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* Winchester, Hampshire, 5 March 1984: Annette Kuhn interviews Jeanne Moore; also present David Moore

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* JM=Jeanne Moore, DM=David Moore, AK=Annette Kuhn

[Start of Tape]

AK: Perhaps we can just start off with you telling me a bit about your first memories of going to the cinema, how old you were—

JM: Well the very first film that I ever saw, I was about eight, and I remember being allowed to go to the films; and I went with my nanny and my brother and we saw, it must have been a silent one, I think, because it must have been about 1928 or '29, and it was *Peter Pan* [laughs] and I just-- the first film I ever saw. It was a movie, well of course it was a movie, it was silent, think. And that was just the very first, when I was about eight. And the next one I remember, because I didn't want to go to it, I wanted to go to see something else and I was taken by a sort of, governessy person, was *Rio Rita* with Bebe Daniels and that was London, so I was about ten then.

AK: So the first one, where were you?

JM: We were in Beaconsfield in Bucks, and that was just a one-off thing, I mean it wasn't anything erm, one didn't go regularly then. I don't remember any other at all.

AK: So you went with...

JM: With my nanny, erm. Or just with my brother. Oh no, no. I never, I mean, we never, I never did. I mean the most films, after we were in London for about a year and I can't, except for *Rio Rita* I can't remember particularly any more then, because it was a very short time. And then we moved to Farnham and then I really started on going, I mean you'd have two shows, one from Monday to Wednesday and one from, they changed programme. And when I was not at school, holiday time, I certainly went once a week. Erm, you know, if not twice a week.

AK: Well let's go back to the earliest thing and see what else you can remember about what the cinema was like and what the film was like and what you felt about it.

JM: Well I don't, I can't remember what that cinema was like. I can remember seeing, it was, seeing Peter Pan with this shadow which was some sort of thing attached to his feet or something. I thought it was so odd that it was erm a kind of bit of material, or something. But I can't remember the actual building or is that what you mean, yeah?

AK: Can you remember what you felt about it? I mean, you'd heard of the pictures before...

JM: Oh yeah, I must've been thrilled to see it as a thing because I hadn't seen anything. Yes. I mean, I was only eight, you see?

AK: Yes, yes. So you don't remember whether there was music and, if so, what kind?

JM: No, I mean, I'm saying it's silent, but I, you know, I think it was silent.

AK: It must've been, mustn't it--

JM: Yeah.

AK: At that time. So you went with your nanny?

JM: Yeah.

AK: So, she did all the stuff about the paying and everything?

JM: Yes, I'm afraid I wouldn't, wouldn't even, I have a sort of blank except for the fact that it was *Peter Pan* and I'd just been allowed to go, you know? At all.

AK: There wasn't a notion about the cinema was something you shouldn't be allowed to go to, or something?

JM: Well, no. No, no. I mean, I was only, it was just that it was my age, I suppose, you know? It wasn't a certain, allowed to go, I don't think there were all that much, many cinemas around, anyway, you know.

AK: Had your brother been before then?

JM: Not that I remember, mmmm.

AK: So... So that was, really, you only ever went to the cinema with somebody else--

JM: Oh yes.

AK: Until you were older?

JM: Yes, I wouldn't, when I was about eleven I was going just my brother and I. And often with my father because he was really quite keen. But we'd go at least once a week.

AK: Where were you living then?

JM: In Farnham.

AK: Farnham, yes.

JM: So we went to a cinema that I has now been demolished there, you went in one of these, you went in under an arch.

AK: Yeah.

JM: And it was a cinema with shops, and you went in under this arch, and there was a cinema in there, and we paid one-and-six [referring to Palace Cinema]. And the stalls, those were--

AK: That's a lot!

JM: Was that a lot? Ohh!

AK: Well, when would this have been? Sort of--

JM: '30... 1930.

AK: 1930.

JM: Or maybe sometimes we paid a shilling? It wouldn't be less than that. Because we never sat right in the front of the stalls--

AK: They were the cheapest, the very front stalls.

JM: Yeah, we went about the second, but I mean, you could pay much more when you go upstairs, but we never did.

