

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

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- \* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- \* EG = E.J. Godbold/ MrsG=Mrs Godbold/ VB = Valentina Bold
- \* Notes: Second of two interviews with E.J. Godbold; Sound Quality: Good; 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 more details.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

**EG:** They do help you somehow or other, do they?

**VB:** Well, yes. Very much so.

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** Erm, I'm not sure if I was saying before but eh, we're hoping to do a book about eh--

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** Cinemagoers' memories.

**EG:** Yeah. Like eh, a lot of these erm, university erm exercises, don't come to nothing. Well, you know, after eh, they got some marks for doing it and everything and then that's all you hear of it.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** Eh, we had a girl which is some relation to us come down and [amongst the army?]. And eh, we never heard any more about it.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** You know. And erm--

**VB:** It's a shame when that happens, I think. When--

**EG:** That's not on yet, is it?

**VB:** I've just put it on just now so--

**EG:** Tell me when you put it on.

**VB:** Right. That's us now.

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** So erm. Yes, I mean, as I say, I was very interested by what you were telling me before and erm, a number of questions occurred to me after I'd left.

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** E-erm. I mean one of them was, you mentioned a whole range of stars that you liked. People like Ginger Rogers for instance.

**EG:** That's right. Yeah. Yeah.

**VB:** Erm--

**EG:** Well I got the range of stars in the various [categories?], I mean, like gangster films.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** You see. They were the ones I liked. And, and Ginger Rogers would come on the musicals.

**VB:** 'Cause--

**MrsG:** Here you are my old darling.

**EG:** Ssh!

**VB: Ohh! [laughs]**

**MrsG: [laughs]**

**VB: Erm, I was wondering erm, from what you were saying, if there were particular qualities you liked in a film star. Erm, things that attracted you generally.**

**EG: Well, it's hard to say really, isn't it? I mean erm... [pause 2 seconds] When you're young like that, I 'spect the, you know the [time-?] thing of George Raft. The sort of take you when you went in them days but today you wouldn't sort of. [laughs] You might think that's foolish, I mean.**

**VB: Yeah. So you think you--**

**EG: Really--**

**VB: Sorry.**

**EG: The old gangsters erm, when they're played now on TV, seem laughable, you know. "I'm gonna take you for a ride," and all like that, you see. They were serious at that time.**

**VB: That's interesting 'cause it sounds from what you're saying that your tastes in films changed quite a lot from when you were a young--**

**EG: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG: You see, you never saw any blood and erm, if anybody was shot today, it's all sort of gory, blood [all over the place?] and all that. I mean, you get that in erm 'Casualty' on the BBC, don't you. But the Hays Office wouldn't allow anything to. It wasn't do dramatic really. Somebody got shot, you never saw any blood or anything, you know. That's it, you see. The Hays Office wouldn't allow a lot of blood and gore in them days. But they do now.**

**VB: Did you find that erm, did you find these gangster films quite believable when you were watching them then?**

**EG: Oh, yes, yes. They were so believable that the Hays Office had to step in, didn't they? And erm, say they glorified gangsters and that, you see. They made the eh, G-men series of films where the G-men always won. As I said, the gangsters didn't go on very long, you know.**

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Very short time, I think.

**VB: So would you say then that the gangster films were your favourite films then? Or among you favourites?**

**EG:** Well, among.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Westerns were just as good in them days and erm. We used to like gangsters erm, quite a lot, you know. It was erm, well, I don't know why. You're young and impressed by all this sorta stuff.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** I know my friend used to wear a dark shirt and tie like the gangsters. And when he come out the cinema, he used to strike a match under his fingernail just like they did. [laughs] He was holding the door once for somebody and soon as they got there, he let it go, you know. The sort of thing like a gangster, [laughs] would do. It impressed him. What I think today with the, you know, a lot of things you see on television impress your youngsters today.

**VB: Ah.**

**EG:** And you don't know really, do you?

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** They say it don't but I think it do, you know.

**VB: 'Cause I was very interested by what you were telling me about, that you liked the dance films and you enjoyed dancing as well.**

**EG:** Uhuh.

**VB: Erm, I mean was that part of the appeal? Watching it. Doing things that you could do yourself?**

**EG:** Yeah. Yeah. I used to try--

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Try tap dancing an that. Afterwards and that. And the boys used to say, you know, "Come on, Jim. Do a little bit of tap dancing." Yeah, you tried to imitate the eh, people, don't you?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** In them days.

