

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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* Bolton, Greater Manchester, 11 May 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Dorris (Doris) Braithwaite, Vera Entwistle and Kath Browne

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn

* DB=Dorris Braithwaite, VE=Vera Entwistle, KB=Kath Browne, VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: First of one interview with Dorris Braithwaite, Vera Entwistle and Kath Browne; 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]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

DB: One fella on it from Leigh and another one from Swinton. They don't know any of the Bolton back streets, they passed my house twice before they came [inaudible]!

VE: [inaudible] [laughs]

VB: It's just to remind me. Some of the things that you said in your letters, I was wanting to ask you a bit about. Erm, the one thing was, before we actually got started talking about films. I just wanted to check erm, a couple of things. To ask everyone a couple of questions. Just really to get a bit more of an idea about everyone's background, if that's OK?

[general assent]

VB: Nothing too gruelling, you know. Just general things. Erm, so maybe I could start with yourself. Erm, was it Bolton you were born in?

DB: No, I was born in Stockport.

VB: Right, okay. And, how long were you in Stockport then?

DB: Oh gosh. Em, how long have I been here? Ten years I've been here.

VB: Right.

DB: I spent five in Gloucester.

VB: Right. And can I ask what it was your father did? What your father worked at?

DB: Yes, he was an engineer.

VB: Right. And did your mother work?

DB: No.

VB: Erm, do you have sisters and brothers?

DB: I had a brother.

VB: Right.

DB: Younger. Two and a half years younger.

VB: Okay. And, can I ask how old you were when you left school?

DB: Fourteen.

VB: That's great. Erm, do you have any strong political beliefs or--

DB: No, none whatsoever.

VB: Right. [laughs] And can I ask as well, what religion you were raised in?

DB: Church of England.

VB: That's great. Erm, and the other thing is, what year were you married in?

DB: 1947.

VB: That's great. And, what sort of work did your husband do?

DB: He was a tax collector. [laughs]

VB: Oh-h! [laughs] Ooh!

DB: [laughing]

VB: Well, I better be nice to you.

DB: [laughs]

VB: Erm, and do you have a family yourself?

DB: I have a son.

VB: That's great. As I say, that was just to fill in a bit of background. I'll just ask you the same questions. Erm, was it Bolton you were born in?

VE: Yeah.

VB: That's great. I've opened the wrong one actually. Right. And, can I ask what your father did?

VE: He was a [pylon?]

VB: Right.

DB: A what?

VE: A miner.

DB: Miner. Sorry.

VE: Yeah. What did it sound like?

DB: Pylon.

VB: [laughs]

DB: [laughs] [inaudible]

VB: Right. And did your mother work?

VE: Well no, but she took washing in.

VB: Right.

VE: Which was work then.

VB: Of course. Yeah. Well it's work being a housewife as well, isn't it?

VE: Yeah.

VB: Erm, and can I ask, did you have sisters and brothers?

VE: Yeah. One brother,

VB: Yeah.

VE: Three sisters.

VB: That's great. And how old were you when you left school?

VE: Fourteen.

VB: That's great. Erm, do you have any strong political views or?

VE: No. I think about the same.

VB: Right.

VE: Don't really matter in the end.

DB: [says something funny; inaudible] [laughs]

VB: Well, that's true. And what religion were your raised in?

VE: Church of England.

VB: That's great. And is it always been Bolton that you've lived in?

VE: Yeah.

VB: And can I ask what year you were married in?

VE: 1949.

VB: 1949. And what sort of work did your husband do?

VE: Well he started off as an engineer but he ended up as a lecturer.

VB: Right. And, do you have children yourself?

VE: Yeah, I've had two boys. I've lost one.

VB: Ah, I see. Aw, sorry to hear that.

VE: S'alright.

VB: Yeah.

VE: I've got over it now.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Well, not really but--

VB: Yeah.

VE: I wouldn't wish him back.

VB: Yeah. Well that's great. Erm, can I ask you some questions?

KB: Yes.

VB: Right. And have you always lived here?

KB: Well, apart from war service, yes.

VB: Right. Aye, I remember you were telling me about that.

KB: [laughs]

VB: And what was it your father did?

KB: Well he was a regular soldier for twenty-one years but--

VB: Ah!

KB: By the time I arrived on the scene, he'd retired. From soldiering.

VB: Yeah.

KB: He was a storeman. Warehouse storeman.

VB: **That's great. And did your mother work?**

KB: She didn't go out to work.

DB: I don't think many of them did then, did they?

KB: No, no.

DB: Really.

[inaudible; multiple voices speaking at once]

KB: Well they were in the home in this period. But she was rather surprised to find out a lot of Lancashire people, women, worked.

VB: **Mhm.**

KB: But they were people that had been in the mill and continued.

DB: Yeah.

KB: But she didn't. She didn't go out to work. After she was widowed she still didn't go out to work. So...

VB: **Right. And, did you have sisters and brothers yourself?**

KB: I had one brother ten years older than myself.

VB: **Right. And how old were you when you left school?**

KB: Sixteen.

VB: **Sixteen. That's great. And do you have any strong political views or? Ever been in a political party or anything like that?**

KB: I have never belonged to a particular political party. I'm one of these, eh, floating voters.

VB: **Right.**

KB: I have on occasion voted for all three parties.

DB: Whoever you thought was best at the time. Yeah.

[everyone laughs]

KB: If you want a, I should think I'm left of centre.

DB: She's left of centre [whispering; laughs].

VB: Okay. And what religion were you brought up in?

KB: I wasn't brought up in any.

VB: Yeah.

KB: Free will, that sort of thing.

VB: Right.

KB: Mother went to eh, eh Church of England. Congregational. And I went with her for the most part. So I should think you'd say Congregational.

DB: [Congie?], aren't you?

VB: Right.

KB: Congregational, Methodist.

VB: That's great. And have you ever been married?

KB: No.

VB: That's great.

VE: She had more sense. [laughs]

VB: Yeah. [laughs] As I say that was just to get--

DB: No, I can't say that. [laughs]

VE: I can.

VB: Erm, the other thing that I was going to ask before we get into our discussion, is, because I'm taping this and the tapes are going to be kept in Glasgow University.

DB: Keep your mouth shut. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] It is possible that at some time in the future erm, researchers, scholars might listen to it. Would you have any objections to that?

[general 'No' response]

DB: Not at all.

VB: Right. Well in that case erm, could I ask you to sign a form?

[general assent]

VB: It's just to keep everything straight and stop you from suing us basically [laughs]. Eh, so I'll give you one of these each.

DB: Thank you.

VB: And if you could just sign it on the top line there.

[inaudible; general conversation relating to form]

VB: If you want to read through it first. That's fine.

CB: I presume it's the usual thing.

VB: Sign away your worldly goods. [laughs] No, it's not. Just kidding. No, it's just as I say, to say that you don't mind other people consulting it erm...

VE: It's the eleventh, isn't it? Do you want the date in as well?

VB: Yes please. And then I'll sign it as well. Just to keep it straight. [forms being signed and handed back] Thanks very much. That's the official business, [laughs] over. Erm, I mean the first thing I really wanted to ask everyone was erm, what were the cinemas that you went to? Your earliest memories of going to the cinema? What were the cinemas in Bolton in the early thirties?

KB: Oh, there was about twenty cinemas--

VB: Really?

KB: In Bolton. There's a little poem in here that erm, ooh, illustrates how many. It's a present to you, from us.

VB: Ah! Thanks very much. Thanks a lot.

KB: And eh, it's one of our male--

VE: Stan?

KB: Yes. Contributors.

VE: Yeah, yeah.

KB: And it names every one of them. It names twenty. Now I've always thought there was twenty-two.

VE: There was more.

DB: No use looking at me 'cause I wasn't in Bolton. [laughs]

VB: We'll come back to you in a minute. Erm--

KB: But there were the sort of, the town centre ones.

VB: Yeah.

KB: And there were two built in the same year which I think was 1935. The Odeon.

VE: That's right.

KB: And the Lido. Those are old names. None, neither of those exist.

VE: No, I think one of those goes under the Cannon. Is it Cannon?

KB: What was the Cannon is the Lido. And eh, the Odeon was of course the Odeon.

DB: How many was there then?

VE: Oh, I would say about twenty-two or three.

VB: Right.

KB: There were some better cinemas. But there were a lot of what, you know, you'd call bug houses or flea pits.

[everyone laughs]

KB: And then there was some quite nice ones that were built, I think, in the thirties.

VE: Yeah.

KB: That were in the suburbs. Such as the Crompton and the one on [inaudible].

VE: The Embassy?

KB: Oh, no! That wasn't--

VE: It wasn't bad, the Embassy.

KB: Well, I went to see something there and eh—

DB: She got bitten. [laughs]

VE: That was the 'lodger'.

[everyone laughs]

KB: No, no, no. Well, I think I did. I did in most places. The Queen's was the worst for that. 'Cause I remember showing--

VE: Now that was bad, the Queen's.

KB: Yes but--

VE: I didn't think the Embassy was bad.

KB: It was either cats or rats at the Embassy.

VE: Oh, good grief.

KB: It was near the old fish market, you see. So that--

VE: Well, it would be rats then. Would be rats.

KB: Yes.

VE: Oh, I never saw any. I remember going off to see erm. I remember going to see *King Kong* at the Capitol I didn't realise till years later, they demonstrated on the television how it was made. And King Kong [the character] was about that size. [laughs]

KB: To us, you see, the pictures were real.

DB: You literally got lost in the story and it was happening.

VE: I ran all the way to the bus station.

KB: I don't think it had that effect on me. No, no. I don't think so.

VE: Oh it did me. The first one, I mean, with Fay Wray.

KB: Yes, I know about the one you mean.

VE: Yeah.

KB: You see, I had another. I remember going to a pantomime years ago. And Norman Rushton who's mentioned in that book.

DB: That's right, yeah.

KB: He was two or three years younger than me, and I must have been a toddler I think. And eh, he took us to see 'Red Riding Hood'. You know, and the wolf. Well, this little lad, he was in tears. Howling! His mum had to take him out, you see. 'Course I wanted to know why he was howling. Oh, well it was only pretence, you see. Well, I took my mother's word for it and it didn't bother me. It's only pretence, you see.

VE: Yeah.

KB: But poor Norman! [laughs] [reassure?]

