

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.

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* Fakenham, Norfolk, 24 October 1995: Valentina Bold interviews clients of Cranmer House

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn and Julia McDowell

* JS=Jack Smith, RS=Rose Smith, FB=Fred Barnes, BE=Bert, CA=Carer, VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: First interview of one with four Cranmer House clients; Sound Quality: Fair; this interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; the original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection - please contact Lancaster University Library for details.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

VB: Erm, I was just asking one or two questions about, erm, everyone before we got started.

RS: Yes.

VB: Talking about cinema. Erm, can I ask you, how old were you, roughly, the first time you ever went to a cinema?

FB: Oh I don't know. I used to go a lot to the music halls.

VB: Ah, I see.

[sound of paper rustling]

VB: So you went to the music hall a lot?

FB: [nods]

VB: **That's interesting.**

[pause 2 seconds; papers rustling]

VB: **Erm, can I ask everyone where, where were you born? Are, are you from Fakenham yourself?**

JS: Who, us?

VB: **Were you born in Fakenham?**

[pause 3 seconds]

[all laugh gently]

CA: Where were you born, Fred?

FB: Oh, I don't know!

[all laugh]

CA: Was it in Norfolk?

FB: I couldn't tell you! Couldn't tell you.

CA: You don't know?

FB: No.

VB: **Right. Erm, have you, have you lived here most of your life?**

FB: No, most of my life, anyway.

VB: **That's great. And, have you both lived in Fakenham most of your life?**

JS: Naw, I've lived in Fakenham only a year but eh--

VB: Ah.

JS: But I was, eh, born in Wighton, That's where I spent most of my life.

VB: H-how do you spell that?

JS: W-I-G-H-T-O-N.

VB: [writing down] And were you--

RS: I was born in Monmouthshire.

VB: Ah, I see. Okay. [pause 2 seconds]

[BE coming into room]

CA: You can come and sit with us.

VB: And when did you come to this area?

JS: Who, Rose?

VB: When did you come to--

CA: [separate conversation] The cinema.

JS: When she met me really! [laughs]

VB: Ah, I see.

BE: Not much.

CA: Well we're talking about a long time ago.

BE: About forty years when I didn't turn down the lights.

CA: Yeah, you come and sit down.

VB: That'd be great.

CA: This is Val.

VB: Hi.

CA: Hallo Val!

VB: Hi.

CA: This is Bert. Bertie!

JS: Hello there.

BE: Hello Jack!

[general laughing]

BE: Hallo!

VB: We're just erm talking a bit about cinema in the 1930s.

BE: Oh yeah.

VB: Aye.

BE: Haymarket. The, eh, Odeon, the theatre, mhm, whatever d'you call it?

FB: What, in Norwich?

BE: Yeah.

FB: Ooh that was the--

BE: The Electric.

JS: The Electric Theatre, they [joined?] one another.

VB: Ah.

BE: And then there was another one at the corner what got bombed [referring to Empire Cinema]. I don't know I recall it know, but it was the one where you paid a penny to go and see a [waller?].

VB: Were, are you a Norwich man yourself? Were you--

BE: Yep.

VB: I see.

VB: Can I ask what year you were born in?

BE: Pardon?

VB: Can I ask what year you were born in?

BE: What year I was born in. [pause 2 seconds] '21.

VB: 1921, that's great. The other thing I wanted to ask, erm, everyone, was how old you were when you left school?

JS: Fourteen.

VB: Right. Were you fourteen yourself?

RS: Fifteen.

VB: Fifteen, that's great.

VB: Erm.

CA: Fred, how old were you when you left school?

FB: Fourteen.

CA: Fourteen.

VB: That's great. And can I ask everyone, again, what your first job was?

FB: Worked on a farm.

VB: That's great.

RS: My first job was, I was waiting to go nursing, but I couldn't go till I was nineteen so I went as a nanny.

VB: Ah, I see! That's interesting.

CA: What was your first job?

JS: Grocery trade.

VB: That's great.

JS: Thirty-four year.

VB: [writing] Right.

JS: [inaudible].

VB : [laughs] And how about yourself? What was your—

BE: Barnetts [inaudible].

VB: That's great.

BE: Engineer.

VB: Okay, so that's—

BE: I don't know how to [inaudible].

CA: [laughs]

VB: That's great, so that was all I really wanted to ask just to get a bit of an idea about, erm, about yourselves. I mean, how often did you go to the cinema in the thirties?

RS: I didn't.

VB: You didn't?

RS: No!

VB: Ah! [pause 1 second] Can I, can I...

JS: Well on an average, in the wintertime I used to go, but in the summertime 'cause I was in Norwich, I was a lot in Norwich, I suppose I went once a month.

VB: About once a month. Erm.

CA: How often did you used to go to the cinema, Fred?

FB: Oh, I couldn't tell you, I used to go to the music hall more, all over the country.

VB: Yeah.

CA: But you didn't go to the cinema very often?

FB: No. Been to the stage door all over the country. Scotland. [pause 2 seconds] And, erm, Y-Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire.

CA: Mhm.

FB: Hampshire, Kent... [pause 1 second]

VB: Mhm.

FB: T, eh Severn.

CA: What about Bert?

BE: I'm just trying to think, when I was young, ah.

FB: Devonshire, Norfolk.

BE: I would say I went once every two months, then during the blackout that was about twice.

VB: Mhm.

BE: I...

VB: So not, not very regularly.

BE: No.

VB: Yeah. [pause 1 second] And you were saying you didn't go at all! Can I, can I ask why that was?

RS: Sorry?

