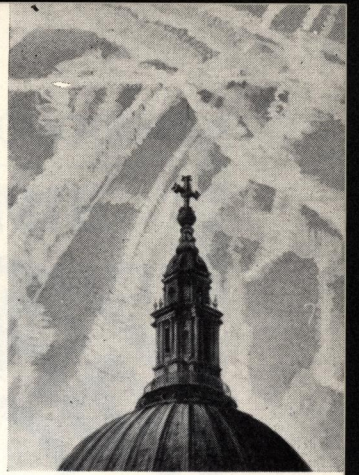


BRIEFING FOUR



The Battle of... BERMONDSEY

They've been there the whole time, of course — the kind of Londoners we met during the re-creation of the London Blitz for *The Battle Of Britain*. It was like meeting old friends. So much has been written about them, these Cockneys, so easy to sentimentalise, platitudinise, patronise.

They were there again, in the limelight, as the cameras rolled in London's Dockland, recording over a period of days a mock-up Blitz. They came in their hundreds to see just how accurate was the job that was being done; offered suggestions, criticisms.

London Pride? They have a core of hard reality and gay cynicism to their natures. They're a difficult-to-fool people. Two of them speak here. Emily and Rose (she's the blonde one) O'Connor are sisters who married brothers. They were born and bred in Bermondsey and the Blitz to them was something to fear, but also something you might as well survive with humour. This they did. Their role was part of *The Battle of Britain*... when for the first time thousands of civilians found themselves looking into the face of war. They write on the back page.

Issue No. 4



Not for the flood!

Yea, in Britain in those days were great waters and the falling of floods upon the land. And, as the last of the weather swirled out through its own plug-hole the waters did close in to erect a watery tombstone upon what the tribe of the British call in their wisdom Summer. Verily then did the film-makers known as Spitfire Productions groan at the mighty waters because they were making a moving picture about machines that flew about the face of the earth in the year nineteen-hundred-and-forty. In that time the sun had shone exceedingly upon the war in the air.

Might it not, some said, have been better to have made a film about arks?

But by dint of patience and industry they wrought their record of Battle, hoping that others would look upon it with favour. So the sound of the Spitfire was heard in the land.

The weather for the final aerial shooting on *The Battle of Britain* has been in proportions of near Biblical wetness. For ten days at one time not one plane could take off for filming; enthusiasm and money frayed.

At one point our aircraft were moved to Montpellier in France, a necessary retreat to shoot some aerial material amid bluer skies than England had yet seen.

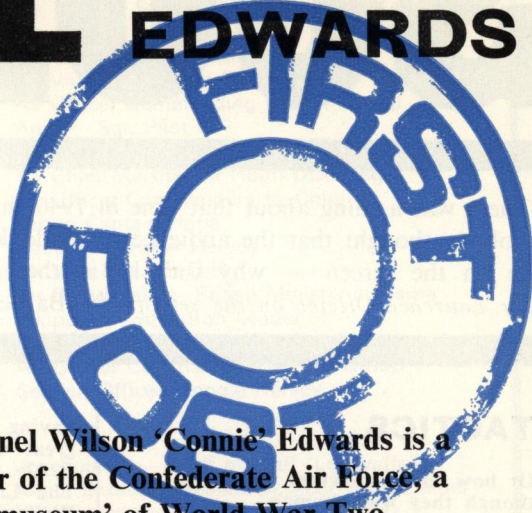
What saved the day, re-kindled the spark of energy that has always been the dynamic for the film, was the switching of certain blitz scenes, so that the filming of

St. Katherine's Dock fire came ahead of schedule. The effect brought down the (ware) house — and raised all our hopes above the wetness that had been so prevalent. Now? Aerial filming has finished; the scenes are complete; director Guy Hamilton seems to have squeezed the last gasp of drama from his occasions in the sky. As technical adviser Ginger Lacey said: 'We were all so despondent with the weather; the blitz fires seemed to warm us all up.' Well, at least we kept our heads above water. Like Noah?



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OPEN PAGE BY CONNIE EDWARDS



Colonel Wilson 'Connie' Edwards is a member of the Confederate Air Force, a living 'museum' of World War Two aircraft, based in Harlingen, Texas. He has been flying both Messerschmitts and Spitfires in *The Battle Of Britain* since the start of production in Seville. He met and married his wife on the film. She was Sandy Downing, secretary to S. Benjamin Fisz, co-producer.

'The first *Battle of Britain* war-bride,' says Edwards.

As a pilot I would rather have flown in the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain.

Naturally, I lean to the British because I believe in what they were fighting for. But as a pilot — not a politician — and having flown both, I consider the Messerschmitt superior to the early Spitfires and Hurricanes.

Sacrilege? Don't shoot me, it's the way I feel.

But then Ginger Lacey, who's a Technical Adviser on the film, did shoot down 19 Messerschmitts from a Hurricane and he was only shot down 5 times by an ME 109. . . .

Being a pilot I knew quite a bit about aerial battles but what I know *now* about the Battle of Britain you only learn by knowing great aces like Ginger Lacey, Bob Stanford-Tuck and General Adolf Galland.

We didn't learn too much about it at school because all of a sudden we had been hit by the Japs and, coming so soon after the Battle, it pushed it out of our history books.

I was six years old in 1940 and, like all kids, collected model aeroplanes. But no Spitfires then — they were still top security. There was a newsman called Gabriel Heater who we used to listen to every evening on the radio. Usually he would say 'There's bad news tonight.'