**VB: I brought along a couple of books that I thought you might be interested in. After our conversation of erm, some of the stars. [laughs]**

**EG:** That's an old one, in't that? [laughs]

**VB: Eh, I thought you might like to see these.**

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB: 'Cause a lot of the stars that you mentioned are obviously eh, in this.**

**EG:** Yeah. Yeah. Somebody had this years ago, didn't they?

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

**EG:** Ten pound!

**VB: We bought it. [laughs]**

**EG:** Eh?

**VB: We bought that for the project. Eh, but eh, but somebody's had a lot of pleasure out of it, I'm sure.**

**EG:** Because this would only go up to a certain year, would it?

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

**EG:** So you wouldn't have to. There's Deanna Durbin and that. Errol Flynn. Yeah. It's very good, isn't it?

**VB: Were you interested in the lives of the stars?**

**EG:** Oh yeah--

**VB: At the time.**

**EG:** There used to be, 'scuse me, there used to be several books [magazines] come out every, every eh, week, you know for filmgoers and that. Just like the erm, books on hi-fi and things today. And erm, we used to buy them. They used to be quite good books. 'Course that all comes from the eh, star system. From what Hollywood built up in them days, you know. And erm, they were very strict on what the stars done. In their private life and that, you know. So that they didn't belittle the film industry and that. If they got married they had to ask permission and all this sort of thing, you know. And they had this erm, this woman, what was her name? Greta somebody who used to go round an see to the stars and she'd lapse [latch] on anything which they thought was immoral or anything and. So they had to be ever so careful, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** In them days. [pause 2 seconds] Yeah, Fred Astaire. Yeah.

**VB: 'Cause I was interested as well erm, when you were telling me about eh, the English films and the American films and how there was quite a difference.**

**EG:** Yeah, well they were.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Well, we used to say they were corny. They were really. I mean, eh, they wouldn't accept them in America, you know. They wouldn't put 'em on the circuit. 'Cause they, they weren't so classy as the American ones. Well, America invented films, really, didn't they? They went there donkeys years ago and erm, and they set up the eh, star system and the studios and everything. We didn't have erm, the expertise as them and that. We didn't. One or two films were not too bad. Like *The 39 Steps* and that. But eh, I don't think they would accept. If the Americans wanted to make a film which was something about England they brought the star over here and erm, finished it in Hollywood. *A Yank at Oxford* was made for Robert Taylor. And he come over here to make it. But erm, they wouldn't accept our films really. They weren't good enough. They weren't even in the B class, you know. B class.

**VB: D'you think that had something to do with the system you were just telling me about in America? D'you think that's where they were erm, sort of supervising the stars. Do you think that had an impact on the sort of films they made?**

**EG:** Yeah. I think so, yeah. Yeah, they didn't want any scandal and that. Because they glorified these stars and they, you know. It was a good idea, really to have the star system. They were on a big contract and eh, and they had to do what the studio said. Sometimes the studio was ruthless, you know. That was all for the best, I think, really. When you think about it.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Because the Hays Office, as I said, was very strict. You couldn't be shown, a married couple couldn't be shown in bed, you see. A man could be sitting on the edge of the bed but eh, not together in bed, you see. And eh, when you look at the films today when they keep jumping in and out of bed in nearly everything you see. That was a good thing, I think, you know. But erm, what happened was, you see. In the, when the period of the cinema died off 'bout 1960, something like that. When television was, we had television in 1955. An erm, they got desperate so they made a lot of these sexy films and things like that to try and get people back. But now they've gone back to a real decent film. And people are going back to, to the cinema.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Did you read where they're gonna have eh, eh? Well it's only gonna cost you a pound on the century [centenary] next year.

**VB: Ah, I saw that. Yeah.**

**EG:** And erm. I think, you know, that's improving. I've seen, you know, some films and erm, with my son and erm... [pause 2 seconds] they've cut out a lot of this sex and kitchen sink dramas and that sort of thing.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** But eh--

**VB: I mean I'm interested when you say that about the way that eh, life was shown in the pictures. What sort of impression did you form of life in America? Did you think it was different from--?**

**EG:** Oh, yeah. We all thought it was a great place. And so did the girls during the war. They went out with Americans. You know, they all thought they were gonna go back to big cars and big houses and that. As matter of fact, we had several people in Stowmarket married. 'Cause we were ringed round with American bases and erm, these girls got married. And they sent photos back standing outside a

big house with a big car. But it's not always genuine. Because we found out that one, this chap lived in a shack right in the wild and that, you know. [laughs] So, I mean, they were impressed by the films, you see. Robert Taylor an all this, you know. But they did erm. They had more money than us when they come here and they had better equipment and better. But eh, lorries and things for the army and that. They were, they were ahead of us, really. We couldn't keep up with them. But the girls got this impression that everybody was erm, got plenty of money and that.