VB: Why was it that you didn't go to the cinema? Just--

RS: Well because in the first place we were miles from anywhere--

VB: Ah, I see, yeah.

RS: And there wasn't a cinema.

VB: Yeah. So it just wasn't something that was a, a possibility.

RS: [shakes head to indicate 'No']

VB: Yeah. Yeah. When was the first time you went to one?

RS: In Wells [referring throughout to Wells next the Sea], I suppose.

VB: Mhm.

RS: We would.

JS: What?

RS: In Wells, I went to one.

JS: We went to Fakenham to see *Mandy*, I remember that. [pause 1 second] Can you remember *Mandy*?

CA: [laughs]

JS: The deaf-and-dumb child? The picture?

CA: No. [laughing]

JS: That deaf-and-dumb child.

CA: When was that?

JS: [pause 1 second] Oh, forty years ago.

CA: [laughing] Thank you very much Jack!

[all laugh]

BE: When I was down in London, there.

JS: Well I'm sorry, you've deceiving looks!

[all laugh uproariously]

BE: When was that, erm, miles, we'd go and see.

JS: Well you'd go a lot, a lot further to find out a Charlie Chaplin.

VB: Ah.

BE: Sh, Shirley Temple, Shirley Temple.

JS: Shirley Temple.

BE: That's right, Shirley Temple and erm--

VB: [coughs]

BE: Some other.

JS: Eh, Charlie Chaplin and old Jackie Coogan was with him [referring to *The Kid*].

VB: Ah.

JS: I seen Jackie Coogan at Wembley Exhibition in 1924.

VB: Ah really?

JS: [nods]

VB: That's interesting.

VB: 'Cause I, I mean I brought some, some pictures of some of the stars to see if any of your favourites would be in them. Eh, I'm afraid I haven't got Charlie Chaplin but!

BE: Oh now!

[all laughing]

VB: Laurel and Hardy!

JS: Yeah! [laughing]

VB: Eh, did you like them?

BE: Well, I suppose so, certainly in young times I used to like them, but I don't like them on the TV. Not now.

VB: Yeah.

JS: [laugh]

CA: Did you see them at the cinema though, Jack?

JS: Pardon?

CA: Did you see them at the cinema.

JS: Yes, yes. Oh yes.

CA: Did you like them then?

JS: Yeah. But I didn't in... Jackie Coogan, I told you about that. And also I'm trying to think now, that the George Arliss what I told you in them days, he had a boy with him sometimes, didn't he? [pause 1 second] I can't think of the boy's name.

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: 'Cause you mentioned Cicely Courtneidge as well.

JS: Oh yes, oh yes, she was marvellous. Her and her husband--

VB: Yeah.

JS: Jack Hulbert. [pause 1 second]

VB: Yeah.

BE: Deanna Durbin.

VB: Ah! I've got one of her as well.

JS: Who?

VB: Deanna Durbin.

BE: Deanna Durbin.

JS: Ooh, Deanna, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

BE: A Hundred Men and One Girl [referring to *One Hundred Men and a Girl*]

VB: Yeah.

BE: Or something.

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: 'Cause I just saw that, erm.

BE: But she didn't last long though, did she.

VB: No, she didn't.

BE: Nohh.

VB: Wh, what was it about Deanna Durbin that, that you liked?

[pause 2 seconds]

CA: [laughs]

BE: Well she was attractive, weren't she. Very attractive and a nice singer. [pause 2 seconds] Yeah.

VB: Thanks.

JS: Well you could [inaudible] Mae West. She used to be on at the cinema in them days but erm.

[pause 1 second] Gracie Fields.

VB: Ah.

RS: Oh Gracie Fields, she was wonderful.

VB: Yeah. What was it about Gracie Fields that, that you liked?

JS: Well the personality, because for myself, I would say she was not a wonderful singer, but she had the personality to put over, put it over.

VB: I see.

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: I mean, well yes because, I meant, eh, her type of song was sort of, erm, [pause 1 second] it would suit nearly everybody, didn't it?

JS: Yes.

BE: That's. I meant the great, 'Greatest Aspidistra in the World' [referring to 'The Biggest Aspidistra in the World'] and [pause 1 second] we used to be listening to that on the wireless what was made up of a margarine box and eh... [laughing]

VB: Aye.

BE: But.

JS: St, I liked Stanley Lupino, Lupino, or whatever you called it, he was good. He was comedy films he was.

VB: Mhm. Was, I mean it sounds from what you're saying as if the comedies and the musicals were--

JS: Yeah.

VB: Films that you enjoyed.

BE: And what was that, Kay Hardy family? Does anybody know them? Kay Hardy, a family? That was, oh he's still alive. Eh, he used to [pause 1 second] pick up a girl.

VB: Not, not Mickey Rooney? Not the Andy Hardy?

BE: That's right, Mickey Rooney.

VB: Yeah.

BE: That's right.

VB: Yeah.

BE: And eh, [pause 1 second] what's the other one? [pause 1 second]

JS: {whispering to RS; inaudible}

BE: Oh, I forget now. [pause 1 second] Used to follow them but erm, because eh, they were your, your idols round then really, about that time.

[pause 1 second]

VB: Were there other, say, stars in the musicals that, that you particularly liked?

[pause 2 seconds]

JS: Pardon?

VB: Were there other stars in the musicals that you particularly liked, I mean.

JS: Well I was like Fred really, I used to, when I used to go to Norwich, I used to go to the Hippodrome more times than I did to the pictures.

VB: Mhm.

BE: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

JS: Gin...