My father was very concerned and very well aware of what was going on in Europe and it rubbed off on us. At the same time I had a nephew-in-law working as a ticket clerk in an airline office. He 'borrowed' a plane, crossed the border into Canada and joined the R.A.F. to fly bombers. Of course, he had become such a hero by the time he came home that no-one got cross about the plane he had 'borrowed!'

If the Battle was going on now I should definitely feel I ought to be right in there shooting — on the British side. But at 34 you think differently than at 21. Pilots in combat are really better when they're young; they obey without question but at my age you start questioning.

Every young pilot thinks he's the greatest aviator the world has ever known. When I was 18 I was undoubtedly the greatest aerobatic pilot of all time, but now at 34, with 8,000 more flying hours, how have I lost all that knowledge?

I'm very proud to have worked on this movie; it's something a person can't fail to remember the rest of his life. This is the greatest experience that could ever happen to a pilot. It's an enterprise that any pilot anywhere in the world whatever his qualifications, would want to be a part of.

When the film is finished you'll still be able to see the planes in museums but it'll be like going to a mausoleum.

You'll never hear them fly again and to a pilot that is sad, like an extinct bird.

The people who see the end-product will never realise the amount of practice put into each short scene. You have to be in the perfect position for the cameras and a lot of the formation flying we do, for instance, is much tighter than they would have flown during the war. Anyway, most of the pilots then didn't have the experience to remember the camera angles while they were flying! We all practised for two months before a single shot was taken.

I figured out soon after the start of filming that the Luftwaffe wasn't going to do too well this time round. You see I have been shot down 118 times as of now and I've taken a shot at ten or twelve Spitfires. Those aren't really decent odds!

I've done all the solo Messerschmitt flying but only because it's been easier to explain to me what is needed than to the Spaniards — great pilots and it's been marvellous working with Commandante Santa Cruz — the greatest Spanish aviator, in charge of the Spanish Air Force working here.

The movie company has never asked us to do anything I would consider dangerous; no daredevil stuff. The pilots have appreciated it.

I've always been a gadgeteer so I've had a great time helping the Special Effects boys. For instance, everyone insisted that we should only use grey smoke when a plane caught fire in flight. But when a Spitfire I was flying caught fire all the smoke was white. Ever since the special effects have used white smoke. It looks much better, more sinister.

I've been over in Europe since January. I was in the first shot and I'm to be in the last.

I've got a great kick out of flying into R.A.F. bases like Manston and Bovingdon which got so clobbered during the Battle. Best of all, I reckon I'm the only American who has flown over the White Cliffs of Dover in a formation of Messerschmitts. . . .

The last time those Messerschmitts flew I was six years old. I realise now that that white cliff patrol and the way it was repulsed by Britain meant all the world to the rest of the world. . . .

Wilson C. Edwards

'SCOPE

... looks at the many tributary stories branching off from the mainstream - theme of THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.

For specialists and experts in their own lines — a particular selection from the thousands of generalities that go to make up the complex.

There was a thing about that time in 1940 that actors should go on the screen as it was good for British morale. Nobody thought that the audience might look at that good-looking face with the nice manners and say: why is he on the screen — why isn't he in the services? It struck me that way, anyway. That's why I joined up. *Sir Laurence Olivier on the set of The Battle Of Britain at Pinewood Studios.*

TACTICS

Or how to treat actors as though they were human . . .

The relationship between a director and an actor is, of necessity, a special one. To achieve that performance up there on that screen there has to be a subtle collision of temperaments.

Alfred Hitchcock once called his actors cattle, one nameless director was so fearful of his star he virtually allowed him to direct. Guy Hamilton, director of *The Battle Of Britain*?

'An actor is a marvellous human being and a very special one. I like them to be around, if possible, for 48 hours before the actual take so they can see the approach because I work very fast with an actor or actress.

'That way they don't get as nervous as they might because, being temperamental people, they are liable to get nervous. Sometimes there has to be yelling but not with this picture where everyone is so professional and they're giving of their best the whole time.

'That's why you need courtesy and politeness the whole time, no matter how desperate the situation seems, how complex what you are trying to achieve. That's why eight hours' sleep a night helps me a great deal.'

Interesting epilogue to that from Trevor Howard, who plays Air Vice Marshal Keith Park, Commander of No. 11 Group. Howard is surely one of the most professional of all actors,

having worked with most of the world's great directors. His film before *The Battle Of Britain* was the *Charge Of The Light Brigade*, directed by Tony Richardson.

'Tony and Guy are different as chalk from cheese. Tony? A genius and all over the place, improvising all the time. Guy? Direct, efficient, a genius with actors because they feel so much at home with him.'

WAR

Trevor Howard
Wanted Demotion

No names and, especially, no pack-drill when Trevor Howard criticises some of the war films he's been in.

But, he proclaims, he's become fed up to the teeth of saying 'Up periscope! — and all those other military terms.'

So why is Howard starring in the epic flying film *The Battle Of Britain*, another movie about war?

'Because,' he says fervently, 'this film is different. I know it's been said before but this one really is. It makes you realise that at the time of the Battle of Britain, in 1940, there was a near-spiritual contest going on, the result of which was going to affect the whole world. It was a battle that had to do with courage.

'That's why, although I may criticise some of the war films of the past I've been in, this one is one war story I had to be in.'



Ginger Lacey

JUST FANCY THAT

Squadron Leader Ginger Lacey joined the Royal Air Force in 1937 and was flying in all types of aircraft until his retirement in 1967.

Lacey is now one of the technical advisers to *The Battle Of Britain*. In 1940 he was the highest scoring British ace and was himself shot down nine times. After 28 years he fancied a spin in a Hurricane but . . . strange though it may seem Lacey is not eligible to fly. The planes are no longer Ministry of Defence property!