AK: That the only cinema in Farnham at the time, was it?

JM: Mhm, I can't remember the name of it but it's only recently that it has been demolished or something. What's it called? It certainly wasn't the Odeon or anything or a name like that.

AK: So when you says it has got these sort of shops in it, was that all part of the cinema then?

JM: No, it was built, there were shops and there was a kind of an archway thing, and you went through the archway and the cinema was built at the back of all the buildings.

AK: Oh! So it wasn't one of these cinemas that had its own café and billiards rooms and things?

JM: No, that one, no that came later, I think, that came later. 'Cause I don't think there were two cinemas in Farnham. There was only one. May have been the Regal, I think it was the Regal.

AK: Yes, yeah. So you'd either go with Peter [brother] or the two of you would go with your dad.

JM: Yes, I can't remember if whether my mother took us much. But, er, they, we, er, yes, we would go with them. And when we moved to Alton, you know, Chawton, we had to, there was none, there wasn't a cinema in Alton, or it was so scruffy we didn't go, and then we would be taken by car But my father often us took us. I mean he was just...

AK: He liked to go as well--

JM: Mhm, mhm.

AK: Wanted to go to the cinema as well. Can you remember anything you saw?

JM: Oh yes... *Sunshine Susie*, now goodness knows who was in it but it was certainly, it was in this book cos it's mentioned. I can't remember, *Sunshine Susie* and *Bring 'Em Back Alive* and *The Mystery of the Wax Museum*. Well that's been redone but this was the original and I found out that it was Lionel Atwill and he was, and I had the most awful nightmares after it because this, you know the story that he had this museum and I don't know whether you want to hear all this really, but the bodies were laid out. His beautiful museum had been burned, hadn't it, to the ground and he lost all his, you know Marie Antoinette and everybody. So when he somebody who looked like one of these well-known people, historical people he would get them and lay them out on this sort of bench and

there was always wax, it was bubbling up above and you waited for it to bubble up and then fall down. I had these ghastly nightmares. That was *The Mystery of the Wax Museum*. Of course...

AK: As a child you were allowed to go and see these horror films?

JM: Oh yes, my father took me there as a treat before going back to school, yes. It wasn't considered a horror film then.

AK: So there was nothing to stop children going?

JM: Oh I think it was a Sunday and Sundays there was always a special film. They didn't always-. So there was that. And then, oh I remember, I mean I loved the *Tarzan*, Johnny Weissmuller who died the other day. We saw those, and erm Jessie Matthews who was in a lot of films. Do you remember erm 'Catherine the Great' [probably referring to *The Scarlet Empress*], Paul Robeson, *Sanders of the River*? And Eddie Cantor, I can't remember his films. Was he American?

AK: Yes, Yes.

JM: And then we loved the *Roman Scandals*, was that Eddie Cantor? And then there was, well I mean Clark Gable. Oh Deanna Durbin, 'A Hundred' ... [referring to *One Hundred Men and a Girl*]

AK: Was this a period of several years? It must have been before your parents separated.

JM: Oh yes it was from 1930 to about '35 you see.

AK: So you reckon you went at least once a week?

JM: Oh yes, all during the holidays.

AK: You must have seen hundreds of films.

JM: Yes some were most unmemorable, you see. I mean we would think we were badly done by..., and that was the regular weekly thing. And if it was raining we might go twice.

AK: That was all part of your pocket money, was it?

JM: No, no they, my parents... I hardly ever got any pocket money. My father used to give me sixpence a week at one time.

AK: So how much it cost was neither here nor there because they would fork out for that?

JM: Well they would fork out, but they wouldn't fork out more than the one and six or one shilling or whatever it was. They wouldn't have forked out for us to go upstairs or anything. No, even though you know they weren't exactly poor.

AK: Were there lots of other kids going to the cinema then?

JM: Oh yes, yeah and I mean the poorer ones would sit in the front but there were a lot of children. I mean all this [dog barks]—

DM: Trudie!

