

swallows Artoo were shot later on location in George Lucas' unfinished swimming pool, with two divers manipulating the creature from below the muddy water, whilst Lucas shot the footage himself.

The later scene of Luke and Artoo looking at the totally submerged craft, bar a small corner of wing, was achieved with Mark Hamill in water photographed looking towards a blue screen (either filmed at ELSTREE or later in post production at ILM (we assume the latter)).

Hand held cameras were used for the scene where Luke uses the Force to make the rocks rise into the air. The rocks were made from papier-mâché with little wires on them in a sequence that would take two hours to shoot. Several other scenes linked to Luke's training as a Jedi, involving shots of his leaping into the air (and a scene of him leaping over the lake), fighting seeker balls (like the one in the *Falcon* hold in STAR WARS) and a moment where he was to stand in the air on two hands, then one hand, then one thumb, would sadly all be trimmed or excised beforehand, due to lack of filming time and money.

15TH AUGUST

STAR WARS second theatrical re-release begins for a limited period of three weeks in US cinemas. The first EMPIRE teaser trailer is shown with the film prints and KENNER toys discount books are handed out to cinema-goers.

Dagobah set filming continues, with an off-screen stand in for Alec Guinness, still recovering from his eye operation, relaying dialogue to Mark Hamill.

21ST AUGUST

Paul Hirsch leaves the UK to return to the US-it is there that he will finish the final stages of editing for EMPIRE. With the movie over-schedule, and the middle of the film missing (due to the heavy amount of effects footage to be integrated into it), Lucas has been working on the



Wearing a lightweight "Stunt Yoda" on his back, several script condensed sequences of Luke Skywalker's Jedi training are filmed, including a partially completed scene, supervised by Gary Kurtz, where Yoda, still on Luke's back, throws a metal bar into the air which Luke has to cut into pieces with his lightsaber.



film's first four reels, where, seeing difficulties, he's working on it's pace.

24TH AUGUST

Having met with him the night before, Lucas re-confirms that Sir Alec Guinness will once more be playing Obi-Wan Kenobi for a few brief scenes in the movie. With his health recovering, Sir Alec's scripted scenes are simplified by Lucas.

SUNDAY 26TH AUGUST AND MONDAY 27TH AUGUST

Gary Kurtz attends the British 37th WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (SEACON) in Brighton's Hotel Metropole, where he opens an exhibition showing aspects of the making of EMPIRE (including miniature models,

loaned from the art department, of the Rebel Hangar, Bespin and Dagobah-wetting the appetites of many STAR WARS fans for the film's upcoming 1980 release), takes part in a panel discussion and presents a Hugo Award to the best dramatic presentation of a science fiction theme (won the previous year by Christopher Reeve for SUPERMAN).

A stunt Yoda is used in the back pack scenes of Luke training-it has some basic movement but is mostly seen in long shot with Franz Oz's dialogue added on in post production (for the close up scenes of Luke talking to the Jedi Master about the good and bad sides of the Force, a radio controlled Yoda is also used). An additional scene, where Luke splits a bar into pieces with his lightsaber, thrown by Yoda whilst he is in the rucksack, would be partially filmed by Gary Kurtz and the Second Unit but, for time and pace reasons, never completed (filmed MOS (without sound), it consisted of a close-up shot of Yoda and the bar, and then a medium shot of Luke swinging. As far as LUCASFILM archivists can tell, there was no reaction shot of Luke or a shot of the split bar ever filmed (though it was created as a prop in six pieces (originally seven in the script) by NORANK ENGINEERING), or anything of Yoda explaining the setup)).

LATE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

BBC children's television requests series JIM'LL FIX IT visits the Dagobah set near the end of filming, with a young viewer getting the chance to visit the EMPIRE sets at ELSTREE and picnic on the Bog planet with Mark Hamill and the robot Artoo Detoo. In the later studio filming of the introduction/finale inserts for the JIM'LL FIX IT show, held at the London Shepherd's Bush Theater, the young boy receives his JIM'LL FIX IT badge for taking part in the programme, given to him by Peter Mayhew in character as Chewbacca.



