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- * Bolton, Greater Manchester, 7 June 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Freda McFarland
- * Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Jamie Terrill
- * FM = Freda McFarland /VB = Valentina Bold
- * Notes: Only interview with Freda McFarland; 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.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

VB: [recording commences mid conversation] before we start to talking about the cinema, if I could ask you one or two questions about yourself, just so em--

FM: Oh dear.

VB: [laughs]

FM: Do you think I better sit there?

VB: Do you think so? Maybe then we can put the--

FM: Well I think if she comes across there she's bound to knock it off, isn't she?

VB: That's true. Yeah.

FM: Whereas you can put it, you could probably put it, could you?

VB: Yes. That's fine. Yeah. Em--

FM: Unless, shall I bring one of those chairs up there? You could put it on that and then--

VB: That would be quite good. Yes.

FM: Mhm. Mhm. [pause 4 seconds] Put this round here.

VB: I think she wants to join in. [laughs]

FM: Oh Yes. Oh! Doesn't like being left out.

VB: Right.

FM: I'd seven people here yesterday.

VB: Be exciting for her.

FM: Ooh! [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Ah that's you.

FM: Right. Is that better?

VB: Yeah.

FM: So she won't eh...

VB: Yeah. As I say, just to make sure that I've got everything right about yourself.

FM: I see.

VB: Em so I know you were born in 1916.

FM: That's right. Yes. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Annie. Come here.

VB: And that was in Wigan?

FM: No. Eh, yes, yes. I was born in Wigan.

VB: Right.

FM: Yes. Yes.

VB: Just get a pen out my bag. Em can I ask what it was your father did? What sort of work--

FM: He was a joiner.

VB: A joiner.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: And did your mother work?

FM: No no. No no.

VB: Right. And how many children were there?

FM: Four.

VB: Four. Right. [pause 4 seconds] [laughs] [pause 3 seconds]

FM: That's a good girl. You stay with me.

VB: And can I ask em, were you brought up in a particular religious eh--

FM: Anglican.

VB: Anglican.

FM: Church of England, yes.

VB: Can I ask as well if your family had any strong political views? Have you ever been a member of a party or anything like that?

FM: Eh, no actually I'm a floating voter.

VB: Right.

FM: I study what they've done and what they're likely to do and kind of eh...

VB: So based on their policies.

FM: Mhm.

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

FM: 1937.

VB: 1937. And what was it your husband worked at?

FM: He was a pawnbroker.

VB: Ah!

FM: Well, worked in a pawnbrokers.

VB: Yes. And do you have children yourself?

FM: Yes. I've three.

VB: Yes. Three. That's great. Well that was all I wanted to ask.

FM: I see.

VB: The other thing is, because I'm taping our discussion, these tapes will be kept in the university initially and it's possible that someone else might listen to them in the future. Would you have any objection to that?

FM: No.

VB: Right. And it's also possible that extracts from them might be used in some sort of publication or broadcast.

FM: No, I'm quite happy with that. Quite happy with that.

VB: Right. In that case I wonder if I could ask you to just sign this form. It's just to keep everything straight from a sort of legal point of view.

FM: Do I sign it here?

VB: Yes. And then I'll sign it as well. It's just one of these things that we have to do, you know.

FM: That's right.

VB: Then it gets put in a drawer and forgotten about, I think. That's great. Thanks a lot. I'll just sign that as well. [pause 4 seconds] That's that part of things over. Em I mean the first thing I really wanted to ask you was, what was the cinemas that you went to in Bolton in the thirties?

FM: Cinemas. Well actually I didn't start going to the cinema very much at all--

VB: Yeah.

FM: --until I met my husband. Now he loved the cinema. And we went every week.

VB: I see.

FM: But up to then, I only went just very occasionally.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You see, one or two pictures that I liked. Like Nelson Eddy, Jeanette MacDonald and those kinds you see. Spencer Tracy, I always liked him, Leslie Howard. Can remember the two of those. Mind you that might've been after I started going out with Harry. But my husband loved pictures. Apparently when he was at school, of course I didn't know him then, em, he used to play marbles in the schoolyard. And he always won. And he used to sell the marbles so that he could go to the pictures. [laughs]

VB: Ah. [laughs] So it was a way of financing his habit.

FM: [laughing]

VB: That's interesting. So, it was more when you were courting that you were--

FM: That's right, that's right.

VB: --seeing.

FM: Yes. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And then we went every Wednesday night. To the Regent on eh Wigan Road.

VB: Yeah.

FM: No, Deane Road it was, wasn't it? Not quite Wigan Road. Deane Road we went. Em, the seats started at fourpence. And then sixpence. We went in the sixpenny ones. We couldn't quite afford the ones on the gallery like but em. I can remember we took the children years afterwards. And em... it was half crown [two shillings and sixpence]. And Harry nearly died when he thought it was half crown! [laughs] He hadn't, in the meantime, you see, with having children he hadn't been.

VB: Yeah.

FM: But we used to go every Wednesday night then. But you know, I've never been much of a cinemagoer. Is this what you're doing actually then?

VB: Yes.

FM: The social history of eh--

VB: Yes.

FM: --the cinema.

VB: I mean I was wondering about what the Regent was like at that time.

FM: Em well it was only a small cinema. I believe there's a book now in Bolton on cinemas in Bolton. Eh I've one on mills in Bolton. But I've not one on cinemas. I've not seen it, somebody told me about it.

VB: It's interesting because I was talking to a chap erm, I think he's Dave, Dave Fleming. I think, had written a book on the Bolton cinemas. But I don't know if he actually had it published.

FM: Oh!

VB: So maybe that one that--

FM: It may be.

VB: --that we can talk about.

FM: Mhm. Mhm. Oh! So I can't really tell you an awful lot about cinemas. Only that there was one. Oh I can tell you about my brother going. Eh he went, he used to go to what they call the penny rush. Eh that was erm [pause 2 seconds] on eh Derby Street. It was called the Derby Cinema. Ans then it changed to the Tivoli. And now it's the Tivoli bingo hall. Well he used to go there. And just before you got to that picture place there was a shop called Skinny Nancy's. And eh it was really dirty, it was something a bit like an ironmongers. And she sold everything. And she was a dirty lady. And her shop was dirty. But they used to go in there I believe and buy stink bombs. [pause 2 seconds] And they would drop them in the pictures. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

FM: And the manager apparently eh, used to say when he saw them at the pay thing, "You're not coming in this week." "Aw go on. Let us come in. Aw, we'll be good!" Kind of thing. "Let us come in. Yes. Let us come in." And he always let them in. But nevertheless, he always threatened they wouldn't come in, you see. And eh my brother used to say that every week this manager used to get up on the stage, before the commencement. And he used to say, "Ladies and gentlemen", it was only the penny rush, it was only children, "Boys and girls. The top picture has not yet arrived." It had never arrived. Every week he said it had never arrived. And then he would say, "But we've got a bloody good comic!" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

FM: And apparently he used to come round with a big stick, you see. I don't know whether he ever hit anybody.

VB: Oh dear.

FM: But he did come round with this big stick to keep them quiet.

VB: Was that in Wigan?

FM: No, this was in Bolton.

VB: This was in Bolton. Yes.

FM: This was in Bolton. Yes, yes.

VB: Oh dear.

FM: Em, no, I never, in Wigan we went to the music hall. I can just vaguely remember, and I must only have been a baby then. Because I remember my dad saying something about taking me when I was a babe in arm, to the Wigan Hippodrome [referring to Hippodrome Theatre]. He had come from Rainford, you see, which was a village. And there was no such a thing as eh pictures in Rainford. The only thing my dad used to tell us about this, there used to be a man used to come round with his own sort of eh films. And he would show them in somebody's barn. And my dad used to go and help him with this. And he said, but invariably the film would break and he'd piece it together. And he remembered very well one film with a white horse on. And it was how he got to the white horse. It seemed to break. And they'd cut it out. And by the time they'd finished there was more white horse [laughs] on the floor, than they had... And that was the only way he'd ever seen anything like that, you see.

