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Film Finances and the British New Wave

Sarah Street

The majority of historical accounts of British cinema remark upon the significance of the British New Wave films released between 1959 and 1963. Whether seen as a major flourishing of creative activity among relatively unknown actors and directors or as a retrogressive series of representations of gender and sexuality, there is no doubt that 'a breakthrough of sorts did occur'.[1] The cycle, commonly termed 'kitchen sink', ranged from *Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959) to *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963).[2] One of its most distinguishing features was a heightened emphasis on location shooting in an attempt to capture a poetic, visceral evocation of working-class life outside London. The films were produced by independent production companies as indicative of the rise of that mode towards the end of the 1950s as circuit-owning companies like Rank and the Associated British Picture Corporation became cautious in a context of declining box-office takings, television competition and consequent desire to spread the risk of film-making. While the attainment of a distributor's guarantee and bank loans were vital sources of funding for film production, the existence of the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC) eased the pathway to what the *Kinematograph Weekly* described as 'a new pattern of production and distribution in which creative individuals have as much say as impersonal mammoth corporations'.[3]

It is within this context that Film Finances became involved in providing completion guarantees for some of the most significant films of the British New Wave. The company's role has hitherto been undocumented in published works

but as is clear from an analysis of folders on six key titles in their archives – *Room at the Top*, *The Entertainer*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *A Taste of Honey*, *A Kind of Loving* and *Billy Liar* – Film Finances completion guarantees were instrumental in giving untried directors and actors a chance. Provided that they were satisfied that the productions were well-planned and involved suitable professionals, they ensured that funding largely location-based projects was permitted and sustained. All of the films presented logistical, practical problems with their incidences of location shooting, the most extreme example being *A Taste of Honey* in which no studio sets were used, even for interiors. While reliance on studio sets was certainly not without drawbacks or subject to particular constraints, as Film Finances soon discovered the risks of delays and occurrence of unpredictable problems when filming in 'real' locations were considerable.

The emphasis on location shooting as a key distinguishing feature of the British New Wave has been the focus of considerable critical comment, such as John Hill's observations that in many of the films place rather than action is foregrounded in an aestheticization of landscape that can be read as a marker of authorial enunciation.[4] Shots that do not advance the plot instead create an appreciation of the poetry of place in which 'That Shot of Our Town From That Hill' distances both viewers and characters from the action.[5] The Film Finances files give us another perspective, of safeguarding the investment of pragmatic financiers cautious about risk and navigating productions through an often tortuous production period. The key figure in that process was John Croydon whose reports to Robert Garrett on each film scoped out an initial response, commenting in great detail on specific technical features, anticipating logistical

problems and generally giving an opinion on the proposal's prospects. Croydon's reports assessed production risk, with a view to establishing whether or not a producer's proposal to make a film for a stated amount of money was realistic. Since British film historians have seldom had access to the extent of primary documentation available to scholars of Hollywood cinema, it is particularly compelling to read in Croydon's reports about such well-known and regarded films in the making, when their directors and leading actors were relatively unknown. We tend to think of the films as offering challenges to the censors with their narratives of sexual risk and coarse (for the time) language, yet what emerges from the files is less a concern about content and more the priority of delivering a film on time and as within budget as possible.[6] Croydon even went on location, sending back reports to the company and troubleshooting problems as a location manager and associate producer on *The Entertainer*. This 'hands-on' approach is characteristic of the high levels of professional concern and competence that informed the work of Film Finances and its relationship with independent producers.

Although the files selected for analysis have been chosen for their identification with the British New Wave it is important to note that they were just a number of projects being guaranteed by Film Finances. On occasion productions were however cross-referenced because of their similarity, for example Croydon used his experiences with *The Entertainer* when commenting on *A Taste of Honey*, and he grouped films together in what we would recognize as the New Wave films. Recurring problems whose resolution benefited from the knowledge of hindsight allowed the company to build up invaluable troubleshooting experience. By the time *A Taste of Honey* was being proposed in

May 1960 Croydon was confident about recommending that Film Finances guaranteed a production with no studio work, even arguing that there were distinct advantages because there were very few expensive overhead figures such as 'studio rent or dictation from studio managements about working conditions, number of employees or disruptions by works committee discussions'.[7] This judgment was influenced by his good opinion of Tony Richardson's previous work and having been on location with *The Entertainer*. This first-hand experience of Richardson meant that Croydon clearly exceeded the role of proposal examiner: 'My own experience of him… tells me that Richardson is a hard worker with a basic sense of responsibility, and provided he has someone with him who is prepared to jog his elbow from time to time over this sense of responsibility, a man who takes considerable care, curiously enough, not to damage the conventions any more than he has to'.[8] Indeed, the massive overspend on *The Entertainer* was less the result of spiraling location costs and more due to intractable problems with sound in post-production.

In this way it is beneficial to adopt a comparative analysis of the contribution of Film Finances to the British New Wave. This involves elements of chronological development, as their familiarity with the type of project developed in an accumulative manner. At the same time a sense of the richness of the primary material can best be conveyed through themes that all six films share as being more or less of fundamental importance in the cycle at the time of production and in subsequent academic, critical analyses. The themes guiding my analysis of Film Finances and the British New Wave films are budgets; scripts; locations; stars and the production team, including directors and questions of authorship. While some files are more extensive in their content

than others, together they convey the company's important contribution to a key cycle in British cinema history.