With the Muppets having previously visited their set, Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels, as See Threepio, return the compliment, appearing in a highly popular, and totally hilarious, episode of the MUPPET SHOW, which airs in early 1980, shortly before EMPIRE's theatrical release.

Mayhew later joins Mark Hamill, Anthony Daniels and the robot R2-D2 to guest star in character for a highly popular episode of THE MUPPET SHOW. Hamill greatly enjoys the experience-seeing how the puppet's work and once again being with Frank Oz –this time working with the Miss Piggy and Fozzy Bear characters, meeting the voice artists/puppeteers and generally showing his comedic enthusiasm all across the board. Anthony Daniels also enjoys his little opportunity, despite the restrictions of the costume, to be able to perform a light tap dance during the episode's musical finale.

30TH AUGUST

CARBON FREEZING CHAMBER/ WEATHER VANE CONTROL ROOM CHAMBER AND UNDERSIDE ANTENNA

Harley Cokeliss and his Second Unit direct Mark Hamill, Colin Skeaping (doubling for Luke) and Bob Anderson as Vader for some additional stunt insert shots for the duel.

31ST AUGUST

Principal production wraps and a party is held on the Dagobah set, organized by Meredith Kurtz, who supervises it's transformation into a picnic area. The stink of the bog has now been replaced by the fragrant aroma of candles and tiger lilies. Every guest is given a hamper of snacks and invited to eat on the set's false "lawn", which has now been spread out over the tangled forest. Despite the budget problems, Kurtz's wife has spared nothing in giving everybody a good time and send off. Alan Arnold, unit publicist, recalls: "There was no hint of parsimony." Lucas is sadly not present for the event, and filming is still not complete for certain Dagobah/Yoda scenes, which will carry on, with cost overruns and filming delays, until September.

With many of the main cast now finished, it has been a long but highly rewarding film to work on. Recalled Peter Mayhew to a STARLOG interview in 1986: "By the end of EMPIRE I was exhausted. It was a fairly active film with a long schedule."

SEPTEMBER

A week after the ELSTREE studios

filming is complete, Paul Hirsch's rough cut of the movie, having previously worked through sixty hours worth of footage (of which everything shot for the film would be kept), is now ready for further editing from Kershner and Lucas (who wants the film to have a running time of two hours) and intercutting with effects shots to be created by ILM.

Lucas takes the first eight minutes of the film and apparently cuts out half the footage (Artoo and Threepio's bickering scene being one of the first casualties to be trimmed down, originally being much

film again, saying a year later: "it came together beautifully."

With studio duties completed, Brian Johnson returns to ILM to co-ordinate the continuing effects work being integrated with the studio footage, especially those with the Imperial Walkers and Yoda.

3RD SEPTEMBER

Irvin Kershner supervises pick up photography on one of the Bespin sets.

4TH SEPTEMBER



After several delays and much speculation as to whether he would indeed return for the sequel, Sir Alec Guinness travels to ELSTREE and reprises his role as Obi-Wan Kenobi, supervised by Irvin Kershner.



longer than what was eventually seen on screen.

When Anthony Daniels asks Paul Hirsch why it was trimmed, having been happy with the performance, the editor replies: "it's the first time we see you in the movie. That angry-where do you go from there?" As with STAR WARS, clever editing is apparent through EMPIRE, with scenes shot that were incomplete or difficult to realize due to filming difficulties now looking much better when put together, with careful and well integrated use of same shot footage taken from differing angles. Certain scenes are pared to the bare bones yet still work very successfully in maintaining a strong flow to the movie. It all works well when put together and has all the ingredients to be a big hit.

Working as a team, with Lucas cooled down from his views on earlier edited footage, Kershner suggests new changes, and the next day, following the directors advice, Lucas goes back and recuts the

Irvin Kershner finishes Bespin blue screen Second Unit photography, whilst Kurtz finishes pick up shots on the Dagobah set.