Ginger Lacey has now filed a formal application for a pilot's licence and the chances are he will be checked out by a pilot who was not even born during the Battle of Britain.

CRITICISM

Plummer Turns Self-critic

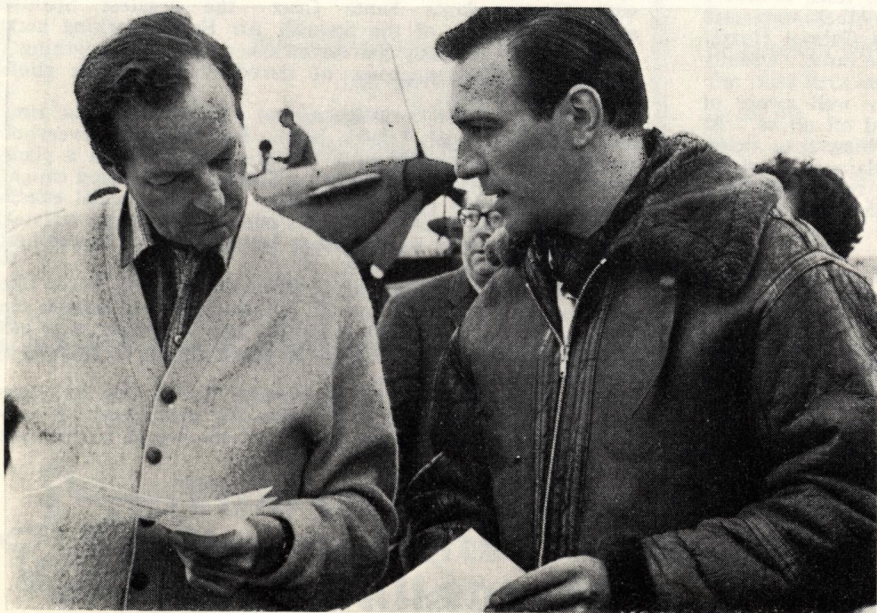
It's a truism that actors are their own best friends, unable objectively to consider their own performances.

Not so Christopher Plummer, one of the stars in the spectacular flying film *The Battle Of Britain*. Plummer turned critic the other day on his recently-released *Oedipus The King*.

His view?

'If I were a critic I know what I'd say about it,' he pronounced. 'I'd give it an "A" for trying.'

His views on *The Battle Of Britain* will have to wait until after the premiere date in late 1969.



Guy Hamilton (left) with Christopher Plummer

BIOGRAPHY

Return Of A Hero — Peter Townsend Remembers

Group Captain Peter Townsend is one of the many ex-Battle of Britain aces who recently visited location filming of *The Battle Of Britain* at R.A.F. Duxford, an airfield near Cambridge.

Townsend is writing a book about the Battle and is in the final stages of research on the subject, which has occupied his time for several years. His visit to these wartime surroundings prompted many anecdotes.

'In the spring of 1940 I was posted to a squadron in France. Having been informed that my appointment followed the death of the two previous squadron leaders in combat on consecutive days, I was sent on a short leave.

I spent the weekend with my mother in a peaceful Sussex village. You could hardly imagine that a war was in progress. She had three sons in the services at that time, but was very brave when we said a fond good-bye on the Monday morning.

'I got on the train after my hero's farewell, convinced I would never see her again, and that I was on my way to die over France in a cloud of glory. I was just 26 and I felt it was a waste, but all very romantic.

'When I arrived at the Air Ministry for my briefing they seemed surprised to see me. After prolonged apologies they said they had mislaid my squadron. "Sorry, but we appear to have lost touch with them during the evacuation." Why didn't I go and enjoy a few days in the beautiful sunshine, they suggested. I would be contacted as soon as they had traced the squadron.

'So, on Monday night, I returned to my mother. I went some with my tail between my legs and not feeling at all like a conquering hero!'

FILMS

Keeping Saltzman's Air Force Happy

On location for *The Battle Of Britain*, there were many days not suitable for filming the complicated aerial sequences because of rain, clouds, haze and general murk.

The Spanish and R.A.F. pilots had grown tired of chess, football, soccer, gambling, cards and reading and were seeking new types of time-filling recreation . . .

Producer Harry Saltzman came up with the solution. He had some film sent up to the small theatre used on location for viewing rushes and now, when they can't fly, the pilots are treated to showings of *Goldfinger*, *From Russia With Love*, *Dr. No*, *You Only Live Twice* and other Harry Saltzman productions.

WOMEN

Susannah York — The Blonde Who Is Not So Dumb

She has the placid blonde beauty that you'd expect from a girl who is continually being referred to as an English rose. But talk to Susannah York, who's one of the stars of the spectacular flying film *The Battle Of Britain*, and you find a petal or two falls to reveal a flower that's not at all fragile.

The girl who was the tough intellectual daughter in *A Man For All Seasons* complains: 'I think that British heroines are usually so frail and Dickensian. They flop about; no guts.

