

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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- * Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- * CT=Cliff Temple, VB=Valentina Bold
- * Notes: Second interview of two with Cliff Temple; Sound Quality: Poor

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

CT: Oh yes, I remember. Hold on. I don't think I've got that one down.

VB: Yes.

CT: Yes. Who was that now? Yes, that's Joan Crawford. And Myrna Loy! She's dead now. Half them buggers are dead now.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Three quarters of them!

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah.

VB: I'll just put this beside you then so that picks you up well. [moves recorder]

CT: Now you can start barking [to dog] if you want to. [laughs]

VB: Right! [laughs]

[dog panting in background]

VB: Right. Erm, 'cause one of the things I wanted to ask you, eh, you mentioned a lot of different stars.

CT: Yes.

VB: And I wondered if there were any particular qualities you liked in a film star.

CT: Yes. [inaudible]

VB: Ah!

CT: There you see.

VB: Right. Marie Dressler. Esther Williams. Theda Barra? I don't know that name.

CT: Who?

VB: Theda Barra. Theda Bara.

CT: Theda Bara, yes.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Oh she did one of those erm, I won't say Shakespeare but one of the tragedy ones--

VB: Yes. Yeah.

CT: One of those sorts.

VB: Ah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: *The Admirable Crichton.*

CT: Yeah.

VB: Jackie Coogan.

CT: Yeah.

VB: Lon Chaney.

CT: You never heard no more about him after that did you?

VB: No.

CT: Nothing at all.

VB: Did you think he was good as a child star?

CT: Yes. Even Richard Bartelmess. He didn't come out [after the wars?] I think he just had one or two. After playing *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

VB: Mhm.

CT: And then after that, nothing. Shirley Temple was the only that erm [pause 2 seconds] existed, right up to her married days.

[dog panting]

VB: Yeah. I wonder why that was.

CT: I don't know. Can't understand it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: No. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: Marlene Dietrich.

CT: Yes.

VB: I think you mentioned her before as well.

CT: Yeah.

VB: Erm, what was it about her do you think that,

CT: Well, course, she became more famous through the last war by singing 'Lili Marlene'.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Eh, apart from that she used to act the eh part of a typical tart in a French cafe or something like that.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I mean they had one there with Herr von [Stoneberg?] or Stroheim. I forget which one it was now [referring to Josef von Sternberg]. And erm, eh she led a poor old man astray by eh vamping him and all the rest of it [referring to *The Blue Angel*]. And eh, your imagination. And [inaudible] I think it was *The Last Command* as matter of fact

VB: Ah.

CT: Yes.

VB: Yeah. Did you like her yourself as an actress?

CT: No, I never did like her. I don't know why but I just don't. She, ooh, very thin face an I rather like them nice and jolly you know. [laughs] No I didn't like her at all. And I think the only reason that she become so popular was that 'Lili Marlene' that she used to sing.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] What about stars like Myrna Loy and William Powell?

CT: Oh Myrna Loy was my favourite strange to say.

VB: Ah.

CT: Oh I liked her. A lot. I forget half of them now. I think there was some in which she was [servin?]. Oh dear, oh dear.

VB: You've got *The Thin Man* here.

CT: Pardon?

VB: *The Thin Man*.

CT: Yes, yeah. They were very good. Very good indeed. Yes.

VB: What was it about Myrna Loy that you particularly liked?

CT: Well, there's some people you like and some you don't like. You can't define it. 'Cause I mean you see some people, eh, without being funny, we'll say a nice-looking man who got a very fat old girl for a wife. And you reverse it too. You get the fat woman, or tall woman with a little short man, and you say, well, what's the difference? And you just can't understand. I mean they got the position. They got the power. They got everything. Yet for some reason.... A bit of a contrast. I mean our famous little lady there. She married an Austrian. He was a director it's true. And erm, he couldn't speak a word of English. And eh, how they got on, I really don't know, but they probably did.

VB: [laughs]

CT: All I know is, he went bankrupt and she sold some of her jewels to pay for some of his debts. You probably remember which one it is. And erm, as I say, these are the things that come to you. And erm, the same with some of these pop stars. However can they get on with their [inaudible].

VB: Yeah.

CT: I mean that Geldof now. I mean he's ugly-looking blighter. Got all those songs for the poor children and that sort of thing. And, Paula Yates, I mean she is quite good-looking. And you can understand them too being together. But some you can never, I suppose they do attract them.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I can't tell you.

VB: So some sort of indefinable quality.

CT: That's right.

VB: [laughs]

CT: As I say, I've been neutral now for forty-odd years! Surviving.

VB: Ah!

CT: What I like and what I don't like. They're all quite nice people as far as I'm concerned. I like talking to everybody and there we are.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Some are very, very pleasant. Some have got a very nice voice. Others are rather crackly which I do not like. Erm, I suppose I'm old-fashioned. I know I haven't got that cultural voice like the BBC have. 'Cause I'm real Norfolk. [laughs] But I can't erm, when some of them, you'll probably laugh at the word, when they're common, I'll put it that way. I don't know if you are the same. Are you?

VB: I mean what do you mean when you say that?

CT: What, common?

VB: Yeah.

CT: Erm in one way vulgar or something like that.

VB: So was that something you didn't like in films?

CT: Exactly, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah.

VB: Any stars particularly that...

CT: I mean eh Marlene, she was an obvious lady of the streets--

VB: Yeah.

CT: And I don't like that at all.

VB: Yeah. Were there other stars like that, that erm.

CT: Well, course, eventually most of them were like it. They'd get into a position they held. I mean, there's no disputing the fact. I mean you read their life stories all the way through.

