

Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1995 and concerns memories of 1930s life; as such there may be opinions expressed or words used that do not meet today's norms and expectations.

\*\*\*\*\*

- \* Transcript ID: BC-95-204AT001
- \* CCINTB Transcript ID: 95-204-8a-ae
- \* Tapes: BC-95-204OT001
- \* CCINTB Tapes ID: T95-85
- \* Length: 00:41:26
- \* Bentley Day Centre, Harrow, 7 July 1995: Valentina Bold interviews clients of Bentley Day Centre
- \* Transcribed by Valentina Bold/Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- \* LC=Lynn Chalk, KW=Kathleen Wicks, PA=Pat, JE=Jessie, VB=Valentina Bold
- \* Notes: First interview of one with four Bentley Day Centre clients; a follow-up interview was later conducted with Lynn Chalk (LC-95-204) on 21 July 1995; Sound Quality: Fair.

\*\*\*\*\*

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

[conversation going on in the background]

**VB: So--**

**KW: Have you started dear?**

**VB: Yes, I just put it on just now. 'Cause I'd be interested to know where you were all born as well.**

**KW: Well.**

**JE: I was born at Blackfriars.**

**VB: Right. How about yourself, Kathleen?**

**KW:** Islington, dear.

**VB: So it's not really the cinemas round here that you remember?**

**KW:** No, no. Definitely not. The cinemas I remember more are in Chingford when I was young because we moved, we moved... it's very difficult because we moved a helluva lot. You've got this on here now, so I've got to be careful what I say. [laughter] We moved from Islington to the Royal Borough of Kensington, and my brother was then born there. Then we moved to a house, my father was buying a house in Cricklewood from there. And I was seven then. And he was knocked down and killed. And then we moved out to Chingford, and that's when all the cinemas [in a way] were coming up new and...

**PA:** Well, '34, '35 they built the Granada [inaudible] and we all went down and saw... and go and see a film.

**JE:** I moved from Blackfriars to Elephant and Castle when I was, erm about six or seven I suppose.

**PA:** [A lot of] listed buildings, you know.

**VB: There's some beautiful ones, isn't there?**

**KW:** Yes, yes. Lovely listed buildings.

**JE:** There's one called The State [referring to the Gaumont State].

**VB: Yes, I was going to say—**

**JE:** My daughter's been to that.

**KW:** The State, the one at Kilburn?

**JE:** [They always built; inaudible] 30s, or were they 20s, those ones? [They always had these?] great big organs, didn't they.

**KW:** Oh, absolutely. It was wonderful.

**JE:** What was his name? Reginald--

**KW:** Reginald Dixon? Reginald Dixon. He went to Blackpool.

**JE:** [inaudible]. His little feet used to go.

**KW:** They encouraged you to sing, didn't they?

**PA:** Oh yes, thirties style.

**KW:** And when I think about it, they used to play to the music that was on. If you got the horses galloping.

**PA:** Yeah!

**KW:** Like in a Tom Mix film, they used to play the music for the horses and that, galloping!

**JE:** Well, you would know more about that, because it was always the sound. They had the sound on when I was about. [And they were very pleased with it] But when my mother and father used to go to the cinema, they used to play the piano.

**KW:** Yes. Yes.

**JE:** [inaudible; overtalking]

**KW:** One of the Odeons started up, you know. I really think there was much more pleasure in those days.

**PA:** Oh, we lived.

**KW:** 'Cause there was nice things then. You know, there was no violence. Although you got Cowboys and Indians.

**PA:** They weren't nasty.

**KW:** They weren't nasty. No, no, they weren't.

**VB:** Do you think there were any favourite stars? I mean, what sort of stars did you like yourselves?

**PA:** 'Course they were.

**JE:** Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers!

**PA:** Oh, Yes.

**JE:** Greta Garbo!

**KW:** I used to like Alice Faye! Did any of you like her? I used to love Alice Faye.

**PA:** Robert Taylor. He was my favourite.

**KW:** Oh well, of course. He was every girl's sweetheart, wasn't he!

**JE:** Robert who?

**KW:** Taylor.

**PA:** Robert Taylor.

**KW:** Dark, very good-looking man.

**JE:** Ooh! He was.

**PA:** I'm older than you, Jessie!

**VB:** I've got some stills with me, you might like to.

**JE:** Pardon?

**KW:** Stills.

**VB:** Some stills from the films.

**JE:** Oh.

**VB:** There's one there from *Top Hat*!

**JE:** Oh Yes. Mhmm.

**VB:** And Fred Astaire.

**KW:** I tell you who I used to love was Tyrone Power!

[general assent]