VE: Nobody told him.

VB: It's interesting what you're saying though. That, you know, for some children it was like, really happening.

DB: Oh, it was, it really happened.

KB: Oh, I think it mostly did.

DB: It did. Because you got so sort of--

VE: Oh, you can have that.

VB: Thanks very much.

DB: But I remember going to see the werewolf one. And I were sleeping with my friend. And she had a dog.

VE: That'll tell you [to VB about publication]

DB: And that was howling in the night. And I was dreaming about this werewolf. I was terrified!
[laughs] I'd go to see Bing Crosby though! They'd put another. You know, they used to sometimes have two films on. They'd have a short.

[inaudible; multiple voices]

DB: And we'd gone to see Bing. And of course, on came the were, and I hated it. I couldn't do with horror stories.

VE: Oh, I used to like to being frightened. Because it was like a stimulant really. You know. It made you aware of things, you know.

VB: Well what did you make of the sort of Bela Lugosis?

VE: Oh, I liked them.

VB: You liked them?

VE: Yeah.

KB: Well, you see, I didn't.

DB: No I didn't.

KB: I deliberately didn't go but my girlfriend she did like thrillers. And I could never understand it because she was, she was frightened of statues.

DB: [laughs]

KB: I mean, her mother was frightened of statues for some reason or other. Aw, what the mother was frightened of was thunder. And she had put that down to the eh, Zeppelin warnings in the 1914/18. And when they, when she was in Chatham, when the naval dockyard was blown up. You see, so... [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

KB: So I think it brought back memories, you know. It brought it back.

DB: Well I once remember seeing a film with Spencer Tracy. I think it was called *Northwest Passage*.

VE: It was, yeah.

DB: I don't know who the other stars were but, eh, there was one chap in it and he was carrying this bag. And everybody was sort of keeping away from him. And, you know, it was a while before you realised what was, and then he brought out what was in the bag and it was a skull! [laughs] I was under the chair! I was terrified, absolutely terrified! Yes. And I've never forgotten it. [bursts out laughing] Except that it was on I think. Aw not all that long ago, on television. I didn't watch it! [laughs]

KB: Could they ask you? It's the sort of thing that I think, you need to be asked. You know, providing you're given the choice. I mean, you say you don't like it but you must admit. I mean, I didn't go because I took that decision that I didn't want to go and see it.

VB: Mhm.

KB: Deliberately. P'raps I'm like the ostrich. [laughs] But you must have had a choice.

DB: No. Because at that time, I was very, me and my friend from schooldays. I had a friend from schooldays and we were very close. We did everything together. You know, we tap danced and sang and goodness what! In the cellar and all that. And then her mother erm, decided that it was time she had a boyfriend. And there used to be a boy lived across the way. And May's mother was a hairdresser. And the boy's mother used to come across to have her hair done. And I think, between them, they hatched up this plot to get May and boy—

KB: Together.

DB: Together, you see. Well I used to go there every Saturday or she'd come to my house. We'd go the pictures or dancing and stay the night, you know. So that we wouldn't have to walk home alone. And of course, she fixed this up with Stan. And he came across this Saturday night to ask May to go out to the pictures. And she said, yes, she'd go but I'd have to go too. [laughs] And she would insist I went as well. Well, of course, he must've chosen the film. And this was the film. And I was under the seat.

KB: Aw, I see.

DB: You see. So that's how... [laughs] She led me into another one too. I saw *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which I didn't like.

KB: No, neither did I.

VE: No, I enjoyed that.

DB: It was macabre.

KB: I went to, for literary reasons [said in posh voice] to that film. [laughs]

[everyone laughs]

DB: I didn't like it.

VB: It is as you say, it's interesting, you know, how people choose what pictures to go to. I mean, how did you choose? Apart from if you were both going.

[everyone laughs]

VB: Did you go to more or less anything?

[inaudible; multiple voices at once]

KB: We went for the stars.

DB: Because they used to have books like the 'Picturegoer' and eh, 'Film Pictorial', telling you what sort of films were coming. And sometimes, some of the films were on. Well they used to, some of the pictures had a fresh film twice a week. You know, you got Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and then Thursday, Friday and Saturday. But it would tell you what was on and you'd think, "Ooh! I fancy that!" Or, what have you, you know.

VB: So reading the, as you say, things like the 'Picturegoer', you get an idea of the--

VE: Yeah, yeah. Of what was coming, you know. It used to say, 'Forthcoming Attractions'.

DB: You'd have your favourites as you got older, you know.

KB: I mean, if Bette Davis was on, we had to go to that of course. Edgar always wanted to go to the Bette Davis. And I went under protest, but looking back. Now I see some of the ones that, you know. I think she was--

DB: She was a good actress, though.

VE: Aw, she was.

DB: She was. Really a good actress.

KB: My favourite from the point of view of an actor. Male actor. Was Spencer Tracy.

VB: Mhm.

DB: Oh, yes, yes.

KB: That was another one. 'Cause I remember having a hell of a row with a male friend, over James Stewart. [laughs] He said he didn't. Oh, I don't, he was soft, you know.

VB: Aw!

KB: Well it caused a great rift.

DB: It caused a rift. [laughs]

VE: So he went off the list, did he?

KB: Oh no! He still kept on. 'Cause he was a family friend actually, as well.

VB: Was it James Stewart that was in that film, eh, that cowboy film where he does whittling with wood and things. Was that James Stewart? I always get James Stewart mixed up.

VE: He's very tall and lanky.

VB: Eh—

VE: He's very tall and lanky.

KB: He drawls. [imitates the drawl]

VB: That's it, yeah. I can't remember what this film is I'm thinking of.

DB: She's got one.

VB: I've got one. [laughs] Erm, you know, it's like a sort of, it's a western. But in a way it's a take-off of westerns. Erm, he comes to the town as a sheriff and he's got all these habits that aren't very, sort of manly. He makes, he does carving with wood. Erm, and he has to sort of clean up the town but he's not, he doesn't drink.

VE: Aw—

[everyone trying to think what the film is]

VB: I mean, he's very. The town think he's a bit soft but of course he isn't really.

VE: I know which one--

VB: It's a thirties film as well.

KB: A thirties film?

VB: Yeah. Oh, I hate that, [laughs] when you can't think of it.

KB: Well, I never used to go to see eh, thirties, eh, westerns.

VB: Yes.

VE: Well you nearly always got a western, didn't you?

KB: But I must say. Can I just broach off from the thirties and say something about the forties. Because, when I, during war service, I met up with some Yanks, you see. Well, all my [images?] of Yanks were in the pictures, you know.

DB: Ye-es. [laughs]

KB: Sort of like Gary Cooper, you know.

DB: [laughs]

KB: The ones that I saw was like that woman that was on the mystery voice on the radio. They were all smaller, well not smaller than me, well I mean! Smaller in height. And dark, very dark. You know. And a [tucked out?] of the corner of the mouth. They didn't look particularly clean. Because I, my idea of a handsome man was somebody that was fair with a fresh complexion. Totally. English or Swedish, you know.

VB: Mhm.

KB: And all that we got, all that we saw were American Merchant Navy people. And I think they came from you know, places, erm, well not... Probably like Tilbury docks.

DB: Were they in films? Were they in films?

KB: No, they came over here, you see, and I was really disillusioned.

DB: Oh.

VB: [laughs]

KB: I was disillusioned. Oh, I think we're talking about the effect of what we saw on films on us.

VB: Yeah. It's interesting. So your whole idea of an American was—

KB: Oh, it was--

DB: See I met the other kind. They were fair, you know.

KB: Yes, well—

VB: Mhm.

DB: And tall and... Very Yankee, of course.

VB: Mhm.

DB: Chewing gum. But there were some very nice ones. You know, they treated you as though you were a princess. They really knew how to treat a girl. Well, most of them did anyway. [laughs] The ones I knew.

VE: Well I remember going on holiday, at eighteen, and you know how you are at eighteen, looking out of the window. "Hiya, babe. Hiya, babe."

VB: [laughs]

VE: "Come here, come here in this compartment immediately!" And while I was on holiday I got mumps. And she said, "That's through looking out of the window at the damn Yanks!"

[everyone laughs]

VE: So I never actually got to talk to one.

[everyone laughs]

KB: Oh well, there were a lot of Canadians in Surrey. In fact, you had a job to go out with a British fella. Because they were all Canadians down there. They were nice.

DB: Well going back to my friend, this friend of mine. She had one, they had one billeted on them.

VB: Yeah.

DB: And erm, I used to treat their house as though it was my own, you know. I used to walk in and I saw the front door open. Bang, knock, knock, you know. "Hello, anybody there? May, where are you?" And of course this Yank comes. He looked at me and I looked at him, you know. "What are you doing here?" sort of thing. And he'd been billeted with them. And eh, through that, 'cause she was going out with a boy. Not the same boy. Another one. She was going out. I think she was engaged, actually. So to make a foursome I was with the Yank, you see. He was very, very nice. And erm, we used to go to the pictures and baths and dancing, you know.

VB: I was interested. I mean, how often did you actually go to the pictures?

KB: Twice a week.

VE: Eh, well, three times for me with Saturday afternoon.

KB: Yes, well I used to go Wednesday.

DB: Tuesdays and Thursdays.

KB: 'Cause I wasn't home on Wednesdays. And Fridays. Sometimes, 'cause I did shorthand lessons.

[VE]: Oh, I had my Saturday morning.

VB: I remember as well that you were mentioning going to the pictures with the school. Was that right?

[general assent]

DB: It was an education.

[general assent]

KB: The first one as I say that I went to that I can remember was *Romeo and Juliet* with Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard.

VE: Ooh, you were lucky.

KB: Sorry, I'm telling a lie. It was *90° South* and that was the one about Scott of the Antarctic. And it was a daft documentary really.

VB: Mhm.

DB: I mean they took you to films really that children weren't interested in.

KB: I read this bit about this Norma Shearer do, and one girl, she came, and that was in the days before we had paper handkerchiefs and she borrowed a hankie, handkerchief off of seven people and she had to bring these seven nicely-laundered handkerchiefs back. And she was the only one that. Well—

DB: She cried.

KB: She'd obviously been affected very emotionally. I mean eh, it was definitely. But you see, Edna and I we had, I don't know.

DB: You were hard. You were hard.