VB: Ah. I've got one here from *Top Hat*. I don't know if that was a--

BE: Oh yes.

VB: Yeah.

BE: I liked that, they were the in things in them days.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Ooh, who was that with them horn-rimmed glasses?

[pause 1 second]

JS: Harold Lloyd?

VB: Aah.

BE: Yeah.

[pause 2 seconds]

JS: [whispering to RS] Harold Lloyd.

RS: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

JS: Ooh yeah.

RS: And Irving Berlin.

JS: Oh we ain't going back as far as those! Long term memory! [laughs]

BE: No we're going back farther than that Jack!

[all laugh]

JS: [laughing] Oh yes!

VB: [laughs]

BE: You're going back farther than I can remember!

VB: What about the sort of Jeanette Macdonald and Maurice Chevalier, people like that, did you--

CA: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

BE: [No, they were no use to me?].

CA: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

FB: What's that?

BE: [inaudible] And on those rare occasions you went to the cinema...

[inaudible: overtalking]

JS: With her ginger hair, red hair--

CA: Yes. [laughing]

JS: She used to be [pause 3 seconds; inaudible].

BE: Shirley Temple on the other side of that.

JS: Do you remember her?

BE: Just before the war, wasn't she?

CA: Yeah.

VB: **That's right. Erm.**

BE: Do that on 'The Good Ship Lollipop' [referring to *Bright Eyes*].

VB: **I think I had one of her, actually, here as well but I can't, [laughing] I can't put my hand on it just now.**

VB: **Erm, I mean what was it about Shirley Temple that you, that you liked?**

JS: Her personality again more than anything.

BE: Personality and then that nasty girl.

JS: Yeah.

VB: Ah.

BE: The one that always used to be nasty to her, then she was quite a character.

JS: We had them talking about them, you've never seen Will Fyffe have you?

BE: Will Fyffe?

VB: Mhm.

JS: Heard of Fyffe?

BE: No, I don't think I seen him on the screen, I seen him on the...

JS: 'End of the Road', did you see that? [referring to the song 'Keep Right On to the End of the Road' by Harry Lauder?]

FB: I seen him on the telly.

JS: Julie Andrews, 'course that was a lot later.

VB: Mhm.

FB: [Did he say Julie Andrews?].

JS: You know how she's [inaudible].

BE: Pardon?

JS: Julie Andrews.

[pause 1 second]

JS: They had a show on, somewhere, and this little girl was so, not dressed up smart, was in the front seats. [pause 1 second] Well, eh, during, well whatever they was doing on the stage, she jumped up and ran up on to the stage and started singing and dancing and, do you know, 'cause

that's when she got took off, but they already knew, you see, but the man who organised it, he didn't tell her nothing, you see but he knew this girl was going to do it, you see? And that was, erm.

RS: Was that Shirley Temple?

[pause 1 second]

JS: Yes, Shirley Temple was the young girl.

VB: Yeah.

JS: [Judy] Garland. [pause 1 second]

VB: What about the, the gangster films? Did you, did you like?

BE: Gangster films, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Oh, we used to go to see some of them, sometimes.

VB: I mean I've got...

JS: But erm, Trigger.

VB: I've got, yeah.

BE: Ahh! Now, I can't put a name to him but I know him.

[pause 1 second]

JS: {whispering to himself: inaudible} What was that man who had the horse Trigger?

[pause 1 second]

VB: Oh Roy, Roy Rogers?

JS: Oh Roy Rogers.

VB: Yeah.

BE: He says, "This is for your birthday," and he got a whole group of crooks lined up and got up the machine gun and [imitates noise] eh-eh-eh-eh-eh-eh.

CA: [laughs]

BE: Oh, what the heck was that?

[pause 1 second]

BE: And then 'cause there was a lot of cowboy films, and these ones.

VB: We're just saying about Roy Rogers and--

BE: Yeah.

VB: I mean Tom Mix and people.

JS: Tom Mix, yes.

BE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 1 second]

BE: And do you know that gentleman? [indicating photograph]

FB: I can't see.

CA: Jack can't see.

BE: Oh of course not, Jack, I'm sorry.

JS: I can't.

BE: Do you know that gentleman? He's a gangster.

RS: He's a dancer?

BE: Can't recall the name now.

VB: Is, it's Edward G. Robinson, I think.

BE: I couldn't tell you.

VB: Yeah.

BE: I honestly can't remember. Not now.

VB: Yeah.

RS: Well I don't know who it is.

JS: I can't, I can't.

VB: Did you not enjoy that sort of film though?

RS: Sorry?

VB: Did you like that sort of film? The gangsters, the James Cagney, the...

BE: Not a lot.

VB: Mhm.

BE: Not a lot.

JS: [whispering to RS inaudible]

RS: Who is it?

VB: Ed, Edward G. Robinson.

JS: That is Edward G. Robinson, isn't it?

VB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

JS: Particularly when they got a bit older, 'cause that was James Mason was the main one on the film front.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] Did you like the sort of adventure films, the Robin Hood and Errol Flynn and...

JS: I can't r--, I dare say we did, you know. We were only in the pictures when we had nowhere else to go!

VB: Yeah.

BE: Who was that in, eh, *Gone with the Wind*.

JS: [inaudible; whispering to RS]

VB: Was it Cl, Clark Gable? Or?

BE: No, a lady, 'course that would be.

VB: Yeah. [laughs]

CA: Yeah.

BE: Uh.

CA: [laughs]

[pause 3 seconds]

BE: Ooh, it'll come to me.

