

**THE HILL: A TRIBUTE TO OSWALD MORRIS** OBE, DFC, AFC, BSC

Introduced by special guests Duncan Kenworthy OBE, Chrissie Morris and Roger Deakins CBE, ASC, BSC



SEAN CONNERY AND HARRY ANDREWS IN THE HILL (1965)

RELEASE YEAR: 1965

RUNTIME: 123 mins

DIRECTOR: Sidney Lumet

CINEMATOGRAPHY: Oswald Morris

*With special thanks to Warner Bros and the BFI*

**B**orn in November 1915 Oswald Morris was a dedicated film fan in his teenage years, working as a cinema projectionist in his school holidays, before entering the industry in 1932 as a runner and clapper boy at Wembley Studios, a month short of his 17th birthday. The studio churned out quota quickies making a movie a week at a cost of one pound per foot of film. He left the studio in the spring of 1933 to work at British International Pictures (BIP) based at Elstree Studios, but after it was taken over by Fox, he soon returned to Wembley, as a camera assistant.

By 1938 he had graduated to camera operator at Wembley Studios but with the outbreak of World War II the following year, his career was curtailed and he enlisted into the RAF serving as bomber pilot. His services earned him a DFC, flying missions over France and Germany before being transferred to

Transport Command, where as a Flight Lt. he flew Sir Anthony Eden to Yalta, Clement Attlee to Potsdam, and the chief of the imperial general staff, Lord Alanbrooke, on a world tour.

After demobilization, Ossie joined Independent Producers at Pinewood Studios in January 1946 and was engaged as camera operator on three notable productions; *Green For Danger*, *Lauder and Gilliat's* comedy-thriller concerning a series of murders at a wartime emergency hospital; *Captain Boycott*, a 1947 historical drama, again produced by *Lauder and Gilliat* and *Oliver Twist*, David Lean's stunning adaptation of the classic novel by Charles Dickens photographed by Guy Green.

In 1949, Ossie gained his first screen credit as Director of Photography on *Golden Salamander*, starring Trevor Howard as an Englishman in Tunis who defeats a gang of gunrunners.

After photographing half a dozen more pictures including Jacques Tourneur's *Circle Of Danger* and Ronald Neame's *The Card* (1952) as well as two in colour, Ossie was recruited as the cinematographer for John Huston's latest project *Moulin Rouge*. Notable in many respects, this film marked the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration between the director and his cameraman and allowed Ossie the chance to really experiment with his technical work. John Huston had asked Ossie to ►



render the color scheme of the film to look “as if Toulouse-Lautrec had directed it”. Shooting in three-strip Technicolor, Ossie asked the laboratory for a subdued palette rather than the mostly primary colours symptomatic of the process. Technicolor was reluctant to do this and so Ossie took to using fog filters and ambient smoke to achieve the effect he wanted.

The story goes that Technicolor confronted Huston and Morris with a set of dailies saying the material was faulty and not “up to Technicolor standards”. Huston and Morris watched it in the theatre at which point Huston allegedly turned to Ossie and said, “What do you think, Os?” To which Ossie replied, “Exactly as I wanted it.” Huston replied, “Me too.” Then turned to the Technicolor management with, “Gentlemen, thank you and f\*\*k you!”

On its release, *Moulin Rouge* became a favourite of Technicolor’s inventor, Dr. Herbert Kalmus and the British Society of Cinematographers awarded him its Best Cinematography Award.

Ossie has always considered that he had two mentors during his long career. Firstly the distinguished cinematographer, then producer, then director, Ronald Neame for whom he photographed six pictures. Secondly the tremendously talented cinematographer, then director, Guy Green for whom he was camera operator on three pictures.

Throughout the fifties, he continued to experiment. With his work on *Moby Dick*, made at Elstree in 1955, he employed an extreme process combining desaturated colour images with



OSIE FILMS OUR MAN IN HAVANA (1960) WITH DIRECTOR CAROL REED

a black and white image, which cleverly reduced the intensity of the colour and gave the film the texture of an old Victorian print. In addition to working with John Huston on *Moby Dick*, *Beat The Devil* and *Heaven Knows Mr. Allison*, he also served as cinematographer for Rene Clement’s *Knave Of Hearts*, Carol Reed’s *The Key* and *Our Man In Havana* and Tony Richardson’s *Look Back In Anger* and *The Entertainer* (1960).