VB: Yes.

FM: And I think I told you that when we lived at Whiston em I remember going to Prescott to see a film. I mean we lived two miles outside the village of Whiston. And it was a three miles walk to Prescott, no buses. Eh but I can remember going from school. And I do remember it was Jackie Coogan. And he stole these trousers off em a [rent cart?]. And put them on the tramlines. The tram run over them and cut them short so he could wear them.

VB: [laughs]

FM: Now I can remember that very well. But after we came to Bolton, course you must understand, '26 we came to Bolton. In '29 my mother died. Well, I was twelve. My sister was fourteen, my brother was ten. And my youngest sister was only five. So, of course, it was up to myself and my

eldest sister to look after the others you see. So, I mean, you couldn't get out to go to places like that, you see.

VB: Mhm.

FM: We were both in the guides and we did get out one night a week to go to guide meetings, you see, and things like that. But as for going to the cinema, no, that was something. Well you didn't have time to do it, you see.

VB: You must have had to grow up quite fast.

FM: We grew up too fast.

VB: Yeah.

FM: I can remember one of my aunties telling my dad that eh he expected too much of us. Which he did. He did really, you know. And eh, and that stays with you, that stays with you. I think I'm younger now, in outlook particularly, than I was then. It's a bit exaggerated that. But, you know, you did. You did grow up too serious. And too eh, you know, I often wished that I'd let myself go more. I did, later on, me father married again. You wouldn't be interested in listening about me auntie Alice's wedding would you? That was in Rainford. This is really funny. Well, when my mother died, this was 1929. My mother died on the Thursday. She died with pneumonia. My grandfather died the following, no... my great uncle Dick was my mother's uncle. He died the following Monday with a haemorrhage of the throat. He'd had a handful of dried peas and one had got stuck in his gullet and he choked. My grandfather died with sugar diabetes. So they all three died in the same week. You know, within a week. Well, in those days, particularly in Rainford, you went into mourning. Everything, everything was black and even the edges they worked in had to be black and white. And black and white borders round the handkerchiefs and all this kind of thing, you see. Well, my auntie Alice, she was the youngest of my mother's sisters, and eh, she was getting married just within the twelve months! Well, my grandma didn't really like this. And there hadn't to be, you know, much fuss. It was very quiet. And eh, anyway, she had a white dress but she wore a black hat. Because they were still in mourning, you see. And we didn't go to the church. We were then living in Bolton you see and we went by train. And the train was a bit late. And then we'd a couple of miles to walk to where my grandma lived. So we hadn't time to go to the church. And my grandma didn't go to the

church. She stayed in the house and made the tea, you see. And there was just a few, well, there must've been about, I should think about twenty people altogether. And eh, so Auntie Alice came, knocked on the door and I went with grandma, you know, to see the bride and I can see her now, with this white frock on an this eh, black hat. And erm then of course we had our tea, I suppose it was [boiled ham?], I can't remember what the tea was. Eh, but after tea, at grandma's they had a gramophone, a piano, and a violin. But they were still in mourning. So none of those had to be played. But they had got a big bottle of beer. One that went like this and, like a bulb. And it was encased in straw, you know. Well of course that was all the men had to do. They just sat there and chatted and had a drink, you see. And my Uncle Dick. There must've been some bottled beer as well. Because Uncle Dick, that was my mother's brother. He'd gone a bit tiddly. And my sister and I sat at the front of him. And he got this bottle of beer. And he held it up like this, his glass down here. And he said, "Now. Bit of joking, jesting and coddling". And then of course we diddled, you see. "Now you mustn't laugh. You mustn't laugh." And then he'd start all over again, you see. "Can't I put best top on?" Well we thought he was hilarious, you see. Well of course all these men, they drank more than they should have done, because they went back to the Bridge Inn for some more. It was the only thing they could do, really. And then there was one that must've been able to sing. So, somebody asked him for a song. You'll never guess what he sang, you may not know it. 'The Little Blind Boy'. Have you ever heard of it?

VB: I don't know it, no.

FM: I'll sing a little bit for you. [sings] "What's the reason daddy? That I can't see like you. I oft times wonder what you're like. I know you're kind and true. Ma says God's will be done, so if to him I pray, will he give me life and let me see your face in light of day." It's a lovely song for a wedding, wasn't it? [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

FM: And then the next one he sung was, "Don't go down in the mine daddy." Now I can't remember that. Something like, [sings] "Dreams often come true", and he was telling his daddy he was not to go down the mine because he'd dreamt there'd been an explosion. So that was another. Considering the men were all miners anyway. You know, it was a wonderful thing for a wedding. But the thing that always stuck in my mind was-- We stayed overnight, and of course in those days, you see, you'd lino on your living room floor. And a rag rug here. And my auntie Alice, this is the bride. She's

scrubbing the floor. And grandma's here at this dresser getting food ready. And Auntie Alice looked up from her scrubbing and she said, "Didn't Roger sing nice last night, mother?" [laughs] Grandma said, "He did that. He did". [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Aw the strangest wedding.

FM: [laughs] And at my age I thought to myself, well he could've sung something more cheerful. [laughs] So that's just a bit of something for my, it's nothing about cinemas. [laughs]

VB: Aw dear. That's amazing though. I mean the length of time for the mourning must've been--

FM: Oh Yes. Oh, oh! You see, in Bolton here we had what we call a sermons. We still have them. You walk round, the churches walk round the parish. And eh, and like it's a special day at church. You know, once a year. Well when my mother died we had some, my sister and I had straw hats from the previous summer. It was February when she died but we had these straw hats from the previous summer. Well, my dad bought us navy blue coats. But my auntie decided, my dad's sister, decided, well I can do you those hats, you see. And she dyed them black. The only snag was, when it rained, then you came out and [laughs] So the following summer, he bought us new hats. Oh, they were very posh. Really more than my dad could afford. My auntie Hetty had no idea because she had no children. And they were Bangkok straw they used to call it. A shiny straw. Sort a bucket shape with a... Well mine had mauve silk underneath the brim and a big mauve flower here. Now me sisters had cream like that. Oh, my grandmother didn't like that. Now that was more than twelve months after the funeral. Mine wasn't bad, she said, because that was second morning. But my sister's, no, that was cream, you see. And I mean imagine like, twelve and fourteen-year-olds.

VB: Children, yes.

FM: That eh, you know, had to wear things like this. Not so much, it wasn't quite so bad in Bolton. They did, they did wear black and all that kind of thing. Because I can remember going to a wedding and they all had mauve, because they were in mourning, you know. The wedding dress and the bride's dress and everything were all in mauve. But em, but that had to be, you know. She was quite upset grandma was, that we had these em, but me sister had this with the cream underneath. [laughs] Oh dear. Now, that was... Well, I left school at fourteen. And I went to work in what I thought was a cafe. I think I told you this over the phone. But I found out that I had to mop the shop