The Budget

All of the films proposed to Film Finances had initial budgets increased after being scrutinized by Croydon and after the productions commenced. The budgets were generally not large, but none of the films under examination avoided overspend, some more serious than others. Comparing the initial budget with the final production cost and, where available, revenue figures, enables the films' financial careers to be tracked, as the following chart demonstrates:

Film title, date, production details	Budget £	Final Cost £
Room at the Top (1959, dir. Jack Clayton; prod. Remus, Harry Saltzman; dist. Independent Film Distributors/British Lion	227,779	231,387
The Entertainer (1960, dir. Tony Richardson; prod. Holly Productions/Woodfall, Harry Saltzman, assoc. prod. John Croydon; dist. British Lion/Bryanston)	192,928	247,716
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1960, dir. Karel Reisz; prod. Woodfall, Harry Saltzman, associate producer Tony Richardson; dist. British Lion/Bryanston)	114,980	116,848
A Taste of Honey (1961, dir. Tony Richardson;	106,860	120,940

prod. Woodfall, Tony Richardson; dist. British Lion/Bryanston)		
A Kind of Loving (1962, dir. John Schlesinger; prod. Vic Films/Waterhall, Joseph Janni; dist. Anglo-Amalgamated)	148,000	155,590
Billy Liar (1963, John Schlesinger; prod. Vic Films, Joseph Janni; dist. Warner-Pathe/Anglo Amalgamated)	209,600	236,809

A budget was the starting point of any enquiry to Film Finances and details of its composition and relevant documents such as the script and proposed schedule were sent to John Croydon for comment. The main contributor to the budget would typically be around 70 per cent from a bank on the security of a distribution guarantee and 'end money' from the NFFC. Since the distribution guarantee only came into effect when the completed film was delivered a completion guarantee from Film Finances was a vital part of the package. The NFFC was involved in *Room at the Top*, *The Entertainer* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Lloyds Bank contributed to the budgets of all of the films except *A Kind of Loving* and *Billy Liar* which were both provided for by the National Provincial Bank. A completion guarantee from Film Finances provided security and a sense of consistent financial prudence being exercised over a production. It also meant that the degree of American control experienced by Harry Saltzman with Warner Bros. over *Look Back in Anger* (1959) could be avoided.[9] Tony Richardson remarked in his autobiography that financing *The Entertainer* 'mainly from British sources' was a major achievement, representing a brief

period of relative independence from American finance before the percentage of British contributions to productions began to dwindle.[10]

After John Croydon examined a proposal the guarantee would be contingent on the submission of key documents in response to his queries. Some of these were standard, such as a letter from the art director approving the estimates for set construction and materials, and a letter from the director confirming the allocation of film stock. On other occasions a letter of intent from Film Finances depended on the provision of information about studio arrangements, as with *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* when Croydon spotted that the budget had been prepared on the assumption that the studio-based scenes would be shot at Twickenham. This was problematic because Croydon knew that under an agreement distributor British Lion had with Bryanston the studio was more likely to be Shepperton. He commented: 'I am quite certain that there are a number of items in this budget, including things like studio rent and studio surcharges, which could not be matched at Shepperton, but would result in budget increases'.[11] In the end Twickenham was the chosen studio and the budget confirmed accordingly.

In a similar spirit of judicious caution John Croydon would often raise a budget's contingency figure, an important security provision as with *Room at the Top* which incurred a raised cost because of the amount of location work indicated in the schedule.[12] If a film went over schedule and so accumulated extra costs a claim would be made under a consequential loss insurance policy, as with *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* when two days were lost due mainly to working in an actual factory in Nottingham.[13] *The Entertainer*, with its delayed completion and problems in post-production, also resulted in a consequential

loss claim. The causes in this case were going over schedule by three days when the Winter Gardens Theatre was used in addition to the Alhambra, new recordings had to be made of songs for overseas distribution and post-synching was needed to correct poor sound quality due to background noise from holidaymakers in Morecambe.[14] Another film that went way over budget was *Billy Liar*. This was in part predicted by John Croydon whose assessment of the initial proposal was that it was 'full of hazards…I feel we must be severe in our attitude towards the proposition'. The presence of fantasy sequences was unusual in the New Wave films, a departure noted by Croydon who advised that particular care be taken in allowing for shooting optical superimpositions and in careful location preparation.[15] In the event the final overspend was due to new sets required for additional sequences; studio rentals; recalling the cast for extended shooting and additional editing costs.[16]

A film's budget could be raised for reasons other than scheduling problems, delays due to bad weather or unforeseen circumstances causing a protracted post-production period. *A Taste of Honey*, for example, required raising to £20,000 the payment due to Shelagh Delaney, author of the play and co-author with Tony Richardson of the script, when the play's run in New York was extended.[17] In this way the files reveal the vagaries of a film's budget, the range of factors responsible along the way for inflating estimates calculated in pre-production. Although only present in cases when there was a call on the guarantee, information on a film's revenue performance some years hence is also enlightening: the UK gross cash receipts for *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, for example, as at 31 Dec 1964 were £401,825, showing the film's profitability against its production cost of £116,848. By contrast, a revenue statement for *The*

Entertainer dated 31 Dec 1962 records only £57,323 gross cash receipts as against its cost of £247,716.[18] The Film Finances completion guarantees exceeded their role as insurance mechanisms since what the company provided was a step-by-step monitoring of process. While financial considerations were uppermost in their priorities advice given to producers and directors inevitably involved comments on the cross-plot (a single-page, large chart detailing shooting dates, locations and script references) and scripts, key documents that provide information on the creative development of the British New Wave.