**VB: Mhm. D'you think it affected your own expectations of life? Do you think, did you feel you would like to live like that or, did it not really--?**

**EG:** No, I've never really give it a thought, you see.

**VB: 'Cause it's an interesting point--**

**EG:** I mean, I knew I shouldn't go there and erm, [coughs], and I had to put up with what we got here.

**VB: Yeah. So it never really changed your expectations of life or anything like that.**

**EG:** No, no, no. But eh, we used to see, they had fridges. We used to see films in the thirties and we didn't have a fridge till donkeys years on. And erm, phones, things like that, you know. But I don't know whether everybody in America had but on the films they all had phones and fridges and everything. Which we never had, you know.

**VB: It's interesting. 'Cause it sounds like, from what you're saying, you didn't sort of believe everything in the pictures.**

**EG:** No, not really. I mean eh, you knew that a lot of eh, stuff was eh, [pause 2 seconds] facade. You know. They would have a building that was only just the front of it. And the actor was looking out the window and he was standing on a piece of scaffolding and that, you see. So you knew that and, and you knew that was not real, really. Eh, Tinseltown. And you could see through some of these things, you know. And you thought, well, you know, he's probably standing on--

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** The scaffold looking out the window. And that's only half of, only the front of the house and that. That's how they done it. So erm, if you was intelligent enough you didn't eh. A lot of girls fell for this. [pause 2 seconds] Rob, what's his name? I nearly thought of this erm, French,



**VB: Oh yes.**

**EG:** Star what every girl used to go on. I did think of it when you went [possibly referring to Charles Boyer].

**VB: A-aw. [laughs]**

**EG:** But, you know, girls thought a sort of a chap like Robert Taylor would come along and take them out of the rut of being in service and something like that. They lived in dream. I think that's what the cinema done. You went there and you forgot all your worries and things and eh, you lived in a dream world. Nice and cosy in the cinema. And you forgot your worries and that, you see. And they was very careful not to make you worry. I mean, if a chap went into a surgery waiting to see the doctor, he went in immediately. He didn't sit there with all the coughing people and... That would be so depressing. That wouldn't be very good cinema, you see. So, he went and saw the doctor right away. And the girl said, yes, see him right away. And that was good cinema, you see.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** You had to make people live in a dream world really. And erm. And that sort of worked really. Lot of people thought the world was like that and like that in America and everything was nice. They would forget they had poverty and unemployment.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** [inaudible] There was one or two films like *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* which did show unemployment and poverty and that. But they didn't like producing these films. But eh, they were produced. One or two, you know.

**VB: I mean, how did you feel when you came out of the cinema? Erm, you're saying--**

**EG:** Oh, you feel refreshed and eh. Like eh, you know, you've had an experience an you, you know, you went home and you thought, well, I've had a nice night. Enjoyed the cinema and that. And you were ready for work the next day.

**VB: Mhm. I mean, did you feel like that even if the film hadn't been your, you know, totally your cup of tea?**

**EG:** Well, we used to have two cinemas as I told you. And erm, we would eh, weigh the thing up, you see. We'd either go to the old one. If the Regal had something which we didn't want to see. And so

we didn't really go to a disappointing film. I never really went to a... I mean, if you're cold when you're on the building trade, you wouldn't want to go and see an old English film which was, which was corny and that. The other one would probably have. They changed twice a week in them days. And erm, you know, you went or you didn't go. [That wasn't up to?] [inaudible] if there wasn't one--

**VB: So you were you quite choosy about the films that you did go to?**

**EG:** Pardon?

**VB: You were quite picky about the films you went to?**

**EG:** Well, yeah, we used to weigh it up, you see. Which was best. Best to go and see. But eh, I don't know. Regal always seemed to get the, the good films, you know. All the gangsters or westerns. You see, they used to have two films anyway. You didn't erm, you didn't think the B film would be much good but sometimes it was, you know. And eh, then you got the main one, you see. So erm, you generally, you generally got a good mix, you know.

**VB: So even if you didn't like one of them, the other one--**

**EG:** Yeah, yeah.

**VB: I see, yeah.**

**EG:** Yeah. You know, we didn't really expect the B film to be much. Although sometimes that'd be probably a travel film or something like that.