THE BRITISH

HARRY ANDREWS

MICHAEL CAINE
TREVOR HOWARD

IAN MCSHANE
KENNETH MORE
LAURENCE OLIVIER

NIGEL PATRICK
CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER
MICHAEL REDGRAVE
RALPH RICHARDSON
ROBERT SHAW
PATRICK WYMARK

SUSANNAH YORK

THE GERMANS

KARL OTTO ALBERTY
ALEXANDER ALLERSON
DIETRICH FRAUBOES
WOLF HARNISH
CURT JURGENS
HELMUT KIRCHER
MALTE PETZEL
MANFRED REDDEMANN
HEIN RIESS

THE CAST

Sir Francis Stokes, Under-Secretary of State for Air
Squadron Leader Canfield
Air Vice Marshal Sir Keith Park,
Air Officer Commanding No. 11 Group
Andy — Sgt. Pilot
Station Commander Baker
Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding,
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Group Captain Hope
Squadron Leader Harvey
Air Vice Marshal Evill
Sir David Kelly — British Minister in Berne
'Skipper' — Squadron Leader
Air Vice Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory,
Air Officer Commanding No. 12 Group
Section Officer Maggie Harvey

Jeschonnek — Chief of Staff (Luftwaffe)
Major Brandt — Heinkel Bomber Wing Leader
Milch — Inspector-General (Luftwaffe)
General Fink
Baron Von Richter
Boehm — Fighter Pilot
Beppo Schmidt — Colonel in the Intelligence
Falke — Senior Pilot
Reichmarschall Goering

'This part of a squadron leader's wife who's also serving, *has guts*, she stands up to her husband — even if he is as good looking as Christopher Plummer.

Susannah York, whom director John Huston described as 'a prodigy of an actress,' finds the change from the free-flowing leisure clothes of today to those worn by the character in the film a bit restricting.

'The uniform of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force is not a very glamorous outfit; not at all Dior-styled. Talking to girls who fought alongside their men at that time though, I found that they would use their gasmasks as a handbag for lipsticks.

'It made them feel more feminine. And they didn't wear the regulation panties which were made of some sort of flannel. They usually wore some more exotic lingerie. Now, they were my kind of women!'

OPHTHALMICS

Michael Caine Making A Spectacle Of Himself

The secret is out about Michael Caine, one of the stars of the epic flying film *The Battle Of Britain*.

With him it's a question of — the eyes have it!

For Caine now admits just how useful his spectacles are to him. He needs them for reading but, he says, 'they also helped to build up the character of Harry Palmer in the Len Deighton spy thrillers. They gave Palmer an air of furtive seediness. That may not be very complimentary to us spectacle wearers but it's true you know.'

The specs also have another use. 'If I don't wear them in places where I'm known, and people wave at me, I needn't wave back. And they then say, "Oh well, Michael isn't receiving today." That way I don't get bothered.'

VISION

Pleas From The Heart

On the wall in one of the offices at Duxford Airfield where they were filming the flying film *The Battle Of Britain* was a notice. 'LOST,' it said 'One pair of glasses.'

Nothing unusual about that? Read on: 'Please return to Production Office and Tony Smith. He's the chap who keeps walking into the wall.'

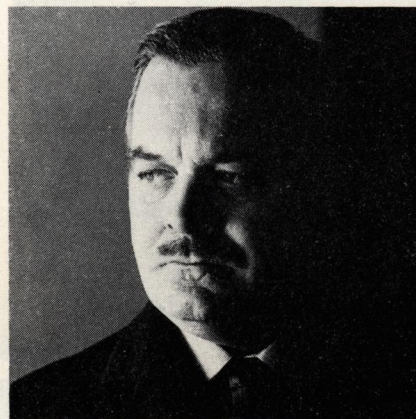
FASHION

Sixty Fashionable Years

Patrick Wymark, who as an air vice-marshal in the Royal Air Force, has an important role in the epic flying film *The Battle Of Britain* moved sixty years forward in fashion to take over his next film, *Doppelganger*.

For he is also starring in a space age fantasy, wearing the clothes and hair-style of the year 2000.

With lingering regret he looks back to the uniform he wore as air vice-marshal. 'That uniform suited me. I felt very handsome,' he says.



Patrick Wymark

The Film-Makers

Progress Report— The room has the discreet opulence of a good club. The leather armchairs are so mirror-polished you could see a dollar sign in them. The desk is a nursery of cradled and uncradled telephones. It may not look it, but this room in Audley Square is one of the nerve centres of a vital war machine. From here the producer Harry Saltzman helps to organise the battle for *The Battle Of Britain*. It has been a task made double difficult this year because of a summer which had definitely gone over to the enemy. 'The worst summer in thirty years,' mock-groans Harry Saltzman. It's no longer a film it's a way of life. It was remarkable that June, July and August gave us so few shooting days because of the rain and because of the cloud which closed in whenever the weather decided to dry out.

'As a summer it was a disaster, a wet disaster.

'But we have surmounted those difficulties because of one thing which not even the British weather could subdue: people.' For Harry Saltzman is aware how, despite days of inactivity enforced because of exterior downpour, there was an interior drive and enthusiasm for the enterprise which could not be washed away. An enthusiasm which spread downwards from Saltzman, his co-producer S. Benjamin Fisz and director Guy Hamilton.

'Of course we felt discouraged at times,' said Saltzman. 'That was inevitable. Rain always dampens a location spirit, especially when you realise that it's stopping work for hundreds of people just hanging round waiting to continue the continuing story of *The Battle Of Britain*!'

Harry Saltzman is still crossing fingers about the film; he never counts his chickens — to distort the joke — until they are safely on the other side. But the footage already shot and seen, the comments already made by disinterested outsiders, make him cautiously optimistic. If we can live up to a fraction of the original

adventures and spirit of 1940 then we have a marvellous piece of entertainment on

our hands, besides being something

of which we hope the British film

industry will be proud. And some-

thing that is of international appeal

because of the excitement that we

feel the story inevitably generates.

It is not merely a tribute — although

it is that — to those Few who flew in

the Battle of Britain; we hope it is a

thrilling story with visual sequences

the like of which the audiences

will never have seen before.'

The interest already shown in the

film from other countries should

give rise to a certain satisfaction

for Harry Saltzman.