The Script

As part of its vigilance over the development of a film production Film Finances kept copies of script drafts which chart key changes, some more controversial than others. It is somewhat startling to find, for example, some well-known films starting out with different scenes and emphases from those we remember well. Some changes appear infinitesimal on the page but are highly significant when transferred to a shooting script. Different versions of scripts are the most common occurrence in the files, requiring comparative analysis between them and in relation to the film as released. Although there is little additional documentation explaining the precise cause of each change the availability of the scripts enables a sense of a film's creative development to be charted, as well as a heightened appreciation of why a particular scene is effective when compared to alternative approaches that did not prevail.

Although Film Finances was fundamentally important in facilitating the novel narratives of the British New Wave, on first reading John Croydon did not always appreciate the scripts. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* was deemed

by him to be 'unnecessarily sordid, and makes out the "hero" to be an amoral parasite, with little or nothing to recommend him'.[19] Even though Shelagh Delaney's play had proven to be successful Croydon thought the proposal for *A Taste of Honey* was for 'a story sordid in the extreme, and one for which I do not particularly care'.[20] Even the lighter touch of *Billy Liar*'s first script was considered to be 'heavy going'.[21] Such comments reflect the shock of the New Wave felt by a previous generation of filmmakers in Britain for whom the films seemed to engulf audiences in depressing 'kitchen sink' realism. Croydon's personal opinions however were secondary to his pragmatic concerns about a production's viability. Comments on content were also made if there was a risk that a film might not meet the requirements of the British Board of Film Censors. This occurred with *Room at the Top* regarding the love scenes between Joe and Alice in Elspeth's flat. As originally presented the rate of shooting was increased for this sequence, to Croydon's surprise, since 'I should have thought that the sort of scene, although mostly between two of the principals, would have demanded great care and attention, not only relative to performances, but in deference to the censor'.[22] The script was not presented to the censor before shooting, as Croydon was aware, so he recommended that Film Finances required an indemnity against any claims made on the guarantee as a result of the censor's views. The film was released with an 'X' certificate which did not affect its performance at the box-office, in fact this might have enticed audiences to see the film advertised as a 'savage tale of lust and ambition'.

In this section a few notable script examples will be analysed from *Room at the Top* and *Billy Liar*. As the first and final film in the cycle they serve as appropriate markers of the evolution of the New Wave, as noted by Alexander

Walker who described *Room at the Top* as 'The first important *and successful* film to have as its hero a youth from the post-war working class', and *Billy Liar* as representing a key shift in emphasis: 'In *Billy Liar* one feels at a cross-roads in cinema. The sad-faced boy who stays behind and conforms, a rebel only in his dreams, has been passed by the new type of girl swinging confidently and joyously out into a future that is part and parcel of an affluent generation's life-style centred on youth, dreams and metropolitan delights. With Julie Christie, the British cinema caught the train south'.[23] Both examples involve railway station settings: the first shots of *Room at the Top* showing the main character's arrival in a new environment that will change his life and, by contrast, the memorable finale of *Billy Liar* when 'the sad young man' watches the London-bound train leave the station without him.

The opening of *Room at the Top* is one of the most memorable in British cinema. We hear the whistle of a train going through a tunnel, a black screen followed by a startling close-up of a pair of shoeless feet, propped up high on a suitcase in a railway carriage. The feet dominate the frame against an industrial background glimpsed fleetingly through the train window. The camera pans right to show the lounging man, his face covered by a newspaper which he pulls down so we can see that it is a young man (Joe Lampton played by Laurence Harvey), languidly blowing smoke rings and gazing out of the window. The trumpet heard on the soundtrack establishes a mood of sleazy anticipation as the man proudly examines an obviously new shoe, puts it on and straightens his body as the shot dissolves to a platform and the train arriving at Warnley Town. The credits follow with the soundtrack evolving into a more leaden, portentous orchestral theme. We see Joe exit the train wearing a striped suit, the next shots

distilling his journey from the platform to a taxi stand where he asks to be taken to the Town Hall. In just four shots and with no dialogue (until 'Town Hall please') Joe's journey has been marked as having begun, arriving in a new place with new expectations and ambitions. As his relaxed pose on the train has indicated, along with the smoke rings, he is calm and confident. His suit and new shoes contrast with the uniformed figures glimpsed in the background at the station, his jaunty ascent up the platform steps signaling his eagerness to arrive at his destination. This communicates something of John Braine's novel that also begins in a railway carriage with Joe in his 'Sunday best' suit, expensive shoes yet appearing 'dissipated in a gentlemanly sort of way'. [24]

There are two scripts by Neil Paterson in the Film Finances folders on *Room at the Top*, dated 1 March and 19 May 1958. Neither resembles the final film, although the second is closer to it. The 1 March script begins completely differently with a wedding scene preceding a flashback to Joe's arrival at Warley (the name of the place in the novel):

'OUTSIDE CHURCH FOR A FASHIONABLE WEDDING

There are lofty trees in the churchyard, and the lawns are immaculate. Some of our shots are taken through the foliage of the trees. Our mood is deliberately romantic, and the music is full of orange-blossoms, and the scene is so pretty it could go on a chocolate box. The bride and her father are the last to arrive. As they enter the church the last of the credits if held against this peaceful background in which there is no action, save the gentle stirring of leaves. This music rises to a romantic crescendo and abruptly ceases as we move into

INT CHURCH DAY. It is a small and gracefully-proportioned church, and we may notice as we move down the aisle that the bride's side of the church is full, whereas the bridegroom's side is almost empty.

The Bride and Bridegroom stand at the alter – Priest – wedding speech 'if any man can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together…etc'

We hold the pause. The Priest now addresses the young couple directly. We shoot over the Priest's head and move gradually into a close-up of the bridegroom's face: 'Impediment' speech of wedding ceremony:

The Bridegroom closes his eyes.