VB: V, Vivien Leigh or? [pause 1 second] Olivia de Havilland? [pause 1 second]

BE: No, no, no, no, no it's a simpler name than that, or a stage name was something. Uh. [pause 1 second] Not Judy Garland, or.

JS: But I don't think that Elsie and Doris Waters done films, did they? Gert and Daisy [referring to Gert and Daisy Walters], I don't think that, they just done music hall and that. More than that.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Yeah, they were mostly on, eh, wireless or television, weren't they.

VB: I mean, I'm very interested by what you're saying about cinema not being a huge interest. I mean were, what sort of other things did you do for entertainment?

BE: A, a, a top and a pram wheel with a bit of wire stuck through, ran miles with it, tip tap, eh, eh, come up on you and throw a dice sudden and you scooped up five stones, [release all?], skipping.

[all laugh]

BE: Oh God, you never see them.

CA: You were busy!

BE: Today, that's a pity and all these skipping songs, my God!

CA: [to FB] What did you do apart from going to the music halls to relax?

BE: [inaudible; overtalking] I can't think of them! [laughs]

CA: To enjoy yourself! To have fun! Apart from the music hall. What did you do?

FB: Used to go for a drink. [smiling]

VB: Right! [laughs] [loudly] I mean did you spend a lot of time out of doors? Erm.

BE: Yeah.

JS: I did.

VB: Mhm. 'Cause it sounds from what you're saying, you know, you were living quite rurally.

JS: Yes.

VB: Is that, is that right?

JS: Yeah, But the villages, see there was always cricket and football in the winter and summer.

VB: Mhm.

[pause 1 second]

BE: No.

JS: Yes.

BE: I think there was a lot more fun being a, a youngster in the olden days than it is today because, as you see around here, the houses are not built for a family, the gardens are too small, you used to play football, and, eh, you used to tie a rope round the old lampposts and have that as a swing and there were gasmen used to come and light it, and, eh, but today, a kiddie can't play football on the road. Too many cars, too many [vehicles?].

JS: [inaudible] [laughs]

CA: [laughs] [coughs]

VB: So it was quite a different way of life for you when you were growing up.

JS: Oh yes.

VB: To--

BE: Oh yeah. I, mean a lot pleasanter life than it is today, for kiddies.

JS: Sometimes I went to Norwich for football on a Saturday and I might stop in Norwich and see a, pictures, and I used to go to the--

FB: [Used to have a ha'penny song?].

JS: Haymarket.

CA: Mhm?

FB: [Used to have a ha'penny song?]

BE: Yeah, I remember the Haymarket.

VB: Was that, was that in Norwich? Or?

JS: Yes.

BE: Yes, yes.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: And there used to be, erm, [pause 1 second] a car--

JS: [inaudible; overtalking]

BE: Tram terminal there used to be, now that was the centre, around by, eh, Woolworths and, eh, things like that, well I can't find out, they've built up, but you wouldn't recognise it now. I wouldn't. I haven't been to Norwich for about fifty years, I wish I had!

JS: [inaudible whispering to RS]

CA: Mhm?

BE: You know, to go round where I used to live.

CA: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

BE: I'm trying to think of that boy's name that used to go with George Arliss [pause 2 seconds] pictures.

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: Oh it's awful when that happens.

JS: I know, I'll tell you another film that was that time, eh, was Ben Warriss.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] Was it, was it the British films that you particularly liked?

JS: Oh we never, we never took to...

BE: We didn't see American films, did we, in them days? They was all British films, I think the old cockerel used to come on and, eh, after the cockerel there used to be a, a chap with a big, eh, hammer and a gong.

[pause 1 second]

CA: [laughs]

JS: Yeah. [pause 1 second] But George Formby, I mean, I meant to say.

BE: Yeah, he was good.

JS: He, he did films, didn't he.

BE: Yeah, he was good. I liked his films, 'cause he was just a plain, simple chap who tried to help others and kind and...

JS: [to CA] Do you remember him in the old films?

CA: [laughing] No!

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: Wish them times would come back really.

CA: Mhm?

BE: Wish them times could come back really.

CA: Do you?

BE: [nods] Our children miss out on so much--

CA: Mhm.

BE: With these computers and TVs and, things like that.

JS: 'Tis a shame. 'Tis a real shame.

BE: Who was that big [inaudible: overtalking].

CA: Was it expensive to go?

[pause 1 second]

JS: No. Because eh.

BE: [inaudible; overtalking]

CA: No?

BE: Some great fat lady.

[pause 2 seconds]

JS: But it is a real shame, I see how at the Palladium, she was riding an elephant, come riding an elephant on the stage.

BE: She was.

[all laugh]

JS: But the following week, I read in the paper she fell off, so I won't h... [inaudible for laughter]

[all laugh uproariously]

JS: [laughing] On the elephant!

VB: Ah.

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: I mean it certainly sounds very different from life today as you were saying.

BE: Oh yes.

VB: Yes.

BE: I meant eh, [pause 2 seconds] ah, money was tight and you took a visit to the cinema as a rare treat, you know? [pause 1 second] Erm, I mean even a picnic in Earlham Park or Eaton Park was a treat, so I meant, a lot of kiddies wouldn't think.

JS: Terry-Thomas, did he do films?

VB: Sorry?

JS: Terry-Thomas, did he do films?

VB: Ermm, I think he did, yeah.

JS: I think so.

VB: Yeah, yeah.

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: I mean, I don't know what other stars I've got here, I mean people like, eh, Joan Crawford. I don't know if...

JS: Yeah.

BE: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Erm, here's one of George Formby as you were, you were saying.

JS: On his motorbike, is he?

