said you don't need me here any more and I'm going back. I came back and everything was different here. I came back and wanted to get back to the film business, I don't know if you remember there was an agency for artists called Essaney, well I had known them before the war and they had an office in Wardour St so I went to see them, they said we can, someone they knew was going to direct a small film, don't worry we'll get you into it but you must belong to the union now, the ACT, I went up to Soho, oh they didn't say anything about a film then, they said before we can do anything you must belong to the union, so I went and told them, they said you can't belong unless you've got a job, I thought this is funny, I trotted back to them and they said don't worry we'll get you a job and they got me this job, I plodded back and that was when I joined the ACT, but it was in existence before and I was approached but it was so difficult being a secretary of a company that was making the films, I couldn't do it.

SC: Before the war how many films had you worked on as a continuity girl, 2 or 3.

DM: Oh yes.

SC: So you were well qualified.

DM: Yes but it was very strange starting back again.

SC: What was the film.

DM: It was, I cannot remember the name of the man, he was the boyfriend of Pat at Essaney, she didn't marry him in the end she married somebody Austin, I can't remember the name of the man who directed the film, he was very nice but a bit harum scarum. Pat Tranfield. He was filming an act of Shakespeare Othello, and it was at Marylebone and he was very nice, and once I started I was alright, do you remember, he lived at Walton, he made some films there and he was making advertising films and I worked for him, then he got a series of Accident Prevention films which we did at Mansdon and I had a lovely summer down there. It was a bit of a funny set up, we had two flight something seconded to us and whenever we wanted personnel we had to do it though them, we couldn't say to someone come and stand here. But do you remember Harry Orchard, he was the cameraman for the RAF at that time and he was seconded to us and Gene and I were the only 2 people there,

He got a man in name Victor Green, he was a partner but they didn't get on too well, and we did a film called Flying 50 about horses at Welling, then the war came and I did war work all the time.

SC: What sort of war work did you do.

DM: As it happened we finished a film and I got a very old friend and he was an army auditor, a civil servant, he'd been posted to Belfast, and I'd not been to Ireland, I think I'd been once but not to the North. They said come over to see us and while I was there war broke out, I rather suspected it was going to. My parents were still at Lee on Sea and we wanted them to come over here because we thought it would be safer, they said no it's all right, so I didn't know what to do. Before I could do anything, he came back the first day and said Doris will you come down and help us out, we've got so many recruits and unless I can get a nominal roll of to War Office we can't pay them, and you know people talk about the Irish not coming into the war, but I'll never say that, they came up in the train loads from Dublin in the South, to Belfast to join up, and the office he was in then was opposite the main station from Dublin, they just got out of the station and came straight across. The first day they came up it was a Sunday, they came up on a late train, they had to get the colonel out of bed, he came up from somewhere or other, he was a lovely man, he came from Cork, he was a n old timer with a VC, his adjutant was a local man, he was nice, first of all I got to this place, I worked until about typing all these names, the Belfast accent if very difficult and they had a man there who was a sergeant and they got all these recruiting things and they wouldn't hand them over, and they were Irish names and he had this awful Irish accent, and I couldn't understand, I was making him spell them out. In the send I said let me have it, I can read it, he went all security conscious, I don't know if I better, I said I'm typing the damn things, oh he was a funny man. I think he left in disgrace in the end. I was there till 12 o'clock, a few hours sleep, down the next day, and they got the stuff over and we got in threw in time for the men to get their pay. But the officers had to swear them in, because they couldn't take the king's shilling as they called it until they'd take the oath, but they must have it when they did. So that was an experience.

SC: Did you stay in Northern Ireland after that.

DM: Yes. I wanted to, there was so much to do there, I wanted to come back, you're doing good here, what do you want to do when you get back, well actually I wanted to join the Wrens but I didn't want to tell the army that. Look we need you, I was the only decent typist they had, they had nobody trained but I trained quite a few ATS for orderly roo because I knew quite a bit about orderly room then, but I worked there for a week and had a touch of flu and I was at home with my friends for a few days, when I got back the devils had written to the War Office, because I knew this terrible woman who was the queen bee and I didn't like the karki uniform, they said before we'd like you but you'll have to join the ATS, but we'll get you back, I said I'm not going to, I'm not going to be under her

SC: Who was the queen bee.

