

'BLACK LEGEND'. Extracts from my DIARIES. CHARLES LEPPER, one of the Oxford contingent. We stay at Mount Pleasant, the home of Dr and Mrs Bernard Schlesinger, the delightful parents of John Schlesinger. Note: 'TIM' is the name by which his friends addressed Robert Hardy.

1948

1st September. .... by 12.30 with John S(chlesinger) down to Kintbury and to Mount Pleasant. Hilary (schlesinger) in residence - and Laua, the 'retainer', who is a gem.... It is a lovely place.

3rd. ... at 9.30 with Dela, John and Hilary to BATH - see the costume place....after tea back at Mount Pleasant do my make-up tests: 'horrifying'.

9th. ... The filming begins tomorrow... round to Ena Morgan's to see, sort and try on costumes..

10th. First day's shooting. Up very early, breakfast, and then in morning cycling scenes - at first very slow progress, later improves, but not nearly finished schedule. Lunch at cafe in village and return to Mount Pleasant at 2.30. to put on my make-up. Called for about 4.30 to find very little has happened. - Do some of the final gallows scene. Alan and John have a quarrel during this....

11th. Not being 'shot' today, all of which is the gleaning scenes. Far behind schedule....

12th. Early up from 9 to 10.45 put on my make-up. Filming late started but soon abandoned after a few showery shots ... after persuading Alan & John that we must organise the camera team etc. Hope all will now go more quickly.

13th. All day in the woods - In morning Tim and John (Marples) chiefly. In aft I have to do a very quick make-up for the one-time 'Squire' sequence. Until quite late and then in evening Alan and John do a hilarious court-room scene as Barrister and Judge....

14th. Today very cold in morning on the beacon for shooting remaining cyclist scenes - and Alan and John terribly slow - on till 2.0. And in afternoon on to the murder sequence. Lovely weather but cold later. To 'bar' before dinner and soon to bed.

15th. Up early and off on location with Alan and John. I make up while they do their recce.- Poor weather in morning and most of my stuff not filmed. Stay in make-up all afternoon for schoolchildren scenes but I not filmed again! - Alan appears to be developing asthma ....

16th. Alan in bed with asthma Tim Hardy directs morning scenes - all very gay ('old' meaning) and efficient. I do quarry scenes in afternoon. We complete schedule and very pleasant atmosphere all round. - Alan has not gone down very well with the company!

17th. Alan still bed-ridden in morning and Tim directs, but Alan does afternoon scenes - the ~~hanging~~ hanging sequences - of course not completed! @fix (Bitch!) - the first 'rushes' take in the evening - and really quite effective. The film will probably be good after all!

18th. Realise situation between Alan and John is going to be tense! My scenes in bad weather in morning pass off all right, but the 'g9g' sequence in afternoon ruined by John behaving like a sulky schoolgirl (Dela's remarks - and threat to walk out prevented by Ena)...

19th. Situation suddenly much better between A and J. - in morning on the beacon and in afternoon gallows ... - in eve some of us collect the projector and see the rushes again - much less impressive, probably no longer a novelty!

20th. Gig scenes finished in morning in good weather. In aft on the Beacon in freezing cold. At 5 adjourn to Ena's and 6 to 8 start interior sequences - very difficult and slow. I do not go back after dinner at 10 to finish them! To bed.

contd.

'BLACK LEGEND'. Diaries (mine). Contd.

21st September, 1948. In morning on location and go to Kintbury, to get petrol etc. Return to Mount Pleasant to put make-up on, then hear camera has broken down! So John and Alan up to London; Roger, Tim and I to Newbury & see film "The Naked City" - very good; find I watch for 'tracking', 'tilting', 'pans' ... to bed early.

22nd. All up deliciously late - and John and Alan surprise us by returning by 9.2 ex London. See some more 'rushes'. They out while I do make-up. afternoon shooting in woods etc.

24th. Early up after sleepless night, chat with Lauza. On location doing last shots in a.m. In afternoon still feeling very 'hang-over'; but leave by the 6.45 with John Marples and Alan, reaching London at 8.45.

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1949

10th January. Reach the Schlesingers for lunch. All afternoon at the Village Hall, INKPEN, setting up screen etc. and at 6.0, 8.0, and 9.30 we showed our film with great success. Party afterwards till late.

11th. Up late and quiet morning. In aft walk to Kintbury & prepare the (cinema) hall there. - see the film through for fun! - also at 6.30 (breakdown for ½ hour) 8.0 (as at pub!) and 9.30. ...It really is good!

2nd Feb. ... in eve to Geography Schools, where we show the film twice. The Rector (of Lincoln College - mine) at both Houses. (OXFORD)

3rd Feb. OXFORD again: at 7.0 and 8.30. (See Crits in Oxford papers)

17 March. Mother, Mrs Smith, Jim, Dad, the Yates, to the First House of our film 'Black Legend' in The House of Commons. .... Back to the Schlesingers, and night there after party.

23 March. ... in evening the film again - at Inkpen.

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2001x

2011

6th March. THE WATERMILL THEATRE.

Charles Lepper.

(Typed 20th February 2011

straight from my diaries)