VB: Mhm.

CT: And eh, there very, very few come out spotless. Very few indeed. Both the men and the women. Yeah.

VB: I suppose one of the stars...

CT: I mean, it's always been known that. Like Hollywood or something like that.

VB: Yeah. Was that something that you were aware of during the thirties? [pause 1 second] Was that something that you were aware of during the thirties? That some of the stars were...

CT: Well only what you heard and just what you read in the papers and that sort of thing. I mean there's no television in the early days as you know. But I mean you read about it. I mean, even Charlie Chaplin. I mean, I thought the world of Charlie Chaplin. But he was a stallion really. Even when he was, eh, even ninety! [Inaudible] [laughs] He was awful man. But then he used to go about with no clothes on and show all what you've got to the people!

VB: Aw dear! [laughs]

CT: Even in the studios. And course, eh many a time he [inaudible] in America for that sort of thing. Being indecent in front of people. Well we never think of that really. But you read, mainly the papers and that. Same as a lot of these, I mean a lot of these people now, like the present Prince of Wales and Diana. There's a lot going against what they've been up to you see. Well you see, being this high-faluting thing, they ought to set the example to other people. But then if you go back to history, look at King Edward the Seventh, when he was Prince of Wales. There was nobody worse than what he was.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] So do you think that the film stars should've been setting a moral example?

CT: Well I think they ought to, erm, used their discretion really.

VB: Yeah.

CT: But they do not. No. We don't expect them all to be dressed in white robes now, and a halo round the head. Anything like that. They're only being human after all. But I don't think they want to be so blatant with what they do. I mean, you take one

of our latest pop groups. Erm, [Inaudible] been to bed with at least five hundred different women. Well, you can't admire a man like that. Well I don't, anyway.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I think he's awful. And eh, 'cause when he married the other girl, she got an unknown disease. Well no wonder after five hundred people he'd had before that. I mean it's a funny subject to talk about--

VB: I know! [aughes]

CT: But I'll give you the reason why and why not.

VB: Yeah.

CT: And I think you can understand it. And it rather put you against them. Well it do me any rate.

VB: Yeah. So I mean someone like Myrna Loy would be...

CT: Oh I never had any blame, anything about her. No.

VB: Yeah.

CT: And Bessie Love. Her too. Was very nice. She was in *The Covered Wagon*. Very nice part. Fay Wray too was very good too. She's only just died. Eh, I liked her, her acting in the erm, *The Lost World* And also eh *King Kong*, that sort of thing. But I mean, it's really wonderful how they do that you know. I liked *The Lost World*. 'Cause the originator of erm *King Kong*. I don't know if you do know him but it was when they had all those prehistoric animals. They were really wonderful. And all the erm double exposures on the film sometimes. 'Cause you see people running right through their bodies! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

CT: You look for that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah. I mean what about stars like Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat, that you mentioned to me before?

CT: Well I thought he was a very nice man. Well he was a proper gentleman and all the rest of it. And that's just what we liked.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I mean, you didn't have all this rough stuff what you have today. I mean, I think you'll probably laugh but they were more genteel days really. I mean now they're, well, specially old people, they're frightened to go out at night-time. Young girls can't go to town, unless they're molested. Anything like that. And it's all wrong. That's all happened, well in the last what? Twenty or thirty years.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Not quite so much as that. Fifteen years probably. And that's wrong. But all those, we used to look up to. And course all cinemagoers used to live in a fantasy world. If it was a man, I'd like to have that girl and take er home to mother. But I wouldn't want to take any of them to mother--

VB: [laughs]

CT: What I see on there today. The ya ya yas.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I mean they're awful. Because the girls they say, oh, we like him and so and so on. Rudolph Valentino. When he died people went crazy. They even threw themselves from skyscrapers in their sorrow. Did all sorts of daft things, just for one man. And when he erm, he was in the tent, supposed to be the 'Sheik of Araby' something like [referring to *The Sheik*]. Then they just kissed. You never saw more in those days. And erm, eh, they all went wild.

VB: Mhm. It's interesting what you were saying about erm, Robert Donat being sort of genteel.

CT: Yes.

VB: I was thinking about that scene in *The 39 Steps*.

CT: *The 39 Steps* yes.

VB: Where he's with Madeleine Carroll and they have to share a bed.

CT: Yes. Yeah.

VB: But there's not, nothing actually happens.

CT: No. Not like you see on television today.

VB: Yeah.

CT: No, you didn't see anything. Covered it all up you see.

VB: Do you think they handled erm, relationships...

CT: I mean, in the old days there was a law that eh, specially in the bedroom scene, that the man could kiss her. He could hug her. He could do what he liked but he must always have one leg outside the bed!

VB: Mhm.

CT: Right! Good.

VB: I mean do you think that made for a different type of film? Than the ones we have today.

CT: I do really, yes. I mean, well because, I never go to the pictures so I can't tell you what's in the pictures. I haven't been since erm... [pause 3 seconds] *The Sound of Music*. So you know ow long I haven't been to the pictures at all. I have to rely on back numbers on television or what they bring on now. And what I see I don't really like.

VB: Well why's that?

CT: I don't know. They seem all foreign to me. I mean, coming back to the sex thing. Well, you can't get away from it. That's all in the bleeding papers. I mean that's all you keep seeing. [picks up newspaper] That sort of stuff there--

VB: Yeah.

CT: And all that sort of thing. Eh, you can't get away from it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: There you are.

VB: Do you think that made the films of the thirties, the fact they were like that...