[everyone laughs]

VE: You're not a romantic.

KB: I can remember seeing [one at the end of the forties?], oh, the one. I've forgotten what it's called. Erm, Fredric March, Shirley Temple. And it was the story of the chap with no hands. 'Till We

Meet Again' is it? [probably referring to *The Best Years of Our Lives*] Or something. It was well known. But it's the forties. Eh, after the war.

VE: Oh, we're in the thirties now Kath.

KB: Yes.

VE: Get back into the thirties, please.

KB: Yes, sorry. I'm wandering.

DB: You're wandering.

VB: [laughs] It's interesting 'cause I mean, it's nice to know how your tastes develop and things as well. 'Cause that's, know I'm interested in the films you have liked since the thirties. But mainly, obviously, about the thirties but eh. It is interesting to hear about these other movies too.

[laughs] Eh, I mean before you came in I was having a look at some of these photos of eh, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald. I mean, I wonder if I could just have a wee peek at these again 'cause--

KB: Yeah.

VB: I just had a wee quick glance at them. Eh, are these favourites of everyone? Eh, Nelson Eddy and?

VE: Well--

DB: A majority of people.

VE: A majority--

KB: There was a great following to see Alice Faye.

VB: Oh Alice Faye, yes. Sorry. [inaudible] Did you have any favourites?

KB: Well I mentioned to Dorris last week, actually, when we met. Eh, there was something came on the television in Colombo. John Payne.

VE: John Payne.

DB: That's right.

KB: He's weathered rather well.

DB: He was in quite a few of the. In fact I've got her and John Payne in *Week-End in Havana*.

VE: Was it in eh, was it *Stage Door Canteen*?

DB: Yes, there was a *Stage Door Canteen*.

KB: That was Bette Davis.

VE: *Stage Door Canteen*?

DB: There was a few, yeah.

VE: *Stage Door Canteen*?

KB: Yes.

DB: There was a few stars in it.

VE: Oh.

VB: I mean these are, as I was saying, they're lovely sort of personal photos these as well, 'cause signed "To Dorris. Happiness Always." And they're really quite personal messages.

DB: Yes. I mean, they're not really. I shouldn't think they're typical. I'm sure they're not.

VB: No, they're not. They're not sort of glamour shots.

DB: And when she wrote, she used to say, "I've heard from May." You know, like, that was my friend.

VB: A-ah.

DB: And she was very like her actually.

VB: Yeah.

DB: And then she'd say, "I've sent a photograph for Eric", you know. That was a chap that I used to write to.

VB: Yeah. It's nice to have that sort of personal attention, isn't it?

DB: Yeah, yeah.

VB: I mean having these photos right from her early movies right up to the quite recent ones as well.

KB: Shall I confess something? The only one that I've got a photograph of that I sent for. It wasn't films. It was radio and it was Arthur Askey, 'Bandwagon', in about 1938. And the next one was, eh, in the forties--

[laughter in background]

KB: At the end of the forties when Oreste Kirkop. He was a Maltese and he sang with the Carl Rosa Opera Company. And eh, eventually, he went out to eh, Hollywood and he made one film.

VE: *The Vagabond King*.

KB: *The Vagabond King*. But he never got any further.

DB: No.

KB: But he had a lovely voice.

DB: He had a lovely voice.

VB: Yeah.

KB: But, you see, that's another--

VB: Did you listen to the radio a lot then, when you were growing up?

KB: Oh yes.

[general assent]

DB: No television so we listened to all the big bands.

KB: And we had a, we had a gramophone as well.

DB: D'you know who was on the other day? George Elrick.

KB: Yes!

DB: Did you see him? [laughter]

VB: So did you listen to the erm, songs from the pictures as well then?

[general assent]

VE: Everybody sang and whistled.

DB: You hear nothing now.

KB: They passed a remark about the VE celebrations about, oh, they're all singing! And they all know the words! And I thought, oh, we did, know the words.

DB: Yes, of course we knew the words. [laughs]

VE: [sings] 'Got to hang out our washing on the Siegfried line.'

VB: Oh, these are just great though. I mean, Caeser Romero. Was he someone that you--?

DB: [laughs]

VE: Oh, oh. Tall, dark and handsome.

DB: Yes.

KB: He was more in B pictures, wasn't he? Really?

VE: Yeah.

DB: Yes. He wasn't in eh, he was in a few--

KB: Yes, I s'pose you do know the difference between A and B pictures, yes. You will do. You should do, if you're taking... But I mean, you have somebody like erm--

DB: He played comedy, he could have played more leading roles really--

KB: Yes.

DB: Because he was handsome.

VE: Oh he was.

DB: And eh, but he played a secondary role. Like with Carmen Miranda in the musical ones. He always sort of ended up with her.

VB: Mhm. Right. Yeah. It's a nice one of him with his wee dog anyway.

[general assent]

VB: Eh, and Orson Welles here as well.

KB: Aw, they didn't have him for his looks, surely.

VB: No.

VE: Oh-h. I thought he was Mr Rochester to the last.

DB: Rochester.

VE: In *Jane Eyre*. Was it *Jane Eyre*?

DB: Ye-es. I thought he was wonderful in that.

[inaudible; multiple voices at once]

VE: There's never anybody, I think his personality--

DB: His personality was eh, very good.

KB: [whispers something to VB; inaudible]

VB: Yes.

KB: [inaudible]

VB: Yeah. Were you a keen reader as a child as well?

KB: Oh yes. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

DB: Yeah, read? Oh yeah.

VB: Mhm.

DB: I read 'Jane Eyre' when I was about eight, I think, and I was terrified of the mad woman.

[explosive laughter]

KB: I remember hearing that on the radio too. And Gladys young who was an actress at the beginning of the war. Well, she was, you know. She used to play these really melodrama, melodrama things. Mother loved, she used to go before the 1914 war, I'm going further back. And she used to see Matheson Lang. He was a, he was a well-known stage actor, she used to go and see him, you see. That's where I think--

DB: Where you've got the theatre from?

VE: Well it was the same with my mother.

KB: Of course it was on the stage. He ran away, he ran away to join the... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

KB: Only at holidays and mother never went. She never went--

DB: Oh my mother took me, we went every Friday night. It was a regular thing.

VE: I used to go with my sister.

DB: But eh, I don't remember going with friends. I didn't go on a Saturday afternoon much. I preferred the, didn't like having to wait the following week. [laughs]

VB: Right. That's what I meant to ask as well. What were the cinemas that you were going to?

Where you were growing up?

DB: Well, erm, I suppose they were more or less all the same in each town. You had the grubby ones--

VB: Mhm.

DB: And the fleapits.

KB: Did you have an Odeon in eh, Stockport.

DB: We had eh, we had a Palladium. We had the Ritz. That was, that was built later. We had the Cinema, the Prince's. Em, the Wellington. The Don. The Alexandra.

KB: Well they all sound like independents to me.

DB: Well, you know, they were sort of all little. To the different areas. I used to follow them from town.

KB: Yeah.

DB: Right to wherever it was, I would follow them, you know. Till we sort of got to erm. Offerton, where I lived was just a little--

KB: Place.

DB: Cinema. The Curzon. And then, towards Hazel Grove was another one. The, I forget what that was called. Then they built the Davenport. And actually the Ritz was the first and that really was a super cinema. And, *Gone with the Wind*. I saw *Gone with the Wind* there. It was big, airy. You know. So much different to the little small ones where you'd get them breaking down half the time. And everybody started [stamping?].

[general laughter]

DB: And then they built the Davenport which is still going today. And it's a cine-, it's a stage.

KB: What was that one that you used to, what was it? You sat behind a screen. It went to the 'Navada' later on [referring to the Navada skating rink]?

VE: The Regal.

KB: The Regal.

VE: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Ah.

KB: It went to, it went to a skating--

VE: Yeah. And then it got burned down. And you used to go through that. Erm, it was like a curtain that you went through. And if you let the light in you're, "Close those curtains!"

VB: [laughs]

VE: If you let the light in, you see, you couldn't see, you couldn't see the screen, the screen would go.

DB: Eh, as I was saying, then the Davenport one is still going to this day and they have all different stars. You know, going doing stage shows. And the Christmas pantomime. They had two out of 'Neighbours', come all the way, you know, to do a [laughing] pantomime. And eh, but it is a lovely cinema.

VB: Yeah.

DB: And twice a year they give a show, the amateur dramatic society, you know. Put a show on each year. And my son used to be in the operatic.

VB: Right.

KB: Aw there were certain ones like the ABC--

DB: And then they had the organ, didn't they? They had the organ come up. The organ used to come up. And they would all sing and on the screen would come the words.

VE: That was like in the interval, you know.

DB: Aw it was lovely.

VE: Yeah.

DB: I used to love that.

VB: Did they ever have any of these, sort of go as you please or eh, competitions for singing or anything?

VE: Eh, no. Not until the late eh, when television was coming in. They sort of--

VB: Right.

KB: Though I mean, Laurel and Hardy. [inaudible; multiple voices speaking]

VB: Really?

KB: Yes, oh yes. But, you see, the day had gone, if you know what I mean. That was in the forties, I think.

VE: Yeah.

KB: And they came and did a pantomime, didn't they?

DB: Yes because Harry Secombe came to the 'Grand'.

KB: Well the 'Grand' was always the live theatre.

VB: Right.

KB: And then there was the Theatre Royal which was pictures and it went on to eh, comic.

VE: I saw the ballets there, at the Theatre Royal.

KB: The ballets. Yes, so did I.

VE: Yeah.

KB: That was during the war, though.

VE: And then there was the Hippodrome.

KB: The Hippodrome. Yes. That was eh, plays.

VE: Plays, yeah.

DB: You see, you were lucky there because we had to go to Manchester to see any of the shows.

VB: Right.

DB: Opera or ballet.

KB: I used to say that I knew London better than I knew Manchester till I started working, after the war. Sort of on the outskirts.

VE: I've never been to London, so I wouldn't know. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

KB: You haven't?

VE: No.

KB: Well, you see, it was one of those things 'cause I was there pretty frequently--

VB: **That's interesting though. Because when you were going to the cinema, was it mainly locally or--**

VE: Yeah, yeah.

DB: Yes it was really. The odd occasion we would go up to Manchester but it had to be sort of something special because of getting a bus back.

