

## Klaus Hugo 'Ken / Heinie' Adam

Berlin-born Sir Kenneth Adam, KB, OBE, arrived in England from Nazi Germany in 1934 when he was 12 years old. After leaving school he studied architecture at University College, London, and the Bartlett School of Architecture, before joining the Royal Air Force as a fighter pilot in 1941. He and his brother Dennis were the first German-born pilots in the RAF, Dennis joining No. 183 Squadron in 1944, as part of the same Wing (No. 123) that his elder brother was flying in with No. 609 (West Riding) Squadron.

"I finished training and joined 609 Squadron on 1st October 1943, stationed at Lympne. In the meantime I had changed my Christian name from Klaus Hugo to Ken Adam, but everyone usually called me Heinie! I went straight on to Typhoons. Our job was basically to escort American bombers. On my first operation, I nearly ran out of fuel because my Typhoon wasn't fitted with long-range tanks. We were flying medium-level escort over France, and my engine had cut on main tanks, so I switched over to reserve, but I thought I had better call up the CO. He gave me a terrible bollocking: 'Reduce your revs and try to glide back to England'. Then as I was turning, I saw planes being attacked right and left of me. There were no enemy aircraft around, but there was a high-level escort of American fighters who had never seen a Typhoon, and they thought we were Focke-Wulf 190's, and so they just took a dive at us. And our squadron commander (S/Ldr Patric Glynn Thornton-Brown DFC) was shot down, along with a couple of others, and an American pilot in 609, a famous ice hockey player, Artie Ross, was also hit, though he managed to get back and force land somewhere on a beach. Then they sent Artie Ross to all the American fighter stations to show them a Typhoon, and I believe some pilots were later court-martialled. It was a terrible thing to happen, especially on your first operation." Adam was to typically sport an RAF moustache, though rather than growing it as an attempt to look older, as many did, it was instead to help disguise his 'Jewishness' in case of capture by German troops.

Postwar, Adam has become one of the most highly regarded and influential film set designers internationally and has been nominated for Oscars for art direction five times, winning two, with 'Barry Lyndon' and 'The Madness of King George'. In 1947, Adam entered the British film industry making set drawings for 'This Was a Woman'. He rose rapidly from draughtsman to art director, having been assistant art director on 'The Queen of Spades', 'The Hidden Room', 'Your Witness', 'Captain Horatio Hornblower', 'The Crimson Pirate', and 'Helen of Troy', before becoming full art director for the European-based sequences of Mike Todd's 'Around the World in 80 Days', for which he earned his first Academy Award nomination for the winner of Best Picture for 1956. In 1962, Adam began work on Dr. No, the first in the series of James Bond films. From low-budget at the beginning to more lavish allowances during the 1970's, Adam was able to give greater rein to his creativity. Influenced by his studies in architecture, Adam's designs have resulted in some of the best-styled sets of modern cinema, including the acclaimed war room from Dr Strangelove, and, along with the cars used in the James Bond films, the all-time classic 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. His 1964 design of the vaults at Fort Knox in 'Goldfinger' came from his own imagination - access having been denied to him. So convincing was the design that it was commonly believed that the sequences had been shot on location.

In 1999 Adam designed the interior of Berlins millennium exhibition pavilion, and the Queens Birthday Honours list for 2003 included the following: Diplomatic Services - Knight Bachelor - Kenneth Hugo Adam, OBE, for services to the film industry and Anglo-German relations.

### Filmography

- 2001 Stanley Kubrick: A Life In Pictures
- 1999 The Out-of-Towners - Production Designer
- 1997 In & Out - Production Designer
- 1996 Bogus - Production Designer
- 1995 Boys on the Side - Production Designer
- 1994 The Madness of King George - Production Designer
- 1993 Undercover Blues - Production Designer
- 1993 Addams Family Values - Production Designer
- 1991 Company Business - Production Designer
- 1991 The Doctor - Production Designer
- 1990 The Freshman - Production Designer
- 1989 Dead Bang - Production Designer
- 1988 The Deceivers - Production Designer
- 1986 Crimes of the Heart - Production Designer
- 1985 King David - Production Designer
- 1985 Agnes of God - Production Designer
- 1981 Pennies from Heaven - Associate Producer, Production Designer
- 1979 Moonraker - Production Designer
- 1977 The Spy Who Loved Me - Production Designer
- 1976 The Seven-Percent Solution - Production Designer

1975 Barry Lyndon - Production Designer

1975 Salon Kitty - Production Designer

1973 The Last of Sheila - Production Designer

1972 Sleuth - Production Designer

1971 Diamonds Are Forever - Production Designer

1970 The Owl and the Pussycat - Production Designer

1969 Goodbye, Mr. Chips - Production Designer

1968 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang - Production Designer

1967 You Only Live Twice - Production Designer

1966 Funeral in Berlin - Production Designer

1965 Thunderball - Production Designer

1965 The Ipcress File - Production Designer

1964 Goldfinger - Production Designer

1964 Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb -  
Production Designer

1964 Woman of Straw - Production Designer

1963 In the Cool of the Day - Production Designer

1962 Dr. No - Production Designer

1962 Sodom and Gomorrah - Production Designer

1960 The Trials of Oscar Wilde - Production Designer

1959 Ten Seconds to Hell - Art Director

1959 The Angry Hills - Production Designer

1959 Portrait of a Sinner - Art Director

1959 Ben Hur

1958 Gideon of Scotland Yard - Art Director

1957 Curse of the Demon - Production Designer, Set Designer

1956 Spin a Dark Web - Art Director

1956 Around the World in 80 Days - Production Designer

1947 Prairie Express - Character played: Pete

1947 Flashing Guns - Character played: Dishpan

Best Art Direction: The Madness of King George, Won Academy Award - 1993

Best Art Direction: Addams Family Values, Nominated Academy Award - 1977

Best Art Direction: The Spy Who Loved Me, Nominated Academy Award - 1975

Best Art Direction: Barry Lyndon, Won British Academy Awards - 1965

Best Art Direction of a Color British Film: The Ipcress File, Won

Oscar hero's great escape

by JOHN THORPE

SURPRISE, surprise, Britain didn't do well in the Oscars. But one who does hail from this side of the pond and was called forward at the ceremony in Los Angeles is lucky to be alive to pick up his gong.

He's Ken Adams, or Keith Howard Adams as he's known to folk like Jim Earnshaw of Stonefall Avenue, Harrogate.

Ken got an Oscar for art direction of 'The Madness of King George'. Now Jim tells me that Ken - who he knows as Keith - was a pilot in 609 Squadron during the Second World War.

#### TYPHOONS

"Keith joined 609 - a squadron that was formed in 1936 at Yeadon aerodrome - on October 20, 1943 as a sergeant-pilot flying Typhoons" says Jim.

"He was promoted Flying Officer around VE Day.

"But on March 19, 1945, Keith was flying Typhoon SW499 when it was hit by enemy fire. He crash-landed the aircraft at Gilze-Rijen, in Holland. Luckily, Keith walked away unscathed."

Jim, a member of the 609 Squadron Association, tells me they're in regular touch with Keith, who has also worked on the James Bond films.

Yorkshire Diary