The wholehearted co-operation of

the Ministry of Defence and the

Royal Air Force has been one of

the things that Saltzman knows

has helped towards making the film

an authentic portrayal of those

times which has affected the lives

of everyone.

'What we have to offer, here,' says

Saltzman, 'Is an epic of contem-

porary history, which is not taught

in schools but which means probably

more to those schools than anything

in this century. That's why the

summer could not defeat us. With

that story we had something to say

that had to be said.'

It is worth noting, also, as an

indication of Harry Saltzman's

optimism that whenever he ventures

from that Audley Square office of

his, where the leather armchairs

wink with polish and the telephones

buzz like a hive of bees, he never

takes an umbrella. So far as

The Battle Of Britain is concerned

the sun is shining. . .



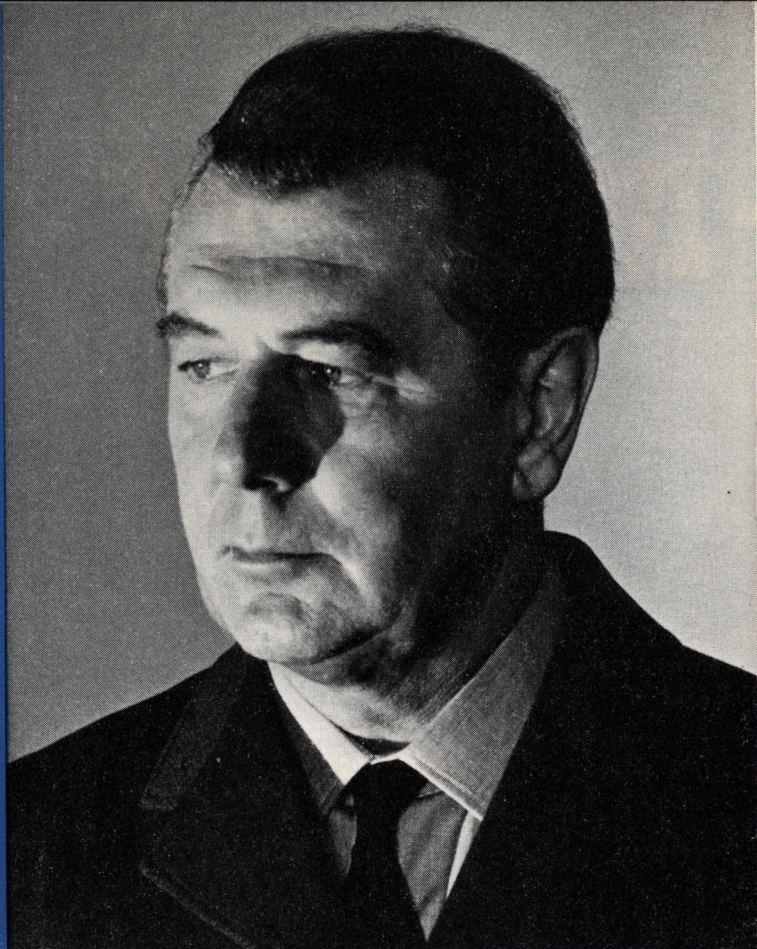
PROGRESS REPORTED to Harry Saltzman (centre) by director Guy Hamilton and star Robert Shaw.



PROGRESS REPORT of another kind from General Fink (Wolf Harnish) to Reichsmarshal Goering (Hein Riess). Result: a vocal explosion of rage!

Knights Without Armour

They could of course rest very easily on their laurels. They've earned them. But the careers of Sir Ralph Richardson and Sir Michael Redgrave are as distinguished as their techniques are adventurous. Both are sensitive men; like all great actors they have a skin missing. Both appear in *The Battle of Britain* playing real-life characters with an authority that only they could achieve.



Sir Michael Redgrave

The Father

'I don't think I'd mind,' says Sir Michael Redgrave, 'just being known as the father of Vanessa and Lynn. After all,' he muses, 'they are pretty good actresses aren't they?'

It is significant of the objectivity of the man that he can bring to bear on a dearly-loved family a critical faculty that has made his books eminently readable and fascinatingly documented.

The Redgraves are one of the most famous theatrical families. Besides Lynn and Vanessa there is his actor-son Corin and his actress wife Rachel Kempson. 'It is rather in the blood,' he says.

'I have enormous pride in my children's prowess,' he says. 'I would like to criticise them but they are really very good. Sometimes they ask me if they should do so-and-so, take such-and-such a part. Not so much nowadays. And they don't really want to know; they've made their minds up already. Just as well that they should go their own way.'

'Mind you I once offered Vanessa a piece of advice which I think she appreciated. She has a tendency to elaborate a role because she is so brilliantly inventive, to put in extraneous detail. My advice: take as much out as possible and that is acting.'

There is a humorous diffidence about the man who plays Air Vice Marshal Evill in *The Battle Of Britain*. 'A real life role,' he says. 'My favourite part was a real-life one, Barnes Wallis in *The Dam Busters*.

'He is a remarkable man who was slightly bitter that he hadn't been knighted until recently. When I was knighted he sent me a telegram saying "I suppose I'd better invent another bomb." Rather sad that he should have had to wait so long for recognition.'

Sir Michael has an honesty of manner which springs from an inner intellectual self-knowledge. His first film was Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* and he admits: 'I didn't realise that it was so good. It was my first you see.'

'Hitchcock thought I was being intellectual and highbrow and really looked down my nose at films. I think he dislikes me and I wasn't fond of him. If only someone had explained to me about films, had taken me on one side and explained editing and shots and things like that; explained why I had to hang around between scenes.'