VB: He's not on his motorbike! [laughs]

[all laugh gently]

VB: Unfortunately!

BE: Aw yeah!

VB: [picking out photograph of film advert] And then, Ronald Colman, *Lost Horizon*.

BE: Wh-who?

VB: Was Ronald Colman someone that you liked? Or.

[pause 1 second]

BE: I can't, eh, I can't remember Ronald Colman, I can remember the name.

RS: [taking photograph] Thanks.

BE: But eh not, not him at all.

VB: Yeah. [pause half a second] Yeah. He was in quite a few films, I mean, things like *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Lost Horizon* and, but he wasn't someone that [pause half a second] you particularly, struck you, or.

BE: No.

VB: Right.

BE: I remember, perhaps that was all right for serious cinemagoers, you know? Who were, perhaps a bit rich and could go but--

VB: Yeah.

BE: We had a, oh, hard times or we enjoyed it more, I suppose.

VB: Yeah.

VB: [to FB] Was, was George Formby someone that you?

CA: [to FB] George Formby?

RS: Oh yes, I remember George Formby.

VB: I was thinking, he's a music hall fan!

FB: I can't see it properly.

BE: H-here he is. [indicating photograph]

VB: Yeah.

RS: He, he erm had a house on the way to the [Norfolk] Broads.

JS: On the [Norfolk] Broads, they sold it.

RS: But he, he never lived in it. [pause 1 second] He sold it.

JS: [inaudible; whispering]

CA: Mhm.

VB: That's interesting, I didn't realise.

RS: Yes.

JS: Yes.

VB: Yep.

BE: Who was that chap with the banjo?

[swell of television theme tune from background]

BE: 'When I'm Cleaning Windows'

JS: George Formby.

VB: That's George Formby.

BE: No it can't be George Formby.

JS: It was!

BE: Was it? Well that's not the George Formby what I'm thinking about!

VB: [laughing] Ah!

BE: I'm thinking about someone else who used to act as a simple man and he used to get a simple job and perhaps he'd know of, of a car and...

JS: Norman Wisdom?

BE: That's right.

VB: Ah.

BE: Norman Wisdom, that's right.

JS: Yes.

FB: He was good.

JS: He was good.

RS: He lived on the Isle of Man.

[pause 1 second]

VB: Ah.

RS: We passed his house when we were there.

JS: Yeah.

RS: Beautiful house.

VB: Ah.

JS: Yeah, who was it. Mister. [pause 1 second] I'm trying to think what was his master's name was in all these films, Mister.

BE: That's funny, I mixed him up with George Formby. That, that was the one in mind, 'When I'm Cleaning Windows', and he lived at the [Norolk] Broads, didn't he.

[pause 2 seconds]

CA: Mr Grimshaw.

JS: Eh, Grimshaw, that's right! [laughs]

BE: Yeah. [pause 1 second] What was St Trinian's and the girls, I suppose [possibly referring to *The Belles of St Trinian's*].

CA: [laughs]

BE: That was another good one.

VB: Did you like comedies and?

JS: Yeah, I liked comedies.

BE: Yeah.

FB: Yes.

RS: Yes.

BE: Oh yes, yeah. When I was young I used to scream if there was anything like that come on!

CA: [laughs]

VB: Did you ever like the sort of horror films, the...

RS: No!

VB: Bela Lugosi and...?

JS: No. I never used to like them, none of them war films.

RS: Oh no.

JS: I never did go to one of them.

VB: Ahh! That's interesting.

JS: No, I never seen one indoors on the television.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Not a war film.

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: Well I did, only saw one. Eh, a foreign one off the boat, with a German submarine and, eh, how they suffered. How they sunk the British ships but how they suffered when they were mined and you could, you could sympathise with them chaps because they went in the Forces.

CA: Yeah.

BE: I mean, just the same as a lot of our boys, didn't want to fight, and, eh, 'cause they sort of seen the other side and that was very interesting.

CA: Mhm.

VB: Mhm.

BE: And they all got killed but, in the finish [possibly referring to *We Dive At Dawn*].

VB: Yeah.

CA: Nice happy ending then.

[all laugh, gently]

BE: No, not really, though.

CA: [laughing] I didn't mean it like that.

BE: You felt sympathy for the--

CA: Yeah.

BE: Captain--

CA: Yeah.

BE: And that--

CA: Yeah.

BE: Because he stuck on the bottom and eh.

CA: Still people, aren't they?

BE: Pardon?

CA: Still people.

[pause 1 second]

VB: Mhm.

[pause 1 second]

BE: Yeah.

JS: Jane Russell.

VB: Ah!

JS: Another one.

[pause 1 second]

BE: When was that one on, the bombers, pictures on the bombers, on the planes, erm, aw crikey, miniskirt on, was that Jane Russell?

CA: I don't know! What, painted on the planes?

BE: Yeah. I wish there was a collection made of them because they was lovely, eh, art was in them days, and there was a church made by the Polish [inaudible] over here, and they done it all with hardboard and papered it, they had tiles and that.

CA: Mhm.

BE: I think that one's still there but, that was beautiful.

[pause 1 second]

BE: But eh, in this day and age all those sort of things must be done away with, so that's why I say there should be a memorial aerodrome left for, eh, the young lads what fought in the war and lost their lives but, why they lost their lives I don't know with this country...

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: Not now.

JS: I was trying to think of another western man, thickset man used to be in it. I can't think of his name?

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: [coughs]

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: That ain't like you, Jack, not to think of the names.

[pause 1 second]

VB: Wh-what.

BE: Not usual.

VB: [laughs] What sort of films was he in when you say westerns? The, the man you're trying to think of.