floor first, sweep the shop front. Mop the shop floor. And the cafe was over the top. It was all one of course. And then, after breakfast, I started work at half past seven. And then we had a breakfast. We always got a good breakfast. And then it was a case of I had to go back. We had our breakfast in the bakehouse. Came back into the kitchen. And then it was cleaning the silver teapots. Em, like mopping the floors in the cafes. Doing all that kind of thing. Getting ready, eh, for lunchtime, eh, trade. I can only remember, all the time I was there, which was only a matter of I would think, about twelve months because I didn't like it at all. I can only remember serving one person in the cafe. And, well, as soon as lunchtime came, of course, all the washing up wanted doing, you see, from the cafe. And that was what I did, all the washing up from the cafe. Well when that slackened off eh, the waitress, the proper waitress, as far as I can remember, she was in the shop. Well it was my auntie, my cousins that were in the shop, it was my uncle's shop. And eh, she used to stand there and talk but I had to go in the bakehouse when I'd finished all that washing up. And then I had to help them to clean up in the bakers. This is at fourteen years old! And then when they went home, I came back! Into the kitchen ready for the tea-time trade, you see.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And I was going home at seven o'clock. That was from half-past seven in the morning to seven o'clock at night. Seven [shillings] and six [pence] a week I got. Which was quite good really, in those days. Because I got a breakfast and I got a lunch as well, you see.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And I must've had some tea. I don't think I'd go till half, but if we had tea I think it'd just be bread and jam or something like that. But we did get a good breakfast. Sort of bacon and tomatoes or something like that. And it was cooked in the bakehouse oven, it was good. And a good lunch. No, no pudding or anything like that. But a good, solid one-course meal, you know. But I rather fancy it was just sort of bread and jam at tea. But I can't really remember. Anyway, on Wednesday aftertoon I was supposed to have half a day. But I know twice at least I was sent with an order where they'd had an order with pies or cakes or something. And eh, after I'd finished, oh which would be two o'clock or half past anyway because you'd got to wash up after lunch, you see. Em, I'd to take these orders on me way, me way home. And eh, it would be half past three, four o'clock when I got home.

VB: Mhm.

FM: You see. But didn't start work right away. Because when my mother died, my sister had just started work. Anyway, my dad kept her home. Because, you see, in those days there was no help at all for fathers. There was a little bit of help for mothers that were left, but nothing for fathers. They just had to keep on with their work. And em, eh, so she was kept at home. And then when I left school I was kept at home, you see. Eh but that wasn't very long 'cause me father married again, you see.

VB: Ah.

FM: But then like, after he married again, em, you used to have to help, when you finished work. You see. Everybody did, it wasn't just that I had a stepmother, everybody, all the girls, not the boys of course, but the girls, you see, all had to do quite a bit of the housework at home. So it wasn't very easy, wasn't an easy life really. But eh, I don't know. But most of my life really, I should say that book was more like the life I led. Apart from the fact she doesn't seem to be fourteen when she finishes, 1939. So she must've been younger than me. But she did sort of the same thing. It was church, morning, well Sunday School and church. Everybody went to Sunday School and church. And eh and then, of course, outdoor games after my mother died. Which was playing hot flag or skipping or anything like that. We didn't do, you see, because we'd all the work to do. And eh, and then like there was guides for us. Now later on I did go to a dancing class. And I've always regretted I didn't keep it up. Because, I can do a waltz, and I can do the barn dance, and the Veleta and that sort of thing, you know. But I suppose it wouldn't be much use now because it's all these sequence dances and I can't get me feet round those. I can do the country dancing, I learnt that in guides. And eh... So like... But it's similar to her.

VB: Mhm.

FM: In the respect that [pause 2 seconds] that her father was never out of work. Now my dad wasn't out of work, you see. Mind you, that's why we moved. We moved from Wigan to Whiston and Whiston to here. Because there's no way my dad would be out of work. You see 1926 there was the miners strike. Well, Whiston was a mining village. Although my dad was a joiner. There was no work for the miners, there was no work for the joiners, you see. And that's when we, that's when we came here. So... Apart from, just occasionally going to the pictures until I started courting Harry and that was it, you know.

VB: Mhm.

FM: But we did go then, every Saturday. And then I was married in 1937. Let's see what else did I do? Oh! I went and got a first job after that. But that was in a bakehouse. Doing the baking. Em... I managed to get a fresh job. But then, after a while, the lady said, it was a lady that ran it and her husband worked for the water board. And she said she was going to give the shop up because you weren't supposed to have a business of your own if you worked for the water board.

VB: Ah I see.

FM: So she was going to give it up. Eh, so that was me out of a job. And that was when for a time, I worked in the mill. I didn't dislike working in the mill. It was quite clean and eh, it was hot. It was hot. It was stifling. But the job itself was clean. But apparently there used to be cockroaches and that going up the walls at night, you know. The night-watchman came to me because I'd left an apron hung up. Said, "Don't ever do that again," he said. "Because the cockroaches here they're that big as you walk through." And I know there was rats as well. But course I never saw anything like that. Anyway, then we opened a shop. Erm my sister did the baking and I served in the shop, you see, for a while. And then what else did I do? Well, I moved out of that after a while. Erm... Oh and I worked at Walkers Tannery. I was working at Walkers Tannery when I was married. Now that was, it was well paid. Course if you'd twenty-nine shillings a week in those days that was a good pay, you know. I was twenty-one by this time. And erm... But we were ironing calf skins. And you had to iron thirty-three an hour, for your wage. But each part of the calf skins had to be ironed three times. You put it on the table and you ironed half of it like that. Eh did you iron half or quarter? No, you ironed, no you must've ironed half of it. Then turned it round like this and ironed the other half. And then you spread it all out. You ironed it three times. You ironed each place three times. And depending on the size of them, if you got some bigger ones in, you might not have to do as many. But you'd an average of thirty-three an hour. And with four big irons like that, you weren't supposed to mend a fuse or anything like that yourself, there was an electrician. But if your iron was broken down, your wage was going, you see. So, you were halfway over the place searching for the electrician. And then perhaps he was doing something else. And you got in trouble if you didn't use all four irons. Because you had to like that [demonstrates] with quarter of it. Then pick another iron up and do the other quarter. That was the way it was. And then turn it round. And then pick the other iron up and do that. And then do the whole thing all over again, just with one iron. Erm and erm, so of course you

did your own fuses. But you see if you'd had an accident or anything like that, you wouldn't have got any compensation. An eh, but by and large, well, it was all right. And that was when, when I was married. And then war broke out of course. Now all this time my husband was in the pawnbroking trade, you see. Well, it wasn't a very nice job. And it wasn't very well paid. Well the first time that my husband, he had thirty shillings a week. And he was manage-- [tape cuts off]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

FM: Afterwards I worked at, I think one of the first supermarkets in Bolton. It was called [Bloors?]. And it was the first sort of cut-price grocery, if you like. Eh but it was nothing like the supermarkets of today, you served everybody. And you started at Monday morning and you cleaned the shelves first of all. You cleared out all the shelves out and everything. And then you started weighing up the stuff. Currants, sugar eh, you know, all dried fruit and sugar, I can't remember what else. There was loads of things. But that all had to be weighed up you see, because there was nothing pre-packed. And you did that 'til about Wednesday. But all the time you were doing that eh the manager was in the shop. But there never had to be two customers and only one serving. If a customer was being served, and another customer came in the shop, the manager would say, "Right one!" And you came and left what you were doing and did. And on... eh Fridays and Saturdays, there was so many people came to the shop. And they used to spread sawdust round the back counter so that you could slide round. You see, because you had to get all the goods off the shelves. And you know these tins of salmon? I don't know whether you sell them, they sell them in Scotland. It's called cucumber salmon. And it's still available occasionally. It was good salmon. Eightpence a tin that. Sugar was four pounds for ninepence, I can remember those two. I can't remember the price of butter or anything like that you know, that was good. And then of course 1941 my son was born. So that's, that's sort of 1930s, you know.

VB: Yes.

FM: And it's 1930s you want, is it?

VB: That's right. Yes.

FM: That's right.

VB: I mean, I was interested when you were talking about em I mean Bolton's obviously changed a lot.

FM: Oh! Oh! Oh, unbelievably.

VB: 'Cause I found some photos of some of the cinemas that I thought you might recognise even if they're not ones that you're so familiar with.

FM: Imperial! Now--

VB: I've heard that under another name. I've a feeling it might've been called The Empire as well.

[pause 2 seconds]

FM: Empire?

VB: I know it had a--

FM: You don't know where this was?

VB: Someone told me it was down by the Boots now, in the town centre. Near where Boots the chemist is.