'But nobody did. And like anyone who's new to films, I was appalled at the seeming waste of time at the studio, those times when you think nothing's being done. But, as

I've told my children it's a minor miracle that everything's there on time and in the right place.

'So in *The Lady Vanishes* I was tired and rather bored and probably rather cavalier and I didn't like Hitchcock's practical jokes. We made it up since, during one night out in Hollywood. But we didn't like each other then.'

Redgrave *can* seem intellectual and highbrow. But then, of course, he is, but still contrives to push out an honest emotion; his is not an arid intelligence. One of his greatest performances was a recent interpretation on television of Prospero in *The Tempest*. It leads him on to talk about acting.

'So you really thought I broke the staff at the end? Good, because I didn't and that is what acting is: illusion. There was a marvellous American actor called John Jefferson whose great role was that of Rip Van Winkle, whose dog used to follow at his heels. People used to stop him in the street and ask about the dog. The thing is there was no dog; it did not exist. That is what acting is. . . .'

Sir Michael served through the Second World War as an ordinary seaman. The conversation over he turned and went back to his role of Evill, Senior Air Staff Officer to Lord Dowding during the Battle of Britain. That was acting. . . .

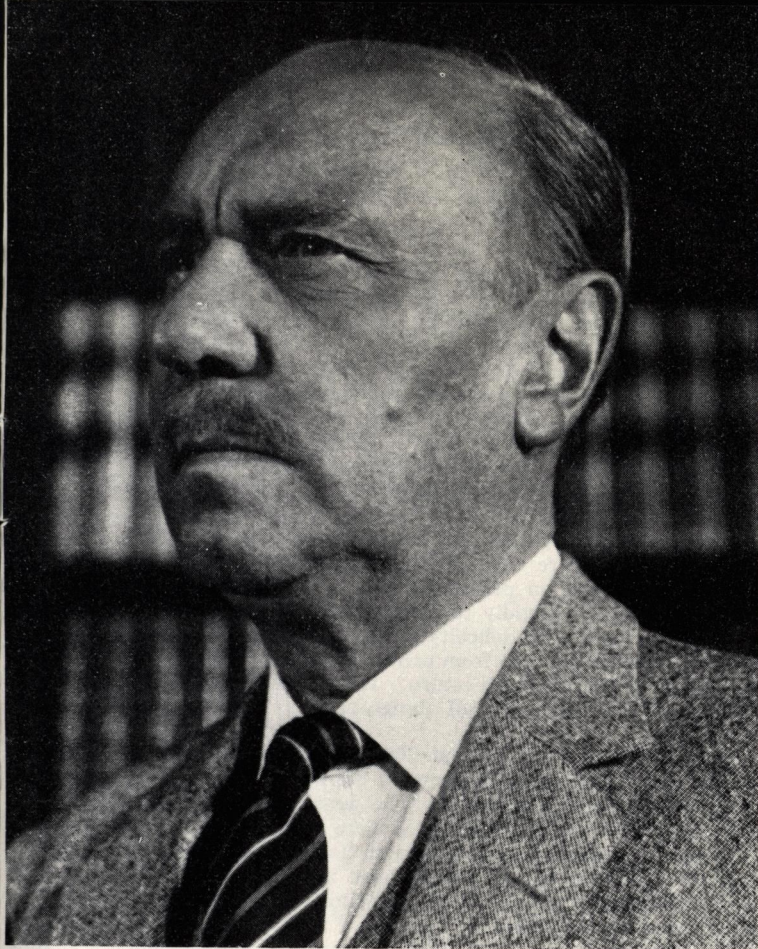
Man on a Motor-Cycle

'Tell me'—the famous voice booms around the location restaurant-tent—'tell me about this man Harry Saltzman. He sounds like quite a guy.'

Conversation in the tent stops. The voice carries that kind of quality. When Sir Ralph Richardson speaks you listen; even the quite-a-guy Americanism becomes enhanced and as English as a Forsyte when contained within that rolling diction.

It is a voice that has carried Sir Ralph far up into the stratosphere of his profession; that and an acting technique which is inimitable and personal, yet universal enough to project possibly the greatest Falstaff in living memory and the definitive version of the father in Robert Bolt's *Flowering Cherry*.

The theatre he admits to being his profession. He respects films ('and they pay well') and his film career ran alongside his theatrical development beginning with a horror movie in 1933 called *The Ghoul* and running into more worthy epics such as *Dr. Zhivago* and *Khartoum*.



Sir Ralph Richardson

In *The Battle Of Britain* he plays David Kelly, British Minister at Berne. 'I want to look as much like him as possible. I talked to people who knew him, tried to understand his mannerisms.

'The only other real-life character I've portrayed was the famous barrister, Edward Carson. I read all I could about him, read his cases and his speeches; it was amazing the way he threw his net and made his chess moves.'

As a Top Person in his profession Sir Ralph can still astonish with a quirk of personality that in a man with less style might be considered an eccentricity. Like his motor-cycle, for instance. . . .

'I've never been without one,' he says, 'and I've always cleaned and maintained my own. Beautiful things, motor-cycles. Meriel (his wife actress Meriel Forbes) says I go too fast but she doesn't really know because she won't ride pillion with me.

'You see, although people have described me as looking like a real English gent, I don't like horses. Incredible for an Englishman isn't it? But it's true. I rather hate them as a matter of fact and they hate me. Don't know why but there it is.

'So I travel about on a motor-cycle. I used to go much faster than I do now, and when I'm filming, the company usually insists that I be driven in my Rolls Royce. Something to do with insurance, don't you know. I've always liked a bit of speed.'

Before the war Sir Ralph was a weekend flyer — trained by his great friend, test-pilot Geoffrey de Havilland — and during the war was in the Fleet Air Arm.