CT: Well. [That might have drawn certain people's attentions?] as they'd make more money on the film. [VB moves recorder]

VB: Erm, it's an interesting list this actually. I mean you've got films here as well like *Morning Glory* with Katharine Hepburn.

CT: That's right. Yeah.

VB: Was she one of your favourite stars?

CT: Eh, not exactly, but she was a very good actress. I mean *The African Queen* for instance. I mean, I think she was, I mean she was no ornament. She wasn't pretty or nothing. And had a horrible voice. But I liked *The African Queen*. I thought that was a very nice picture. Eh [Humphrey] Bogart I think was in that wasn't he?

VB: That's right. Yes.

CT: Am I right?

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yes.

VB: Yes. And what about Garbo? You have her here.

CT: Eh well [Greta] Garbo she was erm. [pause 2 seconds] How shall I say? [pause 2 seconds] Well she was always, man always wanted er, lovey-dovey that sort of stuff. I wasn't keen on those ones. But erm you picked the best you could out of a picture and just went and saw it, you see--

VB: Mhm.

CT: Risk what it was all about. Garbo was the king pin at the time. "I want to be alone." Which you've probably heard about.

VB: Mhm. And then you've got some of the films here like *Cavalcade*.

CT: Well *Cavalcade* was right up my appplecart. You see it's got everything. Got war, got ships, got guns, got planes, got everything. I liked it. Who wouldn't? [laughs]

VB: Yeah. So did you like films that reflected your interests?

CT: Oh rather. Certainly.

VB: Yes.

CT: Oh yes. Yes.

VB: Yeah. [pause 4 seconds] Oh and *Sanders of the River*. Paul Robeson.

CT: That was another fine thing too.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah. Another nice one. [laughs] Yeah, it was made on the Thames.

VB: Was it!

CT: Didn't you know that?

VB: I didn't, no. [laughs]

CT: Oh yes. [laughs]

VB: I thought it was made in darkest Africa somewhere! [laughs]

CT: No! No.

VB: No. On the Thames.

CT: Did I tell you when you were here last time that Stewart Rome, who I've written down there. Well I was a boy at the time so you know how many years ago. He was a very popular actor at the time.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Well we saw Stewart Rome in a kind of a South Seas act. And erm, he was hiding away from these pirates. Well these pirates had these things over their eyes. Daggers in their teeth. They was crawling through the grass and it was, ooh, I wonder if they'll catch him, you know, and all that sort of thing. Then 'course I was with two or three boys, they all roared out laughing. There in the distance, was a little old ship we used to put our bikes against when we used to go on the Broads. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]. Aw, it shows you what they can do. [laughs]

CT: Exactly. And that was taken on the Norfolk Broads.

VB: Yeah.

CT: That's 'South Sea Pirate'. And then again, [the photo I showed you?], *The Rolling Road* at Yarmouth.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Well I did see her being rescued from the sea and all the rest of it.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Well, 'course, Yarmouth was the [Scots?] land. When we saw it on the film, on the cinema, beautiful palm trees and coconut palms all the way along--

VB: Aw.

CT: Which someone had put on. [pause 3 seconds]--

VB: Ah.

CT: And then, 'course, we had to have another laugh over that one.

VB: [laughs]

CT: Made at Yarmouth. Not the South Seas.

VB: That's amazing. And did you like these sort of adventure films then?

CT: Oh yes, rather.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I always was, in my early days, the eh, to go with erm. [pause 4 seconds] That man and wife who used to [inaudible] and elephants and erm eh, zebras and all that sort of thing. I'd have loved to have joined them you know but, nothing doing.

[laughs]

VB: I mean are...

CT: Are they... [pause 3 seconds]

VB: I'm not sure.

CT: That's all behind you.

VB: Yeah.

CT: They were French people but they were very good photographers [possibly referring to Armand and Michaela Denis]. But they didn't have a long-distance lens. They'd go right close up to the animals. Wonderful.

VB: Yeah.

CT: But now, mean, they can take it about three miles away! [laughs]

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] I mean I was wondering, how did you actually feel when you were watching a film like that? Something that you were, you know...

CT: Well, I never got truly excited or anything, like some of them do. And I still can't understand how they get excited over anything now. I mean I can't understand the present day. How they go raving over these pop stars. And I can't understand why they all want to sing at the football. I haven't been to football, me. I mean, to my idea, if I want to see people eh, eh, twenty-two demented men chasing after a ball, I shouldn't want to 'Happy Days Are Here!' [sings]

VB: [laughs]

CT: I go there to watch what I want to see. Same, in *Ben Hur*, I was thrilled to see the chariot race go round and round. It's a spectacle. You see something. But I mean like, as today, you hear them singing, ['All One Alone?']. I mean they even take them from

'Carousel', that particular song. And, why they all want to sing that, I really don't know. It's like they're being absolutely daft.

VB: Mm. So you're not one that gets over-excited?

CT: No. No, I can't get excited over anything--

VB: Yeah.

CT: Eh, or anybody come to that. As you see I didn't get excited shaking hands with the Prince--

VB: Ah.

CT: And eh, I've been with pop stars you see on there. Mainly for my daughter's sake. And film stars. There's hardly anybody on television you see that I haven't spoken to or taken the photographs of. And now that's just someone else. Far as I'm concerned it's a tree in bloom, it's a ship coming into a harbour or something like that. And somebody said, well, you're not married or anything. Why don't you have a nice girl and all the rest of it. I say no! If I was on the quayside and a girl was standing stark naked and I saw a lovely sailing boat coming in I'd leave her and take that sailing boat.