JS: Yes, he was very popular indeed, he always used to be driving stagecoaches and all that sort of thing.

VB: Oh, not John Wayne.

JS: Noh!

VB: No! [smiling]

JS: No, not John Wayne.

VB: When you said stagecoach I was thinking.

JS: Yeah, but this one--

BE: Yeah.

JS: Was a thickset man.

VB: Mhm.

BE: I'm trying to think.

JS: Eh. [pause 1 second] He died a few years ago. Sometimes he had a sort of young man with him, don't know-- [tape cuts out]

[End of side A]

[Start of Side B]

VB: Alright. Naw, It's too late now! It's not... [laughing]

CA: [laughs]

BE: It's just hard luck though, isn't it! [laughing]

VB: That's right!

[all laugh]

VB: Uh, I mean is it okay, with you?

BE: Yeah!

JS: You can read it now!

VB: That's right!

[pause 2 seconds]

VB: Oh. [pause 2 seconds]

BE: It's just funny what things stick in your mind and the other things just go.

VB: Mhm.

JS: [whispers to RS for 3 seconds; inaudible] But what we were talking about was the *Mandy* film, I think that was one of the best I ever seen.

VB: Yeah. It sounds good, I'd like to--

JS: Yeah.

VB: Try and get hold of that.

JS: Yes, the little girl was deaf and dumb and, eh, [pause 1 second] they sent her away to a school.

VB: Mhm.

JS: And the husband thought his wife was getting off with the gi-, the man who was trying to teach his little girl, you see? So they was [just stops?] all the way along.

VB: Ah.

JS: But she got so one day she was looking at a horse on the field, she called to it. [pause 1 second] Can't you remember that Rose?

RS: What?

JS: *Mandy*.

[pause 1 second]

RS: Oh yes. [pause 1 second] I do.

VB: Did you go a lot to the cinema together when you were--

JS: No.

VB: When you were courting.

JS: No, we did go and see that one *Mandy*! [dissolving into laughter]

VB: Ah!

[all laugh]

JS: I think that was about the only one!

VB: Mhm.

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: There was other things to do when you were courting, weren't there, Jack?

JS: Yeah.

BE: Other than, than the cinema!

CA: [laughs] Did you take your wife, Bert?

BE: Pardon?

CA: When you first met your wife, did you take her?

BE: No.

CA: No?

BE: No.

CA: Did you used to go with her though?

BE: Pardon?

CA: Did you used to go to the cinema with her?

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: No.

JS: [laughs gently]

CA: Who'd you used to go with, on your own?

BE: No, my mum and dad.

CA: Oh, before you met.

BE: And, eh, then eh, when I was working I went to **Holkham** in digs. We went to a cinema and I was surprised because there was a great wide screen.

CA: Mhm.

BE: And I was waiting for all the lights to go out and that, a girl with a torch, you know, to show you to your seat, and the lights go dimmed.

JS: [laughs quietly]

BE: And you could see everywhere and!

[all laugh gently]

BE: I say to them, "What's going on there?" And I think, what's that, *Gone with the Wind*? Naw, it must've been *Gone with the Wind*. [pause 1 second] No, it couldn't handle, I.

VB: [laughs]

JS: What's this, a Hepburn?

BE: Audrey Hepburn.

VB: And Katharine Hepburn of course.

JS: Kath, and Audrey Hepb...

VB: Yeah. [pause 1 second] Do you watch many films now or? [pause half a second] Do you ever watch films on TV?

JS: No!

VB: Or. No?

[CA asks JS if he's started getting the tapes, JS brought three down this morning, talking newspapers and talking films, JS had Agatha Christie this time]

VB: Mhm. [pause 1 second] Did, did you listen to the radio much when you were growing up? Or.

RS: Sorry?

VB: Did you listen to the radio much when you were growing up or? [pause 1 second] The, the radio?

JS: [to RS] Did you listen to the radio?

VB: The wireless or?

RS: No.

VB: No.

RS: Nothing much doing.

JS: Well not when we was growing up, you see that was the cat's whisker and one valve, you see!
[laughs]

[all laugh]

BE: Ah well that was.

JS: You couldn't all hear it at once! So!

[all laugh]

BE: And once that my father used to read [at Paignton?] and eh, Norwich City lost, and he was trembling, and I couldn't hear anything on the crystal set but.

CA: Did you used to have a wireless Fred?

FB: Eh? 'Course I did.

CA: Did you used to listen to it a lot?

FB: Well, mostly got to, sometimes I'd be home, that's how it was!

[all laugh]

CA: Weren't very reliable!

[pause 1 second]

FB: Well, I suppose it was but I had the headphones.

CA: Mhm.

FB: You'd always have the headphones, that's the only thing you've got.

BE: And you got to take the old accumulator to be charged up--

JS: That's right.

CA: [laughs]

BE: And change the battery.

JS: The battery, it had a battery.

BE: Yeah.

JS: And an accumulator to be charged.

BE: Yeah.

JS: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Mhm.

FB: And sometimes a good [inaudible; overtalking].

JS: We used to--

VB: How, how about music, I mean did you listen to the gramophone or I mean, did you--

JS: Oh yes, I, well, we, in fact we never had a gramophone, but other people, you know--

BE: They'd listen.

JS: They used to listen to.

FB: I wasn't keen on the wireless then and I couldn't be bothered to listen.

JS: So that was the...

BE: I remember the, eh, poor women pushing a pram with the gramophone on.

VB: Really!

BE: And I can remember the barrel organs coming round.

RS: Oh yes. I can remember them.