Having thus established a reputation as one of the world’s leading cinematographers, throughout the sixties, Oswald was constantly in demand and indeed brought his talents to bear on many fine productions. They included: *The Guns Of Navarone*, a 1961 screen version of Alastair Maclean’s book *Lolita*, Stanley Kubrick’s 1962 interpretation of the notorious Nabokov novel *The Pumpkin Eater*, for which Ossie received the 1964 British Academy Award; *The Hill*, the 1965 film directed by Sidney Lumet for which Oswald won another British Academy Award; *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*, 1966, which earned him his third consecutive BAFTA Award; *Oliver!*, the Carol Reed 1968 film musical for which Ossie won a first Oscar nomination for his colour photography and *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (1969).

During the seventies Oswald Morris photographed a string of major productions and indeed one of these, *Fiddler On The Roof*, filmed on location in Yugoslavia, earned him his American Academy Award (Oscar) in 1971. Between 1970 and 1978 he shot eleven pictures and in the process worked with such leading directors as Joe Mankiewicz on *Sleuth*, John Huston on *The Mackintosh Man* and *The Man Who Would Be King* and Sidney Lumet on *Equus* and *The Wiz*. After photographing two more pictures in 1980 and 1981, Ossie gained his final credit with *The Dark Crystal*, having photographed 58 features.

In addition to his Oscar win and three nominations, and three BAFTAs for Cinematography, he was awarded the fellowship of BAFTA in 1997 and was honoured with the International Award by the American Society of Cinematographers in 2000 and the British Society of Cinematographers Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003; to add to his four BSC Cinematography Awards for *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Taming Of The Shrew*, *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* and *Moulin Rouge*. ►



OSIE AND CREW FILM SIX GREEK DESTROYERS FOR THE GUNS OF NAVARONE (1961)



Ossie was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1998, for services to Cinematography and the Film Industry. Along with his BAFTA Fellowship he was a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and the National Television School and an Honorary Fellow of The Arts Institute at Bournemouth and the British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society. In June 2009, the new building incorporating the theatre at the National Film School in Beaconsfield was named in his honour. He published his memoirs, *Huston, We Have A Problem: A Kaleidoscope Of Filmmaking Memories* in 2006 and is featured in the book *Conversations With Cinematographers* by David A Ellis.

Ossie will be sorely missed by those in the industry; a delightful man, inspired by Ronald Neame and Guy Green, who in turn has himself been an inspiration to a new generation of cinematographers. ●

*With special thanks to Phil Meheux BSC and The British Society of Cinematographers for providing this text.*



OSSE SHOOTING MOBY DICK (1956) WITH DIRECTOR JOHN HUSTON

## OSWALD MORRIS OBE, DFC, AFC, BSC FILMOGRAPHY

<sup>1</sup> Clapper Boy	1936 <i>Café Mascot</i> <sup>2</sup>	1950 <i>Circle Of Danger</i>
<sup>2</sup> Assistant Cameraman	1936 <i>The End Of The Road</i> <sup>2</sup>	1950 <i>Golden Salamander</i> <sup>3</sup>
<sup>3</sup> Camera Operator	1936 <i>Troubled Waters</i> <sup>2</sup>	1950 <i>Cairo Road</i> <sup>4</sup>
<sup>4</sup> Director of Photography	1936 <i>Wedding Group</i> <sup>2</sup>	1952 <i>The Card</i> <sup>4</sup>
1932 <i>Born Lucky</i> <sup>1</sup>	1936 <i>Highland Fling</i> <sup>2</sup>	1952 <i>So Little Time</i> <sup>4</sup>
1932 <i>After Dark</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Concerning Mr. Martin</i> <sup>2</sup>	1952 <i>Saturday Island</i> <sup>4</sup>
1933 <i>Money For Speed</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Against The Tide</i> <sup>2</sup>	1952 <i>South Of Algiers</i> <sup>4</sup>
1933 <i>Follow The Lady</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Catch As Catch Can</i> <sup>2</sup>	1953 <i>Moulin Rouge</i> <sup>4</sup>
1933 <i>Two Wives For Henry</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>£5 Man</i> <sup>2</sup>	1953 <i>Indiscretion Of An American Wife/ Stazione Termini</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>His Majesty And Co.</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Strange Experiment</i> <sup>2</sup>	1953 <i>Beat The Devil</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>Josser On The Farm</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>The Black Tulip</i> <sup>2</sup>	1954 <i>Beau Brummell</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>Rolling In Money</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Calling All Ma's</i> <sup>2</sup>	1954 <i>Monsieur Ripois</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>The Third Clue</i> <sup>1</sup>	1937 <i>Variety Hour</i> <sup>2</sup>	1955 <i>The Man Who Never Was</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>Blossom Time</i> <sup>1</sup>	1938 <i>Murder In The Family</i> <sup>2</sup>	1956 <i>Moby Dick</i> <sup>4</sup>
1934 <i>Mister Cinders</i> <sup>1</sup>	1938 <i>Second Thoughts</i> <sup>2</sup>	1957 <i>A Farewell To Arms</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Blue Smoke</i> <sup>2</sup>	1938 <i>Who Goes Next?</i> <sup>3</sup>	1957 <i>Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Late Extra</i> <sup>2</sup>	1938 <i>Londonderry Air</i> <sup>2</sup>	1958 <i>The Key</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>White Lilac</i> <sup>2</sup>	1939 <i>I Met A Murderer</i> <sup>3</sup>	1958 <i>The Roots Of Heaven</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Abdul The Damned</i> <sup>1</sup>	1946 <i>Green For Danger</i> <sup>3</sup>	1959 <i>Look Back In Anger</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Smith's Wives</i> <sup>2</sup>	1947 <i>Captain Boycott</i> <sup>3</sup>	1960 <i>The Entertainer</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Old Roses</i> <sup>2</sup>	1947 <i>Blanche Fury</i> <sup>3</sup>	1960 <i>Our Man In Havana</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>All At Sea</i> <sup>2</sup>	1948 <i>The Passionate Friends</i> <sup>3</sup>	1961 <i>The Guns Of Navarone</i> <sup>4</sup>
1935 <i>Sexton Blake And The Mademoiselle</i> <sup>2</sup>	1948 <i>Oliver Twist</i> <sup>3</sup>	1962 <i>Satan Never Sleeps</i> <sup>4</sup>
1936 <i>The Big Noise</i> <sup>2</sup>	1949 <i>Fools Rush In</i> <sup>3</sup>	1962 <i>Term Of Trial</i> <sup>4</sup>
1936 <i>Blind Man's Buff</i> <sup>2</sup>	1950 <i>The Adventurers</i>	