VB: [laughs]

CT: And they can't believe me you know. That's quite true.

VB: So it's the ships that you...

CT: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. That's interesting. I mean, 'cause you were saying last time that going to the cinema wasn't something that was hugely important part of your life and yet you've seen all these [films?].

CT: Well, I mean, I show you those books. I mean, it's not one thing. I don't specialise on anything. Or go crazy on anything. I mean I'll go in that park. But during the erm, autumn the colours there are magnificent. All the lovely yellows and greens and gold. I appreciate it. It's very nice. I'll go somewhere else and see erm, well, I [inaudible]. Oh, that's nice. Nice sunset behind there. A cloud, a cloud be lovely. So and so and so on. I'm interested in that one. I go out in the country. I see cows or horses grazing. Ah, that'd make a nice photo. Get the old camera out. I take them. But no particular interest. Now, in one of my societies there's one man, he's a beautiful photographer. You got one thing to know. And that is, he take all church pews. All engraved. All the carving. Beautiful stuff. And eh, once he saw me in the street. He said, "I just can't understand. I've won awards. I've won silver cups. I've won [no?] other prizes for my photographs. Yet you, you take anything from a tram car to a steam engine, and you get all yours in books. and I can't get one!"

VB: [laughs]

CT: Now what about that?

VB: It's interesting. 'Cause it sounds like a broader--

CT: All the way through.

VB: Broader vision.

CT: No matter what it is, I got it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Now I mean, there are film stars. If you go to all the old timers. I go to Marie Lloyd. I go to all the old timers. Eh Billy Danvers. All the old timers. And the new ones too. [pause 2 seconds] If it's a question of music. Noel Coward. All the rest of it. Very nice. Tell you all about those years. If it's a question of churches. There's 1450. That one's 1780. So and so on. "How do you know about churches? Have you read?" No not a thing. It's just come to me.

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VB: That's interesting.

CT: Yes.

VB: So I mean film in your life is sort of one of many...

CT: Oh it's just one of many.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah. Yes I mean erm like we've had several processions. I mean the Coronation. We've had two Coronations, three really. And erm Jubilees. We've had all those. Well I go up and take photographs. But erm, they was nice, at the time. Thought no more about them. Nothing at all. And in one way I've enjoyed doing that 'cause that's brought back all those days. Ah yes, I can visualise that. [Inaudible]. 'Specially when they had lovely erm the ships all fighting each other. And erm, and I rather liked it. But I'd see them go round. I thought that was a wonderful spectacle. And it was. There's no getting away from it. Even Charlton Heston on the second edition of eh, *Ben Hur*. They even bought the chariot that he was in.

VB: Aw.

CT: Yes. And I don't blame, I'd have done the same thing.

VB: I'm wondering then, was it the visual aspect of film. Was that something that interested you a great deal?

CT: I think it was a visual, all the time--

VB: Yeah.

CT: 'Cause then, well as I say, we were brought up in the silent days. I mean we didn't know what talkies were. And the very first talkie was as you know, Al Jolson. In *The Jazz Singer*. People say *The Singing Fool* was the first one but it wasn't. *The Jazz Singer* was the very first one. And erm, in *The Singing Fool* it was wonderful to hear the man speaking and talking.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Wonderful. Now I mentioned one there, when the talkies more or less first come.

VB: Ah.

CT: Eh, *Broadway Melody*.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Well that was in black and white. But, in one particular scene, [where they got to pay at the door?], they come in colour--

VB: [gasps]

CT: For the first time.

VB: How did that make you feel when you saw colour coming in?

CT: Aw it was wonderful. It was a very crude colours. The reds were definitely reds and the greens were greens if you understand me.

VB: Yes.

CT: They're not the subdued colours which you got, which you have on the... [pause 1 second] Same when they first saw colour television, they were terrible colours. dabbed on like with a brush.

VB: Yeah.

CT: They're beautiful. Now you can't tell from real flesh now can you?

VB: 'Cause when I think of, I think one of the earliest coloured films I've seen is *The Garden of Allah*.

CT: Yeah.

VB: And again it's that, as you say, quite bright and--

CT: Yes. Yes. But now they are subdued. Well you can't beat them now can you?

VB: Yeah.

CT: Only one thing to beat them and that's erm, erm when they have a [inaudible]. People don't like wearing glasses, do they?

VB: So, so were you interested in the technical aspects of film then?

CT: No. No.

VB: No.

CT: Anything mechanical I'm hopeless at.

VB: Right. [laughs]

CT: Hopeless in the motor car. Hopeless in radio. Hopeless in anything like that.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Making models of those things there--

VB: Yeah.

CT: Make them. But apart from that, no.

VB: 'Cause when you were saying that, I was wondering, do you find that particular scenes or shots from a film stick in your mind? Given your...

CT: Oh yes.

VB: Interest in photography.

CT: Every time. Every time. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

CT: [Beginning inaudible; voice very quiet]. I mean, before I started in photography I used to do painting. I did everything as a schoolboy.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Which I told you last time.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Well you see, again, it's visual you see.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

CT: But you'd say, why didn't you keep it up? I didn't. Well you see, that's only one of those things. Writing stories. Writing for the papers. Now I left this one out specially for you to show you. I'm helping these people out now.

VB: Ah.

CT: Help the old. They want them bringing memories back to these frail and elderly people of seventy.

VB: Yes.

CT: There's me twenty years older and I'm helping them.

VB: [laughs]

CT: It tickled me you know--

VB: [laughs]

CT: Now I'm helping those now--

VB: Ah!

CT: With photographs you see.