[pause 2 seconds]

FM: Ah! It was! It was! This was Woolworths here.

VB: Right.

FM: This was Woolworths here! Yes. This was it, this was, now, was it called the Empire at that time? I think it was. Erm that's right. This was Woolworths. And behind there, higher up here, was the fish market. And they used to say at night, rats came down there, you see. And apparently one woman was sat in there, one time, during my time, and a rat jumped on her knee. And I think after that it

closed down. That's right. There was the erm... eh going... going say along eh down the street. This is St Helen's Road. Beyond, perhaps about ten minutes' walk from here, down there. You get the main road, St Helen's Road. Eh there was the Rumworth, it was called. And then there was this eh Derby picture house which went to [become] the Tivoli. And that was all along that road. But going over to Deane Road, there was the Fern Cinema [probably referring to the Plaza cinema at the corner of Deane Road and Fern Street]. That's three isn't it, up to now? And then there was the Regent where we used to go. That's four. And then there was a big one. Eh... it turned into a skating rink after [probably referring to the Astor]. And it began with R. It wasn't the Rialto and it wasn't the Regent. [pause 2 seconds] But it began with an R [probably referring to the Regal, aka the New Olympia, later the Navada skating rink].

VB: Not the Rex? I've heard of the Rex.

FM: The Ritz. No. It wasn't the Ritz.

VB: The the Rex.

FM: Rex?

VB: Yeah.

FM: Don't remember that one. No, this was... it was ordinary name.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And it was a big cinema that. And they used to say a lot of courting couples used to go there and sit on the back seat, you know. And that was to, I don't know. I never went in, so I don't know. Erm so that was like erm what, one, two, three, four, five. And then there was one on St George's Road called the Rialto. [pause 2 seconds] This was called the Imperial. That's six isn't it? There was the Queen's on Bradshawgate, that's seven. And then, there was one opened on Bradshawgate erm called the Lido. Now that's still going. I don't know if it's still called the Lido, but it's still going. And I can remember when it was being built. Now I was still at school when that was being built. They used to say, the workmen that were working on it said it would fall down within five years. Well, it was still up. That's only about seven. There was one... There was one called the Gem in Shepherd

Cross Street because that is where guide headquarters is built now, you know. That sort of going up erm eh, wait a minute. Not Blackburn Road way. Erm Chorley Old Road. I believe there was in their teens of cinemas, about. There was one, there was another one eh, now I don't know if this was the Gem or not. There was a man came to the Lady's Fellowships, I remember of him, he was showing us films of, slides of old Halliwell. Now it could've been the Gem. Because a friend of mine used to live there, round about there when she was little. And she remembered going. And they say it had dirt floors. And like forms [benches] that they sat on, you know. And eh, he said one man had told him his mother used to say when he went, "Why is it, you can go to any three cinemas, at Saturday afternoon, and you come home with a white face? But you go to the Gem, and you come home with a black face." Because, well of course when it got exciting 'cause they were nearly all Cowboys and Pearl White hanging over a cliff etcetera and it would be continued next week, you know. And of course they'd start stamping like this with their feet and all the dust would fly up.

VB: [laughs]

FM: They always came home covered in dust. And em there was another one, farther up Blackburn Road. I remember seeing that one. There was, and there was one on St George's Road. Have I said that one? There was one on St George's Road. And then of course there was the Capitol. Now that was built, the Capitol and the Lido... and the Odeon were built in the thirties.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You've got the Odeon.

VB: I've got one of the Odeon here. Yes.

FM: Uhuh. Yeah.

VB: I also got one of the programmes from the Odeon.

FM: Ha! Yeah. *Women Chases Man*, *Victoria the Great*, *Action for Slander*, Janet Gaynor. I don't remember. I remember Fredric March and Jessie Matthews. Barbara Stanwyck. Oh yes. My eldest daughter loved Barbara Stanwyck. Ronald Colman, yeah, Leslie Howard. In *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. It was good that. Yes, I remember that. Em [*The*] *Prisoner of Zenda*. Edgar Wallace. Em... very good.

Very good! I think that man that came had a cinema programme. He had lots of things about old Halliwell. But that's quite a lot isn't it? Like in the Fern.

VB: It is! Yes.

FM: The Fern. The Regent. That one at the bottom of eh, just can't remember its name. Oh! and there was another one! On the beginning of Blackburn Road [possibly referring to the Empire]. And then there was the Rialto. Then there was these two up here. And then the Lido on Bradshawgate. The Odeon and the Capitol. Then there was the Gem. And there was one, going up Belmont way [probably referring to the Belle]. So that's about eleven isn't it? I think I've a feeling that I've been told once there were about thirteen cinemas at one time in Bolton. Course it was the only thing wasn't it, really? You know. Erm... That's about I think all I can tell you, really.

VB: Yeah. I mean you mentioned earlier on some of the stars that you liked yourself. People like--

FM: Oh yes.

VB: Jeanette MacDonald and--

FM: Oh yes! Oh Jeanette MacDonald.

VB: And Nelson Eddy.

FM: And Nelson Eddy! Aw, I thought they were wonderful. And you'd today, you saw Nelson Eddy now, he'd look plump wouldn't he?

VB: Well, it's funny you should say that, because I was just watching erm *Maytime*.

FM: Ah yes!

VB: About two days ago.

FM: Were you?

VB: Yes.

FM: Yeah.

VB: I thoroughly enjoyed it.

FM: Oh yes!

VB: It's a wonderful film.

FM: Oh, I tell you what we once watched. Eh, it was an old film when we watched it. Because it was when my son was born in '41. Now we went to me aunty's in Sheffield once. And we stayed with her for a few days and she said, "Go on to the pictures. Have a night for yourselves." And eh it was *Whisky Galore!* [note: released 1949] And oh! We thought it was a really good film. It really was a marvellous film to us. It was black-and-white. And eh as the girls, there's a lot of difference between my sons and the girls. Eh, there's eleven years between David and Tricia, who's the eldest. And then there's fourteen like between. And Christine's the youngest. Eh, well they were born, they were playing about at this particular time. And it was coming on the television on the afternoon, Sunday afternoon. And we kept saying to them, "Oh! You mustn't miss *Whisky Galore!* It's a wonderful film. It's absolutely hilarious." You see. Well they teased me about it, many a time that. Do you remember? I think they'd cut so much out of it to get it on television, in the time. It was nothing like as good. Now, there was a young boy in that. [pause 2 seconds] Ah, there was *Whisky Galore!* now there was a young boy in another film I remember seeing... Nah that was, no, it wasn't *Whisky Galore!* It was a film where there was the shipwreck. There was a fire on board ship and the crew got off. Some of them did. Some got in one boat and they were still at sea when they got back to the ship and the fire had gone out and they reboarded it. [note: *Whisky Galore!* is about a shipwreck] Now he played a boy, the sort of cabin boy, in that. And he was the man, and I can't, I don't know is name, he played the butler in *Upstairs Downstairs*. (ITV, 1971 - 75)

VB: Oh yes.

FM: A Scottish boy he was.

VB: Em, Yeah, I know who you mean. Gordon Jackson?

FM: That's right! Gordon Jackson. And I can remember him. And em and they had this fire and they finally got the ship. And they were going to send the tugboats out to bring it in, but they said no. Because if the tugboats had come in, they wouldn't have got the bounty or something for bringing this ship in, you see. I can remember that. There was Gordon Jackson and then there was another man, he was a Welshman... can't remember his name. [pause 2 seconds] And I think those were the only two I can remember out of that picture.

VB: Did you enjoy comedies particularly or?

FM: Those kind. I wasn't very keen on Laurel and Hardy.

VB: Right.

FM: Now I seen Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin of course.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Now I thought he was funny.

VB: What was it that put you off Laurel and Hardy do you think?

FM: I thought they were a bit silly. You know. I'm still not keen on that kind of-- I like a sort of hidden humour.