Fade Out

Then Railway station – flashback to Warley and Joe's arrival (in 1 March script he's called Lambton, not Lampton as in later one). 'Joe Lambton, a young man of 25, in demob suit and rain-coat, gets out of a third-class carriage, and, carrying a large cheap suit-case, walks to the barrier. The people on the platform have the drawn and dowdy look that we associate with the war and its immediate aftermath. There is a sprinkling of uniforms. Joe hands over his ticket at the barrier. He walks to the station entrance and stands sniffing the town, his expression lively and eager. Behind him a youth is lounging against the wall, newspapers on a bench beside him. If we are sharp we may note the chalk

lettering on the sandwich-boards: Princess Eliz. 21 tomorrow; more Cripps austerity: spuds rationed; Runners at Newcastle'.

This opening has very different ramifications from the one in the final film. Beginning with Joe getting married amongst a 'fashionable' crowd, yet with few of his relatives attending, sets up a contrast in circumstances as he arrives in Warley. Establishing the post-war context seems to be important with an emphasis on specific references such as to Cripps, rationing and Princess Elizabeth. In the final film the post-war context is suggested with a much lighter touch and the casting of Laurence Harvey arguably militates against much suggestion of Joe being ordinary.[25] By 19 May the flashback idea had been jettisoned, and Paterson's script instead opened thus:

'Fade in – long shot of speeding train, Day. Int third class compartment. Joe Lampton, a young man of 25, in a demob suit and raincoat, is at the window of the compartment. He sees:

General landscape Shot. Day.

From Joe's eyeline in the railway carriage: kids by the river, fishing and swimming. A grubby greyhound Track and a sign looming up in the background: Brown's machine tools. Ext railway station. Day. 'The train pulls in at a provincial station somewhere in the North, at the central platform, alongside a dingy signpost reading Warley.

From the window Joe sees a car, chauffeur and Susan Brown and her father. 'Joe gets out of his 3rd class carriage carrying a large cheap black suitcase. As he walks towards the barrier he sees:

Ext railway station. Day. The chauffeur acting very busy about Susan and Mr Brown. Susan is loaded with bags from expensive shops. As Joe hesitates for an instant, a sportscar pulls up beside Susan and Mr Brown and a grinning Jack Wales leaps out. The ensuing dialogue is obviously light.

Ext. The Station platform. Day. 'From the spot where Joe paused he cannot hear the dialogue; he gives one longing look at the expensive scene and moves on. The people on the platform have the drawn and dowdy look that we associate with the war and its immediate aftermath. There is a sprinkling of uniforms'.

The major addition here is the introduction of Susan Brown and her father. As major characters who exercise a profound influence over Joe's ambitions and fate, Joe's exclusion from their world is highlighted in the script. The emphasis is less on Joe and more on what he sees around him as he gains first impressions of his new home. The final film's more economical introduction of Joe is arguably more effective than if this script had been shot with its emphasis on Joe's impressions of an alien environment. In the final film his lack of fit is unraveled more leisurely, allowing the other major characters to be introduced after Joe's centrality has been firmly established. There is little indication as to why the final film did not conform to the 19 May script, but there are references to the script being 'impractical' and too long in John Croydon's

assessment. [26] The shooting script however held in the Jack Clayton papers at the British Film Institute reveals that Clayton created the iconic opening late in the day. He wrote on the first page of the shooting script by hand: 'Joe's feet. Pan to face'.[27]

Just as beginnings of films are crucial, so are endings. In this respect the different script versions available in the Film Finances files offer insights into the development of *Billy Liar*. Two scripts, dated respectively 12 September and 31 December 1962 show differences in Billy's failure to go with Liz to London, his long-awaited escape from the provinces yet again postponed. In the final film Billy arrives at the station carrying his suitcase with the (apparent) intention to go with Liz to London. They board the train but his reluctance is clear as he tries to think of things they might have forgotten or will need for the journey, with background comedic interest created by some musicians in the same carriage. In the final minutes before the train departs Billy rushes to get some milk from a machine on the platform, waiting there more time than necessary so he just misses the train. We see Liz looking resigned out of the window as the train moves off leaving Billy behind; she knows he can never leave home. The final shots of the film show his preferred fantasy, marching down the middle of the road towards his house, leading an imaginary army. Head held high and looking happy, Billy opens the front door, closes it behind him and the film ends.

The script dated 12 September is as follows:

'STATION HALL – BILLY AND LIZ

Billy approaches Liz assuming a drunk act. LIZ shows no particular surprise. BILLY holds out a ticket to her and is wobbling unsteadily on his feet.

BILLY

Goin' London – you goin' London – I'm goin' London – cash a train – London.

LIZ (calmly)

So you keep saying.

BILLY

You come London – me – goin' London Platform Three – S'Pancra', ge's all London.

LIZ

Drop it!

BILLY (resuming his normal voice)

Drop what?

LIZ

That's better. You may be a brilliant scriptwriter but you're a rotten actor. I've just spent the last half-hour trying to comfort that Barbara of yours - terrible state she was in.

BILLY is silent.

LIZ

Are you really going or just pretending.

BILLY shows her the ticket with some triumph.

LIZ

I'm not going with you, Billy.

BILLY

Please.

LIZ

I won't live with you Billy.

BILLY

Come anyway – Live next door. Blimey, you've been everywhere else, you might as well come and live in…Where are you going then?

LIZ

Manchester.

BILLY (tries to argue with her)

Why Manchester?

LIZ

Oh, just Manchester.