DM: The head of the ATS. But this time I'd heard about her and what she was like and I said no, I said you can call me out any time of the day or night and I will work but I'm not going to be under anyone else's thumb and I want to wear my own clothes.

SC: You weren't liable to compulsory conscription.

DM: It never was over there. Because there was so much agriculture over there it wouldn't have been worthwhile have conscription because so many people would have been exempt, they were more valuable farming. Everybody joined up voluntarily. When I came back the colonel had applied to the War Office to have me as a civilian, so I made history, I was the first civilian ever to work officially in an orderly room in Belfast. So I was there for a long time.

Then I carried on with them for a long time and trained some people. The someone came over and we had to have a PRO. We did have so much help from the South I love the Irish, we had arrangements made, at one time they thought the Germans would take Ireland next and they'd usrround the country and for a long time I had a case packed in the hall, I had to go to Belfast Castel, some of the men were going down to Dublin, they'd got all the railways organised, with Dublin, even De Valera helped although it was a secret, they didn't want to be overrun by the Germans.

SC: It was very strange, just over the border in the Republic there was a German consulate,

DM: That was so useful to us you don't know, we used it to get false messages. We had a lot of maps printed where there were false grids and they were placed where they would be pinched, I can't tell you it was so exciting, it was lovely, we weren't supposed to go down there but occasionally we did. I'll never forget going down for a weekend, and the lights, because we had blackout in Belfast, and I remember standing on a bridge over the looking at the lights. And the people there, you'd go in a shop, they were short of some things which we weren't short of, their bread was terrible, it was black bread, and if you went down there you always had to take a loaf, a funny thing was I went down in a train, and the dodge was if you were smuggling anything, because you were searched at the border, you put it under a seat of a carriage, go and sit in another carriage, and then go and see if it was still there, and I was sitting opposite an old priest, and there was a loaf or something and of course he knew all about it, it was so funny, coming back, I always remember going into the shops and their saying oh you're from the North, you're short of this, stockings because we were on coupons, everywhere I went I got silk stockings, it was marvelous, the first time I got down there after this train business and they had glorious ice creams, we hadn't had ice creams or anything, I sat down and went to Dunleary which is just outside Dublin and gorged myself on a lovely chocolate sunday, I made myself sick because my tummy wasn't used to anything like that, and I managed to get myself down to the front and I sat on a seat for quarter an hour praying I wouldn't be sick.

SC: These were done for the RAF.

DM: For the RAF, they were never shown and they were very good. It was to teach pilots various things and we used to show the things they did wrong and in some of the episodes there were plane crashes. This was the thing, we had to get old planes, or if we got a few hours flying time, well we got one coming up with a few hours, these two boys, oh it's got so much flying time, the next thing you know, I remember once we were standing there and we wanted some help and they were both flying up in this plane, flying round, they didn't get their flying in before it was finished.

SC: On a personal note can you remember what your money was in those days.

DM: About £12/10. I don't think it was as much as that, but they put us up in a very good hotel at Westgate and we had everything, and at that time I had digs and I wasn't happy where I was so I just gave them up for the summer and stayed down there and they paid for my weekends and I probably didn't get so much in money but I got it in kind and it suited me, and he was a very nice and very jolly person. And he used to leave us there and Harry and I directed the blooming thing half the time, we got the script and we knew what to do with the boys, we got by, it was fun.

SC: When did you get into features proper.

DM: I went more into series than features.

SC: Commercial television was starting by now.

DM: No, that would have been about 48. I don't know how I got the first one, we did some stuff at Walton and I got to know people. 3 weeks for a feature.

AL: Who were they for.

DM: Different little firms used to come in, you were only there for 3 weeks, it only lasted 3 weeks, so about your first or second week the man who'd hired the space for the next one was coming round and 9 times out of 10 he asked the crew to stay on.

AL: Who was the cameraman on those.