VB: Yeah. Oh I'm sure that'll be great for them.

CT: I said, now they go round the hospital with a box and I say [chuckles] with all due respect I say, if I was ill or so-called infirm and I was very elderly, as incidentally I am in my nineties. I said, and somebody show me a toaster, I'd say, yes, what about it? Put it down.

VB: [laughs]

CT: How is that going to bring my memory back? And they mentioned that they [were] going to show you the tools that the craftsmen... [pause 1 second]

VB: Mhm.

CT: Probably interesting to a man who do use them tools. But will it be interesting to you? Or your parents? Or anything like that. If they show the handle of a spade or something like that. And you're in a hospital an that's to bring your memory back. I say, no, anything you bring back as visual scenes. Like a bathing machine like they used to have in the old days.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Eh, the kiddies riding on the donkeys which you very rarely see now.

VB: Yeah.

CT: The trip out to sea, around the bell buoys, something like that.

VB: Yeah.

CT: And I say, that's what brings memories back.

**VB: I tell you the sort of thing I've got that would bring [laughs] memories back.
Erm, talking of visual. I mean things like this.**

CT: Yes.

VB: Film books from the thirties.

CT: That's right.

VB: [laughs]

CT: Buchanan. Buchanan, yeah.

VB: Jack Buchanan. Would you like to see that actually?

CT: Yes, yes, yes.

VB: That's one I've got with me.

CT: He was the ladies' favourite he was, wasn't he?

VB: I'm sure you're right though. It's the visual things that...

CT: It is all the visual stuff--

VB: Yeah.

CT: I liked, yeah. Eh because I liked the Hell's Angels, when they had all those aeroplanes.

VB: Yeah.

CT: And, I don't know if you know but eh, Howard Hughes after he was a producer, right!

VB: Yeah.

CT: And he got every blessed... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

CT: Liked Ginger Rogers too. Seen her last time on television you wouldn't recognise her, would you?

VB: No. She's changed a lot.

CT: Double chin and everything.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I know we all got to get old but there we are. Alexander Korda. [pause 3 seconds] I got one there. I'll show you in a minute.

VB: Ah.

CT: 'Goodbye Vienna'. His favourite song. Did you know that?

VB: Oh. Jack Buchanan. Yes.

CT: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] Matter of fact [inaudible] I took the recording of it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Same as old songs. I've got, I've got them all. Tons and tons which I record off there when they bring on the old ones.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Just go back. Again. Incidental you see. Don't go all out with music, or anything like that. But [inaudible] you see.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds; looking at book]

CT: Oh Jessie Matthews.

VB: Was she someone you liked?

CT: No I never did like her. I didn't like her hairdo she had. That put me against her.

VB: Oh yes.

CT: Same as did the Queen Mother or when she was Queen. I hated that hairdo.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I hated it. I didn't mind her songs. Eh, 'Over My Shoulder' and 'Dancing on the Ceiling'. And all those. And erm I met her husband. Was talking to him there but erm, he was nothing much was he?

VB: Ah. Was that Sonnie Hale?

CT: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Eh, Binnie Hale was very nice. She erm, she broadcast specially for my daughter. Erm, because her name was Nanette after 'No, No Nanette' that Binnie Hale was in.

VB: Oh! How lovely!

CT: And she broadcast on the radio. I thought that was rather nice of her.

VB: Mhm.

[pause 5 seconds]

CT: See, another one, tell you all about the music stars you see.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Again, incidentally. [laughs] Not raving on or anything like that.

VB: Mhm.

CT: All gone, gone. They're all fine looking fellas but I mean to say today they're scruffy aren't they? Well I think so. Don't know about you.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Well you battle on then, yes.

VB: Was that part of the appeal for you then as well? Talking about the visual appeal, was it the way the stars dressed? Or carried themselves?

CT: Could have something to do with it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Could have something to do with it.

VB: Yeah.

CT: It's one of those things you can't exactly explain. You either like it or you dislike a thing. But erm, you just accept it. You went to the pictures as a matter of habit. You go there every Thursday night. And erm during the courting days you'd take the girl there. And look at the pictures there. And eh, none of that back seat business like they do now. And we just went just to enjoy the pictures--

VB: Mhm.

CT: And the best one what we could think of at that time and erm, oh, here he is again. [looking at book]

VB: [laughs] So it wasn't something you overly analysed. More something to enjoy.

CT: Yeah. And even going into a garden, I like to see a nice garden too. And erm, I was in my element when I went to Bristol. First of all went round their lovely erm

zoo there. Well I say lovely 'cause they got beautiful flowers in the gardens. I don't know if you've been to Bristol.

VB: I haven't, no.

CT: But it's really, really lovely. And the cages, there in more or less glasshouse, so then they'll come right up to you and that's lovely--

VB: Yeah.

CT: And I thoroughly enjoyed it. And I said, well, now we're here we'll go and see the Great Britain. That boat that got wrecked on the Falkland Islands I think it was--

VB: Mhm.

CT: And then the biggest liner ever made. Well one went by screw propulsion. Well, course, I took photographs of that. And I said to my son-in-law at the time, I said, "Come on. We'll go over there." "Oh, I'm not going on that bloody thing. It's all rusty," he said.

VB: [laughs]

CT: He say, "You'll fall through." I say, "Come on." We went through and very gingerly. Strange to say we noticed [another man?] did fall through. But anyway, I got some dust from it. [That's gone to dust now but I took off that?].

VB: Ah.