VB: Yeah.

FM: If you like.

VB: 'Cause another thing I brought along that I thought you might be interested to see was some stills from films from the thirties. And the first one just happens to be Laurel and Hardy. [laughs]

FM: Laurel and Hardy. No some people, some people really enjoyed them.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You know. And eh... Who's that?

VB: I think that's one of Joan Crawford.

FM: Oh! I used to like her.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Yes. I used to like her, Joan Crawford.

VB: What was it about her that attracted you or appealed to you?

FM: Well, I think Joan, oh! I tell You somebody else I like. Sorry, I'm going off me tale. I think Joan Crawford was more, she was more sort of sophisticated, wasn't she? And also a bit of a lady. I think perhaps that's what appealed to me. Em, now there was somebody else that played the highwaymen. She was a woman, she was called Margaret [referring to Margaret Lockwood]. I can't for the life of me think. And into my mind keeps coming Margaret Rutherford. But I think Margaret Rutherford's later on, really. I've seen Margaret Rutherford quite often on telly. Now I like films like that, you know, whodunits. I like whodunits in books and that. [pause 2 seconds] Erm... Margaret somebody she was called. [Pause: 2 seconds] Eh and she played the part of a highwayman. [referring to *The Wicked Lady*] She sort of dressed up as a man. And she was a highwayman. But I can't for the life of me think what the film was.

VB: Sounds like an interesting film, actually.

FM: Mhm. Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Very unusual--

FM: Uhuh. Uhuh.

VB: --sort of story.

FM: I wish I could think about that.

VB: The only other Margaret I can think of is Margaret Lockwood when you're saying that.

FM: Ah! No wonder, it was Margaret Lockwood!

VB: Yeah.

FM: Eh, when would she be about the thirties?

VB: She must be about then. Yes.

FM: That's right. Well, I think it was her. I think it was her. An erm did she used to have a sort of erm, what did they used to call it? They used to put a spot on.

VB: Beauty spot sort of thing.

FM: That's right! Beauty spot. She did!

VB: I think she did. Yes.

FM: Yes, she did. Yes, she did. That was a good film. She finally got shot or something didn't she in that. Yea, I think she did. I don't know whether she got shot in the arm and she died or whatever. She got shot properly and died. But whether she gave it up then but I know she played the highwayman. I liked that one. And I used to like Joan Crawford. Oh, and this is erm, erm, what's his name isn't it--

VB: Edward G. Robinson.

FM: Edward G. Robinson. Yeah, he mostly played gangsters didn't he? And who was the other one that used to play gangsters too but he... A little fella. [pause 2 seconds]

VB: Not, not James Cagney?

FM: That's right! James Cagney.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Yes. I can remember him. And now didn't he have a film once where he had a boys' school? That might've been Spencer Tracy. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: Yeah. I think it is Spencer Tracy.

FM: Uhuh. He was a priest or something and he sort of started a boys' school. That's right. That's right. I used to like him, Spencer Tracy.

VB: Did you like the gangster films?

FM: Eh, well it depended. I don't like too much blood and thunder. But, yeah, some of them were quite good. And usually the best came out on top, didn't they? In the end which [laughs]

VB: 'Cause I was wondering when you said that about school. Erm, it put me in mind of the one where Cagney's a gangster and he has to pretend to be yellow at the end.

FM: Oh!

VB: So it was not too. It was the Dead End Kids in it.

FM: That's right. Yes.

VB: Yes.

FM: I don't think I saw that but I remember of it. Don't worry she's alright. [referring to dog]

VB: Yeah. And Pat O'Brien.

FM: Pat O'Brien. I liked him too.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Now, I'm not terribly keen on dancing films like that. I'd watch them. I mean if they came, sometimes they come on at Saturday afternoon, don't they?

VB: Mhm.

FM: These old black-and-white films.

VB: That's interesting. Did it just not really appeal or?

FM: Eh, no. No erm... it's funny that, really. Erm... they're all right. They're all right. But I'd rather have a good whodunit, you know. Even now I'd rather have a good whodunit. Margaret Rutherford was marvellous, you know. Now who's the other one that's getting on now? [pause 2 seconds] There's another one that's about ninety-odd. She must've been [pause 3 seconds] hm. No.

VB: Did you like the Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce?

FM: Oh now!

VB: The Sherlock Holmes.

FM: I liked, Yeah, eh, those were the cricket. The ones that were always playing cricket. Basil Rathbone and the other one. They were a bit pansified.

VB: Right.

FM: That's right. That's right. But yet they were in whodunits many times.

VB: That's what I was thinking. Yes, Sherlock Holmes and--

FM: Now, I'm not terribly keen on Sherlock Holmes. No. And yet I like those type of films.

VB: That's interesting.

FM: I like 'em [pause 2 seconds] now they come on television. Sherlock Holmes, I might watch them if there's nothing else on. I might, I wouldn't buy a book or get a book out of the library with them on. But if there's somebody else on like Agatha Christie. I like Agatha Christie. I would watch that instead, preferably. I would watch that, you know, or read that. Eh, but those two, those two pansies. [laughs]

VB: Ah. I'm interested when you say that because I mean obviously they were quite popular--

FM: Oh yes!

VB: --films.

FM: Well so were em, I can remember talking about something that were going on at school there. And the vicar saying he liked Laurel and Hardy.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And I thought, remember them once trying to get a piano up and down stairs. And I thought, "You stupid things", if you turned them the other way. I thought they were a bit stupid.

VB: Yeah.

FM: 'Course erm, he comes from Wigan, doesn't he? [referring to George Formby]

VB: Yeah.

FM: I like him. I like his songs.

VB: So was it as a singer you liked him best?

FM: Oh yes! Oh yes. I like his songs very much. When I'm Cleaning Windows and that kind of thing. It's little bit cheeky but, I liked those.

VB: Mmhm.

FM: And em, but my dad used to say his father was better than him.

VB: Is that right?

FM: Mhm Mhm. His father used to be in the Wigan Hippodrome. I suppose, I suppose with living at a place where there wasn't anything like that. When they went to live at Wigan. That was great, you see, to go to the Wigan Hippodrome. My dad used to like the brass bands too that played in Wigan park. That was something else. I like a brass band. Eh, and em, but he used to say, when my sister and I were little, my mother would spend so much time getting us ready to go out on Sunday night, we always got to the park when the band was playing God Save the King!

VB: [laughs] Aw dear.

FM: Oh! Shirley Temple.

VB: Ah.

FM: Yes now, I liked Shirley Temple. Now some didn't like Shirley Temple. They thought she was a bit affected. Em, for a child kind of thing, you know. Em, but I like Shirley Temple.

VB: Mhm. Very talented for a--

FM: Oh yes. Oh yes, or course she was, for a little one. I could see my little granddaughter being like that. She's like that. But em, oh it's funny how these bring them to mind. I would never have thought about George Formby. I remember seeing him once in the TT Races. That's right. Ah, yeah, this comes back. You see, I'd see those films, probably, well, well you see, from... eh, it would be about '34 when I started going out with my husband. You see well, then until '41 we'd go regularly to the pictures, every Wednesday night. So, we'd see quite a lot of eh, of pictures in that time, wouldn't I really? But before that, no. Very very rarely I went.

VB: Did you used to meet him at the pictures?

FM: Oh! He used to come, used to come for me.

VB: Come and pick you up.