JM: These names that... we used to like Tom Walls and Robertson Hare and Ralph Lynn, his films, Aldwych farces, that was. But I don't know whether they were films though, those. Claude [Hulbert], Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. Anything with Maurice Chevalier in. Adolphe Menjou, I think he was in with Deanna Durbin in *One Hundred Men and a Girl*. And the William Powell, Myrna Loy with the dog...

AK: Did you make any distinction at the time between the British films and the American ones?

JM: Oh well I suppose so. Well we knew that [?Paul] Walls wasn't English. Yeah they were usually comed...

AK: Did you think American ones were better?

JM: Well, I suppose we did in a way, yes mhm. I certainly saw Janet Gaynor in *Seventh Heaven*. I saw Janet Gaynor-, I mean my brother was very fond of Janet Gaynor. And there was all the Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, but that was later, I'd call that later. Will Hay we thought was terribly funny. I think the British films were comedies, weren't they, when you come to think of it?

AK: A lot of popular ones were, yeah.

JM: Will Hay, yes. Edward Everett Horton but he came in with Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, you know he was the waiter in there.

AK: So basically you didn't pick what you'd go to. You'd go to whatever was on?

JM: Usually, mhm. I remember Paul Muni, and Paul Muni in 'The Life of Louis Pasteur' [referring to *The Story of Louis Pasteur*] and this came with George Arliss in *Disraeli* and he always looked the same. But you know now that I'm talking about it, was that an English, British film? I mean I don't suppose I, *Disraeli* with Paul Muni—

AK: No it wouldn't have been.

JM: Paul Muni. George Arliss was English.

AK: Mhmm. I don't know. Could you sort of get any of these fan magazines?

JM: Oh yes, Yes, yeah. And then I remember having a great big album, an annual thing, a great big red..., and I wish I had it now. 1930s or something. My godmother was a great filmgoer and she gave it to me and it had, it was like a sort of dictionary of films and film stars. I had it right up to not so long ago, well the war anyway. Yes, I certainly bought these. I remember this, 'Film Pictorial', because we used to look up to see who was, what they said about them and they came out just like this, and what the films were. [looking through magazine] Oh and Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. Laurel and Hardy but they were...

AK: So really you did... If you saw a film on locally sometimes you'd know about it because you might have read about it?

JM: Yes, certainly I remember that Janet Gaynor one. My brother knew, had known about it and was trying to get our mother to take us. Was that a musical, *Seventh Heaven*?

AK: I know who the director was but I can't remember what it's about. Or maybe it was a melodrama.

JM: It was certainly Janet Gaynor and it may not have been the *Seventh Heaven* one. I remember him talking about the music and trying to encourage her to take us you know, and we did go. Eric Blore, he was the waiter, sort of British waiter. Of course I adored Clark Gable, Ronald Colman. Then Jack Buchanan was in English films. Yes, they're always the light ones, weren't they?

AK: Yes, Yeah. I mean your knowledge of all these stars, it wasn't just the films, must have been the publicity and stuff...

JM: Yes.

AK: Did you feel they had any effect on your life, thinking about things? Or was it just for leisure?

JM: Leisure, and they were all stars like people now with pop stars I suppose was the same thing for us. I mean we didn't have any television, we only had records.

AK: But I can see in some of those pictures of you at that period... I think the way the pictures have been taken and the way you look somehow relates to the way..., or perhaps it was the way everybody was looking then?

JM: Well it was a big thing in our lives, going, I mean the films. And then the French films, I suppose they came later really, like Jean Gabin in erm, and Simone Simon, you know those films that you saw in London. That was later in that nice Curzon cinema. You didn't see those down in Farnham.

AK: So you'd just get the sort of ordinary run of general release ones?

JM: Yes, Spencer Tracy, *Boys Town*.

AK: Conrad Veidt.

JM: Oh yes well David liked him.

AK: Mhmm.

JM: Norma Shearer, Luise Rainer, *The Good Earth*, saw all these. And Sylvia Sidney was in *City Streets* it says here but I, I thought she was in *42nd Street*, but that was somebody called Ruby Keeler that was around then.

AK: Yes, that was on television the other day.