BILLY

Well whatever you want in Manchester
they've got it in London. Oh please Liz, I
don't know anyone down there. You'll love
it – we can go all over together.

LIZ (smiling)

One condition!

BILLY

Oh, come on Liz. I don't want to go
on my own.

LIZ, smiling, shakes her head, completely self-composed. She picks up her duffel-bag.

BILLY (pathetically)

We'd have some smashing times. Theatres…(he tails off lamely)

LIZ

I don’t want the communal ring.

BILLY closes his eyes tightly, he is forced to make the greatest decision of the day.

LIZ

I just want a wedding ring.

BILLY opens his eyes and looks at her for a moment and LIZ gently blows him a kiss and speaks softly.

LIZ

Postcards?

BILLY (having lost hope)

Postcards.

LIZ turns and walks away.

CLOSE ON TICKET BARRIER

- the roller sign over the barrier which reads LONDON (ST. PANCRAS) PAN DOWN as the gate is closed with a crash. Behind it is a bespectacled TICKET COLLECTOR and beyond him the train where a PORTER is slamming doors.

STATION HALL

The solitary figure of BILLY, carrying his suitcase, moves across the station hall towards the exit'.

The closing scene is then similar to the final film with Billy returning to his street, leading the imaginary army but not actually seen entering his house and closing the door behind him.

This is a very different ending, arguably far less effective in conveying Billy's prevarication and being less clear about Liz. It would seem that Billy's final decision not to go to London was because Liz would not accompany him. It also links Liz to the other women Billy has been engaged to, promising them wedding rings but never finally committing himself. By contrast, in the final film Liz is very much identified as a free spirit, 'the new type of girl swinging confidently and joyously out into a future', who wants to marry Billy but also to leave their stifling town for London.[28] The script dated 31 December resembles the final film closely, with no mention of Liz going to Manchester. The change in emphasis is probably due to casting. Julie Christie replaced Topsy Jane when the actress originally cast as Liz became ill.[29] Shooting had begun in mid-October and Topsy Jane is listed as present in the production reports until early December when Julie Christie took over the role. Richardson and Janni had seen Christie in *Crooks Anonymous* (Ken Annakin, 1962) and decided she would be good to play Liz when Topsy Jane dropped out.[30] It seems likely that this influenced the re-writing of the script; having Liz go to any other destination than London now

seems unthinkable. In Keith Waterhouse's original novel Liz was destined for Doncaster so the film script of 12 September resembles its final pages.[31] In the play version of *Billy Liar* which also predates the film, there is no final scene at the station: Billy simply returns home after announcing he will go to London.[32] In this way the evolution of *Billy Liar* can be traced in new ways through the Film Finances documentation, in this case showing the profound impact of changed circumstances.

Locations

As has already been noted, accumulating experience with location-based films meant that Film Finances was involved in the major films of the British New Wave. John Croydon's past experience of working as a production manager and associate producer at Gaumont-British in the 1930s and with Ealing in the 1940s, enabled him to offer expert opinion so that Robert Garrett was fully cognizant of risks involved in films seeking a completion guarantee. On some productions his advice did not stop there, most notably with *The Entertainer*. Tony Richardson was keen to shoot on location as much as possible, making the adaptation of the successful stage play a cinematic experience that heightened realism: 'Film is a totally realistic medium and Archie Rice can only be a failed vaudevillian; our only entry to him is through understanding his own vulnerability and squalor so deeply that we can empathize with the individual without extending the character to thoughts about society. The detail of the performance was what had to count, not the leaps to beyond'.[33] To convey this mood the prime location of Morecambe was chosen as 'a failed popular resort

with decaying piers and crumbling theatres, the second-class sister to the livelier, more raucous, still popular Blackpool'.[34] While this may have been liberating for Richardson, Croydon's location reports to Maurice Foster at Film Finances suggest that there were problems. On 25 Sept 1959 he wrote that the location was 'shockingly unprepared, largely because Harry [Saltzman] refused to have a location manager. That's what I've been doing! Fixing facilities and laying on preparations – from 6.30am to 7.30 pm. It's coming together, but we're not out of the woods yet, not by a long shot'.[35]

Yet he too became somewhat exhilarated by the experience, reporting a week later that on the whole the shoot was going well: 'We are as near to schedule as makes no odds, and I believe that Bryanston are delighted with the material. They should be; we have "milked" Morecambe of its location facilities!' Indeed, the utilization of the Winter Gardens, a second theatre not in the original schedule, required additional preparation and shooting time. At the same time Richardson's sense of freedom meant that the film stock allocation was exceeded and the need for major post-synchronization that contributed to the film's ultimate completion problems was anticipated by Croydon: 'We haven't a word that doesn't need post-synch; mainly because of the location sites we use, but it is going to be colossal'.[36] With characteristic pithiness Alexander Walker described the poor quality of sound recorded on location as 'a contest, it was said, between Olivier and the Morecambe seagulls'.[37] In addition Laurence Olivier's songs had been recorded direct onto the dialogue track and not onto an M and E track (music and effects dubbing track) that was duly requested by the German sub-distributors without Olivier's singing voice. Woodfall agreed to pay for the extra work that further increased costs.[38] Protracted delays meant that

the West End premiere was cancelled and after being rejected as an official entry at Cannes 'the atmosphere when *The Entertainer* at last opened in London on 28 July 1960, was edgy and pessimistic'.[39]