FM: Oh yes. Em, well with working in shops you see, and shops at that time, Saturday, workers didn't go up Saturday, they went at Wednesday. So of course, they had half day Wednesday in Bolton, then. Em, but you see Saturday night, Friday night and Saturday night, the shops were open till nine o'clock. And I had to be in for ten. So there's no way you could get very far [laughs] by that time. at that time, when I was courting, there used to be em, sometimes, eh, evening trips to Blackpool and Southport. I think it was one [shilling] and six [pence] to Southport. Two and six to Blackpool. And I can remember once going to Blackpool on one of those half-crown trips, we used to say. And eh, it got stuck somewhere. Just outside a station. Oh, and it was about one o'clock in the morning when I got home. I was scared to death because my dad would have gone mad. Anyway he just said the following morning, "You know this kind of carry on can't go on. It mustn't happen again." I said, "Well, you know, it was just a case of the train being late." Well I mean, I'd be about, I was twenty-one when I got married. So, I'd be about eighteen at that particular time, you know. But your time for getting in, ten o'clock, that was quite good. And I can remember a lady, she was a girl then, quite bit younger than me, and we were talking the other day, and em, she lived next door but one to us. We lived at the top of [inaudible] Lane which is down here. And em, she said, her dad, he was a good dad you know, she said, "Oh! Very strict." He wouldn't let her go to the Palais dancing. That was a den of iniquity! The only thing they did was dance, you know. And erm, and they were very strict Roman Catholics. Which, really, usually they were a bit more lenient. It was the Methodists that were more against em, you know, eh against dancing and that kind of thing at that particular time, you know. But anyway, he wouldn't let her. And a little incident that showed you the difference in their approach to sons and daughters. She had three brothers, Clairey, and I can remember my stepmother saying to me, years after, that, it was after I was married. And she was saying that Clairey's mother had been saying to her that the father had got very annoyed with Clairey, because she didn't help to put the boys' food up at night. They took sandwiches with them you see. They were all working then. And eh, so I said, "Oh! Why does Clairey not work?" And she looked at me, "Oh yes, of course she does." I said, "Well why should she put their food up any more than they should put her food up if they're all working." But that was the attitude, you see. Eh, men didn't do things like that. It's a lot better these days, I think, as far as that goes. I think men take far more, you know. And I mean, 'course a lot of it, with women going to work now, they can see. I mean, when

men would come home, "Oh honey, I'm tired." They'd probably been looking after two or three children all day, you know. Which is completely exhausting. But, you know, that was nothing. And erm, I can remember my sister once saying, "It'll never happen to me." My mother, and this was before my mother had died like, and she told my sister to clean my brother's shoes. And she didn't want to. And she said, "You should be proud to clean your brother's shoes." [pause 2 seconds]. Well, I think it should be the brother that should be cleaning everybody else's shoes. That'd be one job for him wouldn't it? But eh, that was the way it went those days, you know.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And I mean girls were very poorly paid, you know. If you got a pound a week sometimes it was quite, you know, reasonable. I can remember, somebody that I worked with once went to work, oh that was another cinema! Em [pause 2 seconds] on Crompton Way. I think it was called the Crompton Cinema. You see that's near where Samuel Crompton was born and that. And eh, and she left, because there was a lot of short time. The pay was better when you were working. But she got a job as an usherette and that was a pound a week. And she was, she was about twenty-something, you know. And that was the wage. [pause 2 seconds] I know things were a lot cheaper but erm, a pound a week didn't go far. Because the average rent then would be about twelve [shillings] and six [pence] if you were renting your house. So you couldn't, of course, women couldn't. I mean I can remember a friend of mine, not all that long ago, saying to me I must've loved Bill an awful lot. To marry him. I said, "Well what would you have done if you hadn't have married him?" I said, "There wasn't much for us. Really." Because you could never have bought a house of your own. I can remember after I went back to work after my husband died. That's thirty years since. Erm and eh, we had a supervisor. I worked in an office then. As we had this supervisor. And she was the supervisor, and earning a good pay. But if hadn't have been for the owners, eh sounding for her, she couldn't have even bought a flat! Because they wouldn't let a woman take a mortgage out. I mean when I was married I'd a better pay than my husband. But they didn't take that into account at all! You see. I know, like erm, we bought a little semi [semi-detached house] when first we were married. On Plodder Lane. I don't know if you where Plodder Lane is.

VB: No. Not at all.

FM: Well this is like Lever Edge Lane. It runs parallel with Lever Edge Lane but over the fields that way.

VB: Ah. Right. I know roughly where you are.

FM: Uhuh. And, erm, it was newly built. Three-hundred-and-twenty-five pounds they were. Well you'd to put thirty-two-pounds-fifty, well it was thirty-pounds-five shillings then. Down, you see, a tenth.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And this is what we did. But when the building society, when you give all your details in, and they realise, and I think Harry was then on about two pounds something a week and some bonus. Eh, but we had to pay another thirty-two pounds. Because he wasn't earning enough.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And although I was working, and I was getting actually more than he was at that particular time. That was when I worked at the tannery. But they didn't take that into account, you see, then. It all had to be according to his pay. So erm, that was how it went. [pause 4 seconds]. So, is there anything? Do you want to hear these tapes? Or do you want to borrow them and eh--

VB: I wouldn't mind borrowing them if that would be all right.

FM: Well! Well you'll let me have them back, won't you?

VB: Of course. Yes. That would be great.

FM: That's right. I think those are a bit heavy. I don't think you'll get much out of those books.

VB: Mhm.

FM: But if you've seen them anyway.

VB: Yes. I had a brief look at them in the library.

FM: Yes. I don't think you'd get much more out of those than you'd get off the tapes really.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And the tapes are quite light, aren't they? To send back if erm...

VB: That would be great. Yes. I'd like to have a chance to--

FM: Uhuh. Uhuh.

VB: To hear them.

FM: Well, I think you'd get, you'd get. It's erm, there's four sides.

VB: Yeah.

FM: I don't know whether, it mustn't have had this one. I've had it years actually. And I just looked for it after you'd rung me up. And I don't think that must've been in a case.

VB: Mhm.

FM: But I can't see why. I can't find the case to it anywhere.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And erm, it starts off at, this must be where it starts. Home and Neighbourhood Life. That one. And then the second one, Leisure and School. And then the third one is Working Experience. And Social Change--

VB: Right.

FM: --on that one. So yes, you could borrow those.

VB: Thanks very much. It's very kind.

FM: This is the paper they've been wrapped up in all this time. I'll put them in a bag or something for you.

VB: It was interesting for me to look at that.

FM: Oh yes!

VB: Gives some sort of background.

FM: A background. Yes, yes.

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

FM: That's right, yes.

VB: 'Cause that's helped me a lot.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: To get a general idea.

FM: A general idea, yes.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: But then after the end of this month I'm going to be down in North London.

FM: Oh! Oh gosh!

VB: And talking to people there.

FM: Gosh!

VB: An then I go on to East Anglia!

FM: Good gracious! Well, you get about anyway, don't you?

VB: Yeah. Well the idea is to really build up a picture of em, things like the differences in what stars people liked. And how many times a week--

FM: Yes. Yes.

VB: --a week people were going to the cinema.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: In different places.

FM: Uhuh. Yes. Yeah.

VB: And another thing we've been doing is eh, I put some adverts in sort of special interest papers. So we've been sending out questionnaires throughout Britain.

FM: Oh! I see.

VB: So that should help fill in some of the background too.

FM: Ooh yes. Yes, wonderful.

VB: And we get people replying from, you know, Wales and--

FM: Uhuh.

VB: --all sorts of different places.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: So em--

FM: Yes. Yeah, yeah. I can remember going seeing erm, oh of course that would be after, because the girls were eh, oh they'd be, oh, it'd be '66 that, I think. Eh, when we stayed in Colwyn Bay.

VB: Ah right!

FM: And eh I went to see one of them, oh oh, what's she called? She sings eh, "La la la la la, with the Sound."

VB: Oh yeah.

FM: Sound of Music.

VB: Julie, Julie Andrews. Yes.

FM: That's right. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

FM: I remember going to see that. And usually you'd go and see a film when you were on holiday.

VB: Is that right?

FM: You know, that would be something you would do.