DM: One of the early ones was Basil Emmott. And Bernie Lewis was an operator. I've found a unit list but there's no title on it, Billy Boyle was the producer, and that must have been a series because Springsteen and John Lamont were directors, that was where I met Ernie Palmer. I had met him before the war at Wembley, I don't know what film that was on. It would have been a feature, but I would just have been a beginner and Ernie was the cameraman, he'd just come back from doing that thing at Foula in the Hebrides where they were all isolated, Edge of the World, I didn't know him very well because he was a big cameraman. Then I met him again when I was doing a commercial or something up West because we went to a pub in the Haymarket or somewhere down there and I was with a couple, we'd finished work and were having

a drink and Ernie was the other side with a girl, he remembered me and came round and spoke to me and he got me on a picture there, that was how I started again, because when there was something going he suggested me, oh I went up to Manchester and did something, Blakeley, and that's where I met Dorothy Stimson, she was the editor and we shared a flatlet together, I did several up there.

I worked with Norman Evans, Over the Garden Wall, I can't remember the name of the other man, he'd get so drunk, anyhow I did these 3 reelers and Ernie got onto Sir Lancelot, that was the first series I worked on.

SC: That was the first time I met you. You stayed at Walton quite a while.

DM: Yes I did, Geoff Faithful was the cameraman on some of them, the was almost resident at Walton, I did several of these 3 reelers. The I did the Sir Lancelot series, then I did Sword of Freedom,

SC: Do you have any recollections of Edmond.

DM: He was a problem boy wasn't he. He was alright, he didn't know his lines half the time

SC: How did you get on with Adrienne.

DM: Very well, I liked her, she's still going, I've seen her on television lately.

SC: Where you Four Just Men.

DM: No.

SC: Where you on The Buccaneers,

DM: Yes.

SC: That was shot at Twickenham.

DM: Wasn't Bernie Knowles on that. In 55, I did a series called Grant Mitchell, we only did four and they hoped it would run again and Lorne Green was the star and it didn't take, and he became such a big star afterwards in the States, he was a nice man. Geoff Faithful was the cameraman. Jackie Collins, Joan Collin's sister was an actress then, John Guillermin was the director, I can remember him now saying come on Jackie, come on give it something, she was so shy. In those days they used to let them go on and improvise, and she didn't know what to do. But when I saw her name there I thought that would interest you.

I did several things for Vernon Sewell, you know he had a yacht, the first one was called Ghost Ship and we went out the Light House and four nights I had to sleep on the light house because it was to rough to take us off. That was quite an experience but it was bigger than most light houses because they built these mystery towers for the first world war and nobody knows what they were going to do with them because the war ended,

but they towed them out and the was being towed to out to some spot and it broke away so they cemented it down and it's a light house now. The lower part belonged to the navy and they used to store stuff there. We had the top part which was Trinity House, that was interesting, and we had some canaries out there for this scene and the old lighthouse keeper fell for these canaries so we donated the canaries to him at the end and he was so pleased, and they had a platform, the big liners used to go right past us, and I remember I was wearing a bright green dress and we went out for a breath of fresh air, and we didn't think about it, we were looking at the liner and they were all looking at us, what's a girl out there, another actress and myself, they gave us rooms to sleep but we couldn't sleep because the radio was going all night, we took out mattresses up and we went to sleep right under the light. We used to give them a big extra when they were shooting, when it was foggy they couldn't because of the blooming noise, if it was foggy they couldn't shoot when they had this thing on. It got when we were on deck one of them would come up and say there's a bit of fog coming up don't you, don't you, and he would say yes and they'd put the light on and it was as clear as mud, we'd have to slip them something not to sound the foghorns, so they were on a good thing while we were there. But they loved us going there because we brought out fresh milk every morning and newspapers which they didn't get. Then after that it did get rough, I got a message to meet Vernon in Wardour St and when I got up there he said Doris I promise you this one won't be as rough as the last, and it wasn't, we just went out from the shore, he was a nice man, I did two or three with him.

SC: The other one was shot on the yacht.

DM: It was was only used, we were based in Southsea and we just stayed in hotels or there was a club house we stayed in and we used to go out daily, some of them stayed on board but there wasn't much room, and they went into Portsmouth Harbour because he'd been in the navy. He was onto a good thing because he owned this yacht, the navy took it over in the war and paid him for it and he got his lieutenant commander whatever it was and his own yacht. And he was patrolling in his own yacht, and being paid for it.