VB: **Right.**

DB: The film was on till say, half past ten, and the last bus was half past ten. So, frequently, we'd miss the end. [laughs]

VB: **Oh dear.**

VE: Oh we were lucky there really, weren't we?

KB: Yes.

VE: There were so many picture places within the town. You know, short bus ride and you'd the choice of about half a dozen.

VB: **Yeah.**

KB: And you could walk home anyway.

VE: And you could walk it home, you know. It wasn't eh--

DB: And you never used to think anything about walking, did you?

VE: It used to take about twenty minutes from town, that was all.

KB: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause I mean, I was wondering, you know, when you sometimes went into Manchester was that to the sort of big cinemas like the Gaumont?

[general assent]

DB: But they were few and far between. Mostly we went to the shows.

VB: Right.

KB: Yeah.

DB: It was the shows that drew.

VE: Yes.

DB: Because they were wonderful shows.

VE: I think we had everything though, in Bolton, really, didn't we? Because we had the Theatre Royal and the Hippodrome. Plus all the picture houses beside. You know, the cinemas beside.

KB: Yeah, they had the, I was going to say about the Theatre Royal. But I didn't say that later on we got all the erm, European ones, you know.

VB: Mhm.

KB: And I belonged to the eh, Film Society. But I didn't belong to that in the thirties.

VE: No.

KB: I don't think it. I'm not sure when it started actually. But it was definitely going after the war. 'Cause I went for about fifteen years. Saw the Czech, Czechs and eh, Sophie Loren's early pictures.

VB: Yeah.

KB: Get me back to the thirties.

VE: Get me back to the thirties, please.

VB: Erm, just going through this album. I mean there's a lovely one here--

KB: Jeanette MacDonald, yes.

VB: Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. Erm, that I know were favourites. [laughs]

KB: Yes, as I say, I enjoyed them. And I think I went to most of the films, but I'm not an addict.

VB: Right.

DB: They were romantic. Pure romance and, you know, beauty really.

VE: Oh, I'm gone. For two hours. You'd gone!

DB: None of the sort of eh, sex and you know, violence. I mean, it was just romance.

VB: Yeah.

KB: When eh, Ginger Rogers died, and of course they showed one or two of her films with eh, Fred Astaire.

VB: Mhm.

KB: And I said, well, when I was, you know, in the, in the thirties, I used to imagine I could get up and dance with him, you know. And I said, "Blow me! Watching him again, I still felt I could get up and dance." And I certainly couldn't get up and dance!

[all laugh]

VE: But it just made you feel like that.

KB: It made me feel like that.

VE: You know you felt that you could just get up and--!

VB: Yeah. So, as you say, you were totally--

VE: Involved. Involved in it, you know.

KB: Yes.

DB: Yes.

VE: For two hours. I mean, that was it.

KB: Did you see any of those Warner Brother pictures?

DB: I mean, he sang to me.

VE: I was sat there and he was singing to me, actually. [laughs]

KB: Now these had social content. Now the question is [laughter] did you see any? Paul Muni. 'I was a member of a Chain Gang' [referring to *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*]

VE: Oh yeah! Paul Muni in em--

KB: 'Louis Pasteur' [referring to *The Story of Louis Pasteur*]

VE: 'Louis Pasteur'. Oh that was a marvellous film.

DB: You've gone off what she was talking about. [laughs]

VB: No it is interesting. I mean, I think both these subjects are interesting. We'll maybe come back to that in a sec. Erm, but you know you're saying that when you saw these it was like he was singing to you.

VE: To you.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Just you personally. You were gone. Hu-uh! [intake of breath]

KB: It didn't get me like that.

VE: Oh! My sister used to be... [imitates sister's facial expression]

KB: No, I mean, I wasn't gone as you put it.

VE: She'd be nodding when he was speaking. She would be nodding as though like, "Oh, yeah."

DB: [laughs]

KB: But I liked Bing Crosby. But I don't think I was ever, you know, that gone.

VB: Mhm.

KB: I think I must've been much, you know, hard-headed.

VE: She hasn't any--

DB: Well, you see, when I saw the first film, it was his voice! I didn't even see him. It was just his voice. And I was thirteen. And it was, it just did something. It still does to this day. There's something in his voice that's, you know. Erm, [pause 2 seconds] I don't know.

VE: He pulled you.

DB: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause some of these stills that you were showing me as well from these films like *Maytime* and *Rose Marie* and--

VE: Well she's taped quite a lot of them. And every time I see *Maytime*. [laughs] And yet you've seen it so many times.

KB: I think I liked *Naughty Marietta* the best. You know.

DB: [whispers] Oh, *Maytime*.

VE: *Maytime's* lovely.

DB: It was sheer beauty.

VB: I've never seen *Maytime*, actually.

DB: Oh you must come!

VE: You'll have to come.

DB: Next time you come I'll put in on for you. You must! I've got every film.

VB: What's the storyline? Don't spoil the ending for me then. What happens in these films?

DB: Well, she's an opera singer. And this chap, who's John Barrymore erm, is her teacher.

VE: Teacher.

DB: And he's given all his pupils up just to, you know, see that--

VE: Tutor her.

DB: She can get to the top. And she eventually gets to sing with the erm, what would you call him Louis of eh? No, Napoleon, wasn't it? Of, not Napoleon. The song. Joseph, Napoleon Joseph or something like that. What was his name? It wasn't Napoleon and Josephine. It was the other one. Louis Napoleon.

KB: Yes.

DB: Louis Napoleon. And she gets to sing with him and that's the highlight, you know. And he asks her to marry him. And eh, she's so excited. She accepts. She doesn't love him and he knows that. But she's so grateful that he's got her to where she wanted. And she's so excited, she can't sleep. So she decides she'll get a carriage to take her just riding round the park. And the horse breaks loose. And she's left while the fella goes running after the horse. And from a little cafe you can hear this voice singing. There's like a party going on. 'Course it's him, you see, singing. And he sings 'The Fat Prima Donna', doesn't he? [laughs] And of course, she's the Prima Donna, you see. So she goes in, listening. And eh, he gets carried to where she sat. Starts a conversation. And eh, then there's a raid by the police. And he runs, oh! He makes her promise that eh, she'll have lunch with him the following day. And he told her where he lives. And said, "You must come." So, she turns up. And then, he goes to see her in the opera. 'Course, he's fallen in love with her by this time. And then he asks her to go to this May Day fair. And that was, it was a lovely scene that.

VE: Beautiful.

DB: You know, it's all the typical old-fashioned May Day fair. And eh, of course, they finish up by singing 'Will You Remember'. And eh, then he finds out that she's going to marry eh, the other fella. So I won't tell you any-- [laughs]

[general laughter]

VB: Oh, I'll have to see it now.

VE: Oh, you'll have to see that. It really is a nice film.

DB: Well, it's all the blossom.

VE: Yeah. The may blossom.

DB: You know, the blossom.

VE: It's beautiful.

DB: Well that little one, it shows you [referring to picture].

VB: Yeah.

DB: That's it.

VB: Ah right. Oh that's lovely.

DB: Still got a big one of that in my lounge.

VB: That's a beauty. It really is. Beautiful dress as well.

DB: Oh, she had some gorgeous dresses.

VB: I see what you mean about the blossom and everything. It looks great.

VE: It's beautiful, yeah.

DB: Should have been in colour. And then they changed it.

VB: Ah right.

DB: Irving Thalberg should have directed it. And he was doing it in colour. And then he died.

VE: He died.

VB: Mhm.

DB: And of course, it came to a standstill. And Louis B. Mayer decided it was costing too much. It was all re-wri, actually, the script and that was all re-written. And the story was altered. But it was a nicer story--

VB: Yeah.

DB: Than the original one. 'Cause the original one was by erm... [pause 2 seconds] Ooh, who wrote the music? Eh, Romberg.

VB: Right.

DB: Romberg. And it was a different, you know, they'd altered it. All they kept in was the May Day scene. And I think, 'Will You Remember'.

VB: Yeah.

KB: Was that eh, Victor Herbert?

DB: No. Victor Herbert was *Naughty Marietta*.

VB: Ah.

KB: Friml.

VB: Cause you were saying that--

DB: No. Friml was erm, *Rose Marie*.

VB: Right. You were saying that you preferred *Naughty Marietta*.

KB: Yes, I think I did.

VB: Yeah.

KB: But that was the first one I saw. Well, I mean, I know it's heresy to eh, I have expressed that before. I thought Nelson Eddy was a bit of a wooden actor.

DB: You're as bad as [inaudible].

VB: [laughs]

DB: You can't say that because he wasn't wooden at all! [laughs] He wasn't wooden at all.

KB: [inaudible] the foreign to the British scene, which [inaudible].

DB: You want to see him, his whole body's going when he's singing! His whole body is going!

KB: Is it?

DB: Yeah.

KB: Right.

DB: I mean in *Naughty Marietta* you can't fault him really, in *Naughty Marietta*. For his first film. I mean, he wasn't an actor. He says himself he wasn't an actor. And so, I think his films, you know.

KB: Uhuh. No. I'm just expressing--

DB: I know. But there's a lot said--

[DB and KB speaking over each other]

KB: I'm just saying it, actually.

[laughter in background]

DB: And we all, you know, we all can't see how they can say that at all. 'Cause I've watched and watched, you know.

KB: Well, I mean, I think there's something in certain people on the screen.

DB: Oh yeah, yeah.

KB: But I mean, it comes over to you. And only to you.

DB: Yeah, yeah.

KB: I mean David Farrar is British. He was in the eh *Black Narcissus*. Yes. Well, he was what you might call a solid--

DB: Yeah, but I mean, look at Gary Cooper. They praised Gary Cooper and to me he was, he was wooden if anybody was.

KB: Oh.

DB: I mean all you got was , "Yip. Yip."

KB: Aw well. I thought he was quite good in his comedy roles.

DB: Yeah.

VE: Yes he was. Yeah. He was. And I liked him in *Beau Geste*--

KB: Oh, well I didn't see it.

VE: Very good in that. He was very good in that.

DB: [laughs]

VB: Well what about--

KB: Ronald Colman, of course. We should have Monica here.

DB: Oh, we could have Monica here.

KB: Yeah, yeah. She thought eh--

DB: Ooh! Lost to Ronald Colman.