**VB: Mhm. The other thing that occurred to me, erm. Do you think that erm. You know when you were going as a teenager, did adults go as much as you? Did you parents go to the cinema very much or?**

**EG:** Well mine didn't, but eh, no they didn't. I know my mate that was working on the building trade with me, same age as me. And his father used to like eh, Gabby Hayes in a western. And he'd go when Gabby Hayes was in a Western. You know, he thought Gabby Hayes was brilliant, you know. My dad never went much, you know. [pause 2 seconds] He had a hard life, really. I mean erm, he was shoe mending in a depression. The Depression was at the thirties, you know. And eh, he had a hard job to make a living. If he had, if he had a shilling to spare he'd eh, have a pint before he come home He'd work in his shop till about nine or ten at night and then have his pint and then come home. Or half a pint. Whatever he could afford. But he never worried much about the pictures.

**VB: Mhm. Do you think that was? I mean, you're saying your friend's father went if it was a particular film that he would like.**

**EG: Yeah, yeah.**

**VB: Do you think that was true then, of your parents' generation? That they didn't go as much as your generation did?**

**EG: They didn't go so much as eh, the sons, but when you got teenagers and people who are just married and all that sort of thing, went. The older people didn't go so much. [inaudible]. Always full on Saturday night there used to be two houses. [coughs] And it be all, big queue waiting outside, you know. To go in the second house and that. So, you know, not all youngsters. There were middle-class people and that.**

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG: Middle-aged people, I should say--**

**VB: Mhm. It's interesting. 'Cause I was wondering about that. If it was something that would erm, you know, more for teenagers, youngsters.**

**EG: Mhm. I think, as it is today, the teenagers have got the money, you see. We had the money.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG: I mean, when you think of it, the average wage was only two pound fifty before the war. And people didn't have the money to spare, like that. It was a luxury. If they liked a pint of beer they, they had a pint of beer on a Saturday night and they'd erm... The youngsters had the money in a job and they got full rate like a man. I had the two fifty pound [two pound fifty]. That's what I was getting and erm. You know, you had money to buy suits with and things after you'd give your parents some money.**

**VB: Mhm. Did you spend a lot of time outdoors in those days? 'Cause, I mean, you mentioned cycling. Did you--**

**EG: Do you mean, in my spare time?**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** In your free time. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] I don't know really. I eh, used to work on the building trade so I was out. [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs] I suppose it's not so much--

**EG:** It was enough for me, you see.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** We used to go. In the evening, we used to go to dances, you see. Well one of my friends had a car which was, hardly any cars about, you know. And erm, he used to say, you know, shall we run out to? On a Saturday night. So we run out to Sudbury, to the dance there. This is what we done. Some nights we used to, I used to meet my friends and we'd probably have a drink in the pub and that.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** That was the fashionable thing to do in them days. The pubs were full and that, you know. But, as I say, there's no television. Unless you went to the pictures or went in the pub there wasn't much-

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**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** Much else to do, you know. Unless you took part in some sport but then they... That was only Saturday afternoon that you played football.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** There was no sports clubs as, as we know today and that. Indoor, you know. Sports club.

[pause 3 seconds]

**VB:** I mean how would you erm, when you say that sort of range of activities that you did. How would going to the pictures fit into that? Was it one of the most important, most enjoyable things?

**EG:** Oh, yeah. I think that, on reflection, that was the most important thing. Eh, you know, that we could do really in them days. 'Cause they made. 'Specially the Regal was brand new and it was so warn and nice in there. We lived in a sort of a dream world. Yes, that was the, I should think, the favourite. I would rather do that than go in the pub. I was never interested in going in pubs really,

and that. But, dances were all right. If you ran out to another place and they had the recognised good dance, you know. Ipswich or Sudbury and that. They had 'em in Stowmarket as well.

**VB: Mhm. What were the main dance halls in Ipswich then?**

**EG:** Oh, I forget now. They're mostly pulled down and that.

**VB: Ah.**

**EG:** There was quite a few. Ones in the villages, Sudbury way. Then afterwards we would go from there and round to Ipswich. And there was an all-night cafe open called Lorraines, [Lorenz?]. And we used to have eggs and chips.

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** And then make our way home. [laughs]

**VB: It sounds like you had a lot of fun.**

**EG:** Kersey! That was the place where they used to have--

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** They all used to come to Kersey which is near Hadleigh and erm, there used to be very good dances there, you know.