SC: By that time was there anything different about the job itself, the continuity job.

DM: No, it was basically the same, you have to see the thing matches, check they're wearing the right clothing, in fact you have to do more on these little things because on big features you've got wardrobe people and people like that, it's just a question of checking, you do catch them out sometimes, on smaller pictures you had to do much more, it's a jolly good grounding.

SC: What about the hours were you working very good hours.

DM: Yes. I did so much on location. They were long hours and 6 day weeks. I remember going to Italy, I did a picture, I was away for 4 months, I went to Taomina which was lovely, and it was a funny old film, Call of the Blood with John Clements and his wife Kay Hammond, Robert Rietty was there, Harold Richmond was the production manager, it was an Italian crew apart from that.

SC: Who was the director.

DM: Hilton Edwards was engaged to do it and then John Clements asked him if he'd mind very much, John wanted to direct, no he took the part, no it wasn't John, it was a Hungarian, Ladislas Vajda, very nice man, I knew John Clements had done a funny business, he pinched the best part.

SIDE 2, TAPE 1

John Clements, he was very nice, very pompous but very nice, I never had any problems and she was very nice.

SC: Awful things happened to her because she became very ill.

DM: Yes, they lived at Brighton.

SC: We're in the 60's now.

DM: Yes, I started doing series. Then I went to Shepperton, that was when ITV was starting and the year before they wanted to stockpile some stuff,

SC: It was about 55.

DM: And Ernie went there and I went there, quite a few people.

SC: You must have been at Walton on and off from 55 to 60.

DM: Easy. I was there on and off.

AL: You were talking about Shepperton, where did that come in.

DM: Came after. In the beginning not many girls wanted to do series, they all went toffee nosed, and I thought this is silly, this is where our future is going to be in television, on series, and I did so many I wasn't out of work for ages, I got known and I went in. I liked it. You get a long run, you get to know everyone,

SC: Yes and in those days they'd be shooting 39 episodes a year, 39 half hours, that was practically a year's work.

DM: It was and inbetween I didn't mind having a break, but I did a few. I used to get an offer to do children's picture inbetween and I did some very nice children's pictures, Children's Film Foundation. And you get away on those. I went to Maldern on one, and the thing was I was phoned up one day, would you be interested in a 3 weeker, I know you're finishing then, I said not really because I'm starting again soon and I really want a break, she said in Taomina, I said I would be interested and I went back.

SC: By this time what sort of money would you say a continuity girl would be earning.

DM: £20 or £30. It was always good money, much more than you'd

get in an office, the work was so much more interesting, I couldn't have worked in an office.

SC: Any outstanding personalities you met during those years.

DM: Not really. I worked with so many artists. I did Pat McGoohan, Danger Man, that was Ralph Smart with you. He was very nice then, then I did the Prisoner later and he had gone a little strange.

SC: Don Chaffey, he was directing a lot of them, and as I understand it he finally had a quarrel, tell us something about the prisoner.

DM: It was a weird thing, we did Portmarion, we did one episode of Dangerman there and that's what gave him the idea. It was when he went back, it was a lovely place, we shot a lot of it there, it wasn't so bad at the start, he was writing it, he couldn't work out what these awful things were going to be and in the end he finished up with a big rubber balloon things, it was stupid, it was beyond him, he tried to do everything himself, and he couldn't.

SC: I heard about this from Don, that Pat was starring, producing directing, scripting.

DM: Leo McKern was in it and he had a breakdown, because he's a very conscientious man, of course Pat was drinking very heavily then, he wasn't the same man. Funnily I saw him recently in some episodes of Columbus and he's like himself. He looked younger. Because he made some series in America where he was a doctor and he looked about 100. He was just like his old self, like he was when we first knew him.

SC: Because at his best he could be very nice.