VB: Oh-h.

DB: I've just read Ginger Rogers's erm, life story. And she mentions, she was in one with Ronald Colman. And, ooh, she said, he was wonderful. You know. And eh, in that film. I saw it not long ago actually on television, called *Lucky Partners*. And he plays that with a sort of a smile as you might say. You know. A little bit different to what he usually plays.

VE: And what about *The 39 Steps*?

KB: Oh-h!

DB: [laughs]

VB: Oh, it's wonderful that.

KB: And *The Ghost Goes West*, I liked that too.

VE: Oh yeah, yeah. They were very good them.

VB: Who was the woman in *The 39 Steps*? Was it Madeleine Carroll?

VE: Yeah.

DB: Madeleine Carroll.

KB: She was beautiful, wasn't she?

VB: Yeah.

DB: My husband's favourite, she was.

VB: Yeah.

KB: And typically, you know, British. English.

DB: All blonde and lovely complexion.

VB: Yeah.

KB: And of course, Deborah Kerr went into that, didn't she? Later. And Monica, who I've just mentioned, was taught, wasn't she? By, what was it--

DB: A relative.

KB: A relative. Bristol she came from.

VB: **Mhm. So Ronald Colman was one of her favourites?**

DB: Oh yeah. She wrote one, didn't she?

VE: Was it *Cimarron*?

DB: Yeah.

VB: I was watching one of his films on video quite recently. The one where, oh, this is going to be my day for not remembering titles of films, I think. But the one where he's with erm, the woman in it, called *Cigarette*. Eh, it's that French--

KB: Oh. The one with Claudette Colbert.

VE: Yeah.

DB: That was the only thing I remembered where she dies in his arms, you know. I couldn't remember any--

VB: **Oh! But it was so sad. You thought, I wish he'd gone for her. [laughs]**

DB: They were lovely films though.

VB: **Yeah.**

DB: They really made some super films.

KB: Yes. And Claudette still looks quite good. On the stage, I saw her--

DB: Yes.

VB: **Oh really?**

KB: Yes. Eh, yes. Within this last ten years, it was. She was with Rex Harrison. Aren't we all? And on, I paid about thirty shillings. Aye, up in the gods.

VE: Really? Thirty shillings? Up in the gods?

KB: Yes. It was a special preview price. And I'd gone up to a WEA [Workers' Education Association] meeting, and I thought, well I'll see what I can get in the theatre.

VE: Thirty shillings.

DB: [laughs]

VB: Oh-h.

KB: Ah. Well one pound fifty.

VE: Well, thirty shillings. That was my wage three times over. When I left school.

KB: Well, when I went to the opera, that was 1952. Two pounds fifty. All my relatives thought I was--

VE: Crazy.

KB: Raving mad.

VE: You we-ere!

VB: [laughs]

KB: Yes. 'Cause I sat there--

DB: You paid, see--

VE: Well, you only get what you pay for.

VB: That's true.

KB: Why not? And I only got [inaudible] the whole day.

VE: Oh well! Oh well!

VB: [laughs]

DB: [laughs]

KB: Anyway, get back to the thirties.

VB: Yeah. We were on Claudette Colbert there. You know, as you were saying you saw her.

KB: Yes.

VB: Was she someone that was quite popular?

KB: Oh yes. Very popular.

DB: *It Happened One Night* with Clark Gable.

VE: She could do both, couldn't she? Serious and comedy, you know. She was very good in both, you know.

KB: Yes. Well she was one I could--

VE: Yeah, yeah.

KB: But I liked Carole Lombard.

VE: Yeah.

KB: You know. The one that married in the end eh--

DB: Clark Gable.

KB: Clark Gable. And I used to like Bill Powell. Now I used to think he was attractive--

VE: Oh William Powell.

DB: No, he was all right but I didn't go for fellas with [moustaches?]. [laughs]

KB: One of the funniest things that I saw, and it's been reissued under a different name.

DB: Yeah.

KB: *Libeled Lady*.

DB: Mhm.

KB: And it was William Powell, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy and Jean Powell [probably referring to Jean Harlow]. And it was really absolutely wonderful. Really.

VE: Did you see *The Rains Came*?

KB: Yes.

VE: Last week.

KB: Oh no! I didn't see it last week. [laughs]

VE: Oh. Last week it was on television.

KB: Tyrone Power.

VE: Tyrone Power.

DB: Oh yes, he was another.

KB: Now I thought he could act with his eyes. Definitely. Yes, yes.

DB: Yeah.

VE: Oh yeah.

DB: No Alice Faye said he was a very nice man. She said he really was nice. You know they were quite good friends. I think, wasn't it in 'Chicago'? [referring to *In Old Chicago*]

KB: That's right.

DB: She was in *Old Chicago* with Don Ameche. I wanted Don Ameche. [laughs] Because, Tyrone Power played a sort of--

KB: Yes, but he wasn't a, you know--

DB: Yeah. But he played a nice part. He always played a nice part.

KB: Yes, yes.

DB: And I think he was a nice man too.

KB: They were probably all very nice men.

DB: No, some weren't. Some weren't.

KB: What about Cary Grant?

VE: Oh! That's what I've been trying to...

DB: [inaudible] She was going to be a librarian actually. [laughs]

VE: I've got him here in *The Awful Truth*. And Katharine Hepburn, *Bringing Up Baby*.

KB: Yes. [inaudible]

VE: Jessie Matthews in *Evergreen*.

DB: Oh yes. I was Jessie Matthews doing her big long kicks. [laughs]

KB: Yes.

VE: Bet she can't do them now.

DB: She had wonderful, oh no.

VE: She had. Wonderful kick.

DB: A wonderful dancer.

VE: She was.

KB: One of my uncles, every time he met Ma, later on, you know. "Come on, Liz. Give us one, give us one of your high kicks." 'Cause she was five foot eight and thin in those days, you see.

VE: There you were

KB: [inaudible] And there she was, kicking her leg up. Can-Can business.

DB: Yeah. Now we get to Eleanor Powell, don't we?

KB: Yes. There again, apart from her dancing--

DB: No, no. She'd not much personality. But her dancing was absolutely--

VE: No. I remember you saying, "Oh look!"

DB: Oh, it was awful!

KB: Ann [Reinking?] was always a very good dancer.

DB: Yeah.

KB: Still is.

VE: Yes she is. Yeah.

DB: She came on. Did you see eh, Debbie Reynolds's life? She came on 'This is Your Life' for Debbie Reynolds. You know.

VB: Ah.

KB: And of course, Howard Keel.

DB: Oh and Howard Keel, yeah.

KB: He's Lacey, isn't he?

DB: He's Lacey, yeah.

VE: We're coming into 'The Colbys'. Go back, go back.

VB: I mean you mentioned earlier on, you just mentioned Clark Gable and I think somebody mentioned Leslie Howard.

KB: Oh yes. I liked him.

VE: *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

DB: Yes. *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

KB: Well of course, I'd read all the books.

VE: "They seek him here, they seek him there. Those Frenchies seek him everywhere."

KB: Barry K. Barnes, [next few words drowned out] but he wasn't half as good [possibly referring to *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*].

DB: Pardon?

KB: Barry K. Barnes.

VE: Oh, no, no.

DB: No. No-one seems to do it just when you see that first--

VE: The model.

DB: They never seem to do it the same.

KB: Has anybody mentioned W.H. Mooring apart from me?

VB: No.

KB: Oh I used to think he was a marvellous writer in the 'Film World'. In the 'Film Weekly', not 'Film World'.

VB: Yeah.

KB: Yes. He was an English journalist who lived in America and acted as, well, you know. Like Alastair, what you call it, [does now?]. He was very good.

VB: So was he someone that you--

KB: I particularly enjoyed reading him. Yes.

[background noise; rustling]

VE: See that's what's I'm trying to tell you about.

VB: Oh! Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy on the cover of 'Picturegoer'.

VE: But look at the, that's the 'Picturegoer'.

DB: Yeah, yeah. I've still got that. I've got that 'Picturegoer'.

VB: Really?

KB: You could send off for erm--

DB: The photos.

KB: Photos. Which I did but I think I mostly passed them on.

DB: The trouble was they were dear. They were a shilling [five pence] then. And a shilling was your spending money.

VE: Yeah.

VB: Did they get passed around a bit 'cause--

[general 'Oh no!'; laughter]

DB: You hoarded them. I think I've got about half a dozen.

VB: Really?

DB: Mhm.

VE: You might exchange them. But eh, you might exchange them.

DB: No, no.

KB: No, I kept them. And you could buy stills from the pictures.

VE: That's right.

DB: Yeah. But as I say, they were a shilling each so they were--

KB: I did have them--

DB: Well these are the ones we're getting now, you see.

KB: Yeah, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* [book?], I got.

VE: Well, in front of the cinemas they used to have like a glass case with all the pictures of the stars that were in the film, you know. And you could buy those.

VB: Right. I see. I mean this one is interesting as you say, 'cause not only has it got Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy on the front. It's got this sixteen-page supplement.

[inaudible; many voices speaking at once]

KB: The 'Film Weekly' was threepence.

VB: Right.

KB: And then it went up to fourpence. [laughs]

VB: Did you read any of the other film magazines?

KB: The 'Picture Show'.

DB: Oh yes. There was the 'Picture Show'.

KB: It wasn't as good, was it?

DB: No, it wasn't. I liked the 'Picturegoer'.

KB: I liked the 'Picturegoer'.

DB: And then the 'Film Pictorial'.

VE: 'Film Pictorial'. That's right.

KB: I didn't read that very much.

DB: Eh--

VE: Was there 'Film Fan'?

KB: 'Film Fun'.

VE: No, 'Film Fan'.

DB: No, I don't remember that.

KB: You don't remember that.

DB: No.

KB: [Daddy?] used to be able to go to the Market Hall and get the erm, ones from America.

DB: I was going to say, I brought that last week. I used to go the market.

KB: Yes.

DB: And they were piled up.

KB: Yeah. And you used to get 'Photoplay'.

DB: You used to [laughs] go through them, looking for your photographs. But there again, they were a shilling each.

VE: Yeah, they were. A shilling.

DB: So you couldn't afford to buy an awful lot.

VB: Yeah.

DB: I think I've got about half a dozen of those. 'Cause there was another one called 'Pictorial'. There was 'Movie--

VB: Right.