**VB: It sounds like you enjoyed yourself when you were--**

**EG:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**VB: Going to all these places.**

**EG:** Well, we were lucky, you see. We had this erm, car. My friend ad a car. I remember once we went to get measured for a suit and we all had the same material. It was a light suit. So we had dark shirts and white ties.

**VB: Ah.**

**EG:** An erm, we went to Ipswich to see a band show. And erm the toilet, the erm, the stage was here--

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** And the toilets were at one side, you see. So at half time we went to the toilet and when we come out the spotlight went on us.

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** They thought we were members of the band, you see.

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** And they were clapping and cheering.

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** And we made our way back to the seat. [laughs] 'Cause, I say, we were dressed, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** That was, I s'pose erm the films what sort of put that in our mind, you know. This light suit and erm dark shirt and white tie. Nat Gonella, that was the band we saw. And His Georgians. They, funnily enough, were dressed almost the same. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** So they thought that was us.

**VB: Ah. I know 'cause it sounds. [tape cuts out]**

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**EG:** I s'pose, really that was really what was really in the subconscious mind--

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** When we all went and got these. Well there was three of us, you know. We went and got the same suits and erm. I think it must've been in the back of our mind just that, to look like that, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** You got a suit for two pound fifty in them days. Made to measure, you see. Mind you that was a week's wages so you're talking about a hundred, a hundred and fifty to two hundred pound today, aren't you, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** It's relative, isn't it? I mean, funny how money, that seemed cheap then but that was half of... That was a week's wages.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Two pound fifty, you see.

**VB: Do you think the films did affect your sense of style then?**

**EG:** Oh, I think so. And I believe that TV and films affect people today. 'Specially youngsters.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Well you often see in the paper where this chap, he murdered somebody and he got the idea from some film, didn't he?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** They'd say, well it was the same as, *Death Wish*, or something like that, you know. I mean, they do have an effect. I saw one night, I think I told you before. It was a film and this little boy come along with a coin and he scratched the car right across. And, I thought myself, well, hundreds and hundreds of children'll see this.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** And they'll be wanting to do the same thing tomorrow. You know, it's bad to show these sort of things. But it's all money, isn't it? To get money. They don't care what they show as long as they get. And there ain't no Hays Office now or anything to stop them doing these things.

**VB: I s'pose it's better to be influenced by a film of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.**

**EG:** Yeah, yeah.

**VB: [laughs] Not gonna put you far wrong!**

**EG:** Yeah, yeah. That's right. [laughs]

**VB:** Ah. I mean it's interesting though to think, as you say, the ideas that you pick up from watching films and--

**EG:** Oh yeah. Yeah, I think you were very impressive [impressionable?] when you're young.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** 'Specially when you, when you think you lived in a small market town and nothing ever happened. And people just went to work and girls went into service. And got half a crown a week. Just one half day off and that. You've gotta think in them terms, you see. And you would be impressed by eh, going to cinema and seeing how gangsters went about. And Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and all that. Very impressive and that. It put sort of new heart into you really, you know.

[pause 3 seconds]

**VB:** I s'pose, when you put it like that it's a whole different way of life that you were seeing.

**EG:** Mhmhuh.

**VB:** Em, I'm sure for most people watching that sort of film it's eh... [pause 6 seconds]

**EG:** Have you erm? Do you see the other people again or?

**VB:** Yes. I'll be seeing some of the other folk again too.

**EG:** You've got to go to Lowestoft again, have you?

**VB:** Yes, yes.

**EG:** Have you?

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** Aw.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** Anything else you was doubtful about? [inaudible]



**VB:** Erm, I think actually we've covered most of the things that I was wanting to ask you about again.

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** Erm. [pause 3 seconds] And some more in addition. It's eh, erm, especially as you're saying, the way the films influenced you. I think that's really interesting.

**EG:** Mhm.

**VB:** Erm. [pause 3 seconds]

**EG:** I'll get my erm, my book like that.

**VB:** O-hh!

**EG:** And it's a better one than that.

**VB:** [laughs]

[pause 10 seconds] [EG getting book]

**EG:** I don't think this is much more in cost, brand new, than what you got there.

**VB:** Ah right.

**EG:** I mean, you probably got that because of the [old?]. But the first part of this, this was fifteen pound.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** That was bought as a present. You see, the first thing is how they were made.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** Which erm. [turns pages] [inaudible] This is all the old... old silents. Silent films and that. [flicking through; pause 9 seconds] I didn't put it down anywhere, no.