'Those were some of the happiest years of my life. I had been very unhappy at school and I expected the services to be rather like that but they weren't. When the Fleet Air Arm learned that I had trained to fly on a Gypsy Moth they gave me a plane to fly. It was rather alarming.'

He left the Fleet Air Arm with the rank of Lieutenant Commander in 1944 and was made joint director of the Old Vic that same year. Acclamation followed.

He trails it still, an ermine mantle of achievement. A personality at once booming and sensitive. Like his voice.

It took all luncheon for them to tell him about Harry Saltzman. 'As I said,' repeated Sir Ralph, 'quite a guy!'

Then he strode back on to the set, casting a reproachful eye upon the Rolls Royce sitting sleekly waiting for him. A vehicle that would never require him to use a crash helmet. . . .

The Young Lions

Their laurels have still to be grown. But they've been planted well and securely — the young men who appear in *The Battle Of Britain*.

Youth has to be portrayed by youth. It's the inner make-up that counts. For this reason the makers of *The Battle Of Britain* are giving opportunities to many young actors, some appearing in their first film.

Ian McShane, Edward Fox, Nicholas Pennell, James Cosmo, Gareth Forwood, Nicholas Tate, Alan Tucker and Myles Hoyle are playing some of the young pilots.

'*The Battle Of Britain* will be, specially, a film for young people.' Guy Hamilton, director of the film, has always insisted that this is so.

A reasonable comment because one of the most interesting facts about that summer battle in 1940, was the youth of the pilots who took part. In the eyes of British men and women many of the fighter aces have become legendary heroes.

Sailor Malan, the famous South African ace, at the age of 30 was the oldest pilot. Douglas Bader was considered elderly at 29 and Peter Townsend, Bob Stanford-Tuck, Johnnie Kent, Al Deere and Tom Gleave were considered fairly senior citizens — at around 26.

Ginger Lacey, now a technical adviser on *The Battle Of Britain*, was 23 at the time, and with 501 Squadron:

'Career officers, like Townsend and Stanford-Tuck who had joined the R.A.F. about 1938. They were the ones who survived — it was always the replacements who copped it. It wasn't the age factor, just experience. If you got through three or four fights you were a veteran.'

Under normal circumstances flying officers would have flown a minimum of 150 hours on Spitfires and Hurricanes before going into combat. Stanford-Tuck, chief tactical adviser on the film, says: 'By the first half of July, 1940, I had flown 1,000 hours on a single-engined aircraft, 250 hours on Spitfires and Hurricanes. But the sprogs who came in then sometimes had less than 15 hours on Spits and Hurricanes.'

Naturally enough it was usually these young pilots who 'copped it'; were often shot down from behind on their first mission — without ever seeing their assassins.

The fighter pilots had a dashing image — the boys in blue — which was encouraged by the informal way they wore their uniform. Leaving the top button of their jackets open, wearing silk scarves instead of ties — an attire of recognisable gallantry.

'Originally,' says Lacey drily, 'this started as a practical measure, to save us from decapitation with all those stiff, detachable collars. But it was soon adopted as a gimmick even when we weren't flying.'

So, in the interests of accuracy, youth has its day in the film. Ben Richardson, son of Sir Ralph, is appearing in his first film. James Warwick had only left drama school two weeks before starting work as a young R.A.F. pilot.

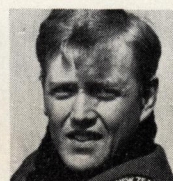
Guy Hamilton, who spent almost three years in preparation and research for *The Battle Of Britain*, sums it up: 'The great responsibility resting on these young boys in 1940 is one of the things that stood out from all the reading I did on the subject.

'And, of course, the fact that the survival rate of the pilots was in strict ratio to the number of hours they had flown before the Battle started. . . .

Perhaps it is as well that those young pilots were not aware at the time of the importance of their role to the eventual outcome of the war. Although awe was not one of their obvious characteristics.



Ian McShane



Alan Tucker



Edward Fox



Gareth Forwood



Nicholas Pennell



James Cosmo

Props Away!

He had hundreds of 1940 cigarette packets made by Players and filled them with ordinary cigarettes — without tips. . . .

He travels with Ronson gas, baby bottles, flyspray, cotton wool, Coca-Cola, violin strings, spectacles, ropes, tuning fork, sun glasses, collapsible daggers, cigars, darts, puncture outfits, rifle cartridges, torches — 'And that's only my travelling box!'

He uses vegetable colouring as whisky and ginger ale as champagne. ('One charming actress used the real thing in one film but by the afternoon she was always a bit tiddy. It just doesn't do'). And the G.P.O. makes 1940 stamps for him. . . .

He is John Bennett, better known to *The Battle Of Britain* unit as Paddy Props.

'It was really an accident that I became a props man. I was a steeplechaser before Stewart Granger brought me over from Ireland in 1945 to look after the horses on a film called *Captain Boycott*.' After the horses Paddy found himself called in as 'nursemaid' on other pictures. It was an ostrich on *Swiss Family Robinson*, leopards for *The Castaways*, sharks for *Thunderball* and — worst of all he feels — alligators for *An Alligator Named Daisy*. 'I had two terrors on that, Peter and Paul.'

Peter and Paul were nine-foot long alligators.

Director Ken Annakin paid him the compliment of telling Paddy: 'You can produce anything from a needle to an elephant.' In fact he had to find an elephant for Annakin's *Swiss Family Robinson*.

The needle? On *The Battle Of Britain* Ian McShane challenged Paddy to find a steel gramophone needle of the extinct variety that would have been used on the kind of record-player in an R.A.F. mess — 'That was surprisingly difficult but I came up with it eventually.'