JM: Mhmm.

AK: Yes, I remember seeing that.

JM: You see Robert Donat, I suppose all his films were English films. And *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*. But the only..., see I can remember Franchot Tone in that and I can't remember who the other people were. And yet it was probably somebody like Gary Cooper or somebody.

AK: Mhm.

JB: But he was the one I fancied at the time.

AK: I mean it must have made an impression on you for you to have remembered...

JM: Oh yeah, yeah, indeed, mhmm.

[inaudible]

AK: So this was when you were in Farnham, all these?

JM: Yes, I mean we went to Farnham in 1930 and that was my, when we were going to films during the holidays only, you see.

AK: Oh I see. I mean, couldn't you have gone when you were at school?

JM: Lord no!

AK: You weren't allowed to?

JM: No, never left..., it was like a prison. I mean one wasn't allowed to go outside the grounds. And then we went to, after I'd left school and I went for a year to this erm cookery school, then we were allowed out on Saturdays and then we saw films at Guildford. And I suppose every, I mean we certainly wouldn't have missed a Saturday and not seen a film. But that would have been about, when did I say? I left school in 1935, didn't I? That's right, so that would be '35, '36. I can't particularly remember the films I saw then.

AK: Mhm. And that was for a year?

JM: Yes.

AK: And did you go to London after that?

JM: Yes, mhm. I would still have seen films. I certainly went to a lot of the French ones at the Curzon. Leslie Howard in erm *The Scarlet Pimpernel* for instance. He was a great pinup, Leslie Howard. And Clive Brook, I always liked his things, and he did *Clive of India*. John Boles, he was another great pinup.

AK: When you were going to Guildford you went with your chums at the school?

JM: Oh yeah, yeah.

AK: And when you were going in London?

JM: Oh well by that time I was on my own more or less and either going with a girlfriend or boyfriend or on my own.

AK: Were the cinemas sort of quite luxurious?

JM: Oh yes and they certainly always had the cafes. They had cafes attached to them from, erm, right up to after the war, you know after...

AK: Yes, I can remember cinemas that had cafes.

JM: Yeah, I mean they all did. I mean that was...

AK: That was the thing.

JM: Yes.

AK: You expected that.

JM: Yes, cinema organs came up didn't they, they rose up?

AK: Oh really?

JM: But I mean the Farnham..., I think they were more the London ones. I don't think you could get that in Farnham. And I suppose when we lived at Farnham we would probably, I don't remember doing this actually, I thought we might have been taken as far as Guildford if there was a good film on. But they changed them so often that you got a lot of films, you know. I mean you didn't have to go very far really to get...

AK: And they'd still get a full house every night even though...

JM: Oh yeah, they'd be full, yes. Yes, certainly there were children there. I mean it was just full.

AK: So you would get a queue then?

JM: Yes if we didn't get early enough, yes.

AK: Mhmm. Different.

JM: Mhm.

AK: So you were now in London in what, 1937?

JM: Yes. But erm I can't, I don't remember any particular film. I mean well, I mean I remember going to see *Gone with the Wind* and things up at Leicester Square. We used to go to Leicester, the Leicester Square cinema [referring to Leicester Square Theatre]. We used to go to the big cinemas up there, Odeon and, the Odeon...

DM: Studio One.

JM: Studio One was the other and the Curzon was so lovely.

AK: The same Studio One as now?

JM: Well. Is the Curzon still around?

AK: Yes, I think so. Where was it?

JM: I'm not sure.

AK: I think there is a Curzon still.

JM: It was remarkable in that it was, I think it was all on one floor, there wasn't a balcony and the seats were incredibly comfortable and they just had nothing but foreign films. We used to go to that and that's where we saw Jean Gabin.

AK: But you only ever saw entertainment films like that? You don't remember in that period seeing, 'cause that was a period of probably small-scale film societies and that kind of thing?

JM: No, we didn't see anything through that, no. I remember going to one about VD. A cinema, I went with a boyfriend and he, well he wasn't, I'd known him all, you know as a young, as children together and he decided it would be a good idea to go and see this one and we were terribly embarrassed sitting there...