By contrast, Richardson recalled *A Taste of Honey* as 'an experience without problems'.[40] It was experimental in that it was shot totally on location, both exteriors and interiors. Again Croydon's experience was invaluable when considering the project. He drew on the case of *The Secret Man* (Ronald Kinnoch, 1958) for which the buildings used for interiors had been insufficiently large to accommodate personnel and equipment, whereas in *First Man into Space* (Robert Day, 1959) the room was adequate so 'it was no better or worse than working in a studio'.[41] Croydon's report was extremely detailed for this 'unconventional' production, anticipating many issues including equipment hire and the need for the unit, so far away from a studio, to be self-contained. The aim to streamline production while a shooting schedule was subject to a great variety of potential risks was the tone struck very early on in the negotiations, contributing a crucial sense of prudence while recognizing what might be gained from the production's innovative conception. When several locations were to be utilized – in this case involving trips away from Manchester and including Blackpool – it was important, Croydon pointed out, for adequate time to be allowed for setting up. Even so, freedom from studio constraints was appreciated from a number of perspectives, particularly the release from 'studio controlled labour, equipment or technicians'.[42]

Croydon was least concerned when working with directors he considered to be tried and tested, even Tony Richardson who tended to over-shoot. As the next section will demonstrate he was far less enthusiastic about directors who

were relatively unknown to him. In the majority of cases it was unnecessary for Film Finances to be represented on set unless daily progress reports flagged up concerns. While the documentation submitted to Film Finances purported to give clear indications of a production's planning, once at a location a number of things could force changes. Being tolerant of the proclivity towards location shooting was risky, even with the insistence on a higher contingency. On the other hand it could reveal a director's capacity for creative improvisation, as appears to have been the case with *A Kind of Loving* when 'the mode of shooting bore little resemblance to the indications given in the script; immediate advantage was taken of location conditions, and what was written in the script "bent" to those conditions'. This response to the exigencies of a location meant that once again it was the studio, rather than the location schedule that required the provision of additional finance by Anglo-Amalgamated in the case of *A Kind of Loving*.[43] Even so, Croydon found this lack of control frustrating, leading to a severe report on the prospects of Schlesinger's next film *Billy Liar*. As noted earlier this was correctly deemed by Croydon to be 'full of hazards' resulting in the film going over-schedule and budget. It is worth noting that although exterior locations were dominant in many of the New Wave films the need for careful planning for interior and studio sequences was not neglected in Croydon's reports.

While the arduous practicalities of location shooting are conveyed in the files of Film Finances, they are also instructive when re-considering the critical literature on the British New Wave. One of the most absorbing debates on realism in British cinema concerns the New Wave films, particularly interpretations of the role of space, place and landscape in various writings by

John Hill, Andrew Higson, Terry Lovell and Peter Hutchings.[44] All note the importance of 'poetic' landscapes, of pictorial shots that can be seen to serve both spectacular and narrative functions. Much was made of 'That Long Shot of Our Town from That Hill', a phrase first used by documentary filmmaker John Krish in 1963 when observing how the pursuit of realism encouraged showcasing landscapes of the industrial north, at that time a novelty.[45] While it is not appropriate for the purposes of this article to go into the debates in detail, suffice it to note that one of the emphases on 'That Long Shot' was its capacity to convey an authorial, directorial and class-based perception of the landscape and its characters. As Higson argues: '"That Long Shot" is a betrayal of authorship (and of the class position of that authority as outside the city and the consciousness of its inhabitants). The distance in That Long Shot, between the vantage point of the spectator and the city as the object of the gaze, is at the same time a representation of the distance between the classes. From the class outside the city, the city is unknowable, impenetrable. But in constructing the shot as spectacular, the distance is disavowed; the impenetrability of the real living city is transformed into a surface, a representation, an image which does not need to be penetrated, but which can be gazed at in fascination precisely as image'.[46] (pp. 155-56). In this interpretation the middle-class, outsider perspective of the New Wave directors emerges as contributing to the impact of these shots as somewhat voyeuristic and pictorial. There is thus irreconcilability between 'an "internal" point of view of the figure in the city…and the "external" point of view from outside and above the city, the look of the master-cameraman'.[47]

The Film Finances files have information on these shots that permit scrutiny of scripts, cross-plots and, of most relevance here, the activities of

second units. The logistical complications of location shooting, often in several places, meant that some of the films employed second units. The types of footage that these most typically shot were non-dialogue, establishing shots. In view of the stress in the critical literature of the agency of the director in creating 'That Long Shot' it is interesting to find, for example, that many of these shots in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* were shot by the second unit, not by Karel Reisz. Croydon spotted this division of labour in the planning stages: 'We must remember that almost everything he [Reisz] is to shoot on location is of a dialogue scene nature; the more documentary type of scene seems to be left to the second unit' which 'has quite a task of day and night shooting to face'. He recommended that Richardson should shoot these shots.[48] Examining the second unit diary 2 Mar 1960-25 Apr 1960 in conjunction with the X-plot we can see that the unit shot many 'documentary type' scenes. In the final draft shooting script dated 29 Jan 1960, for example, scene 30 is described as being 'in a working-class area. The street slopes gently down towards the wartime redbrick of a works canteen, at the bottom. The scene does not even hold the charm of squalor. The houses are exactly uniform, and the street is empty'. The documents also refer to scene 102 being shot by the second unit. This is the end of the film featuring 'That Long Shot' from a hill above the town: 'A housing estate is in the background, some houses not yet finished. We pan from the housing estate on to Arthur and Doreen…dialogue…They descend a little way down the hillside towards the sea of pink houses'. In addition the documents show that the second unit shot footage by the canal where Arthur and Bert go fishing, and at Nottingham Castle, another location facilitating 'That Long Shot', as described by Higson.[49]

While this does not particularly affect the argument regarding the shots conveying an 'external point of view' that is indicative of the filmmaker's 'poetic' authorship, it queries the precise nature of its construction, certainly in terms of personnel, even if Richardson's Oxbridge, middle-class background is similar to that of Reisz. It is however ironic that the shots considered by critics to be the most striking markers of New Wave realism should have in fact been shot by a second unit. Whether this detracts from their critical status is debatable, suffice it to note that both units produced work of a high standard. There was clearly a collaborative ethos that corrects an over-emphasis on the director's contribution.