DM: He could be charming. I liked him very much then. Roger Moore was a dear, I did the Persuaders, with the American actor, they were both very nice. Roger's charming. And I tell you one thing, he's very quick study, he'll come up some times and say Doris can you hear me, can you give me the cues, and he'd have it all, very professional. He was great fun. I got on very well with the other one, but he upset a lot of people, he's one of these people if he liked you you were alright and if he didn't you were out. I tell you one director I couldn't bear and that was Leslie Norman. He was horrible, he was such a to work with, and I found out afterwards from discussion that he had a thing about continuity girls. None of them got on with him. I was on a series with him, he'd ask you something and then you'd go and look it up, and then he'd ask you something else, you know, it seemed as if he set out to make life difficult for you which was very rare.

SC: It's surprising, Les having been an editor, a very good editor too. One is very dependent.

DM: He was on that series and afterwards I swore I would never work with him again.

SC: That's unusual for you because you're a mild lady.

DM: Yes, I get on with most people. He was a pig.

SC: Did you ever have any great problems with artists.

DM: Not that I remember, if you treat people nicely. Some girls don't because they try and show off, I don't, if I've seen anything I go and tell them quietly. I've got a feeling for them, I know what it's like, sometimes they get a block.

SC: You weren't like Tilly Day and put little notes on your continuity sheet.

DM: No, I've seen some of hers. I had one winter when there wasn't much going, and I had a life saver at Beaconsfield, it was doing release scripts for America, apparently they'd sold a lot of earlier films to America and America insisted on having release scripts, so I went there and I think that's where I met Jane Buck, the two of us were doing them, in some cutting rooms there, and then I saw some of Tilly's continuity sheets. Funny, but it's a bit dangerous putting them on, you never know where they're going round.

SC: Looking back you've enjoyed the job.

DM: I enjoyed Black Beauty, that was one of my favourites, it was such a nice crew, such a nice atmosphere, and we were out in the air. It was shot at Stockers Farm, Rickmansworth, the canal and the house. I went there once afterwards and some other people were filming there, and it had been altered and it nearly broke my heart. The kitchen, they were using that as wardrobe. You know Shirley and Reg Dent who had the horses, well I have some neighbours who have two lovely daughters and one of them is crazy on horses, they got a horse, at that time they had a very old friend living somewhere near Guildford and they used to go out every weekend and the horse was stabled out there, well he died, they were wondering, there horse was still there but it was such a long way for them to go, so I said I know some people who could help, so I rang up Shirley, and explained the situation, and I said do you know anyone round there, it would be much nearer for them, she said we do livery, so took them out to the farm, and the horse is there now, and the younger girl's got a horse too.

SC: Black Beauty is still running around the world.

DM: It was a lovely series.

SC: Have you stopped working.

DM: I have stopped now, about 2 years ago. Another one I loved was Born Free in Kenya.

SC: With James Hill directing.

DM: Yes. Dear old Austin, the cameraman, he died soon afterwards. Austin Trevor. I loved that. I went out there, I didn't do the whole, Kay Rawlings was out there, and do you know we both lived in Ealing and met for the first time in Kenya. I went out to do one episode. They had the man who was doing the

animal stuff was going to direct one and they had to get a continuity, he didn't want continuity but they insisted he had to have one for the editor. I was warned about this, I didn't really want to go at first, when they rang up I said that's on the Equator, I can't work in intense heat, they said no it's high, it was quite cold, but I was so glad I did it, I loved it, I got on so well with Jack, we had a lovely little native assistant cameraman, Mathew K , there were just the three of us, I went out to do this episode with him, and we got on alright, then they said stay on there's a few pick ups to do, and we went round doing these, and he just went round doing the stuff, and he had these pile of scripts and he kept going through the scripts and I thought this is crazy, so when I used to get the call sheet from Kay, go through what we wanted and make a precis of what we'd got to do the next day, he thought that was brilliant, but it was only common sense really,

SC: Was this a series.

DM: A series.

SC: What are the main changes you've noticed since you first started when you were young in the business.

DM: I'll tell you the biggest thing from our point of view that you can have a tape played back when you want to get the dialogue, so you know you can get the dialogue right, it was such a struggle to get the shorthand and check, I used to have a system when they altered things, I'd write in longhand what the new thing was, then when we shot I'd take whatever they improvised in shorthand and I knew which was on the screen, but it's a great help having that, they've really got it made.

SC: Did you work on a series when they had a tv monitor on the stage.