**KW:** Oh, he was my cup of tea, although he was a short fella he was my cup of tea! [laughs]

**PA:** Yes.

**JE:** Another one was Greta Garbo.

[general assent]

**PA:** Gloria Swanson, there was wasn't there?

**JE:** Yes. Gloria Swanson.

**KW:** Oh, yeah.

**VB:** Who else have I got?

**PA:** Lovely woman.

**VB:** I've got one here of Joan Crawford.

**PA:** And Buster Keaton.

**KW:** Joan Crawford, Yeah. I mean there was Roy Rogers.

**PA:** [overtalking]

**JE:** He was a cowboy, wasn't he.

**KW:** Tom Mix.

**PA:** [inaudible].

**KW:** Rita Hayworth, she was lovely.

**PA:** Yes, she was gorgeous.

**KW:** She was lovely. Well, I'll tell you who I used to like, I mean, eh, perhaps it's a bit later, James Cagney!

**PA:** Yes, he was good.

**KW:** He was good.

**PA:** What about films [inaudible; what happened, she was married to [inaudible].

**KW:** I don't know.

**VB:** That'd be great, yeah.

**PA:** [inaudible] wasn't she? Betty Grable, was it?

**KW:** Betty Grable. That's it. Yeah, that's it. There's a song about her now, on.

**PA:** Mhm.

**KW:** Have you heard that?

**VB:** I haven't.

**KW:** Yes, it's a pop song. [sings] Betty Grable! And it's about, eh, youngsters, who've got old now, and they're singing about how much they used to love Betty Grable.

**PA:** On the telly they were. And I said to my husband, I wonder if they're going to show us Betty Grable. During the war, during the war, her and her husband used to entertain. I saw them a lot when they came, they used to go to... My mother used to work in a munitions factory.

**KW:** Oh yes.

**PA:** When the big stars were coming, she used to take my sister and I into the canteen [to watch?]

**KW:** All the stars—

**PA:** Or the big band leaders. Because we were very, fourteen or fifteen [laughs] we liked it. That was the end of the war.

**KW:** We're really and truly, I suppose we're talking about a bit later than what you want, isn't it, really?

**VB:** Mhm. I mean, the sort of thing, certainly people like Cagney, I'm interested in. What was it that attracted you to a star like that, do you think?

**PA:** Well, we don't know! He was a short, fat man.

[all laugh]

**PA:** Certainly we thought he was wonderful. It's the same with Humphrey Bogart.

**KW:** I suppose it's the personality that comes over, really.

[general assent]

**KW:** It's the personality really.

**PA:** When Cagney danced, everybody looked! You thought he was a marvellous dancer. Whether he was, is... [pause 2 seconds] remains to be seen.

**KW:** Because you see, you see, in our age group, and that, we never had that kind of thing did we?

**PA:** When you compare it with the...

**KW:** No, children today will be taken to ballet and go dancing. But we only saw that on the films, didn't we. We didn't know anything different.

**PA:** We were very lucky in that we had a... our mother was very forward-thinking. used to take us to the theatre hundreds of times. To the Shepherd's Bush or the Chiswick Empire.

**KW:** Yeah.

**PA:** I mean all the old stars on the stage. And on Saturday night we would sit round the piano, and my mum would play the piano, we'd all have to 'do a turn' as she used to say. We all did a turn, really, whether we were going to the cinema or not.



[knocking at door; Lynn is brought in]

**KW:** Hello Lynn.

**VB:** Hello, my name's Val.

**KW:** Val Doonican!

**VB:** [laughs] I'm afraid not. Or I'd have given you a song!

[general settling in of Lynn]

**KW:** [passes photo to Lynn] There's a picture of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. A poster that used to go outside the cinema.

**PA:** My aunt used to be an usherette. She worked at the cinema for years. [inaudible; husband?]

**LC:** It's a long time ago since I went to the pictures.

**KW:** Well, this lady's talking, wanting to know about the 1930s.

**VB:** Yeah.

**KW:** She doesn't want to know about the cinema today but the films we used to know in the 1930s.

**PA:** Before the war, sort of.

**LC:** Well, I came to Harrow in 1934, with my mother.

**VB:** Aah.

**LC:** In...

**VB:** Can I ask how old you are, Lynn? What year you were born in?

**LC:** What year was I born in?

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** Nineteen hundred and eleven.