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OSWALD MORRIS (LEFT) FILMS OLIVER TWIST (1948) WITH DIRECTOR DAVID LEAN (RIGHT)

## OSWALD MORRIS OBE, DFC, AFC, BSC FILMOGRAPHY (CONT.)

- |      |   |      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|------|---|
| 1962 | <i>Come Fly With Me</i> <sup>4</sup>                  | 1967 | <i>The Great Catherine</i> <sup>4</sup>         | 1976 | <i>The Seven-Per-Cent Solution</i> <sup>4</sup> |
| 1962 | <i>Lolita</i> <sup>4</sup>                            | 1967 | <i>Reflections In A Golden Eye</i> <sup>4</sup> | 1977 | <i>Equus</i> <sup>4</sup>                       |
| 1963 | <i>Facing The Facts</i> <sup>4</sup>                  | 1968 | <i>The Winter's Tale</i> <sup>4</sup>           | 1978 | <i>The Wiz</i> <sup>4</sup>                     |
| 1963 | <i>The Ceremony</i> <sup>4</sup>                      | 1968 | <i>Oliver!</i> <sup>4</sup>                     | 1980 | <i>Just Tell Me What You Want</i> <sup>4</sup>  |
| 1964 | <i>The Pumpkin Eater</i> <sup>4</sup>                 | 1969 | <i>Goodbye, Mr. Chips</i> <sup>4</sup>          | 1981 | <i>The Great Muppet Caper</i> <sup>4</sup>      |
| 1964 | <i>Of Human Bondage</i> <sup>4</sup>                  | 1970 | <i>Fragment Of Fear</i> <sup>4</sup>            | 1982 | <i>The Dark Crystal</i> <sup>4</sup>            |
| 1965 | <i>Mister Moses</i> <sup>4</sup>                      | 1970 | <i>Scrooge</i> <sup>4</sup>                     | 1988 | <i>John Huston</i> (onscreen participant)       |
| 1965 | <i>The Hill</i> <sup>4</sup>                          | 1971 | <i>Fiddler On The Roof</i> <sup>4</sup>         |      |   |
| 1965 | <i>The Battle Of The Villa Fiorita</i> <sup>4</sup>   | 1972 | <i>Lady Caroline Lamb</i> <sup>4</sup>          |      |   |
| 1965 | <i>The Spy Who Came In From The Cold</i> <sup>4</sup> | 1972 | <i>Sleuth</i> <sup>4</sup>                      |      |   |
| 1965 | <i>Life At The Top</i> <sup>4</sup>                   | 1973 | <i>The Mackintosh Man</i> <sup>4</sup>          |      |   |
| 1966 | <i>Stop The World I Want To Get Off</i> <sup>4</sup>  | 1974 | <i>The Odessa File</i> <sup>4</sup>             |      |   |
| 1966 | <i>The Taming Of The Shrew</i> <sup>4</sup>           | 1974 | <i>The Man With The Golden Gun</i> <sup>4</sup> |      |   |
|      |   | 1975 | <i>The Man Who Would Be King</i> <sup>4</sup>   |      |   |

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