DM: Yes.

SC: Did you like that.

DM: Yes, we started that in Persuaders, that was a great help, I'd use it in my lunch time and pick it up, but I was organised, it was wonderful. I'll tell you another difference, when you did the doubles, it was a nightmare because they had to shoot it and then cover one side of the camera and I had to time it exactly that the words came and then we'd play it back, it was hard work and took ages to do it. Now it's so simple. I was thinking where you've got someone playing two different characters in the same frame and they've got to answer themselves at the right time, now they can play it back and hear it, it's a doddle but it wasn't then, I used to dread it.

SC: Otherwise I suppose the method of recording, putting down your continuity sheets is more or less the same.

DM: They haven't really changed. Of course I did Superman, the flying units, and Supergirl, I did 2nd unit on that. The last thing I really did was 2nd unit, stunt stuff, Return to Oz, that was at Elstree, a studio I don't like.

SC: Why didn't you like it.

DM: It was too higgledy piddledy, it wasn't kept very clean, and it was such a journey getting there from here. Pinewood was my love, straight along, apart from that it was so well run.

SC: Elstree did grow up higgledy piggledy.

DM: That was the way it grew, but the best thing about it was that it was right at the end of the shops and lunch time you could go out and do your shopping, when you're at Pinewood and anywhere like that you had to shop weekends.

SC: You were talking about flying things, did you actually fly.

DM: Not very often, because they had to insure you for so much, they wouldn't take continuity girls if they could get out of it. No, we called it the flying unit when we flew Superman on the pole and various things like that, and I worked with, can't remember his name. I was asked to do another thing in 82, a short, 2 weeks and they hadn't got much money, I did take less because it just fitted in, we were going to shoot at two schools in this district, Millhill and another one, we shot all over the place, I found myself driving through the city to the East End, it was a nightmare. It was called A Shocking Accident and it won an Oscar for the best short film. I couldn't believe it when I saw this woman on the screen all dressed up, I didn't recognise her. I thought she beat me down. It was a lovely story, that's what made it, it was by a pig author, it was about a man who was abroad somewhere, and you know how in Italy they keep pigs on balconies, well he was walking under a balcony and it collapsed and the pig fell down and killed him. His son suffered all his life, how did your father die, he was killed by a pig, it was so funny. The crew wasn't know, the lighting cameraman I haven't heard of before or since. I think it was 16mm.

SC: That was one of the changes, the series started being shot on 16mm. That was really funny, he keeps on falling in love and the girls always laugh, and it finishes with him telling a girl at dinner and her saying what happened to that pig. The pig ran away, it wasn't hurt.

DM: Another series I enjoyed was Shillingbury Tales with Val Guest and that was made near Tring. Those 3 I think I enjoyed more than anything, Shillingbury Tales, Black Beauty and Born Free. But I enjoyed working on Superman and the others.

SC: Looking back you wouldn't have changed it.

DM: Looking back I think the best thing going onto series, I was employed all the time, and one of the reasons I didn't want to go onto the big pictures because I always felt they have more time on their hands and there could be bitchiness there, where everyone is trying to be better, you never get that on series, everybody's got their own job and they all pull together.

SC: You're too busy anyhow, 5 minutes a day.

DM: 7 sometimes. I'm glad I got out when I did because now it's going back I'm afraid to the old days, the hours have got longer



and they're trying to make all in deals.

SC: All in deals, you're paid so much and you work untold hours.

DM: Those awful brothers, they go out handing two contracts, the Israeli brothers, one to be shown - Golans - and do you know when I went out to South Africa they were out there making films on the cheap because it's beautiful scenery out there. And I have a friend out there who is a director, he goes into America a lot, and he told me they were making them, I said what about the crews, he said well Doris there's so little work here they're glad to take it and it's money for them. I said it's all wrong.

SC: Because the union had got very good down the years with their agreements.

DM: I never went outside, I never took an all in deal. But I'm afraid some of them have to do it if they want to work.

SC: Thank you Doris, that was great.

DM: Well I've enjoyed it, it's brought it all back, and made me think what a lovely time I've had, you do remember the best, there were times when you get browned off, standing out in a field in the middle of the night.