CT: And I like seeing that too. Go down in the submarine. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing the submarine. I didn't like the mechanism or anything like that. And when the warships used to come to Yarmouth which again, I took a photo of that. I used to go [to] all the big guns and look around them. And used to get some of the sailors to

show me round. And they took me down into the engine room, I said, "Don't show me. I'm not in the least bit interested."

VB: Mhm.

CT: I want to know what speed it go to. What the length it was. What wars it fought in. And all the rest of it. Which I got. And, apart from that, I forgot all about them.
[laughs]

VB: [laughs]

CT: And just saving the lifeboat. I was interested in the lifeboat. Went on the lifeboats too. And it's lovely going out to sea in one of those, you know.

VB: Uhuh.

CT: And erm... Seeing those old [smocks?]. And erm... [Hearing?] how they go to rescue and get the people off the ship and how they lower them down. And then there's the rocket brigade. Fire the rocket, it go right over the ship bringing it in. And [inaudible] it's rather funny. I was talking to one of the men. And he said, you remember [the earner?] coming ashore. And he said he saw a sight he had never seen before in his life. He say hundreds and hundreds of rats jumped overboard. And wherever boxes had been washed over, they was on them, they'd come ashore like little old men on rafts, you know. And he said, eventually the beach was absolutely black with rats all the way into Yarmouth. I wrote about it in a book. You wouldn't believe me. I've had about half a dozen authors have quoted my writing now on that.

VB: It sounds an amazing--

CT: Yes.

VB: Thing that.

CT: And erm... I was also interested in windmills. I got the finest collection of windmills in East Anglia. I went to take this particular windmill and erm, in the first entrance I saw a lot of engravings then. I said, "What's the idea?" Well you see, in the old days there was no insurance companies. You had to insure so and so. And you went with Billy Smith, Johnny Green, Billy White. If your place caught fire that's only Billy White who you insured, would come to put that fire out you see.

VB: Ah I see.

CT: Well anyway, we went first of all, on the first floor and they show me the big wheel and that was made of applewood. See, you see you learn all these things, about that being applewood. 'Cause that withstands all sorts of pressures. And you get [inaudible]. Then you get something else. And the higher we went, the darker it got. Till we got almost to the top. So I say, "I suppose I come at the wrong time, have I?" He say, "No. Why?" "Well," I say, "Well you can have [inaudible], well you can have a Lord Mayor or something." "No," he say, "What the hell d'you want to say that for?" "Well," I say, "You've got all these lovely little fairy lights all the way round there." He says, "Fairy lights?" he says, "They're bloody rats' eyes!"

VB: Aw! [laughs] Horrible.

CT: Experience again.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Put it in a book. People loved it.

VB: Oh.

CT: Ooh! Made him shudder. It's all those sort of things.

VB: Yeah. Do you think that you learned anything from going to films?

CT: Erm, appreciating the composition of photographs like that. Yes. Oh definitely. Yes.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I think that helped a great deal. And erm, as I say, I did like photographs. But they got a new idea for a spectacle, composition, I think it's for studying. Well I shan't say studying, taking it in. And I automatically do it, you see.

VB: Mhm. Do you think that the films of the thirties were well photographed? The way they were composed.

CT: Oh they were masters in those days. Definitely, well, 'course a master in these days, I mean you see beautiful stuff on there. You know, you raise your hat to them. I mean they're really lovely. Absolute masters they are. I think they ought to be on more than they are. I mean on just a recent one there, well, I'll show it to you if you like. Ooh! [pause 5 seconds] [voice from distance] If I make a statement, I can always prove it. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

[pause 5 seconds]

CT: Here we are. Now that's the Pictorial [study?]. I think they're all marvellous. But fundamentally, they publish in the paper that erm, they were selling at I think about ten thousand pounds something.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Well I got more or less. [inaudible] Well, you read it. And then you can see.

VB: Ah.

CT: You read it.

VB: Ah! I see what you mean. There's certainly a similarity between that painting and the photograph. [laughs]

CT: [inaudible]

VB: That's rotten. [laughs]

CT: [laughs] That's just a little bit incidentally to show you, you see.

VB: Mhm.

CT: You've got, on a donkey. You've got very old-fashioned thing there. You've got the old-fashioned lifeboats there. You've got the country lanes.

VB: Mhm.

CT: You've got the old beachman. You've got lifeboatman there. You've got kiddies playing in the sand.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Everyone different. All of interest.

VB: Yeah.

CT: But erm, nothing special.

VB: Well I don't know. I think you're being a bit modest when you say that.

CT: This is what I was going to show you. It's a more modern book really--

**VB: Ah! '[Storing?] Films for Posterity'. 'The Clapperboard Book of the Cinema'.
Leslie Halliwell, Graham Murray. This looks interesting. Mhm.**

CT: But it doesn't give you [laughs] any of what you see on there.

VB: No.

CT: I thought I will get it out just to show you.

VB: Yeah. It's interesting.

CT: In the university they've got a lovely lot there. Well I dare say you've seen them.

VB: Yeah. I was actually in the archive this morning so.

CT: You were.

VB: Yes.

CT: So you know what it's like don't you?

VB: Yeah, it's wonderful.

CT: I've got a photograph of those two you see.

**VB: Ah! [laughs] Yeah. That's interesting. Were you interested in documentaries
and news films and that sort of thing?**

CT: Yes. All documentaries.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Every time.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Anything on there, listening on there. Listening or looking. Both of them.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Oh yes. You can't beat documentaries. I love them. 'Cause I don't care what they are. I just want to know about them.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I mean, as I say even mentions about *Nanook of the North*. That's a documentary. I mentioned another one on that. *Drifters* too, which is supposed to be the most famous one of all, *Drifters*.