JS: [inaudible; overtalking] [crank?].

BE: They used to be.

JS: With handles, they used to pull the--

CA: Mhm.

VB: Was it the centre of Norwich--

JS: Handles.

VB: You were living in the thirties or?

BE: Well not to the centre of, eh--

VB: Yeah.

BE: Norwich, Woburn Street, round by, eh, Chapel Field, eh, not far from Chapel Field.

VB: Right. I don't, I don't know the area very well so it's more on the sort of outskirts of the town, was it? Or.

CA: Yeah.

BE: Yeah, I lived on the outskirts of the town.

CA: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JS: [Used to visit it?]

BE: Not in the heart of the town.

VB: Ah right, yeah, yeah.

BE: That was.

VB: So--

BE: Quite near Caley's Factory.

JS: Out by [inaudible street name] Road?

CA: Mhm.

JS: That's where I used to.

CA: Yeah.

VB: So, I mean, the barrel organs used to come round--

BE: Yeah, they'd come round.

VB: Lovely.

CA: Yeah.

BE: Yeah, and then at erm, Easter time, you used to hear the young boys about two or three o'clock come round: [sings] "Hot Cross Buns! Hot Cross Buns!" just as soon as they were baked, and you used to get them hot! Not like today when you, when you buy them and they're half rotten.

VB: Ah. Lovely.

BE: Ah, they were the times. [pause 1 second] And, of course, they can get had up now for calling out, can't they?

VB: I'm sure that's right, yes.

BE: Anyway, and the old rag-and-bone man, and the old chimney sweep, the short one with the rifle for [the bear-stalking?]

VB: [laughs]

BE: God, didn't I tremble when he come to, do my chimney! "You ain't that little beggar what shot me and injured?"

[all laugh]

JS: The, the scissor grinder.

FB: Pardon?

JS: The scis, scissor grinder.

BE: Yeah.

RS: The scissor grinder.

BE: Yeah, the old.

JS: With his bicycle.

[all laugh]

BE: And... [inaudible for laughter]

JS: But that's not on the films though! [laughs]

VB: No, I know!

[all laugh]

BE: We're talking now.

VB: It's interesting though, to hear about, you know, life, what life was like then!

BE: Yeah!

VB: 'Cause it sounds like there was a lot more happening in the streets and--

BE: Oh yes.

JS: Yes!

VB: Yeah.

BE: And then the village bobby, I meant if he caught you up to any mischief he'd just say, "Here, come here, I'll kick you up the backside!"

[all chuckle]

BE: And you used to be terrified.

CA: [laughs]

BE: But now today the children just take a laugh at the policeman because they know they can't do anything to them.

CA: Mhm.

VB: So discipline was a lot different too.

BE: Cor, yes, if we got the cane at school and we went home and told our mothers, our mothers wouldn't go up the school, they'd give you another one, [pause one second] for being naughty. And this is where, I think.

JS: Was [inaudible; overtalking] in films, did he?

VB: Erm, I think he might have, actually. I'm not sure, you probably know better than I do, it's... [pause 1 second]

JS: 'Cause, I'll tell you what [inaudible] on the wireless. Television. I can't remember him making the films.

VB: Mhm.

JS: But he might've done.

[pause 3 seconds]

JS: 'Cause eh, Jack Hulbert who married, eh, Cicely Courtneidge, he had a brother, didn't he?

VB: Mhm. [pause 1 second] I think that's right. Yes.

JS: That was a film star too [referring to Claude Hulbert].

VB: Yes.

[pause 1 second]

VB: Was Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge, were they favourites of yours?

JS: Oh yes, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 1 second]

JS: Then he had a brother and all, I'm trying to think. [pause 1 second]

VB: I wish we could remember this western star, that's going to annoy me all day now! [laughs]

JS: Not Hendrix, [pause 1 second] Hendrix, something like that.

VB: Mhm.

BE: Now I can't remember him too. I didn't see a lot of westerns.

VB: The only ones I can think of are, like James Stewart, and, erm.

JS: Well there were so many of them, weren't there.

VB: So many.

[inaudible: overtalking]

CA: [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Ah. [pause 4 seconds] I mean, maybe we should talk just briefly about m-, I mean music hall. I mean, who were you favourite stars? Who did, who did you like in the music halls?

FB: [Who?] I used to see two Scots comedians and they were playing together, and Jack Hulbert, [he had a big following there?].

VB: 'Cause you mentioned Will Fyffe.

FB: Er?

VB: You mentioned Will Fyffe earlier and—Will Fyffe.

FB: Will Fyffe, yeah. He used to [inaudible]. Same time as Harry Lauder was on.

VB: Yeah.

FB: Will Fyffe [inaudible]. 'The end of the road' he used to sing, he was good on that, did you see him?

VB: No, I didn't see him myself, no, but I've seen him on film, yeah, he's great. It certainly sounds like you didn't go short of, erm, entertainments of one form or the other so...

JS: What part of Scotland do you come from?

VB: I come from Fife, north of Edinburgh.

JS: Where?

VB: Fife, it's just north of Edinburgh.

JS: Oh! I was in a, I was stationed in Hamilton—

VB: Ah right, yeah. I live in Glasgow so I know where you are. Yeah.

JS: I was at a camp there for eight months, first time.

VB: Yeah.

JS: [Herne Bay?] and Blantyre [and all round it?]

VB: Ah yes. Sorry, I didn't catch what you said.

BE: You don't talk like a Scotch girl.

CA: [laughs]

JS: Second time—

VB: [laughs]

BE: Because when I was up [inaudible] aerodrome in the Officers' Mess, there was a Scotch girl came there—

JS: Oh, Beryl Reid.