**VB:** This looks good, 'History of the Movies' [referring to book]

**EG:** There's Claire [surname?]. That was, well, I remember her, but that was really before my time. And John Gilbert.

**VB: A-ah.**

**EG:** He was a heartthrob in them days. Buster Keaton. 'The Golden West'. That is 1924, you see. *The Iron Horse*. [turns pages] *Die Büchse der Pandora*.

**VB: Was there a chance to see foreign films?**

**EG:** That's German, isn't it?

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Yes.

**VB: Was there anywhere locally that showed these sort of European films?**

**EG:** Never, never saw any. They wouldn't entertain 'em, you know.

**VB: No.**

**EG:** You had to go to a special cinema in London.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**EG:** Which dealt with all the foreign films, you know, German. They erm, there's the studio system. [turns pages] What I told you about.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** [turns pages] We're not up to anything yet. The Marx Brothers. Now we're getting somewhere.

**VB: Oh, your '39 Steps'.**

**EG:** 1936. [inaudible]

**VB: You were saying that that was one that was a sort of exception.**

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB: To the English films.**

**EG:** Well yeah. But he, he was English. And he went to America, didn't he?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** *The 39 Steps* was very good.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Released in '35, 1935.

**VB: Mhm. Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll. Were they stars that you, you liked?**

**EG:** He was a heartthrob, you know, for the girls.

**VB: Mhm. What about Madel--**

**EG:** Charles Boyer. That's the French one.

**VB: A-ah!**

**EG:** He was. He really got girls going. And as I say, I was laughing like anything in front with my brother and the girls said, "Shurrup or go out!" she said. "You're really spoiling our heartthrob"--

**VB: A-ah. So they took him quite seriously.**

**EG:** See! They show you how they made erm, *King Kong*. Instead of walking on there they had a plank at the back there.

**VB: Ah, I see!**

**EG:** See, you see it now.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** But you wouldn't. In the film you'd think they're walking on that--

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** It had a plank. And they tell you how that's done. Oh, here's a model aircraft, look. See. I always thought that sometimes King Kong looked ever so small. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**EG:** And other times he looked big. See, he lifted that up and threw these people off. But they were on a plank.

**VB:** Ah, I see.

**EG:** How they done that, I don't know. [turns pages] John West [sic]. *How the West Was Won*. That was a western.

**VB:** Oh, John Wayne. Did you like John Wayne as a--?

**EG:** Yeah, yeah. He was pretty good. [turns pages] Nazi Germany. He was in the underworld. [laughs] *Scarface*.

**VB:** Ah.

**EG:** That's the thing what used to get us, you see.

**VB:** Is that George Raft there at the end?

**EG:** Yeah, yeah.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** That's George Raft. Erm, Edward G. Robinson. 'The Corner of the Back Alley'.

**VB:** Ah yes. *Little Caesar*.

**EG:** Where's this one then? That's left, look below. Oh this one is below and [mumbles]. Underworld, [mumbles]. Oh, that's--

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** "James Cagney. [Watch how?] His boy friend, pal and partner in crime. Edward Woods is gunned down by a rival gang." That's here. [possibly referring to *The Public Enemy*]

**VB:** A-aw.

**EG:** They used to die ever so dramatically and that. You know, they'd take a long time to fall down and collapse on the table. Put all the things off and then... [laughs] Very dramatic.

**VB:** Was that the appeal? Was it the sort of, the drama?

**EG:** Yeah, yeah. They'd take ever so many bullets before they. I mean, normally they'd have fell down. [pauses; looks at book]

**VB: Mhm. James Cagney.**

**EG:** See. That is erm, after.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** That's 1939. There's *A Yank at Oxford*, look.

**VB: Oh Tyrone Power. Ah.**

**EG:** I thought that was Robert Taylor--

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** But it wasn't.

**VB: That's the other one.**

**EG:** Oh, that's the 'Yank in...'!

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** [turns pages] It's a very good book this.

**VB: It is.**

**EG:** There's John Wayne again, look.

**VB: And Cary Grant.**

**EG:** That give you the date, you see.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** It give all the films he made. [pause 3 seconds] *This Gun for Hire*. The wife met Veronica Lake.