**VB: 1911. That's great. And what was it that brought you to Harrow in the first place? Was it?**

**LC:** Well, we lived in Fulham.

**VB: Yep.**

**LC:** And, eh, Mum had, you know they used to have big three-storey houses and whatnot, and she used to let out a couple of flats. And anyway, then my brother got married--

**VB: Mhmm.**

**LC:** And that left Mum and I at home, on our own.

**VB: I see.**

**LC:** And he said, "Why don't you come down to Harrow?" They were buying a house, Harrow was only just being--

**PA:** Built then. With the railway.

**LC:** Built on. We used to come there years ago to Harrow and Sunbury to the Sunday school outings as it was the country.

**JE:** Really.

**VB: Aah.**

**LC:** Anyway, he got married and bought a house there.

**VB:** Mhm.

**LC:** And then, you know, we were just left on our own, Mother and I, and he said, "Well, why don't you come and live near us?" Which we did. And, erm, I've still got the same house, and so has my sister-in-law, opposite one another.

**VB:** Right.

**LC:** But my son lives in the house now.

**VB:** I see.

**LC:** And I just live round the corner from him, in a bungalow.

**VB:** Yeah. So, so you'll remember the cinemas in Harrow in the thirties?

**LC:** Yes, the Dominion. We used to go to the Dominion, if I remember right, and the Odeon in South Harrow.

**PA:** [inaudible; mentions Cricklewood]

**VB:** 'Cause I did bring along...

**KW:** The one in Rayners Lane?

**LC:** Beg your pardon?

**KW:** Rayners Lane. That one.

**LC:** No, the Odeon in South Harrow, opposite the Sainsburys. It used to be there.

**KW:** Oh. Yeah that's right, that's right.

**LC:** Now it's Tesco's. That's a long while ago.

**PA:** I don't know what they did with the Playhouse [possibly referring to Playhouse Cinema, Greenford]. I think [inaudible] the cinemas. They were very good, somewhere to meet.

**KW:** Oh, yeah.

**VB:** I brought some pictures of the cinemas in Harrow because obviously I didn't know that everyone would come from different places but, erm.

**KW:** No, I wouldn't know Harrow, not in the thirties. No.

**VB:** I mean, I've got some here.

**LC:** I can't see very well.

**VB:** I see.

**LC:** The Odeon.

**PA:** Let me see that one.

**KW:** Yeah, there was an Odeon in South Harrow, that's right.

**VB:** Yeah.

**KW:** Let me see that one, dear.

**PA:** Who's?

**VB:** It's Jessie Matthews, opening the Granada.

**KW:** Oh, 'cause she used to live in Hatch End, Jessie Matthews.

JE: Oh yes.

PA: The Granada at Harrow. [There was the one at Greenford as well?] 1938!

VB: Yeah.

PA: [laughs] I saw Gracie Fields opening the Granada at Greenford. We all went down and saw it.

LC: I don't, living in Harrow I don't know Greenford very well.

**VB: Yeah.**

LC: That's Sunbury, isn't it?

PA: It used to be a real village in those days.

KW: Yeah.

**VB: Yes.**

KW: That's right.

PA: 'Cos my aunties used to live in [inaudible]. We used to walk from Greenford to East? We walked across the fields.

**VB: We were talking about some of the stars before you came in just now, Lynn. And folk like Cagney and, erm.**

PA: Mickey Rooney.

LC: Oh yes, yes.

**VB: I mean, did you have any favourite stars yourself.**

**LC:** Oh dear.

**JE:** Oh I can remember.

**PA:** [inaudible]

**VB: We had a vote for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers as well!**

**JE:** I always used to like... [inaudible] My sisters. There was a story going around.

[overtalking; inaudible]

**LC:** Well, you know what I'm going to say now. To us, then, I think, they were all nice.

**KW:** Yeah.

**JE:** Yes, it's just exactly what I said, you see. And their personalities came over.

[general agreement, "That's right."]

**JE:** That's what I said.

**KW:** Also now, I mean, the films and everything don't do anything for me, whatsoever.

**JE:** I never see a film these days.

**KW:** I know, but I got it on the telly.

[inaudible]

**LC:** But they did used to be lovely, years ago.

**JE:** It was something, it's all going to end happily ever after.

**KW:** Yeah! [laughs]

**JE:** And it was, you know, happiness at the end.

**KW:** It wasn't all this gunning and bashing and.... Even as I was saying to Val, when you used to go to Cowboys and Indians when you were young, they weren't vicious, were they?