AK: [laughs] When was that?

JM: Well that was about 1937.

AK: Oh. I thought they'd stopped making those things by then. What was all that about?

JM: I can't remember where it was-, how we'd heard of it or where-, it was an ordinary film. You went in there and paid. It wasn't under the counter in any way and I just remember going with him and we were awfully embarrassed because it started off with a mother and daughter talking about the girl having her period you know and because you didn't talk about that in those days. I mean that comes out in 'The Thornbirds' where this wretched girl, you know when she said she was bleeding and yeah... Well I mustn't go on about 'The Thornbirds', but anyway we never ever spoke about it, it just wasn't mentioned.

AK: So sitting there with your boyfriend...

JM: Yes, to see... And then they got onto syphilis, and people...

AK: Did they mention it?

JM: Oh yes, it was fairly explicit. It was supposed to be teaching, you know, educational and there were an awful lot of men there.

AK: It was a narrative film?

JM: Yes.

AK: It was a story film not a documentary.

JM: But I mean, it was mostly men I think in the audience. I don't know why we, I don't suppose I wanted to go at all but anyway we went.

AK: Do you remember what it was called by any chance?

JM: No, I can't remember. I'm not sure that it was even English. I should think it was French.

AK: Oh really?

JM: I shouldn't think it was in English voices, I think it was French. No because the girl, the woman, no, well it might have been dubbed, you know, dubbed or written underneath...

AK: There were lots of English and American ones...

JM: I'm sure it was black and white.

AK: *Marriage Forbidden? Damaged Lives?*

JM: It would have been some sort of thing like that. I remember the erm, it was syphilis mostly and this woman having a baby and that had got it, you know. But I can't remember any more than that. It's the only one...

AK: I thought they'd stopped making those by then. That was a real big thing around 1920. That must have been incredibly embarrassing.

JM: Yes.

AK: Did it scare you?

JM: I don't remember being particularly scared about it because one never thought anything such as, you know you wouldn't come into it at all. One knew about it, but you didn't know much, many details about it.

AK: My mother said she saw one in 1923 but she obviously wasn't as explicit and she gathered from it that, from the story that this nursemaid is kissing a bloke on a park bench and then they get sores on their lips... and they die. And she gathered from this aged sixteen that if you kissed somebody on a park bench you'd die. [laughs]

JM: Well no, well that was the sort of thing in there that you... [both laugh]

AK: So anyway we're in the late 1930s. So what about when the war started? Can you remember the cinemas closing?

JM: Yes, well when the war, when we were getting to about after Charles, 1941ish, by that time I was parked in Grayshott you know, near..., and I used to go down to the Haslemere cinema, the Rex

cinema at Haslemere. I remember the Rex and I suppose then I had to get my, somebody, to babysit. But I must have, I wouldn't have gone every week then 'cause I wouldn't have been able to. And I certainly, well then it was these sort of, not war film but things like *Mrs. Miniver* you know and, I mean I can't, I think, erm...

AK: *Millions Like Us? In Which We Serve?*

JM: Well that came later really. Well some of the sort of—

AK: Ealing...

JM: And quite light ones like [inaudible], some Betty Grable-y things, you know. I mean I would never miss anything with, say, Clark Gable. I suppose I must have seen every film he would have been in. Same with Ronald Colman, you see. I mean we thought he was absolutely marvellous. I mean Brian Aherne, I know that name very well and John Loder because... Oh another thing I always did was to write to these people for photographs. I had John Loder...

AK: Did you get them sent to you?

JM: Oh yes, they were awfully good about it. I certainly had John Loder's photograph signed John Loder.

AK: You mean you wrote off to...?

JM: Well you wrote off...

AK: To the American ones as well?

JM: I don't think I had anything from America, or if you did you might have it with it printed on it but some of these...

AK: [inaudible] a signed picture? What did you do with all those?

JM: Well. At one time I collected all my theatre programmes, and I would never go to a theatre without sending my programme backstage—

AK: Oh!