5TH SEPTEMBER

Despite an eye infection making him feel a little unwell, and wincing at times from the brightness of the camera lights, Sir Alec Guinness ends speculation about whether he will return to STAR WARS by coming to the ELSTREE set, via chauffeur driven limousine, at 8.30am and recording all his scenes, in character, against blue screen/velvet

drapes, for literally just a day (six hours, leaving at 3pm). Hamill and Lucas greet the actor, who takes his direction from Kershner (Guinness, becoming very fond of Yoda at one point, tells Kershner, when he doesn't want to deliver a certain lines of dialogue, "Why doesn't the little green thing do this one?"). With the filming of his scenes nearing completion, Guinness feels uncomfortable by the entourage surrounding Lucas and prefers the days when it was just a case of him and Lucas sharing a meal to discuss the film.

Selected crew members, towards the end of the shoot, due to the time and pressure of the film making, are allowed small breaks in filming and replaced with other personnel.



To preserve Yoda's appearance and the fact that he is a Jedi Master, it is deliberately conceived that he won't appear in a movie poster for the film's 1980 release. It is not until the 1981 re-release poster by Tom Jung that he does so (when EMPIRE is first released on video, the GONE WITH THE WIND style poster also has Yoda added on to it).

10TH SEPTEMBER



Concluding his third and final batch of set visits, Lucas, with Marcia, watches the scene of the X-Wing pulled out of the swamp by Yoda. Talking about a wide manner of subjects to the crew, Lucas tells Tony Dyson, apart from discussing R2-D2 and his fabrication at a later point, how difficult it is to get a good US style burger in the UK, as well as how much he dislikes flying. Crewmembers see that Lucas is not only more subdued and serious but also more forceful about how the film should be artistically.



Readied for filming, the X-Wing is soon lifted out of the swamp by the use of a crane (with a model of the craft flying towards its land location added onto the live action filming plate photography, with an additional background matte painting by Ralph McQuarrie, in later post production). Recalls Kershner to STAR WARS INSIDER: "It had taken some time to set up, a few hours actually, and now we did the shot, and the haze was right-and then the ship came out of the water. It looked beautiful, and there was moss and seaweed, and the water is dripping off, and suddenly the two wings just collapsed. I felt so badly for George, because I knew that it was his money. I said



"What happened?" And they said, "Well, we didn't realize it wasn't waterproof, and the wings are wood, and they couldn't take all the weight." I said, "Now you tell me." It took hours to re-build it-they put in structural things and a little steel. 10 hours to do the shot, and it was maybe six seconds."

Making the most of his final visit to the UK, George Lucas, conferring with Gary Kurtz (wearing his Norway filming jacket) and Irvin Kershner, returns to ELSTREE to watch the Dagobah filming of Luke's X-Wing being moved from the swamp. In a break, he also manages to chat and be photographed off set with Mark Hamill-the pair knowing that the film is now finally nearing it's completion and about to enter a post production phase.

The close up dialogue scenes between Luke and Yoda, after the X-Wing has been pulled out of the swamp, had previously been filmed on 17th August.

Extra scenes involving Luke's Jedi training are also filmed against the

gradually disintegrating set, requiring the use of stuntman Colin Skeaping to fill in for Hamill.

17TH SEPTEMBER

LEAVING DAGOBAH/ "THERE IS ANOTHER"

The filmed conversation in which Luke talks to Yoda, with the latter warning him not to go Cloud City, would be shortened down in the editing stages (Luke originally sat next to Yoda at the foot of the X-Wing before getting up to ready his craft for departure). An additional scene of Artoo hosing down Luke's ship, getting it ready for take off, whilst a flying creature comes down on him (as seen in the recent EMPIRE OF DREAMS documentary-the string on the creature clearly visible) would also be cut from the final film-both scenes remain for the novelisation however.

When filming Luke's close up as he readies to leave, a stage hand off screen fills in for Yoda providing dialogue, including an extra line that may, or may not, have been voiced by Frank Oz in later dubbing. The full line is "if you end your training now, if you chose the quick and easy path-as Vader did-you will become an agent of evil, and the galaxy will be plunged deeper into the abyss of hate and despair." As the filming of the scene continues, Mark Hamill, removing a snake from one of the X-Wing engines would be bitten by it, exclaiming to the crew, "He fucking bit me!!" Hamill then makes everyone on set laugh when he goes on to say: "It was a little love peck!!"