[all agree]

**KW:** It was the goodies and the baddies!

**JE:** Oh yes!

**PA:** You never saw the nitty gritty!

**LC:** They're vicious now, compared to what they used to be.

**VB:** 'Cause--

**LC:** Sundays I used to. Mostly Sunday afternoons it was then, you know. We used to go for a walk up, eh, Harrow on the Hill. Up, [pause 2 seconds] round the school, up there. 'Cause I lived down the bottom of the hill, just close to it. So we used to have a walk up there and, see all the boys out in their tailcoats and their straw [yard?] hats. And we used to laugh because, you know, how can I say? Well, boys will be boys. They got right tatty some of them, and I think, their suits, some of them still do, but I've not been up there for years.

**VB:** Mhm.

**LC:** But they used to have their straw boaters on, you know. And all the edges were nibbled as though the nanny goat had had it!

[all laugh]

**LC:** And their trousers, you know, were all in tatters round the bottoms but, that's where we used to go Sunday afternoons for a walk. Up the hill, up round the, the--

**PA:** But could you have gone to the cinema on the Sunday?

**KW:** No, the cinemas weren't open on a Sunday.

**PA:** In any case, my mother wouldn't have allowed it.

**LC:** And it was nine, ninepence in the afternoon. [laughs] I used to go to the afternoon, not in Harrow, when I was in Wembley, and I was home, and my husband was at work all day. But sometimes in the afternoon I'd go along to the pictures. Ninepence!

**KW:** I can remember as kids it was sixpence!

**JE:** What was it they used to call it

**KW:** A tanner.

**JE:** No, I know that. But what did you used to call a Saturday morning cinema?

**PA:** Matinee.

**JE:** No, no, no. There was a, yes we used to go to the, where we were, I mean I know we used to call it the flicks, we're going to the flicks.

[all: Yeah]

**JE:** But there was something, there was a name for the tuppenny rush or something, I don't know.

[no one has heard of that]

**JE:** I mean it wasn't that but.



[inaudible]

**VB:** Actually, something I was wanting to ask you about was. I'd heard that some of the cinemas ran a cinema bus. I think it was, there was one in Harrow, I know, the Cosy, was it, on the hill, that had a cinema bus?

**LC:** That I don't know. I know there was something up, no, I don't know anything about that.

**VB:** Yeah, yeah. I just wondered if that was something--

**LC:** No, no.

**VB:** You'd come across.

**KW:** No.

**VB:** 'Cause I...

**LC:** I have heard of it, but I didn't actually... a bus that used to pick up. The Cosy bus.

[inaudible: all talking at once]

**KW:** Are you doing a... What are you doing your project for, Val?

**VB:** Well, I work at Glasgow University.

**KW:** Yeah.

**VB:** And we're doing this project over two years.

**KW:** I see.

**VB:** And we're talking to people in various places, in Harrow, in Glasgow, East Anglia and Manchester.

[all: yes]

**VB:** And the idea is, at the end of it, we'll have an idea of things like if there were particular stars popular in different places--

**KW:** Places, yeah.

**VB:** Or different types of films were--

**KW:** Films, yes. Well. I've just thought. [inaudible] Gary Cooper, Gregory Peck. And they were all very charming.

**JE:** With Sonja Henie.

**KW:** The ice skater, the ice skater, Yeah. She was lovely.

**PA:** [inaudible].

**KW:** And I mean.

**LC:** Do you know, although he was a WEG[?], I used to like Robert Mitchum.

**KW:** Did you know that? How do you know that, dear?

**PA:** Yes, he was very hunky, wasn't he?

[all: Yes]

**LC:** There were so many, and they were all handsome.

**PA:** They were good.

**LC:** Cagney. They were all nice and tall and charming, so it was a bit difficult to pick out a favourite, really.

**PA:** Roy Rogers. What was the other one?

**KW:** Tom Mix.

**PA:** There was another one as well. [pause 3 seconds] That used to wear all the cowboy clothes in the films. Gene Autry.

**KW:** Gene Autry, yes.

**VB:** 'Cause I was thinking, I've heard of erm, Hoot Gibson was another one.

**LC:** Oh that was before our time! [all laugh] That was in the silent days!

**VB:** I mean what about the comedians as well. I mean, there were some good--

[all: oh yes!]