JM: And you always got it, I mean this is so awful that this beautiful book full of all these things just disappeared. Cos my mother had them in her house you know, and they just disappeared.

AK: What a shame.

JM: But you always sent them, people were awfully good. I mean I had Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud—

AK: Wonderful.

JM: Yes. But it was great to send off to these people. And Anthony Bushell, yes he was rather... 'Cause these were English. Brian Aherne, was he English?

AK: I don't even know the name, I've never heard of him.

JM: Oh gosh, yes. And another one I sort of remembered was Carl Brisson. He was in some films, I've forgotten. Felix Aylmer, he was, you know him?

AK: Yes, oh yes.

JM: He was in a show. But he must have been in comedy. Cary Grant of course, I thought he was marvellous. [inaudible] put the stars against early heartthrobs. John Loder was one of them. I remember it arriving, this, erm...

AK: So you liked the male stars?

JM: Oh yes, yes, oh yes. I mean I liked some of the female ones but I mean the male ones were my chief interest. Herbert Marshall, he was gorgeous when he was a young man. He had this lovely voice. You know he had a wooden leg?

AK: No.

JM: Oh yes, you know he lost his leg. [laughs] I mean you knew, you read about these things, you read about them.

AK: [inaudible]

AM: He lost his leg in the First World War. So if you see him in a film he does limp.

AK: He never takes his trousers off. [laughs]

JM: Trousers off? They didn't even take their anything off. I personally rather like that where it sort of faded out and the door closing.

AK: Lots of free play to the imagination.

JM: Yeah. People one liked, female ones were more or less the ones who were quite funny like Claudette Colbert.

AK: Yeah.

JM: Well, Myrna Loy—

AK: Yeah.

JM: Well Myrna Loy was, I mean, yes...

AK: Jean Harlow and people like that.

JM: Yes.

AK: What about Garbo?

JM: Well I saw- I think if there was a Garbo film I'd certainly go to it. I suppose we saw, any Garbo film you mention I'd have seen. Well there weren't many were there? Didn't make...

AK: Did you say you saw *Queen Christina*?

JM: Yes.

AK: Oh Catherine the Great of course.

JM: Catherine the Great and Queen Christina, yes.

AK: Catherine the Great is Marlene Dietrich I think [referring to *The Scarlet Empress*].

JM: Yes, Queen Christina was, not Ingrid Bergman, can you think who? Elisabeth Bergner, wasn't it [possibly referring to *The Rise of Catherine the Great*]?

AK: Was she? No, it's Greta Garbo and she's in drag, she pretends to be a boy [referring to *Queen Christina*].

JM: Yes, well I can see her [inaudible] one earlier.

DM: Catherine the Great.

JM: No, that's Marlene.

AK: If it's the same one, the same version.

JM: Well it may have been [inaudible]. Or something ghastly.

AK: Catherine the Great, that's 1933 I think.

JM: I mean Paul Robeson in *Sanders of the River*, I mean you know in those days... He was black but we still thought he was marvellous. He was a heartthrob if anybody. Maurice Chevalier was one of, he could do no, he was in some marvellous films.

AK: Were there any kind of hoohahs about films like you get occasionally get now, being unsuitable and shouldn't be publicly shown, things like that?

JM: I shouldn't think they'd made any films that could never be publicly shown. And if they were they were in these sort of film, film clubs or something. I don't remember...

AK: Well censorship was so [inaudible] then. I've never actually come across any references to films that did.

DM: [inaudible]

AK: They were even stricter in Britain.

DM: Yes.

JM: You couldn't see anybody in actually in bed. They had to have twin beds. But I mean David liked people like Boris Karloff but I can't remember actually... I don't think I would myself have gone to a sort of one with Boris Karloff in it 'cause I would have been too scared, you know.

AK: Oh, I mean It sounds as if those kind of things were given certificates called H certificates. Do you not recall certificates, like sometimes X.

JM: Yes.

DM: Yes because censorship was a certificate displayed [inaudible].

JM: So whatever it was...

AK: But it never affected your life, I suppose, by the time you got to be old enough?