The Production Team

Croydon's reports contain fascinating comments on the personnel involved in the New Wave films. Directors who subsequently became extremely well-known appear as untried and tested, as risky prospects for Film Finances. His confidence in Tony Richardson has already been noted but it was a different matter with Karel Reisz and John Schlesinger. Although Reisz's experience in directing documentaries was proven at the time *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* was proposed, Croydon considered him to be 'a completely unknown quantity as far as feature films are concerned…I am sure the question of his ability to handle actors will be watched carefully'.[50] This lack of confidence led Croydon's report on this proposal to be detailed and very cautious:

> There are obviously a large number of questions to be

> gone into, and I think they must be gone into with some care, bearing in mind always, Karel Reisz's inexperience with this type of shooting. (You might like to remember a remark Harry Saltzman made to me some time ago; that if Reisz slipped by a day he would be taken off the picture!!). But to be entirely serious and practical about it, Reisz is facing quite a task. I would not consider it beyond the capabilities of say Val Guest – it might be simple to him – but for a man, shall we say bred and born in the documentary world, where perfectionism is, despite limited budgets and enforced speed of production, an axiom, I wonder how he [is] going to fare with this? I hope from his detachment as Associate Producer, Tony Richardson is going to be more of a help than a hindrance and that when he has to wield the stick, it will [be[long, pliable and brought down heavily![51]

John Schlesinger also caused concern, although for different reasons. *A Kind of Loving* was thought by Croydon to be too conventional, lacking Richardson's 'courage (if that is the right word) in unconventional film making…I know literally nothing about Schlesinger, but I cannot imagine him being a Tony Richardson, from whose work over the past few years, I imagine this project stems'.[52] Despite such reservations the projects were given the go-ahead and, as we have seen, were monitored as production proceeded.

What emerges from the files is that the films depended on a number of key personnel, not just the director. Although much of the shooting was in

outside locations, attention was paid to set designs for interiors, costumes and make-up. Croydon insisted, for example, that there was a wardrobe designer on *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* 'in view of the fact that the male characters are dressed in "Teddy Boy suits", and although the girls are factory and shop assistants nevertheless to look right they need dressing most carefully'.[53] Such details were very important in securing the final look; the innovative realism proposed in the films depended on very careful construction.

As well as relating to production personnel the files reveal information about payments to stars, directors, producers and writers, some details more surprising than others. Simone Signoret's fee for *Room at the Top* was £17,857, compared with Laurence Harvey's £10,000. Reflecting her ingénue status Rita Tushingham was paid only £500 for her performance as Jo in *A Taste of Honey,* whereas Dora Bryan who played her mother Helen was paid £3,000 and Murray Melvin received £1,000 for his role as Geoff. As we have seen, following on the continued success of the play the payment to Shelagh Delaney for co-authoring the script of *A Taste of Honey* was high at £20,000, whereas Richardson's fee as director was £6,500 and art director Ralph Brinton was paid £1,500. Laurence Oliver's fee for *The Entertainer* was £10,000 and Joan Plowright's was £2,500.[54] When John Osborn replaced Nigel Kneale as scriptwriter, his fee was £5,000. The films' tight economic parameters meant that payments often were deferred to be recuperated from receipts, as with *The Entertainer* when Olivier's deferred payment was £20,000, Richardson's £5,000 and Saltzman's £5,000. In this way risk was spread over a period of time with variable results, particularly in the case of *The Entertainer* that did not perform well for Woodfall.

This article has demonstrated how Film Finances was in part responsible for the production of some of British cinema's best-known New Wave films. The availability of completion guarantees coincided with the expansion of independent production, enabling films considered to be outside the commercial mainstream to be funded. For independent companies such as Woodfall Films this contribution was crucial as they pioneered trends towards regional settings, working-class stories and new personnel. Film Finances' conscientious spirit of careful 'trimming' that pervaded its activities left its mark on the productions from development to post-production. In the first instance the key concern was that a film's proposed budget was realistic. After careful scrutiny Film Finances would insist that a producer either increase it or rework the conception of the production to be achievable within the budget available. The quality of professional advice offered by Film Finances then ensured that the most was made of a budget, ensuring that filmmaking was as efficient, well-planned and cost effective as possible. As we have seen, the input of John Croydon was consistently productive, his long experience in the British film industry proving to be invaluable when making judgments about the feasibility of projects. The range of documentation generated by Film Finances allows us to reconsider how particular films were produced, as well as how they have been referenced and evaluated. As with all archival collections there are gaps, questions remain and the past can never be 'recovered'. Yet Film Finances enabled British cinema to change, to travel north in 1959 and then south with Julie Christie in 1963.

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[1] John Hill, 'Working-class Realism and Sexual Reaction: Some Theses on the British 'New Wave' in James Curran and Vincent Porter (eds) *British Cinema History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 304. The classic accounts are Alexander Walker, *Hollywood, England: The British Film Industry in the Sixties* (London: Michael Joseph, 1974); John Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema, 1956-63* (London: British Film Institute, 1986) and Andrew Higson, 'Place, Space, Spectacle: Landscape and Townscape in the "Kitchen Sink" Film' in *Screen* 25 (4-5) (1984), 2-21, reprinted in Andrew Higson (ed), *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London: Cassell, 1996), 133-56.