DB: Magazine'.

VE: 'Movie Magazine', yeah.

DB: 'Pictorial' and 'Screen Land'.

VB: Yeah.

DB: So those came from America. But you sort of, they were old ones, you know. Back-dated ones.

VB: Mhm. It sounds like film and following film was a big--

[all chorus: It was, it was!]

DB: I mean you went out with a boy, you went to the film. You know, you went to see a film, didn't you.

KB: Yeah.

DB: It was, it was a cheap way of going.

KB: I know you have interviewed John.

VB: Yes, that's right. Yes.

KB: Now, he's given me a total of different ideas. He said that he's passed my [Dinky dots?] art, article on to you--

VB: That's right.

KB: Well, I said, well there's lots of things that you could've said. But I thought your brief was films. He said, "Oh well. D'you think so and so? No, you don't need to tell her. I've told her that, so." He was on three-quarters of an hour,

[everyone laughs]

DB: Telling you what not to say. [laughs]

VB: Aw. [laughs]

DB: That's a good one that.

KB: Yes. It's very good.

VE: Yeah. I got it really for the fold-out.

DB: I took a photo of that off my old [picture?].

VE: That's right, yeah.

VB: Don't feel you can't say anything 'cause it's nice to get other people's opinions.

KB: Oh, you see, when they said she'd passed it on to John and Marion, she said, "Did they go to the pictures?" You see, because, I mean, when--

VB: I don't think they were quite as keen fans from what I--

KB: Well I doubted it really. Yes, you know. I would never have thought. And Arthur. I wouldn't have thought he was a real fan.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I mean, it's nice to get. What we've been trying to do on the project is to talk to people who, you know, real fans like yourselves. And also to talk to people who're not quite so keen on the pictures. Just to get a sort of general picture, you know. No pun intended. [laughs]

[laughter]

KB: Have you got many people who refer to Richard Hoggart?

VB: Erm, no. Not at all actually.

KB: [laughs] Apart from me.

VB: **Apart from you.** [laughs]

KB: Ah, I just wondered.

VB: **Yeah.**

KB: 'Cause he came to the university.

VB: **A-ah!**

KB: And we had erm, we used to always have a get-together at the university. The Vice-President's reception every year for years and years and years. And there was a lecture at night. He gave that one. He came once. He was one of the most successful in that game.

VB: **Mhm.**

KB: I gave the vote of thanks for the last one. And that was Lord Jenkins.

VB: **Right.**

KB: We finished them off. There's not been any lords since [laughs]. 1980. Anyway, get back to the--

VB: **Well, I mean, you've reminded me of something else I wanted to ask about. Eh, we mentioned Robert Donat and--**

KB: Yes.

VB: **He's from Manchester.**

[all: 'Yes']

VB: **'Cause quite a lot of the big stars came from--**

KB: Oh, Gracie Fields from Rochdale.

VE: Rochdale.

VB: **Was she very popular?**

VE: Yeah.

DB: Yeah.

KB: Very, yes.

DB: Yeah. There is a museum. They've just opened a museum now with all the eh, memorabilia-

VB: Oh really?

DB: In Rochdale. We want to go, don't we?

VE: Yeah.

DB: Did I tell you?

VB: Yes, that's right.

KB: I've only seen it on the television, you see, and I wasn't sure.

VB: Right. Yeah 'cause you were saying you thought it might have been a... [rest drowned out]

Gosh that would be great. And that's open now?

DB: That's open now, yes.

KB: If you are looking in the press in Bolton--

VB: Yeah.

KB: You might find some photographs round about 1935 of her doing 'Sing as You Go' [referring to *Sing as We Go!*] in, making it in Bolton.

DB: Yeah. And in Blackpool. And I was in it! [laughs]

VE: She was in it! Yes she was! She was!

KB: When we were at the senior school, they didn't come back to school with being... It was a dark mill that that they were making it in. She comes along, Gracie, [and sings?] 'Sing as we go'--

DB: [singing] "Let the world go by". [laughs]

KB: Ooh, I mean, well I think everybody went to see 'Sing as we go'--

DB: We saw all her films, I think.

VE: Yeah.

DB: She was so popular. Yeah, and then she came to Blackpool and they filmed on the Pleasure Beach. And she was on it at the time. And my mother said, "If you hurry up and get your lunch, we'll go, I'll take you to see Gracie Fields." And of course they were filming. And eh, Basil Dean, the director, was calling through the megaphone, you know. "Don't look at the camera! Don't look at Miss Fields, just--" [tape cuts out]

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

[everyone talking about Jessie Matthews]

VB: Right, I see.

VE: You got a Krunchy Wunchy, didn't you? [referring to the (fictional) confectionary sold by the Fields character in *Sing As We Go!*]

DB: Oh yes. And then we had to go, they had this little kiosk on the promenade. And eh, he got two or three of the children, 'cause they were twelve, I think, then. To go and buy this Krunchy Wunchy toffee she was selling. [laughs] And then at the end of the week they filmed her in the Winter Gardens. And it was absolutely packed. You couldn't have put a pin, you know.

VB: Uhuh.

DB: It was so packed. And she held them enthralled. Literally you could've heard a pin drop when she sang. And she used to change from, she'd sing a funny song and put a scarf on, you know. Real Lancashire. And then she'd whip the scarf off. [inaudible] Oh, she was wonderful entertainer. She really was.

VB: That's amazing. Having that personal effect.

DB: My mother was trying to take a photograph 'cause there was different ones taking photographs of the children.

VB: Yeah.

DB: And she said, "Go and stand by," you know. And she asked could she take it. She brought the camera. [laughs] I never got the film.

VB: Aw dear.

DB: Got her autograph but she was in such a, you know. Excited. I think that's where I got my 'Film Fan' from, because she'd go to all the shows in Manchester. Wait at the stage door and get their autographs.

VB: Right.

DB: Because there was quite a lot of well-known stars used to come.

KB: Have you done any work on John Buckley?

VB: No I haven't.

KB: Eh, John Buckley was the Lido manager and he went into production [possibly confusing John Buckley, who was manager of the Bolton Lido, with John E. Blakeley of Mancunian Film Studios] and he did Frank Randle, which you'll turn your nose up at that. Frank Randle. [laughs]

DB: Frank Randle. [laughs]

KB: He was very risqué, really.

DB: Yes, yes.

VE: He was blue.

DB: Yes.

KB: And eh, and eh, George Formby.

DB: Oh yes, that's right.

KB: And eh, I think he also did something with Will Hay, if I remember rightly. But there was a Manchester eh, filming. You know, commercial. I don't mean the archives.

VB: Yeah.

KB: I've seen some of the archives are good. Have you seen the films from the 19, the horses, the horse for Bolton?

VB: No I haven't.

KB: Oh in 1924. [laughs] They've got it here.

VB: Right.

VE: 'Cause they've shown it.

VB: Well I must try and have a look at that then.

KB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. It's amazing all these, 'cause--

KB: It's history.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I was interested when you'd been telling me on the phone about eh, all the kids sort of skipping off school--

KB: Oh yes.

VB: For the same film.

KB: Yes it was the same film.

VB: Yeah.

KB: But you see, I didn't. I wasn't that gone. [bursts out laughing] I was a good little girl.

DB: Oh she was a good little girl [laughs].

KB: That goes back to my mother and father's day. [laughs]

VB: I mean there were so many great stars of the time. I mean it's hard to know where to start and stop, isn't it.

[all: "Oh yes"]

VB: 'Cause, the other thing I also want to ask was, did you like the sort of gangster films, the James Cagneys, the--

VE: Some of them, yes.

KB: Some of them.

VE: Yeah. Some of them were very good.

KB: In fact, my brother didn't look unlike George Raft in some respects. [laughs] But it was when he wore his trilby, you see. Can you imagine a trilby at seventeen.

DB: [laughs]

KB: I mean lads used to work--

DB: They did! Ooh they did! Yes always a hat. You weren't dressed if you didn't have a hat on.

KB: You know, and hair smart.

DB: Ooh! I can remember my dad getting ready to go out. Brushing his hat, his bowler, you know. That had to be brushed and shoes polished.

VE: You've gone off James Cagney again.

DB: Oh yes, I have.

KB: Yes Cagney.

DB: Oh James Cagney.

KB: I think I've appreciated eh Cagney better since I've seen his things on TV.

VE: Yeah, 'cause he was a good actor and I mean he was a good dancer as well.

KB: Yes.

VE: Marvellous dancer.

DB: Yes. And so was eh, George Raft.

VE: Yeah.

[inaudible; multiple voices at once]

VE: [inaudible] in *Rumba*.

VB: Yeah 'cause when you think of a film like *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

VE: It was a belter, was that. It was a cracker.

DB: But that again, wasn't the thirties, was it?

VE: No, no. But I mean he was from the thirties.

KB: And Dorris mentioned to me that we haven't really mentioned eh, many of the British--

DB: Stars. Well we mentioned Jessie Matthews, didn't we?

VE: Yes, we've got Jessie Matthews in *Evergreen*.

KB: She opened the erm, the Ode, not the Odeon, the Lido, with *Evergreen*.

VB: Mhm.

KB: And another one was--

DB: Sonnie Hale. Charles Laughton. And Evelyn Laye.

KB: Evelyn Laye, yes.

DB: Yeah, she was really the musical comedy star.

KB: Yes.

DB: Wasn't she?

KB: Diana Wynyard. But nobody--

DB: Anna Neagle.

VE: Diana Wynyard was in the first *Gaslight*.

DB: Yes and she was in also *Cavalcade*.

KB: Yes, she was in *Cavalcade*.

DB: Yeah, which was an early--

VE: She was in the first *Gaslight*.

DB: Yes she was.

VE: Because eh, Ingrid Bergman was in the second one.

DB: Yes.

VE: Yeah.

DB: Well who was with Diana Wynyard in *Gaslight*?

VE: Was it, was it Anton Walbrook?

DB: Walbrook.

VE: Anton Walbrook.

DB: Yeah.

VE: That's right, yeah.

KB: That was later then, wouldn't it? The late thirties, wouldn't it?

VE: Yeah.

KB: 'Cause he came when, with Anna Neagle in *Sixty Glorious Years*.

VE: That's right. He was Albert, wasn't he?

KB: Yes he played Albert.