JM: Well again if you wanted to but I mean you know I wouldn't, I mean I used to be, the Charlie Chan, anything about China used to horrify me and terrify me. And this one, I don't know why, the East and there used to sort of be chairs that disappeared down trapdoors and that sort of thing. A lot of those sort of Chinese-y, I mean they were awfully erm sort of cheap made.

AK: [laughs]

JM: I mean they made... You see you always saw two films didn't you. The second film might be one of these Chinese ones with sort of Eastern men coming out behind curtains and hands com-, ugh I

used to hate those. And funnily enough this *Bring 'Em Back Alive* film was nothing about that at all, it was about animals being brought back. But I had horrors about that.

AK: Back from where? From the dead?

JM: No, [laughs] from Africa for the zoo. They were being collected and I hated it. They were being brought back alive. They weren't being shot but they were being collect-, I mean I don't like seeing that now, seeing giraffes and things lassoed. But I remember that particularly, giving me nightmares, with that *Mystery of the Wax Museum*.

AK: How old would you have been then?

JM: Well probably about twelve, thirteen, yes. I don't know why that one did. I just didn't like them chasing the animals and collecting...

AK: Funny the things that make an impression on a child.

JM: Yes.

AK: [inaudible] So your faves were sort of the, what, musical comedies?

JM: Yes, mhm. Well and I mean the Spencer Tracy things you know like *Boys Town*. Oh and The Groaner, I mean any of his, Bing Crosby, things. I wouldn't have gone out of my way to see anything that I thought would give me the horrors. Erm, I mean David might have done.

AK: Did you ever go to the cinema later on, as a night out with a boyfriend?

JM: Oh yes, yes.

AK: So people did do that as a courting ritual?

JM: Oh yes, very much so, oh yes. Mhm.

AK: Did you and David ever go to the cinema together, huddle in the back row?

JM: Oh gosh, well. Er...

DM: None of that!

JM: Well I mean it was the war, it was never, I don't know that I can pick out anything particular except that awful, we went to a foreign, another of these foreign ones, Dutch or Danish or something. Danish I think. It was about witchcraft, witches [referring to *Vredens Dag/Day of Wrath*].

AK: Oh I know—

JM: It was a well-known...

AK: I know the one you mean.

JM: And I was expecting Charles and I just particularly remember that. I think we went with the Brackenburys [friends]. It was his brother who had this idea. It was quite difficult to get in. It was absolutely packed. That's another...

AK: I saw that [inaudible]

JM: Oh really, and did she call out "Martin"? [spooky voice]. Ugh! That's all I can remember going with him. But we would go to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. I'm sure I never missed a single one of those.

AK: So your filmgoing stopped after you had...?

JM: Well it went on, it went on, yes. I can't remember when it stopped. Has it stopped?

AK: I still go to the films, not a lot though.

JM: No, no, no it's got so expensive. Mhmm. Oh Walter Mitty[referring to *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*], I remember going when I was at, in the 1950s we were going if we were able to get a...

AK: What, you'd take the boys?

JM: Well they came to that but erm...

DM: We didn't get the television till 1957.

JM: No, so we were still going... Oh yes, 'cause the film-, when we were at Gosport in the '50s our film, our cinema was just across the road. It was called the Forum.

AK: I know the one.

JM: Well we went to that quite a lot and there were some of the space, sort of funny early space ones you know.

DM: [inaudible]

JM: Dean Mar- [referring to Dean Martin], do you know Jerry Lewis? Well the 1950s, you'd know about those. And we still went to those, yes 'cause it was still...

DM: Olivier [inaudible].

AK: Were you going before you had telly?

JM: Well we had got telly in the, 1957 did you say?

DM: Yes.

JM: Erm, we were going, yes we may have been going once a month before then. And then the '60s you began to go to the very special films, you know the ones that were sort of special. I remember seeing-, I'm going back now again to the 1950s or '47, '48, *The Red Shoes* with Moira Shearer. Yeah lovely I loved it.

DM: Oh, South Africa.