VB: I don't expect you had many holidays when you were growing up though, if you were--

FM: Actually, erm, actually we went to camp with the guides--

VB: Right.

FM: --for a few years. Eh, we erm, in fact I was telling the ladies, these ladies that came yesterday. I was a guide for about thirteen years, you know. I found it very good. I enjoyed it. And we used to go to camp. Well these ladies, have all been guides. And it's a trefoil, I don't know whether you've heard of them or not. It's a trefoil guild. It's like the older people who were still interested in the movements.

VB: Yes.

FM: And you helped with sort of erm, helping with examining for badges and helping. Recently our guides here celebrated their seventieth birthday. And I made the cake for them. And we gave them fifty pounds towards their expenses. That's the kind of thing. And this what these ladies that were here there. We just meet in one of their homes once a month. And we had the guide captain from here talking to us on guiding of today which is far different. But eh, I can remember going to Wales one year. And we used to go, there used to be a station, just down the road here. Daubhill Station. And then there used to be one in Great Moor Street. That's all closed down now. And erm, we could go right to Wales, on a train like that. It's far more difficult to get to Wales today, far more difficult. I went, not with my daughter because she comes for me. She lives in Wales. But I went on holiday. At Rhos-on-Sea. And I went by the National. And I went from Bolton to Manchester. And I was over an hour in Chorlton Street bus station to get there. I just about got to the hotel in time for eh the evening meal.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And I started off in the morning. And yet in those days, all that time ago, in the thirties, you could go straight to Manchester from Daubhill Station just down here. Or you could go from Great Moor Street. We must've, lot of guide companies and scout companies in Bolton went to Wales, for camping. And that particular year we went to erm Llanfairfechan I think it was. And erm, we got the train in Great Moore Street and half of it was occupied by scouts and half of it was occupied by guides. And the guiders and the scouters were in the middle--

VB: [laughs]

FM: --stopping us from joining in, you know. Erm, and eh, another time, I was telling them this about this yesterday because this guide captain was talking about camp. Eh, we went to Silverdale. And we had navy blue haversacks. Just like bags like this and a shoulder strap on, you know? And eh, we decided to go for a picnic. You could walk from Silverdale to Arnside. And we were going on this walk, and the heavens opened! Absolutely threw it down. Well! All our sandwiches, course there was no tin foil or eh, you know, clingfilm, anything like that in those days. They were wrapped in greaseproof paper of something similar, you see. And of course, dyes, like I say, with the hat dyes coming down here. Well dyes came out of these haversacks, you see. And by the time we came to eat them, they were all blue! [laughs] Blue haversacks. And [laughs] and captain said, "I'm afraid you'll have to eat them, guides."

VB: Oh!

FM: "Because I've budgeted so very carefully for this camp. I can't afford you to cut more sandwiches."

VB: Aw no.

FM: [laughs] They never did us any harm. And the farmer used to bring the water. He had a big tank in the field. And the farmer used to bring the water every morning. And one morning we popped our heads out of the tent and the horses were drinking the water. We still had to drink it! [laughs] Because that's the water we had!

VB: Aw. [laughs]

FM: But it was funny really. But we enjoyed it.

VB: Ah it sounds like great fun, actually.

FM: We had, we had a lot of fun, you know. And I can remember we'd one eh, now they don't do this sort of thing. Essentially you went back to basics. And you cooked, you divided in patrols. You were a cooking patrol. You'd be a messenger patrol. You'd be erm camp patrol. Well camp patrol was to keep the erm [pause 2 seconds] the campsite tidy. And we had this one, she was called Miss

[Demain?]. And she was very efficient. And she used to have you trailing after her and she'd be walking. "There's a piece of paper. And there's a piece of paper there!" And one of our, the comic out of our company, she was dancing behind me, "There's a piece of paper there, and a piece of paper there." [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Oh dear.

FM: And I can remember at guides, we used to go for these badges. Well, these that they do today are far more sophisticated than what ours was. You just said I'd like to go for this sort of badge and that sort of badge. Anyway, I decided I'd go for entertainer's badge. And eh, I just eh, I started off and I was going to sing a song. A song that my dad used, my dad was very, always walking about the house singing. You know, he had loads of songs, loads of repertoire. And em, he said, he used to sing this one eh, "I passed by your window, when the morning was bright." You see. So I decided I would sing this. Well this person that examined us, oh, she was a concert pianist or something, I think. Very very efficient. And so I started off this and I got a few bars. And she said, "Just a moment! Would you like an accompaniment dear?" So I said eh, "Yes please." You know, kind of thing. Frightened to death of her like, really. So she started. She got to the piano and I started again. "I passed by your window when the morning was", plonk!

VB: Oh.

FM: [laughs] "Are you not used to singing to an accompaniment?" "No, Miss." [laughs] So I sang it all through. But I didn't get my entertainer's badge. [laughs]

VB: Aw.

FM: She wrote a letter to our captain. There was about three of us went from our eh, our company. She wrote a letter to our captain and said, you know, the standard was terrible. You see. It wasn't at all efficient. And there was one girl there. She did come from a very poor family. It was a shame, really. And she was terribly bow-legged. And her eyes, obviously neglect, you know. It was a shame. Course we used to wear these great big hats then, you know. Then went dipping all the way round. And she had this second-hand uniform that was very [pause 2 seconds] and it wasn't all that clean and that. But she stood up there, like this and [laughs] I haven't forgotten this. [laughs] "And I know you'll come back! For the little silver ring you gave me!" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

FM: Oh! I often wonder about that girl. But another one played the piano. And she could play it by ear. She never had a lesson. But you sing anything to her, she could play it. But that didn't do for this. Like it had to be. She said, "That's a pity that girl hasn't learnt the piano properly." She said, "She has the gift for it." But it's no use, you see, well, it's no use to people like her. But she was an entertainer! I mean she could have gone on any music hall and entertained anybody. But you see I think she wanted class. And we weren't class. [pause 2 seconds]. Anyway, I think we should have a cup of tea now.

VB: That would be lovely. Yes.

FM: Do you want tea? Or would you rather have coffee?

VB: Tea could be great. Thanks.

FM: Eh, have a look at this. While you're here.

VB: Oh! History of Morris Green by, by yourself.

FM: Yes. [laughs]

[pause 10 seconds]

VB: This is interesting. I didn't realise the--

FM: Pardon? [voice from distance]

VB: This is very interesting. I didn't realise the area was so well.

FM: Well actually em, they started, Mr Cooper was one of those that started this local history workshop. I've been going to local history, oh, for about twenty years. I don't go now. But erm, I'd been going for a long, long time and then they said, eh, we're starting a local history workshop. But,

if you come, you'll be expected to do a project. And I thought, well, Morris Green. It's comparatively new. I don't mean, I mean these houses have been up and those and that. But it is, towards eh Deane and Smithills and all those. There's no long way back history. But em, I thought well I'll do that because there's not much to it. But it was surprising how much I found--

VB: Ah.

FM: --when I did. But unfortunately, all the books have gone. They've all been sold. I do, I do keep that one. And if anybody comes. You see the printers only want to do about two hundred. Well for the number of people. There's so many, there's about seven hundred, altogether. Well, they're only asked for now and then. It's not worth that having another two hundred done. But I keep that. And then if anybody comes and I know them. And I know I'll get it back.

VB: Yes.

FM: I lend it to them, you see. And they can read through it.

VB: It's interesting to see these photos as well.

FM: That's right. That's em, where the school is now.

VB: Yes.

FM: Across the road. Where this is. Yeah. And that's the farm that they pulled down.

VB: That's a lovely one.

FM: And that's, that's the cottages.

VB: Yeah. I mean I wonder if he was [inaudible].

FM: Well, he was called Mr Platt.

VB: Ah!

FM: And his daughter was in the guides. Unfortunately, somebody was saying with Penny, now she's got older, her breath smells. [referring to dog] Erm [pause 2 seconds] eh, he was a warden at church. And they helped to build the church. And they kept a lectern in that cottage and his daughter used to tell us. She used to play on it when she was a little girl.