**VB: Really!**

**EG:** In Stowmarket. Yeah. And Trevor Howard in the Old Fox Hotel.

**VB: What were they doing?**

**EG:** Well they were. They'd come through the town one day. Stopped there for lunch, I think.

**VB: Ah I see.**

**EG:** Having drinks. That's when Veronica Lake was getting ever so old and that. She's dead now, isn't she?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** And Trevor Howard was all lined face, face was lined, you see. Nothing to look at.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** But erm. Well they had a lot of drink and that.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Rita Hayworth. [turns pages] *The Third Man*. Well that was made after the war.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** After the war. And so was this one. *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. Yeah, it's quite erm. [pause 2 seconds] Here's the westerns again.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** As you grew up, you see erm. [pause 3 seconds]. You come into later years.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Fred Astaire and, and Judy Garland. *The Bandwagon*. It's a very good book--

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Really. The first part really is the one which you refer to. [pause 3 seconds] [turns pages] Yeah, my daughter and son-in-law bought me this for one Christmas. A few years ago.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** It's quite a nice erm, Christmas present, isn't it?

**VB: Very much so, yes. I'll need to see if I can get a copy of that from the library. It looks very useful.**

**EG: Well you can take the erm, take the name and the--**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG: They'll have it at the library, will they?**

**VB: I'm sure. I'm sure I'll be able to get a copy of that.**

**EG: Yeah.**

**VB: It looks very useful.**

**EG: 1988!**

**VB: Ah!**

**EG: She bought that. [pause 8 seconds] Yeah, it tell you how a film's made and everything, you see.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG: It's called 'The History', if you want to put it down.**

**VB: I'll just read it on the tape and then I'll get that after.**

**EG: 'The History of the Movies'.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG: It's fifteen pound. And it's published by... [pause 7 seconds] Is that the publisher?**

**VB: Ah, it must be. McDonald Orbis.**

**EG: Uhuh.**

**VB: Edited by Ann Lloyd. Aye, that looks very useful.**

**EG: There was a lotta, a lotta work went into that.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** For fifteen pound, isn't it?

**VB:** You must get a lot of pleasure out of that as well.

**EG:** Yeah, yeah.

**VB:** It's one of these things you can--

**EG:** When I haven't got enough to do I, you know, read some more up and that.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** It's ever so heavy. You feel.

**VB:** Oh yes. [laughs]

**EG:** Give you a heart attack.

**VB:** Hundred years in that, though. [laughs]

**EG:** Give you a heart attack.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** This is quite good for the time, you see.

**VB:** This is it. Yeah.

**EG:** 'Cause you're getting the 1938, aren't you?

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** You see. [inaudible]. 1938. That's the years you want really, don't you?

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** Tyrone Power. Yeah. That's quite good. You wouldn't run into 1940 with that.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** But here you've got eh, all the stars of that year.

**VB:** Yeah.



**EG:** Yeah. Did that come from a jumble sale or something?

**VB:** Eh, just one of the bookshops round the university in Glasgow.

**EG:** Ah.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** And they wanted ten pound for it.

**VB:** Yeah. [laughs]

**EG:** Well, I s'pose that's the value.

**VB:** Yeah. I think. There aren't many of these still around. I think that's the thing.

**EG:** You couldn't knock 'em down at all.

**VB:** Naw. [laughs] Should've tried.

**EG:** Did you?

**VB:** Not really, no.

**EG:** Yeah. It's quite good. Fred MacMurray, Fred Astaire. Loretta Young. She was nice. [coughs]  
Mhm. Don't it bring back memories? Valerie Hobson was an English star. But erm, it don't say much about that.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** Ann Todd was an English star.

**VB:** Mhm. Did you like the, I mean. You talked about getting ideas for suits from the movies, but were you interested in the way the women dressed as well? Was that--

**EG:** Not really, no, no. I mean, unless they were in a bathing costume.

**VB:** Ah. [laughs]

**EG:** Yeah, it's a quite good book. This was probably taken from a series of erm, [coughs] erm magazines, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** Wouldn't it be? I 'spect. That's how the magazines were. They were full of pictures like that, you see.

**VB: Yeah. I think it's actually one of the Daily Express ones.**

**EG:** Is it?

**VB: One of their annual books. Yeah.**

**EG:** Robert Donat. [pause 3 seconds] Yeah, it could be, couldn't it?

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** But this is the sort of picture you'd get in the, in the magazines every week you bought, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** And they'd tell you about the stars and all that, you know. They were very careful not to say much about their lives 'cause they're all round the studio system and that, you see.

**VB: Ah yes.**

**EG:** I think it's quite good. [pause 7 seconds; looks at book] Uhuh. They make erm, multiple cinemas now, don't they? With five screens and that.