**PA:** [inaudible] I wasn't very keen on that sort of thing.

**KW:** Well, when you're talking about comedians, are you taking about somebody like, erm...

**JE:** Charlie Chaplin.

[all: oh yes]

**KW:** What was the other one I used to really like. Budd Abbott, Lou Costello.

**LC:** Yeah.

**KW:** They were a lovely pair.

**VB: I mean, I've got one here of Laurel and Hardy.**

[all: Yes]

**JE: That was the one I was trying to think of, dear.**

**LC: I mean, if they were on I used to go in the afternoon with my mum. We used to make a beeline if they were on, you know. They were a laugh!**

**VB: Yes. So I mean, did, did you go quite often with your mothers, or--**

**LC: I used to go everywhere with my mother. The two of us, we used to trot out, do you know the cattle bridge in Harrow? South Harrow? West Harrow.**

**VB: I think I know where you are.**

**LC: Do you know the cattle bridge, by West Harrow Park?**

**VB: Right.**

**LC: Well, it used to be all cobbles, you know. So Mum and I used to, it was usually I think Wednesday afternoons. We used to trot over there, through the Embassy, which was just round the corner.**

**JE: Alexander Avenue?**

**LC: Yes. Alexander Avenue, North Harrow.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC: Imperial Drive, I think.**

**JE: Yes.**

**LC:** North Harrow, we used to go there. And, eh, so we used to do that trot over there. In the evenings, of course, you used to go with my husband, if we went at all then.

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** To, you know, the Harrow ones.

**VB: Yes.**

**LC:** The Granada and the other ones. Yeah.

**VB: What were they like, inside? Say the Granada.**

**LC:** They were nice.

**JE:** Really lovely.

**PA:** They were plush seats, lovely carpets.

**KW:** And you always got your usherettes. Taking you down to your seats with the torch.

**PA:** And they'd come out halfway with cigarettes, chocolates.

**KW:** And there was never. I'll tell you what I noticed today, the difference, there was never steps to go down. Were there?

**PA:** No.

**KW:** There was always a slope.

**JE:** That's right.

**KW:** A gradual slope.

**JE:** Yes.

**KW:** And so therefore you, you were never actually, the person's head in front of you never got.

[all: no, no]

**KW:** Around you. But today, when you're disabled, you notice a lot of places've got steps, haven't they, you know.

**PA:** You can't get in.

**KW:** No.

**PA:** [inaudible; overtalking; dinner dance, with a restaurant]

**KW:** But you see with the Granada (not that I've been there in years) but with the Granada in Harrow, whereas there used to be one cinema, a Circle and downstairs, they've divided it up now into three cinemas and it's [pause 2 seconds] and it's, well, how can I say, it's not the same is it..

**PA:** Some of them do, some of them don't.

[general assent]

**KW:** Years ago, a long while ago. And they were were a lot sort of cramped and small.

**PA:** [inaudible] High Wycombe [inaudible].

**LC:** And there always used to seem to be the Manager standing in the foyer--

[general: yes, that's right]

**LC:** With his dress suit on, yes.

**PA:** They were the ones, the managers, that used to watch us. If you saw the manager you'd never say anything in case you'd get chucked out.

**KW:** The organ used to come up, you know, and that was nice.

**PA:** The organ, yes.

**VB:** I've got one here of the Dominion in Harrow.

**KW:** Have you dear?

**VB:** Did you mention that a minute ago?

**KW:** Yeah, we did, we did.

[all: yes]

**KW:** 'Cause they have Bingo there now, don't they.

**LC:** Mhm, mhm.

**VB:** It's not a very good photo I'm afraid. It's been blown up a bit.

[general: no, no]

**KW:** No, it used to be very nice because it was just one.

**PA:** I've been there one or two times.

**KW:** That was a very large cinema that was, the Dominion, wasn't it? Very large.

**PA:** Yes, there was a lot of Dominions there was, wasn't there?

**LC:** We used to come out, you know, if you went in the second house, in the evening, you came out about eleven. At least we could walk home in peace. Even if you couldn't get a bus you could walk home.

**PA:** You could buy the [inaudible].

**KW:** You didn't need to be afraid or anything.

**VB:** Yeah.

**PA:** I think the television is half the trouble. It puts things in people's minds. They know, it's a nasty thing to do.

**VB:** I was interested when you were saying that about the sort of stories then were different to--

**PA:** Yes, you see were different.

**VB:** To the films you get now.

**KW:** It was a better thing, in those days, Val, the way I look at it, it was about love.

**PA:** I was going to say lovey dovey.

**KW:** Nothing about sex. I mean even in school now, it's all sex.

**PA:** You'd never see the man, just haze over the top. You never saw anything. Now, I mean, there's all couples, I mean, six times out of ten there's explicit sex on. And it upsets my husband. He thinks that's all I watch.