VB: Ah yes. With John Grierson, directing.

CT: Yeah. See I even got the names you see.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I mean *Drifters* was one of them. [I've only got one fault with it?] - Yarmouth had more boats than Lowestoft.

VB: [laughs] Ah. Yeah. That's a bit of a disappointment.

CT: Yarmouth had more boats than Lowestoft. Took nearly all those. And when, I keep mentioning *The Rolling Road*, that one where she's rescued in the sea.

VB: Mhm.

CT: That had the fishing season on didn't it? Yarmouth. And erm the cameraman went right up the top. Took lovely scenes he took from there. When he was taking the film at the same time. Nobody couldn't find it. They wished they could.

VB: This is an interesting list because you've got so many different types of films.

CT: Well any question of film stars. I mean Cameron Carr, he's supposed to be a very famous actor you know. Well, he was standing, going up the, well, [inaudible] He's going on board the ship you know. And I was standing near the photographer at the time and the producer and that. "Who's that silly old bugger?" he say. "What the bloody hell he...?"

VB: [laughs]

CT: I thought, you mustn't talk to film stars like that. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] No respect.

CT: No respect whatsoever. And there should be you know. 'Cause I thought everybody went like that [demonstrates] to a film star you know. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] That's right!

CT: Little tin gods!

VB: Oh! Well I'm sure some of the ones there were treated with a bit more...

CT: Yeah.

VB: I mean what about people like Garbo? Was she someone you enjoyed?

CT: No I did not.

VB: No. You didn't like her either.

CT: No, no, no. No she's one of those rich men's pullabouts. [chuckles]

VB: Mhm. Do you think there was a difference between the British and the American films in the thirties?

CT: Oh definitely. No disputing the fact. *Blackmail* being the first. [pause 2 seconds]. Hitchcock. [laughs]

VB: Mhm.

CT: Right?

VB: Yeah. So did you prefer the...

CT: Oh I liked the, well, you can understand what they were talking about couldn't you? [laughs]

VB: Ah right.

CT: And eh, when we first saw them, the rest of the British ones when they started coming along, it was lovely to see Piccadilly, in London. After seeing New York skyscrapers.

VB: Mhm.

CT: We'd only been used to skyscrapers.

VB: Mhm.

CT: And there was only two things on there. If it wasn't a skyscraper it was a prairie with the cowboys. And eh, there we are.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Then we saw London, oh! lovely to see London you know--

VB: Mhm.

CT: Because eventually when they come to see [your own town?] well, it was better still then.

VB: Ah, yes. So did America seem quite different then to your experience?

CT: No. I never wanted to go there. Don't want to go there now.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Don't want to go there now.

VB: Yeah.

CT: To my idea they're just massive tombstones. I can't see no beauty in them.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I don't know architecture standards or anything like that. I was disappointed in Buckingham Palace the first time I saw that. But I did like the Pavilion at Brighton.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Pleasing to the eye.

VB: So the sights of America in the films never really interested you.

CT: No.

VB: No.

CT: No. No I liked *Way Down East*. Erm, all that ice coming down the river. 'Cause I seen the ice coming down the river at Yarmouth you see.

VB: Yes.

CT: How they make them jump from one bit of ice to the other I don't know how he did it but he did do it--

VB: Yeah.

CT: And rescued of course. But it was Interesting. I've seen it before you see.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Yeah.

VB: I know what you mean. 'Cause erm, part of *The 39 Steps* was filmed near where I was brought up.

CT: Yeah.

VB: And as you say, it gives you that extra interest in it.

CT: It is.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Definitely. Definitely.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I mean when I see these rescues, I mean, I've been on the lifeboats, I know what it's like. And I can appreciate how they jump up a ladder--

VB: Yeah.

CT: Or some of the crew are going to jump into the lifeboat and that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I understand all that you see. 'Cause I've been there and seen it you see--

VB: Yeah.

CT: And when I see the films that's been issued. The German U-Boat isn't it? It's called.

VB: Mhm.

CT: I know what it's like being inside. I've looked through the telescope you see. Looked out the viewfinder there and seen all the way round. And I've seen the torpedoes going out. The guns go off too.

VB: Yeah.

CT: It's lovely you see. I appreciate it. I've been there.

VB: Yeah. Do you think erm, was there a difference between...

CT: And just the same--

VB: Sorry.

CT: In *Hell's Angels*.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I mean they had the [inaudible]. And it was all out in the open. Well I been in those.

VB: So that sort of personal experience.

CT: Yeah. Again and again you see. Lovely.

VB: Mm. Do think there was a difference between the English and American film stars? In the thirties.

CT: Eh yes. All the English were da dee da dee da. And the other one was [laughs] American.

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

CT: It was nice in one way to hear, I'll call it BBC English, which it was then. And now, course, don't know what they're talking about nowadays. 'Course American phraseology and speech now has come into the English language hasn't it? Terrifically.

VB: Very much so.

CT: You think, those people know more American than what they do English.

VB: Mhm.

CT: [pause 4 seconds] Any more?

VB: I'm just trying to think. I think we've covered a lot actually. I think really the only other thing I was wanting to ask was erm, kind of generally, what part film played in your life in the thirties. I mean, how did you feel when you came out of the picture house?

CT: Well I either enjoyed it or I thought that was lousy.

VB: Right.

CT: Yeah. I saw one there. *Juno and the Paycock*.

VB: Mhm.

CT: It was an awful morbid sort of film. I don't know if you know it.

VB: I know the play, yeah.