Paddy started on *The Battle Of Britain* in December, 1967. It has been a formidable task. 'It took me six weeks to get 230 crates of props packed up, itemised, valued and shipped to Spain. And there were more to come back.'

He prefers work on period pictures. 'It's rewarding and interesting sticking rigidly to detail,' says Paddy.

There has been some difficulty in obtaining 1940 magazines. Most of them are on loan from private individuals and Paddy is responsible for their safe return. He has found them very useful to know what sort of things crowds were carrying at the time.

Have you ever tried to find 200 standard issue German gas masks? The props department were lucky enough to come across a dump in Spain. 'The guns are much easier,' says Paddy, 'just a little alteration here and there.'

German cigarette packets and match boxes have been made specially. 'You've got to think ahead all the time in this job. Particularly when you are catering for a picture like this time is very valuable.'

'It's surprising how often I fall back on some little thing I haven't used for years. That's my motto — never throw anything away.'

Paddy's favourite actor to work with — Sir Laurence Olivier. Not because he is director of the National Theatre Company, not because he is a great actor. Although Paddy knows he is. . . .

'Sir Laurence is a pleasure to work with. He's always very careful of his props and never lets them out of his sight.'

And that's a compliment that Paddy feels is really a compliment.



SCRAMBLE... as the bombs beat down on airfields suddenly made battlefields in 1940. This is one of the scenes of raw reality captured for the film *The Battle of Britain*.



*Our pictures will keep you posted about where the action is on *The Battle Of Britain*. So will we.*

*The publicity team for *The Battle Of Britain* is led by Derek Coyte and the publicity executive in charge of liaison is Air Commodore James Wallace.*

Tom Hutchinson is head writer. John Willis is unit publicity director.

Publicity assistant: Jill Thomas.

Christopher Doll is in charge of the television side; John Dyas of radio.

Publicity photographers are Robert Penn and David James.

The team can be contacted at 103 Mount Street, London, W.1. (Tel.: 01-493 8362) or at Pinewood Studios (IVER 700)



Emily and Rose O'Connor write:—

The filming brought it back to us — like a bad memory that you try to forget through the years. Suddenly, there are searchlight flashing in the sky and people rushing about and barrage balloons sitting, fat, up in the sky.

And there's the noise of sirens and that brings you out in goose-pimples, makes you shiver. Because when you heard that moaning-minnie then you know that soon they were going to drop bombs on us.

And somebody, somewhere, had his name on it — as we used to say.

It's the Blitz we're talking about.

They told us afterwards that if that slimey Hitler hadn't decided to bomb London instead of keeping on at the airfields we might have lost the Battle and the war.

They told us it was a worthwhile sacrifice we were making in the East End and, although there were some grumbles about that at the time, we think they were right. We took the brunt of it, us Londoners, and it's something we'll never forget.

But, after all we won and that's what matters . . . to us anyway.

The filming brought it all back but, of course, this time it was more fun. At the time of the Blitz we seemed to live from day to day and night to night. We were frightened the whole time; that was something you learned to live with; it was a state of mind you were in constantly.

After a while you got used to the nightly bombing and wondering whether you'd live through the night. And, because of that you lived for the day.

We'd go to the pub — The George and the Dragon was our favourite — and sometimes get drunk and then we'd sing all together. The blackout was up at the windows so that you couldn't see a chink of light in the street. But the lights were up in our hearts.

The times drew people closer together. *Now* you needn't necessarily know who your next-door neighbour is. Then you had to. After all it seems silly not to know the name of the person you might be going to heaven with.

There are lots of things to remember from those days. Silly things like having to put stockings round your curlers to fill them out and give your hair a better shape after a perm.

We did look freaks at times because you couldn't get the beauty-things you can get now. But we all looked the same so there was no shame in it.

Then there was finding the whole of a street bombed to rubble — and suddenly realising that this was where our mother lived.

We tried to get through, but the policeman wouldn't let us. Then Emily pushed past and went through all the muck and debris to where Mummy's house was; it was flattened.

There was Mummy, lying on the floor and there was the priest

there holding her head and picking broken glass out of her hair. We thought she was dead, but she was alive all right. Not many *were* in that street.

And Rose rested against a car and later — it gives you the shivers — they found a dead child under that car, killed in the bombing.

Vibration was a funny thing from the bombs. The blast was something you could never rely on. It could leave a window untouched from an explosion just across the road but the house in which those windows were would be just a shell, a shattered hulk.

We made tea a lot in those days . . . it seems like all the time.

It was a comfort, something hot and sweet, while overhead those Nazi bombers droned and you felt frightened. . . .

In a way the bombs did some good slum clearance, getting rid of some rotten houses. You wouldn't know the East End now and what they're doing to it, modernising it and making it fit for people to live in. That was something started by the demolition of the blitz.

Mind you, it's the kind of demolition we could well have done without.

The whole Blitz puts us in the front line along with those pilots flying above us. It wasn't something we wanted, but when we were chose we thought we might as well be cheerful about it. . . .

It's something we'll always remember. The filming brought it back vividly, realistically. The Battle of Britain. The Blitz.



Rose O'Connor



Emily O'Connor

The Battle of... BERMONDSEY



SAM and EMILY SPRING of Rephidim Street: 'Every night was the worst night during the Blitz. When they set the docks alight that was awful; then they dropped on the Elephant and Castle. The road here was all alight. Often water used to come out through the gas pipes and we had to cook on a coal fire. One night we were up to our hips in rubble. It was devil's work all right but we're proud to have stayed. We're proud to be Londoners.'