DB: Well Anna Neagle married eh, Herbert Wilcox. And then they, he produced a lot of films with Michael Wilding. Because of her dancing. [pause 3 seconds] And then she, did, she went to, did she go to Hollywood?

KB: She went to Hollywood.

DB: She did, didn't she?

KB: In the eh, in the forties.

DB: And then came back.

VE: Was John [Moulder?] British?

DB: Yes

KB: Yes.

DB: He was in erm, Gracie's.

VE: Yeah. [inaudible; multiple voices]

DB: She never got the man, did she? [laughs] She never got a man, Gracie. Poor Gracie. [laughs]

VB: Did you have, I mean at the time did you have any preference for the British films or the American films or?

KB: Well we had more variety.

DB: Yes.

KB: There was more choice of American.

VE: Of American. There was a lot more, more of them.

KB: And then they brought something in, I don't know when that was. The quota system. That they had to show so many British--

VB: Mhm.

KB: But there again, that's from memory. I'd have to check.

DB: You see the British never seem to get the musicals. They got the eh--

KB: Well--

DB: They got the very erm--

KB: We mentioned Lilian Harvey, didn't we? At *Congress Dances* but those were German made.

DB: Mhm. I mean one of the early British ones was eh, ['cause I saw it the other night?] Eh, played *Champagne Charlie*. And that was the story of erm, oh, what was his name?

KB: Rossini, no.

DB: Ooh, I can't think of his name. And he did a lot of shows, put a lot of shows on. And they did the film, which was *Champagne Charlie*. And then they put one or two with Anna Nea, eh, Anna Ziegler and Webster Booth. They were a pair that sort of tried to, or at least, became known as the English sort of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald. They sang together. They were husband and wife. And they sang a lot together. But I don't think they came over very well on film, did they?

VE: No. No.

DB: They didn't seem to get the--

VE: I think they were a little bit stilted, really.

DB: They were probably better on the stage than they were on film.

VE: Yes they were.

KB: They were known on the stage. And then of course, 'An Ideal Friend', Ivor Novello.

DB: Oh and then Ivor Novello, of course. But then we're coming again, aren't we, up to...? Well, no, no!

KB: [inaudible; multiple voices] I didn't see-

DB: That's right. That's right.

VE: Yeah.

DB: 'Cause he wrote eh, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning'.

KB: Well that's 19... [laughs]

DB: Yeah. [laughs]

VB: You reminded me there as well, I'm not quite sure why, but erm, of Shirley Temple. I think it was--

VE: That's right.

VB: Do you like these sort of child stars?

DB: Oh yes! She was wonderful.

VE: She was with George Brent.

DB: She really was.

VE: Quite a few times, wasn't she?

DB: Yeah.

KB: I found her rather sickening.

DB: She's off again.

VB: [laughs]

VE: Rather what?

KB: Sickening!

DB: She was wonderful. [laughs]

KB: Well I mean we're all different!

VB: [laughs]

DB: Oh, she was lovely.

[everyone talking at once; inaudible]

KB: Yes, yes, but I was always known for my dogmatic [opinions?].

DB: Caustic... She was the world's sweetheart. They used to call her the world's sweetheart, anyway.
Erm--

KB: No that's Mary Pickford.

VB: Mhm.

KB: Mary Pickford.

DB: Yeah, I know, but so was Shirley.

KB: Oh yes.

DB: Alice Faye was in it. In eh, two I think. Two or three with her. And she said, after playing with her she always wanted a little girl of her own like that. And she ended up with two little girls. [laughs] I used to say the same, "Ooh! I'd love a little girl like that."

KB: Well there's Mickey Rooney, now he was very popular.

DB: Oh yes.

VE: Who?

KB: Mickey Rooney.

VE: Oh yes, he was.

KB: He's more or less my contemporary.

VE: Yeah.

KB: Not yours, no.

VE: No.

KB: Ours.

VB: [laughs]

DB: She's the youngest. She's the youngest. [laughs]

VE: I'm the baby. The baby.

DB: Yes. He made all those Andy Hardy films.

VB: Mhm.

VE: And *Boys Town* with eh, Spencer Tracy. That was very good.

KB: Yes.

VB: 'Cause I thought there was a British eh, equivalent of Shirley Temple, wasn't there? A baby some--

VE: Binkie.

DB: Binkie.

VE: Binkie Stewart! Yeah, she never really, she didn't quite make it though.

KB: No, no.

VE: She was in one or two but she didn't get right, she hadn't that--

KB: I mean you see the British eh, understatement, you see the British films, of the war. They were terribly, terribly restrained.

VE: Oh they are.

DB: Oh yes. And spoke half of them with a plum in their mouths. Awfully jolly [imitating accent].

KB: I think if you go back to it, all the officers, you know.

DB: Oh yeah.

KB: I mean this last war was the only chance that the secondary school boys got commissions.

DB: Well I mean, there was *In Which We Serve*, wasn't there? That was a good film.

VE: Yes, that's with John Mills.

DB: Yes. *The Way to The Stars*.

KB: Yes.

DB: Erm--

VE: Noel Coward. *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing*.

KB: *Next of Kin*.

DB: Yeah.

KB: That was more--

DB: Then they had the women in the factories, didn't they? With the turbans on and that. What was that called?

KB: Something like 'Women at Work' [possibly referring to *Millions Like Us*]. 'Cause I'll tell you who was in that. Oh-h! Patricia Roc.

DB: Patricia Roc.

VE: Yes, she was.

DB: And another--

KB: In one they played 'The Warsaw Concerto', didn't they?

VE: Oh-h, erm. [pause 2 seconds] Anton Walbrook in *Dangerous Moonlight*.

KB: *Dangerous Moonlight*. [sings tune]

DB: I remember going to see that with eh, my brother had come home on leave and he'd brought a friend with him. Norman.

VE: Yeah.

DB: Little 'tache and dark hair and very sophisticated, you know. [laughs] Aw dear me. Yeah. And we went to see that.

VE: Now that made you involved, didn't it? You know, you were sort of hoh-h.., [intake of breath]

DB: Because they were erm, they kept the radio going. All the time. Saying, you know, we're on the finish sort of thing. You could hear them going fighting the Germans with pitchforks and... You know they hadn't the--

VE: The equipment.

DB: The Germans came in with tanks and they were trying to fight with... It was very eh--

VE: Moving.

DB: It was very moving film really, that. And then you'd hear them say, "We're going now," you know, and then they had to just cut off there.

VB: Mhm.

DB: You're looking at me. [to KB: laughs]

KB: No, no! I was just thinking about the last weekend I sat in front of the television set tears streaming down! So at least eh, I'm emotional in some respects.

DB: What was that for?

KB: The eh--

DB: Celebration?

KB: Uhuh.

DB: Brought back a lot of memories.

KB: Oh yes, yeah.

DB: Well the day after VE Day was the day I met my husband for the first time.

KB: The day after VE Day was my brother's birthday.

VE: [inaudible]. Yeah.

DB: Mhm.

KB: [beginning inaudible]. I think you've seen that one. That's the VE Day celebrations.

DB: Oh did you manage to get a picture? We never managed to get a picture.

VB: That's amazing. [looking at picture]

KB: That's the Fire Station at Farnworth.

VB: Who are some of the people at the head of the table here?

KB: Eh, those are part-timers. [laughs]

VB: Right.

KB: That's the officer. [Pat's?] in charge.

VB: Right.

KB: Those two ladies are part-timers. And then the rest of us are off duty so. They're on duty so we've got--

VB: Right. Is this you?

KB: Yeah.

VB: Ah!

VE: "The day war broke out."

VB: Yes. Aw. That's amazing. It's in such good condition as well.

VE: Oh she always keeps things in very good condition, Kath. That's why I said to [Eric?], "Be very careful with that book! Whatever you do."

VB: [laughs]

KB: Was he pleased to see it?

VE: Oh yeah.

KB: Oh good.

VE: But we did find one mistake. Erm--

KB: Mistake? It was in the book?

VE: Hasl, yes, Haslam's was not in Randolph Street. It was in Romer Street.

KB: I knew that. I thought well was it in Randolph Street?

VE: [inaudible]

KB: [inaudible], yes. I thought that. But I didn't know, I thought it could possibly be in Randolph Street.

VE: No, no. it was Romer Street. No, Romer Street.

KB: I knew it used to be Romer Street. They were customers of ours.

VE: It was at the bottom. Yeah.

KB: Yeah.

VE: But it was very good. Took me back to the Saturday pictures 'cause I'm sure that you had to...
Just reminded me of the Saturday afternoon pictures.

KB: Is that quarter to one?

VB: Yes.

VE: It is.

KB: [says something about one o'clock]

VB: **The only other thing that I was wanting to ask just now was erm, if you went to the pictures much now?**

KB: No. I don't go at all.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Well there's not very many pictures about, is there?

VB: **Certainly not too--**

VE: I mean the Odeon is now a bingo hall, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Which I've written in that piece that I've given you, you know.

KB: I've no idea how much the price is. Not at all. I think the last time I went--

VE: It's about three pounds now.

KB: Well it was about thirty shillings [one pound fifty pence] when--

VE: Yeah, it's about three pounds now.

KB: When I went last time. I can't even remember the film I went to see. But it's a long, long time ago.

VE: Oh I think the last one I saw was Albert Finney in erm... [pause 3 seconds] Oh-h! What was that film called? I saw *Alfie* and that other one. Eh, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*.

KB: Oh! I've seen things since then.

VE: I think that was the last one I saw.

KB: I was going to say. I saw, I saw Albert Finney in 'Luther'.

DB: There's a drink out there if anyone wants one.

VE: Pardon?

DB: Drinks machine.

VE: Oh is there?

KB: I don't know whether it's working or not.

VE: Oh, we'll go to the Octagon afterwards.

VB [to DB]: Well we're just kind of finishing off I think. Erm, I was asking if you went to the pictures much just now.

DB: I don't think I've been to the pictures for, [pause 4 seconds] fifteen years, I should imagine. Maybe even longer than that. I think the last one I actually went to go to see was *Love Story*. And it was just after my son got married. His wife wanted to see it. So we went to Manchester and there was a queue. So we stood a little while and then we got fed up so we said, "We won't bother." And then I saw it eventually on the TV. And I thought, "What did I bother?" [laughs]

VE: Oh I think I saw it on the TV.