CT: Yeah. And I hated it. And if it's a musical, the theme song runs through your mind. And, that's very nice like Broadway, *Broadway Melody*, we'll say that one. Oh and 'Sonny Boy'. That went through everybody's mind really. Nice to go through your mind. Same as if you go to any big thing like 'Cats' we'll say. Eh, it's nice. Or even 'Phantom of the Opera'.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Very nice. I can't say I like the tale about it but there we are. The music was very, very nice.

VB: So did you like things that were sort of uplifting?

CT: Yes. You got the very thing going.

VB: Yeah.

CT: You're hitting the line.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Uplifting every time.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Haven't gained much financially anyway but there we are. I have it in my own mind.

VB: Yeah.

CT: And when I see all the, I'll say so-called horrible goings-on on television. I know it's a subculture but there you are, you feel that way. I mean you hear all about

these drugs. How they're going down then they have drugs and they get boozed up. And out comes a knife, something like that. Well I say, why do they go in that company in the first place? I mean we all have fathers and mothers. We all go more or less [to] the same school. Why should one be like that and the other? And I can't understand it. That seem all wrong to me.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: I can't, I don't...

CT: It's wrong you see. Why do they want that? Why do they want drugs? Why do they want to go into the veins, and do it? Why do they want to? [pause 3 seconds] I mean even the youth today, I mean you think, they are bored. Got nothing to do. Well how can they be bored. They got television. They got every blessed thing on. Us poor buggers, we had nothing. What do we got to do [What did we have to do]? We either sit in wintertime and do fretwork--

VB: Mhm.

CT: Or play with toys or soldiers, something like that. And you couldn't go out at night-time. They got everything but they're bored and can't do anything. Why?

VB: I don't know. [laughs]

CT: You can't answer you see.

VB: I don't know.

CT: They want destroying now. Now I mean even yesterday, Sunday, destroyed a hundred seats at the erm football.

VB: Mhm.

CT: Why do they want to be destructive? I mean one team or the other's gotta win. Or either a draw. If one team wins, why should they destroy the seats? A hundred seats would probably be about umpteen thousand pounds. Why do they want to do it? Viciousness you see. How have they been brought up? Do you think there's a change in sort of social values? I honestly think, definitely films there. Because you never heard of a jail breakout or anything like that before they had it on the film. On films first of all. That was the very first thing. Then, afterwards, they had no end of times on there. Even, even, and even tell people how to hold up people and so on. They'd follow suit. And I don't know if I did tell you before. Eh, going back to the cowboy days, they say people do not follow the film. It's a lot a tripe. But it's not a lot a tripe. They do follow the films. They do follow 'em, how girls have, how they got lipstick on. How they put the eyelashes on. Or boys. We'll start smoking. We'll do this. So and so and so. Right. Well when I was a youngster, erm, in the Central Cinema in Yarmouth. And they had a cowboy called [Sting G?]. Never heard of him since. And eh, anyway they had the cowboys. And 'course he got captured by the Indians, you know. They tied him to a stake and built a fire around. Burnt the poor bugger to death till he got rescued. Well 'course, these play Cowboys and Indians. And got one of the boys and erm, that was an old shed, which he used to put barrows, nearly everybody had barrows in those days. With a horse and cart. And some bright idiot had the idea of putting the stall the other way round and setting light to it. Well in no time there was a fire like that. This poor kiddie was all tied up and he was shrieking blue murder. And fortunately, if it wasn't for a neighbour heard him shouting and rescue him, otherwise there'd either have been a death or something like that. But I mean it just proves how that can get in your mind, subconscious mind.

VB: Yeah.

CT: They do have effect.

VB: Mhm.

CT: And that proves that.

VB: Mhm. It's a good example, isn't it?

CT: Exactly. Exactly.

VB: Yeah.

CT: Haven't thought about it till I'm just telling you.

VB: Yeah.

CT: I can't understand why they say feeble and old people and so on. Why should they be [inaudible]. Like one old girl over there, she's only sixty. She don't know what day aof the year or anything. She started going out at five at night, thinking it was the morning. Now why is that?

VB: Yeah.

CT: She's only, she ain't sixty yet. But that's no excuse for those who have got the faculties too. But they do annoy me when they keep talking about these poor old frail, elderly people. I'm twenty years older than them buggers.

VB: [laughs]

CT: There we are. And I thought, well I know they can't all be [livewires?] but at the same time they surely do remember when they was a girl or when there was a boy. I mean, eh they used to have what they call cross-stitches. And they used to make those things eh, with ABC. What d'you call them?

VB: Oh yes. Like a sampler.

CT: Sampler.

VB: Yeah.

CT: You got the word.

CT: And eh, used to do all those sort of things. And eh, very good at it too. Well, I mean, you've seen samples too.

VB: Mhm.

CT: So, that's everything. Have I been of interest?

VB: Very much so. Yes. Yeah. You really have.

CT: Well if you do write a book or something. Well they wanted to know about the Boy Scout Movement. Well I was one of those too.

VB: Ah.

CT: I could get them out but I'm not gonna get them all out. And eh, they wrote a book about me. On every alternate radio. What Mr Temple said when he was a boy. And he used to climb trees. How they used to get the axes out and chop trees down. Used to climb. They used to make a little fire. Used to roast potatoes an eat them half raw and make cocoa. And all that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah.

CT: He made it read ever so nice. I thought, well, yes, I believe I told him all about that.

VB: [laughs]

CT: We used to go out in the country. Camping. When happened with the tents. How they come down. How they got dripping wet. And erm, how the cows used to come in and the 'how d'you do' and off they'd go again.

[End of Side B]

[End of interview]