**VB: That's right.**

**EG:** Yeah, we went once at Ipswich, me and the wife [probably referring to Odeon, Ipswich]. We went up there shopping and we said, we'll go in. And there was only us and another couple in there, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** There's no atmosphere when there's nobody else in there.

**VB: Yeah. I think, as you say, the ones that are split up and it's a small screen as well.**

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB: It's not the same as a--**

**EG:** No, no, no.

**VB:** Big cinema.

[pause 4 seconds]

**EG:** I don't know. The Regal they have here. Up the road here. Erm, have-- [phone rings]

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** [goes out] Who was that?

**MrsG:** I don't know. Some courtesy call. [whispers to VB] What time do you want lunch?

**VB:** Erm, any time that suits you.

**EG:** [comes back in] Double glazing, is it?

**VB:** Aw dear. Oh, they're annoying, these. [laughs]

**EG:** Yeah. We get a lot of that.

**VB:** Yeah.

**EG:** She said lunch'd be ten minutes.

**VB:** That'd be lovely.

**EG:** Yeah.

**VB:** Lovely.

**EG:** Uhuh.

**VB:** It's not something you do much now, go to the cinema? It sounds like you don't go to the cinema much now.

**EG:** No, I just go. I went with my son to see one about the Yanks here during the war.

**VB:** Mhm.

**EG:** And erm, I forget what it was called. Not long ago, well. It might've been a year ago. But I don't go. You see the trouble is, I mean, they have shows on at the Regal as well. And they, they have, you

know, Robert Wolfe come on the organ and things like that. But when you come out at night erm, you walk home.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** There's quite a number of rough people about and. You know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** And eh, it's not really comfortable. Unless, when I go with my son, he'd take me in the car and that. There's a car park there.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** And I'd go there. If, if... I've been to some of these shows. They had the Scottish erm, Symphony Orchestra. One of the chaps who lives in Stowmarket, plays in the Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

**VB: A-ah.**

**EG:** And he erm. He brough, he come over and he brought a few of his mates and was just making an ensemble, you know. And, of course, I went to see him because erm, I know his dad. But when you come out, you see, you walk home and these people are right along the path. And they don't move out the way.

**VB: Ah.**

**EG:** If you said anything it would be asking for trouble, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Some of them have had a drink and that sort of thing. But, same in every town.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** At night, I think, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Unless you've got a car to get there. It's a pity really because they have a lot of shows which I'd like to go. I walk up there. It's not far up the road after, where we were at the bus, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Not far up the road. But erm, you can't trust, you know. That'd spoil the enjoyment of the thing.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** You know. [pause 6 seconds]

**VB: Yeah, it's not so good when you've had a nice night and--**

**EG:** Yeah. Then again, you see, I mean erm, you think to yourself. You've got a cold evening and that. You got television and that, haven't you? See.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** I mean, I know cinema's a lot better than television. I mean, for sound and everything else but, the same time, it's eh something, I mean, you've got there and you needn't go out, need you?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** I think that's eh, the thing that eh, stop a lotta people. They want to follow different things like Coronation Street and that, don't they?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** They, [laughs] don't like to miss these things. I don't know if the cinema'll ever come back really. Eh, youngsters'll probably go and that but, I don't think it'll ever come back like it was in the fifties and sixties.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** There again, you see, television is getting hit by videos and that now.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** If it don't require to watch it, if it's absolutely rubbish. And eh, they go and get a video of a film so, they are seeing films in a way, aren't they?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** I mean all these thousands of people getting videos for the weekend and that. They are films in themselves. So in a way, people are going back to films.

**VB: Yeah.**

**EG:** And then eh, you got all these channels and that, you know. On television. There's so much to do and see, really.

**VB: Yeah. Certainly when you're describing your memories of the thirties and going to the cinema so often, it's hard to imagine someone going as often as you did now.**

**EG:** Yeah, I don't think erm, even people. There used to be, men who were single, they used to go. Somewhere to go, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** Quite a lot. They'd go and see a film six times. Same one and that. But I don't think they exist today. They'd probably be sitting at home watching television.

**VB: Yeah. Well they wouldn't have enough money to go that many times, I don't think.**

**EG:** No, no. That is the thing. It's eh, more expensive and that now, init?

**VB: Mhm.**

**EG:** I don't know what they charge. I think it's about two pound fifty for pensioners, something like that.

**VB: Yeah, yeah.**

**EG:** Oh!

[MrsG comes in]

**EG:** Better switch off the tape.

[End of interview]