[all laugh]

**PA:** In five seconds, you know, I turn it off and on. "No problems" at all, it's horrible. And he says, "It's all rubbish." [inaudible] And I say, "Well, it's only six, and they do do it at the wrong time, six or seven o' clock at night."



**VB: Mhm.**

**PA:** You can turn the telly off at night if you know it's going to be there, if you've got children, and if it comes to that you don't know what to do.

**VB: Yeah. I mean, how often did you go to the cinema in the thirties?**

**PA:** Well, I went at least once a week.

**VB: Yeah.**

**KW:** We used to go once a week.

**LC:** Once or twice.

**KW:** Yes, once or twice.

**LC:** Me, I used to go Wednesday afternoon and a Tuesday night.

**PA:** You had the life when you listened to things on the wireless, didn't you.

**KW:** We used to.

**KW:** To be quite honest I didn't go that much. I know I went on the Saturday.

**JE:** I don't remember going on a Saturday.

**KW:** On the Saturday morning I used to go to the cinema.

**PA:** Yes. And my auntie.

**KW:** Well, it was cheaper you see. Eh, but eh, it was only when I was older.

**PA:** Yeah, that's right.

**KW:** In my twenties, in which wouldn't be in the thirties then, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**KW:** That you.

**LC:** Yeah. But do you remember now the theatres, even in Harrow, like the Dominion and that, were so large and during the intervals in the films that they used to play an organ. That came up, you know and eight seconds later, the organ. But, apart from that, they used to have, sometimes they used to have an orchestra there, you wouldn't remember. Geraldo, and well they were on and they were marvellous. A lovely orchestra.

**PA:** Well they used to have contests, didn't they? Talent contests.

**LC:** Yes, but you see you've got that in between.

**VB: So there was a lot more going on than just the film?**

[general: Oh yes, there was]

**KW:** And then they involved you in things, in the cinema.

**LC:** The cinema orchestra, it was nice.

**VB: I'd heard that one or two of the cinemas had, erm, tea dances in them.**

**KW:** Oh yes!

**VB: Is that right?**

**KW:** Oh yes, yes, yes. They used to be lovely, the tea dances. Lovely.

**VB: Which cinemas had that? Because I'd heard generally about it but--**

**LC:** I couldn't tell you about it. I never went to those.

**PA:** They really was in London much, I think. [Camberwell Green was one, I think].

**KW:** I think there was one in Tottenham Court Road I used to go to, tea dances. [possibly referring to Dominion, Tottenham Court Road]

**LC:** No, I never.

**KW:** I can't remember them. Now isn't that strange, yet I can remember tea dances.

**PA:** Yes, I can remember them.

**VB: Were there places that you could go dancing in Harrow itself?**

**KW:** Not to my knowledge but well, there was, I mean let's face it, there wasn't very many places left now, now there was a dancing school--

**PA:** A lot of people [inaudible].

**KW:** In Station Road.

**VB: Yeah.**

**KW:** That's been there years, that dancing school.

**LC:** I don't know that one, I used to go to a dancing school but that was Knightsbridge I went.

**KW:** [St Ann's?] Road.

**JE:** I wasn't living in Harrow at that time, so.

**LC:** No I never went to that.

**PA:** Then of course there was the Hammersmith Palais.

**KW:** That's it, that's where I used to go to a lot, the Hammersmith Palais.

**VB:** **Yeah, so that was one of the main places to go, was it?**

**LC:** Yes it was.

**KW:** The Hammersmith Palais. And it had all the big orchestras there, Ted Heath.

**PA:** All part of the form.

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**KW:** You know, at the Hammersmith Palais. Oh it was lovely.

**VB:** **'Cause I was going to ask as well, did you do much courting in the cinemas? 'Cause I mean you mentioned going with your husband and--**

**PA:** Yes, that's where you always went, wasn't it. I remember going the first day I ever went anywhere with my husband. We went to the cinema.

**LC:** When you see do much courting it all depends, you know, if you were looking for boyfriends. I mean, I went out with my husband when I was sixteen. Then I was stuck with married life!

[all laugh]

**LC:** Yes, but so girls used to.

[all agree with "yes" "that's right"]

**VB:** Was it somewhere you used to go for a date, with your husband?

**LC:** Yes.

**KW:** Oh yes.

**LC:** Yes, definitely.

**KW:** Yes. Yes.

**LC:** I mean that's going back a bit now.

**JE:** Well, there wasn't much to do in these days when you were courting and yet there wasn't the...

**KW:** There wasn't the trouble, was there? No.

**JE:** That's right.

**PA:** We used to go and sit and eat in the ice cream parlour. We'd go in there and buy a milk shake and one thing and another and that would be the evening. Nothing going on.