[2] The list consists of the following films most often cited as typical: *Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959), *Look Back in Anger* (Tony Richardson, 1958), *The Entertainer* (Tony Richardson, 1960), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1960), *A Taste of Honey* (Tony Richardson, 1961), *A Kind of Loving* (John Schlesinger, 1962), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* Tony Richardson, 1962), *This Sporting Life* (Lindsay Anderson, 1963) and *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963).

[3] Quoted in Walker, *Hollywood, England*, op. cit., 468.

[4] Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism*, op. cit., 129-32.

[5] Higson, 'Space, Place, Spectacle', op. cit.

[6] For full details on censorship in this period see Anthony Aldgate, *Censorship and the Permissive Society: British Cinema and Theatre, 1955-1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[7] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #310: *A Taste of Honey*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 30 May 1960.

[8] Ibid: Croydon to Garrett, 30 May 1960.

[9] Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism*, p. 43.

[10] Tony Richardson, *Long Distance Runner: A Memoir* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993), 107.

[11] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 23 Nov 1959.

[12] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #245: *Room at the Top*: Robert Garrett to John Woolf, 14 May 1958.

[13] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: Bernard Smith (Film Finances) to Tufnell Satterthwaite & Co Ltd, 21 Oct 1960.

[14] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #276: *The Entertainer*: Bernard Smith (Film Finances) to Tifnell Satterthwaite & Co Ltd, 21 Oct 1960.

[15] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #355: *Billy Liar*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 6 Oct 1962.

[16] Ibid: Statement of cost 16 June 1963.

[17] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #310: *A Taste of Honey*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 8 Feb 1961.

[18] When there was a call on the guarantee Film Finances could recoup any advance from box-office receipts, but usually only after the principal financiers recouped their investment.

[19] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: John Croyden's report, 6 Nov 1959.

[20] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #310: *A Taste of Honey*: John Croydon's report, 30 May 1960.
[21] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #355: *Billy Liar*: John Croydon's report, 6 Oct 1962.
[22] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #245: *Room at the Top*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 29 May 1958.
[23] Walker, *Hollywood, England*, pp. 45, 167.
[24] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, (first published Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957, London: Arrow Books edition 2002) p. 7.
[25] Laurence Harvey was an emerging film actor at the time, having begun a successful theatre career and being cast as Christopher Isherwood in *I Am a Camera* (1955).
[26] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #245: *Room at the Top*: John Croydon report, n.d.
[27] Jack Clayton Archive, Special Collections, British Film Institute National Archive shooting script, *Room at the Top*, JCL-7-1-1.
[28] Walker, *Hollywood England*, op. cit., 167.
[29] Film Finances was informed of the casting change on 11 Dec 1962: *Billy Liar*.
[30] Walker, *Hollywood, England*, op. cit., 166.
[31] Keith Waterhouse, *Billy Liar* (London: Penguin, 1959), 183.
[32] Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, *Billy Liar* (London: Evans Plays Montague house, 1961).
[33] Richardson, *Long Distance Runner*, p. 108.
[34] Richardson, *Long Distance Runner*, p. 108.
[35] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #276: *The Entertainer*: John Croydon to Maurice Foster, 25 Sept 1959.
[36] Ibid: Croydon to Foster, 1 Oct 1959.
[37] Walker, *Hollywood, England*, op. cit., 77.
[38] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #276: *The Entertainer*: Bernard Smith, Film Finances, to Tufnell Satterthwaite, 21 Oct 1960; file note, 25 Oct 1960, and G.C. Wheatley of Bryanston to Holly Productions, 10 Nov 1960.
[39] Walker, *Hollywood, England*, op. cit., 77.
[40] Richardson, *Long Distance Runner*, op. cit., 121.
[41] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #310: *A Taste of Honey*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 30 May 1960.
[42] Ibid: Croydon to Garrett, 30 May 1960.
[43] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #355: *Billy Liar*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 6 Oct 1962 – report commenting on previous production experience with *A Kind of Loving*.
[44] See Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism*; Higson, 'Space, Place, Spectacle', op. cit., and Terry Lovell, *Screen*, 31 (4) (1990), 357-76, reprinted in Higson, *Dissolving Views*, op. cit., 157-77. See also Peter Hutchings, 'Beyond the New Wave: Realism in British Cinema, 1959-63' in Robert Murphy (ed), *The British Cinema Book*, 3rd edition (London: British Film Institute, 2009), 304-12.
[45] J. Krish, *Society of Film and Television Arts Journal* issue on 'The New Realism and British Films', Spring 1963, quoted in Higson, 'Space, Place, Spectacle' in *Dissolving Views*, op. cit., 134.
[46] Higson, 'Space, Place, Spectacle' in *Dissolving Views*, op. cit., 155-6.

[47] Ibid., 150.
[48] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 4 Feb 1960.
[49] Film Finances: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and Higson, 'Space, Place, Spectacle' in *Dissolving Views*, op. cit., 139.
[50] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 6 Nov 1959.
[51] Ibid: Croydon to Garrett, 4 Feb 1960.
[52] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #324: *A Kind of Loving*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 14 Oct 1961: *A Kind of Loving*.
[53] Film Finances Archive Realised Film Box #289: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*: John Croydon to Robert Garrett, 6 Nov 1959.
[54] Without referring to an actual sum Walker refers to Olivier's payment as 'a pittance' in *Hollywood, England*, op. cit., 76.