Kershner decides that, instead of showing Luke's ship flying overhead of Ben and Yoda, that they'll just show the take off lights on Yoda's face as the fighter ascends into the sky. He feels it's more powerful an image than having another special effects shot of the X-Wing.

Regarding the "other", Lucas would tell THE ANNOTATED SCREENPLAYS: "My feeling about Luke being the last hope (which first started to appear in the scripts second draft) was really done in an effort to make sure that he was in some jeopardy, that he might not succeed. I was trying to set up subliminally in the audience's mind that something is going on here, that he could fail. And if he does fail, "there is another hope". So the audience is saying "Don't go, finish your training.""

24TH SEPTEMBER

Principal photography is finally completed



In a scene cut from the film, Luke sits near Yoda before resuming his preparations to leave Dagobah. Below: Hamill talks to Yoda without the presence of Sir Alec Guinness.



with insert shots of a Tauntaun's belly being sliced open with Luke's lightsaber (with Harrison Ford no longer available, the shot is achieved by a crew member wearing Han's snow gloves). Blue screen filming of certain scenes that they are unable to shoot at ELSTREE, or scenes requiring completion due to the previous pressures of time, are now to be handled at ILM. The new movie FLASH GORDON now begins full pre-production at ELSTREE, as EMPIRE vacates its offices at the studio.

The *Millennium Falcon* prop is broken down and moved to ELSTREE's backlot for storage until its planned use in STAR WARS III and one further future episode (there is also an idea that the prop might be used for exhibition purposes or be put on display). Due to the sets sheer size, not all of the ship can be saved but most of it is kept sealed in airtight wrapping to protect it from the vagaries of the British climate. Several small sections of the Dagobah set are also retained for possible sequel use.

By the end of the shoot, Peter Suschitzky has thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of working on the project, and the great team he has been involved with, especially Kershner, who encouraged him to do his

creative utmost on the film. With his acting work also completed, Mark Hamill is allowed to keep a lightsaber and has a small outfit, based on his Rebel fatigues costume, specially made for his young son.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER

Preparing to score the film, John Williams sees a fine rough cut of the movie with Irvin Kershner, Gary Kurtz and George Lucas (not present for the meeting, Ben Burt is upset that he hasn't been invited-the sound design co-ordination with the music being so important) -their watching of the Carbon freezing scene, including the "I know" line, being met with much merriment, and is filmed by the BBC for an upcoming documentary on Williams, currently scheduled for transmission in May 1980.

Donald Glut's novelisation work on the film continues, with the author being locked in

LUCASFILM's office trailer on the UNIVERSAL lot to look at the film's current storyboards, concept drawings, uncaptioned stills, and a screenplay, of which each page is numbered (he is later given a script to take home, which he would have locked up). The staff literally leaves him there, with strict instructions that he remove nothing. When they come to let him out, he asks innocently about one still, asking "is this Yoda?" His minders look panicky, hissing "Don't say the name. We're not allowed to know." Knowing that he is handling the novelisation of EMPIRE, friends ask him for info on its storyline. Glut, having signed a secrecy deal, does not reveal anything

and continues visiting LUCASFILM on a regular basis to look at the various Ralph McQuarrie paintings, and the script, which is continuing to be revised, making his own drawings of some of the illustrations so that he can get an idea of what he's describing, and staying one hundred percent accurate to the screenplay he's given-being a firm believer that the reader of the novelisation wants to read the book and feel as if he they are watching the film in their mind's eye. Due to length reasons, some parts of the first draft are cut because, as Glut recalls, things may have been a little too ponderous. Some background material on the main characters is also removed, including information regarding Luke as a boy on Tatooine, as well as other little incidents recalled from the first movie, which slowed the action down. In the final draft, more small pieces would be cut so that it will read as streamlined and exciting as possible. Of the new characters in the film, Glut would not be able to see any footage of Billy Dee Williams, so from the script and the photos, as well as Ralph McQuarrie's production paintings, he is able to successfully approximate how the



Above: a rehearsal (?) shot of a jacket less Mark Hamill near his surface returned X-Wing fighter. Below: In a different out-take image, a disbelieving Luke Skywalker and Artoo Detoo stand amazed by the return of the weed covered space craft.