**KW:** They talk about McDonalds. Now. We used to go to Lyons Corner Houses.

**PA:** 'Course, yes.

**JE:** And Lyons teashops, they used to be where you used to meet people.

**PA:** And that's where you used to have gone into if you were really rich you had a banana thing in a...

**KW:** Banana split!

[all laugh]

**LC:** Well, until these McDonalds came along, and what have you, eh, there wasn't anything cause as Kathy said, or I, we used to go uptown to a Lyons Corner House and places like that. All nicely done, wasn't it, waitress served, and, you know, you'd feel on top of the world.

**PA:** It was a night out.

**LC:** You got nothing thrown at you.

**VB:** Yeah.

**LC:** No, you you really did.

**VB:** So it was a real afternoon's entertainment almost.

**LC:** Yes, Yes.

[all agree]

**KW:** And they had these nippies [waitresses].

**LC:** And they dressed nice, you know, in the caps and the white aprons.

**KW:** And to us that was an absolutely, it was the **bee's** knees.

[all: yes]

**KW:** I mean, it seems a shame. I think the whole trouble is, Val, today, that parents and grandparents say, "We didn't have it, we'll give it to the children. We'll give them what we haven't had." Instead of, 'cause I think now, I mean, thanks be to God, and I know this is nothing to do with cinema and I probably shouldn't be saying it, but thanks be to God today I don't have to know where my next penny is coming from 'cause I've got a regular pension coming in.

**LC:** Mhm.

**KW:** But in those days, I'm glad that I was born, and I never had it when I was young, so I know that, the best part it is, it must be worse to have had it and lose it--

**PA:** But, eh.

**KW:** Than have not had and then--

**PA:** We were really poor.

**KW:** I mean I can't remember paying elevenpence three farthings for a pair of stockings to go out to the cinema or a dance.

**PA:** Yes. That's right.

**LC:** True.

**KW:** On a Saturday night, and you'd wonder where it was coming from, wouldn't you!

**PA:** Yes.

**KW:** That money. If you did pay for it.

**PA:** My mother ran off about ten o'clock to buy me [inaudible] to get rid of it.

**VB:** Would you mind, could I ask a couple of questions about yourselves, just so that I get an idea of, I mean, your backgrounds?

[general assent]

**VB:** Erm, one thing I wanted to ask was, how old you all were when you left school.

**KW:** I was fourteen.

**LC:** Fourteen.

**JE:** Sixteen.

**PA:** I was eighteen.

**KW:** Oh bighead!

[all laugh]

**KW:** She had the money to go to school.

**JE:** No, we didn't have the money.

**VB:** And can I ask what your first jobs were?

**KW:** I was a nursemaid.

**PA:** Civil servant.

**JE:** A shorthand typist.

**VB:** Ah.

**PA:** Civil servant I was.

**VB:** What about you, yourself?

**LC:** And I was a, I was a cashier in the Scotch House, Knightsbridge.

**VB:** That's great. So was that why you went to the dance school in Knightsbridge because it was...?



**LC:** No, no, no, not really. Eh. How did I come to go there? I know I used to go there to meet a chap. Knightsbridge School of Dancing, that was very nice but I don't, I can't remember which chap, it wasn't my husband.

**PA:** Ho ho!

**LC:** It must've been one in between, you know?

**VB:** And have you all been married, or are married or?

**LC:** Yes. [all yes]

**VB:** That's great. Yeah, that was all I really wanted to ask, as I say, just to get a brief idea...

**PA:** Where did you meet your husband?

**LC:** Where did I meet him? I went, I was with a girlfriend and we just went to a little, like a nightclub really and it was.

**KW:** And you're still going to it!

[all laugh]

**KW:** Yes, yes.

**LC:** I wish I was.

**KW:** No we go to the Harrow Social Club on a Monday night, that's why I say.

**LC:** And, erm, I went with this girlfriend, this was to a little, I think it was a Conservative club, not that I'm politically minded but I think it was and eh, a young man came up to me and we had a dance and the next week he came with my husband that became, another young man.

**KW:** [laughs]

**LC:** And it turned out that one said to my husband, "Oh, I've met two nice girls at the club," so of course my husband thought well he'd come and have a look too. So he came and had a look and a dance--

[all laugh]

**LC:** And that was it. Yes, it was nice.

**PA:** I met my husband at work. I'd just [inaudible] but you see feel, he and I used to play table tennis. [inaudible]. He and I used to play table tennis in the club.