JM: Oh South Africa, we saw it. It was called the Bioscope there, and then we had to go into Cape Town and we saw *Where No Vultures Fly*. And you'd see sort of special ones that had a good name, you know. But the '30s you went to it whatever it was really, you know you just went, 'cause it...

AK: Because it was at the cinema.

JM: Mhmm, and that was your entertainment. What else can I think, erm, ones I've seen. I mean if you read out a list of films I'd seen in those days I've probably seen...

AK: If you went that regularly you probably saw most of the ones...

JM: Except, well looking at this, erm.

DM: Do you remember [inaudible] special effects, stunts 'cause they were mentioned [inaudible] excited more interest.

JM: Mhm, I can't think. You tell her because it was your scene—

DM: [inaudible]

JM: How they'd done it.

DM: How did they do that? How did he manage to fall off the aircraft? [inaudible] Was it really a model or the real thing?

JM: Here's Herbert Marshall.

AK: Did you see 'The Private Life...'?

JM: Oh yeah, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. And there's George Arliss. He was in *Voltaire* there. He always looked the same.

DM: [inaudible]

JM: Yeah, but erm... There were some in here which gave the people, and I couldn't remember them but I may have even seen them but I can't remember them now. John Boles.

AK: My mother said in the '30s she remembered a period when they were having music hall acts in cinemas. Did you come across that?

JM: Oh what, in the front of the cinema before...

AK: Yes or between the shows.

JM: I don't think I ever did but I think they did do that, probably more in London.

AK: I was quite surprised to hear that.

JM: Yes.

AK: I knew they'd done that in the very early years of cinema, but not as late as the '30s.

JM: I don't think I've ever actually seen that. Gracie Fields of course, that'd be a sort of film we'd go to, and Anna Neagle in 'Queen Victoria' [referring to *Victoria the Great*]. That was Queen Victoria.

AK: That was a big censorship deal, you know. She was, that was the first film in which they allowed Queen Victoria to be portrayed.

JM: That's right, had to be a hundred years after her death or birth or something, yes I remember that. Bette Davis, well I mean you know all her. I mean those are all now—

AK: Wonderful.

DM: But I mean I would certainly have seen most of hers. And Jessie Matthews, she was in a lot of films. [addressing DM] Well you've got a different view of it 'cause he's talking about Tom Mix and I can't particularly remember a cowboy. I mean I know Tom Mix but I can't remember seeing him.

AK: [inaudible] You would go and see...

DM: I think it was the same. We went to the cinema every week [inaudible]. I remember most going to the cinema when we were in Rochester [inaudible]. I was allowed to go on my own quite a bit. Up till I was about fifteen, sixteen. Up till then I used to go with my parents. That was the first time I remember being allowed to go on my own, and I used to go about every week. They [inaudible] to get me out of the house.

JM: [inaudible] then with your parents?

DM: Sometimes, yes but quite often I went on my own. But I think after about the age of fifteen we really as children looked upon the cinema as a revelation in the adult world because the adult world was very mysterious to us. And our parents, it wasn't that they never spoke to us about sex but anything unpleasant they never would speak to the children. There were so many hush-hush things. And the cinema sort of opened up a great view of the adult world and we quite took it as it came. We didn't know what the adult world was really like.

AK: But you didn't go back to your dad and say, hey I've seen this film, what's going on with it?

DM: Well actually I mean it was, the films were quite puritanical in a way, 'cause everything always had to end..., the criminals never got away with anything and there was, nobody ever got away with adultery or anything like that. So they were very pure really.

AK: But at least they mentioned it.

DM: This was the Hollywood code of ethics. But then I think really when I was about fifteen or sixteen I began to take a more cynical view of them and realised that it was mainly escapism.

AK: Yeah.

DM: We began to get sophisticated and then we would, you know enjoy a good laugh at them when they weren't supposed to be laughed at, you know. American films were serious, but we thought they were funny. I remember one film we went to, it was called 'The First Year of Married Life'. You realised it was all sentimental bosh. But we went all the same because it was entertainment. And another thing I think was that in schools, particularly boarding schools, I seem to remember...

[End of Tape]

[End of Interview]