VB: Ah.

JS: 'Cause I was just running through the ENSA [Entertainments National Service Association] ones, names, you see

BE: ENSA?

JS: ENSA, you see we used to, if we wanted something to do during the wartime, we used to put the Home Guard's uniform on and go there to Stiffkey or Langham Camps to see the ENSA concerts--

VB: Ah.

JS: That was being held there as...

VB: Mhm.

[pause 2 seconds]

[JS was also in Inverary and liked it there. VB praises local area, "it's a nice part of the world", JS was also at Rest-and-be-Thankful and found it a long way down! Talks briefly about the mountains]

VB: It's, it's been very kind of you to talk to me just now. I really appreciate that very much. Erm. So thanks, thanks a lot for taking the time to tell me.

JS: Bendix, Wilfred Bendix [referring to William Bendix]!

CA: [laughs]

JS: Is that right?

[pause 2 seconds]

FB: Who was it Jack?

JS: Wilfred Bendix. He was a western.

BE: Neeoh.

JS: [inaudible; overtalking and laughter]

VB: I'm glad you did. [laughs]

BE: Master, Wilfred someone.

JS: Wilfred Bendix.

BE: A big fat chap.

VB: I don't know him but I'm going to find out about him, he sounds...

JS: Yeah!

VB: Yeah!

JS: [whispering to RS, inaudible]

BE: Who were my favourite ones.

JS: Now we've said what we used to do when we was young, don't you think she ought to tell us what she used to do when she was young? Or a little younger than what she is now!

[general laughter]

VB: [laughing] Ah!

CA: Another day, Jack.

JS: Another day!

CA: Another day! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JS: [laughs heartily]

BE: The other Scotch girl always used to speak so quickly. I used to have to say, "Stop, now stop, just calm down and speak slowly. So I can understand you." [imitates gabbling noise]

VB: [laughs]

[pause 3 seconds]

JS: Can you remember the organ disappearing in the pictures?

BE: Well, when the old organ used to come up?

JS: Yeah! [laughs]

BE: Ah, yeah! And then d-, disappear again.

JS: Yeah! [laughing]

[pause 2 seconds]

BE: Well that was a, quite a relief when the piano played.

JS: [to FB] Yes, we're talking about the cinema.

FB: I can't hear. [inaudible; overtalking]

CA: I don't know. Did it?

FB: Richard Dix used to be on a lot, didn't he?

JS: Yeah.

BE: Yeah.

[pause 2 second]

JS: But when they're, eh, talking about the cinema.

VB: Mhm.

JS: When they sat at the [Silver?] community singing, that was after the night of the Wembley Exhibition, eh, it had the same tune in, eh, every cinema, you see? And it used to, little ball used to bounce along the top of the names and, eh, the song that had 'There's a long, long trail a winding' [referring to song]. That was the same all over the country, you see?

VB: Ah, I see. That's interesting.

JS: Yes, this little ball used to bounce along on top of those words.

VB: Yeah. So you got a bit of live entertainment as well as!

JS: Yeah! [laughs]

VB: Ah!

JS: [whispers to RS, inaudible] That was when, when these, the reason, when they sat at the [ballroom?] meal at the functions, you see, they played that [inaudible] after the tattoo.

VB: Ah, I see. Yeah.

BE: It used to be nice, Jack to hear the football crowd singing hymns too, before the match.

JS: Did you eh hear, the, [pause 2 seconds] the Welsh singing their national anthem on the Saturday? For the rugby [corps?]. They did let it rip too. The Welsh did?

[pause half a second]

BE: I mean in the cinema, at the end of the film, they always had the "God Save the King"--

JS: Yeah.

BE: And we always had to stand up--

RS: Yeah.

BE: Now that's, I don't think that's done any more now.

CA: No.

VB: Mhm.

JS: And then of course the latter part of the time they used to have it the first and so people used to rush out while that was being started!

BE: Yeah! [bursts into explosive laughter]

[general laughter]

[pause 1 second]

JS: Are we remembering too much?

BE: No!

CA: Sorry?

JS: I think we remembering too much! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

RS: I was, I was nursing for fourteen years, you see?

VB: Mhm.

RS: And then after that I was a magistrate for twenty-five years, so I couldn't do much.

VB: Yeah. So there were always other things to do. Yeah.

[pause 3 seconds]

JS: I wish there were more film stars in this country, old ones. [pause 2 seconds]

BE: Oh Kea, Keater, Keater Buston [referring to Buster Keaton] And the, eh, the cops, he was a comedian.

JS: Who?

BE: Keat, Keat Buston.

JS: Oh yes. Oh yes. Yes. I couldn't remember, I forgot the name. Was it Laurel and Hardy?

BE: Yeah! Yeah.

[pause 2 seconds; towards end JS whispers to RS, inaudible]

VB: Yeah, it's amazing when you're mentioning all these stars, I mean, as you say, there's just so many of them, really.

BE: Yeah, yeah.

JS: [whispering to RS, inaudible]

BE: You only sort of remember the ones you used to like.

VB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds]

[CA mentions they are soon going to bring in the trolley with food]

VB: I, I think we'll probably draw to a close anyway, just now, so it might be a good point to break off.

[inaudible; overtalking; CA announces it is twelve o' clock.]

VB: Well, as I say, I mean thanks, thanks very much for--

[inaudible; all thanking VB]

BE: It's been nice talking to you.

VB: I've certainly learned a lot so it's, so it's— [tape cuts out]

[End of Interview]