**JE: [inaudible; Conservative]** My father was a secretary of the Labour party and my husband used to come.

**PA:** Funnily enough, my husband came from [inaudible place name; jinaudible], Met him them. [inaudible].

**VB: The other thing I was, you reminded me, erm, have you, I know you lived in Fulham and then in Harrow, did you live in Harrow right through from 1934 then, or have you ever lived anywhere else?**

**LC:** Right, well I'd only been married for eighteen months and my husband had a, he worked on the railways you see.

**VB: Yes.**

**LC:** And eh, they asked him or sent him--

**VB: Mhm.**

**LC:** To Derbyshire, supposedly for a week, on a special job.

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** He actually, well, helped a Professor somebody--

**VB: Mhm.**

**LC:** To make the diesels, when they started making the diesels.

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** Anyway, he went up there for a week, but that week went on for nearly ten years.

**VB: Ah.**

**LC:** And I was living here, he was living there, and I used to go up, you know, for weeks on end and stay with him--

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** In his lodgings, and then eventually we managed to get a house.

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** I didn't like it, for the simple reason was that, you see, he was at work almost seven days a week, and I was plonked in another house, and I didn't know anybody around me.

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** But eventually we managed to get back, oh I was grateful, to get back to Harrow, and, erm, [pause 2 seconds] where did we come to? Oh yes, we came back to Harrow, to Wembley at first--

**VB: Right.**

**LC:** Through the railway, they managed to get us a house. And then we pushed on then back to Harrow.

**PA:** [inaudible]

**VB:** So you were really dotting around.

**LC:** Yes, really, Harrow was my...

**PA:** Was that the [inaudible].

**LC:** No, the London Midland Scottish big trains. The big trains. The big trains, yes.

**VB:** Can I ask the same question to everyone else? I mean, how about you Kathy?

**KW:** I've lived in Harrow since 1950. And God knows, you'd need a [screed?] as long as this wall to know where I've lived.

**VB:** Right. [laughs]

**KW:** 'Cause I've lived all over London. I really have.

**JE:** I came to, I didn't come to Harrow. I came to Greenford when I was first married, and when my father lost his sight, we moved into Harrow then. I can't remember what the year was.

**VB:** I see.

**JE:** About 1950.

**VB:** About 1950 as well.

**KW:** [inaudible; laughter].

**JE:** That's why I said I didn't want to move.

[laughter]

**JE:** [inaudible; school] Elephant and Castle. [Miner Road?] That's right. That was the school I used to go to.

**VB: How about yourself?**

**PA:** I came from Uxbridge. 1960. 25 years I've been in [inaudible].

**KW:** Have you?

**PA:** Yeah. Had a [shop?] before that; there for four years.

**VB: I see.**

**PA:** Well, we came from Greenford [inaudible]. My sister was born in that house [inaudible]. My husband and I [inaudible]. My mother died [inaudible].

**VB: It's been very interesting for me to hear about your different...**

**LC:** It feels as if we've not been able to contribute.

**VB: Aw!**

**LC:** I don't know if I've done sufficient to help you, you know?

**VB: Well it's been a...**

**LC:** 'Cause your memory goes.

**PA:** What we've done.

**JE:** It's amazing really.

**VB: It is interesting, yeah.**

**JE:** You'd have thought you'd get a cross-section but you've got [WALFORD?] and very...

**VB: Yeah.**

**LC:** Well, it was like where my son lives, in the same house I was living with my mother. We went there in 1934 and I was married in '36 but then it was only, it was all fields all around. Well, we used to take the dog over the hill for, you know, a run, until the area, gradually they built more houses and built it up and, of course it's nothing like it was.

**VB: It's changed. Yeah.**

**KW:** It's the same everything. Where we lived in [Chingford?], it was a forest, you know--

**LC:** That's right.

**KW:** And then you go back, like everywhere you go back to it's like...

**PA:** [inaudible].

**KW:** Are you going now to somewhere else, to do a bit more?

**VB: Yes, I'm away back into the centre of town just now.**

**KW:** Are you dear, yes.

**VB: Yeah. Erm, but as I say, I've really appreciated you...**

[all break in with thanks]

**KW:** It's been a nice change, dear.

**VB: I do sometimes, yeah.**

[P did a project with her children, when she got a her degree as an interior designer, and did a project on the past 100 years.

**VB: I see.**

[End of Side B]

[End of Interview]