DB: It was terrible. [laughs]

KB: Well I can't honestly remember what I saw.

DB: I think the last one actually I saw was *Song of Norway*. And that was at Manchester. We went to see *The Sound of Music* there, *South Pacific*.

VE: Yeah.

KB: Oh yes.

DB: And I think *Song of Norway* was the last.

KB: Oh yes but--

DB: But I think I saw *The Sound of Music* six times at Manchester.

VE: But you see, they don't make the type that were then. I mean the type of films you get now are all, they all seem to be violent--

DB: Oh they're terrible.

VE: And you know.

DB: In and out of bed and--

VE: People running off with everybody else, you know.

DB: [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

VE: And the thread, there's no eh, there's no mystery with it, you know.

KB: No there isn't.

DB: No proper stories.

VE: There's no theme to it at all, you know, that you can sort of follow. I mean, I suppose they think because we're older we're, you know, not with it sort of thing. You know what I mean?

VB: I think so. I don't agree with it, but, [laughs] I know what you mean.

DB: Yeah, they think, oh, they're living with their memories.

KB: Well of course, why go and pay three pounds as you say it is.

VE: It's about three pounds.

KB: About three pounds.

DB: Well there again, it's far too much. I mean, say there was a family picture on--

KB: Yeah.

DB: And my son has three children.

VE: Oh yes.

DB: Well what's that going to cost?

VB: Yeah.

VE: Oh yeah.

DB: I mean, it was a cheap way of eh, we used to go because it was cheap. You could go in the six pennies.

KB: Yeah fourpence.

DB: Well,

KB: And sixpence.

DB: It was sixpence. And then if you wanted the best seats it was ninepence.

VB: Yeah.

DB: And now and again we'd go mad and go in. [laughs]

VE: It was threepence in my time.

DB: Well that was in the eh--

VE: Threepence at the front.

DB: Yes but that was the [where was it?]. Was that the Palace? Was it in the centre?

VE: Yeah.

DB: But I don't think they were that cheap at nights.

VE: Oh yes! At night.

[everyone talking at once; inaudible]

KB: I don't know if I brought it with me.

VE: And if you were in the birthday club you used to be able to erm get a, they'd send you your free card and you could sit anywhere at all. So we used to sit with the plush backs, plush bottom, plush arms.

DB: [laughs]

VE: Right in the middle, you know. And we used to nod to people that were in the cheap seats that we knew, you know.

[general laughter]

VB: So was that something that you joined up and gave them your birthday?

VE: The Birthday Club.

VB: Right.

VE: Yeah, yeah.

DB: Oh that's new to me.

VE: Oh no. If it was your birthday they used to send, this card used to arrive. You know. And it said "This will allow you to come and sit anywhere in the cinema", you know.

VB: Mhm.

VE: Which were very nice, you know. You could be a bit snobbish, you know.

DB: [laughs]

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: Well I think that's... I think we've more or less come to a halt for just now but erm. I mean I know what's going to happen is, when I go away and listen to this tape and think, "I wish I'd asked more about that."

DB: Well you'd better write it down.

VE: Write down. You can always contact us.

VB: Yeah. I mean would it be all right? 'Cause as I was saying I'm going to be going back to Glasgow next week and I'll be back in Glasgow for a couple of weeks. But then I'm coming down to Manchester again.

KB: Oh are you?

VB: Would it be all right if we maybe met again?

DB: Mhm.

VE: Yes. Of course!

VB: To talk about this a bit more.

VE: But you'd have to write your notes down, you see. And then we won't waste any time.

VB: That would be great.

DB: Note what it is you want.

VB: And maybe I'd get a chance to have a look at *Maytime*.

[general laughter]

VE: Oh yes.

VB: That would be great.

VE: Oh, you've definitely got to go and see that.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Definitely.

VB: That would be lovely.

VE: And you get tea and biscuits in the interval, you know.

VB: Oh well. [laughs] Someone comes round with sweeties.

DB: Well I did start doing that. 'Cause after I did a talk, you see. On Nelson Eddy.

VB: Ah!

DB: Well I had it in *Evergreen* first.

VB: Right.

DB: Erm, the story of Nelson and Jeanette's life. And then eh, I did, well Kath got me going, didn't you?

KB: Yeah.

DB: With the WEA. To do this talk. And eh, there was some that missed, you know, that missed it. They weren't able to come. So they contacted me and I had some films showing, you know, during the talk and then I started showing the films. And now I've got all the films.

VB: Great.

DB: From *Naughty Marietta*. Oh there he is with his violin.

VE: There you are. I [hope?] he could play.

DB: [laughs]

VE: And you said he can't.

DB: Well I don't think he can actually. Can play the guitar.

VE: Well he looks very well with the--

DB: Well, he's got his stand and, I've got one on his own but it's not as nice as that. Oh there he is with his horse!

VB: [laughs]

DB: Is that the one you were going to let me have?

VE: You've already got one of him on the horse.

DB: Not that one. That's with his dog as well.

VE: I got that afterwards. That was in that pile. How did you miss it?

DB: I don't know.

VB: **That's a great one, isn't it?**

VE: That was in the pile, that.

DB: Oh is this Lake Tahoe. Oh!

VE: It is, yeah. You didn't see that as well, did you?

DB: That's where *Rose Marie* was filmed.

VB: Ah.

DB: Oh that's the one I've got. That's one I've got. He looks sad.

VE: He does.

DB: That was in *Bitter Sweet*. And that was *Bitter Sweet*.

VB: **As I say, I was amazed when you showed me the sculpture. His erm, self portrait.**

[general 'Oh yes']

VE: He did his wife. Aw! And you've got that one. A-aah!

DB: He's singing on the stairs in that.

VE: "La la la la la, lalala". [singing]

DB: In his eyes. Kath's not romantic like we are.

VE: Oh no.

DB: I mean, he's lovely. Oh there, yes I've got that.

VB: Oh with his dog. [laughs]

DB: Oh and I've got a smaller one than that. Very tiny.

VB: His wife's not unlike Jeanette MacDonald, is she? In some ways. She's not as attractive as Jeanette MacDonald but--

VE: No, not really, no.

DB: She was nice.

VB: Yeah.

DB: She was a nice person.

VE: She was so nice that a friend of mine cut her off the picture.

DB: [wheezes with laughter]

VB: [laughs]

VE: Not mentioning any names!

DB: I were jealous! When he got married, I couldn't! That was in the 'Picturegoer'. I cut her out of that! [laughs]

VE: Oh, I said, that was peevish.

DB: [laughs].

VE: Very peevish that.

DB: [laughs]

VB: So was that a bit of a disappointment then when--

DB: Ooh, ooh, we were all mad when he got married. See he didn't get married till he was thirty-eight.

VB: Ah, I see.

DB: And we all thought we'd a chance, you see.

VE: We all thought we were in with a chance, you see.

DB: We all thought we had a chance!

VE: Didn't come off.

DB: Oh, he was a lovely man. He was nice person as well as a handsome one.

VE: Everybody speaks well of him don't they?

DB: No one ever says anything--

VE: And there was never any scandal. Never, was there?

DB: No.

VB: **It's very unusual actually for--**

DB: Everyone speaks so [well] of him. I'll do you, I'll do you something and I'll let you have it. Do you a magazine or something and I'll let you have it.

VB: **That would be wonderful. That would be great.**

VE: [singing] "La, la, la." No, you can have a copy. The one with the horse. You can have a copy.

DB: I'm not bothered.

VE: You were [inaudible].

DB: When?

VE: When we went to Blackpool. Oh yes you have!

DB: Oh!

VE: Ye-es. And I got one afterwards. I thought, well I've given her the one with him on the horse.

DB: Actually, do you remember that one where the horse, oh, it's a lovely one that. The horse is pushing him, isn't it?

VE: In the back.

DB: Yeah. And he's like this leaning. And he's laughing, isn't he?

VE: Yeah.

DB: It's a lovely photo.

VB: [laughs]

DB: Then I think there's another one where he's sat on a horse and he's bent stroking the dog, but it's not very clear.

VE: No, no. It's not clear that one.

DB: That's lovely.

VB: What film was that from?

DB: It wasn't from a film.

VB: Oh right.

DB: That's just the--

VB: That's just him.

DB: Yeah. And he wrote, he wrote erm a story and that again's hilarious, isn't it?

VE: Yeah.

DB: 'I Bought a Horse'.

VE: Bought a horse, oh!

DB: I've never laughed so much. He wrote it for 'The Equestrian' which was eh, a magazine about horses. You can imagine, he said, [laughs] "Noone asked me to write this story," [laughing] "I just felt like writing." [laughs] And that's the start. I've got a book. It's not that kind of a book but it's a book, you know. It's a book 'cause he wanted to write eh, he wanted to learn to write.

VB: It's like a still from a movie. You know with the, and perhaps this is his own dog as well.

DB: Mhm. And it's the story of how he came to buy this horse.

VB: [laughs]

VE: And what happened at the end? Did somebody buy it back or something?

DB: Oh no! That was one that he did buy. He bought a palomino.

VE: That's right.

DB: Because, was it Clint Eastwood?

VE: Clint Eastwood.

DB: One of them said, "Get a palomino." He mentions all the different stars. They were telling him to get this and get that and get the other. So he gets this palomino and he starts doing stupid tricks. And it wouldn't cross water! Even though it was only a--

VE: Little strip of water.

DB: It wouldn't go across the water. And he couldn't get it to go, you see. And he was getting a bit mad over this. And then all of a sudden he said, "Oh!" He found out that it was pregnant. [laughs]

KB: [comes in] Well I must go. They've come for me.

VE: What, didn't he get two for the price of one?

DB: No, he sold it, oh, well he did, yes that's right.

VE: That was it. He got two, because it was in foal. So he got two for the price of one.

DB: Kath's going for her eh--

VB: Oh right. Yes.

DB: Dial-a- Ride, aren't you?

KB: Yeah, Dial-a- Ride.

VE: If you hear a little click on your tape it's that.

DB: Yes, I was going to say to you.

VE: You banged the door.

KB: Did !?

VB: Doesn't matter. Well thanks a lot.

DB: Come across anytime.

VB: That would be nice, yeah.

VE: We'll go and have a coffee now.

[End of Interview]