VB: Ah.

FM: Yeah. Yeah. And erm, she had plaits and she was called Dorothy Platt. An eh, the guide company's motto was, a long pull, a strong pull and a pull altogether. Of course, we used to pull her plaits you see.

VB: [laughs] [pause 3 seconds] Aw.

FM: Do you like tea strong or?

VB: Em, just as it comes.

FM: As it comes.

VB: Yeah.

FM: That's what I like to hear somebody say.

VB: [laughs]

FM: That's one thing we do as well although we don't do it as much now. If they have anyone like we'll serve refreshments and things like that.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And when you get people, "I want a weak one! I don't want milk!" You think, why can't they say, "Just as it comes"? [laughs]

VB: They really are wonderful some of these photos. The one of the park, as well.

FM: Yes. Yeah.

VB: That's great.

FM: Do you know, that park's not as nice as it was then.

VB: Mhm.

FM: It's a shame really, because people really agitated to get that far.

VB: Yeah. It looks, you can see all the local worthies. It must've been quite a gathering--

FM: Oh, it was!

VB: --place.

FM: Oh, it was. [pause 13 seconds] The little school [dog barking loudly] This is the little school that started the education.

VB: Ah.

FM: It's on the front of the book.

VB: I saw it. Yes.

FM: But em, my grandson did that. He sort of copied it off this. And then eh, we went to his class that they could enlarge it.

VB: Yes.

FM: Make them stretch out and it makes you able to see it more. [dog barking] And that's in, what's the little park now? That was the village green. And the little school. And they rented the school to the Bishop of Bridgewater for a shilling per annum. Provided they whitewashed it inside and out.

VB: Aye. This is very interesting to find out about the area a bit. [pause 5 seconds] The Salvation Army Band on a Sunday night.

FM: Sorry?

VB: It's interesting what Mrs Beckwith was saying about the Salvation Army Band.

FM: Yeah. Yeah. And it tells you that one about them going to the Salvation Army and the Mission.

VB: Ah!

FM: And they would show them these slides, you know, Band of Hope. They'd erm stop people from drinking.

VB: Yes.

FM: And show them the fellas beating their wives up and that kind of thing. Do you have milk and sugar?

VB: Em just milk. No sugar.

FM: Just milk.

VB: Thanks. [pause thirty seconds] I was interested by what you were saying about the fundraising in 1931 for the Church of England.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: And the vicar, Reverend A. Beswick with his mile of pennies and Morris Green in High Street. And then collecting in the Majestic cinemas.

FM: That's right. That's right. Yes. Yes they allowed him to go into the foyer of the cinema and collect for eh--

VB: That's interesting. 'Cause that must've been quite controversial. Because the church didn't like things like Sunday openings at that time. I mean there was a bit of controversy.

FM: Oh, it wouldn't be Sunday, it wouldn't be Sunday--

VB: Yes.

FM: --that he would collect. No. No they weren't open on a Sunday, the cinemas then.

VB: Yeah.

FM: No. No.

VB: That's really interesting this.

FM: It would probably be Saturday.

VB: Yeah.

FM: They once did a mile of pennies to eh, that goes from Daubhill Station to High Street, down here.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And they did a mile of pennies on each side of the road. Eh for a man there used to be a quarry, near Daubhill Station.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And there was a boy that fell in. And a man tried to get him out. But they both died.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And they did a mile of pennies for erm for the man's wife, I think, and children.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You know. [pause 2 seconds]

VB: I notice one of your acknowledgements is to Lois Basnett.

FM: That's right.

VB: I met her.

FM: Did you? For the railways.

VB: Yes.

FM: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well erm, there's my youngest son-in-law's uncle has done something on the railways but it's very technical.

VB: Right.

FM: It's a very biggish book. In fact, I think there's three men done it. Erm but Lois is erm [pause 2 seconds] she hasn't actually published anything, has she? It's just something that, it's in the library.

VB: Yes. I was talking to her about cinemas.

FM: Oh, were you? Were you?

VB: Just erm last week I think it was.

FM: Was it?

VB: The week before. Yes.

FM: Ah! Ah.

VB: Yes.

FM: Yeah. Yeah. She was a friend of a friend of mine. That was how I got to know--

VB: Ah I see. Yes. Yes.

FM: Lois Basnett.

VB: 'Cause I met her through the Westhoughton History Group.

FM: Ah! Is she in the Westhoughton History Group?

VB: Yes.

FM: It seems to be fairly, well I think it was the Westhoughton History Group that erm Andrew's uncle was in. And they done this thick book. I haven't got it 'cause it was about fifteen pounds or something like that. But I haven't got it. But it's very technical, very detailed.

VB: Yes.

FM: About the railways.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Well, I've mentioned it in there. Just where the original station used to be, even I can remember when the train used to cross the main road. And there was man with a little red cap used to stop the traffic. At that particular time, it was only bringing coal.

VB: Ah I see.

FM: They'd pick the coal up at Daubhill Station and brought it across the road to the sidings.

VB: So was that quite a slow train then?

FM: Well, it only just, yes, it just crossed the road once, I think it was once or twice a day at that particular time. But years ago my mother-in-law's mother [laughs] used to catch the train there. She taught at St Mark's School, eh right down Great Lever way, you see.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And she used to catch the train. 'Cause it used to go right to the, to what the call [Letchers Close?]. Eh in the town. Near Trinity Church.

VB: Mhm.

FM: I don't know. If you don't know Bolton you don't know these places do you?

VB: 'Cause it's interesting the mining connection as well. I notice you mention the Pretoria--

FM: The Pretoria pit disaster. It was terrible.

VB: Pit disaster in 1910.

FM: Oh, the Pretoria pit disaster. Three hundred and forty-four. And funnily enough I'm just into reading one of Ruth Hamilton's books. I don't know whether you know her books.

VB: No, I'm not familiar.

FM: Well funnily enough it was my sister in Scotland that told me about them.

VB: Mhm.

FM: She writes on Bolton. But it's fiction, of course. Eh it's erm, but it does give you an idea. But just last night I came, oh, the Pretoria pit disaster, you see. Eh but she says three hundred and odd. But there's three hundred and forty-four men--

VB: That's in Atherton.

FM: And boys. Well Yes. The actual pit was in Allerton. Everybody says Westhoughton.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And there's a big memorial in Westhoughton town centre.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And most of them were buried in Westhoughton. The biggest part would come from Westhoughton. But quite a lot did come from this part of the world, really.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And there was one lady that I was talking to, that lived just down here. She's only been dead about twelve months. She was ninety-one when she died. And she remembers this little girl. And she was in the front garden, on St Helens Road. And she said, "I heard this terrific bang" And then droves and droves started coming up--

VB: Yeah.

FM: St Helens Road. And one of the ladies that was here Yesterday, her father was working there. And, eh, her mother went as soon as she heard, you see. But he had gone on the morning shift.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And he hadn't gone down the pit when the explosion occurred. But he'd stayed on to help to bring the others out.

VB: Yes.

FM: But there was one lady in Morris Green Lane and she lost the husband and two sons. And they didn't get them all out at once of course.

VB: No.

FM: So she had three funerals. And her sons were only in their early teens like fourteen. Thirteen and fourteen, it was dreadful.

VB: Ah.

FM: Mhm. Mhm.

VB: Mhm. Actually, someone was telling me about, that eh, in Westhoughton as well. Saying that they'd had a lodger who actually survived the disaster.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: He was in the last, eh I don't know what the technical term is but, you know, the--

FM: The cage.

VB: The cage. He was in the one that was going down just after it happened.

FM: Uhuh.

VB: And eh, the poor chap, he ended up actually killing himself, shortly after, because it was so, you know--

FM: So traumatic.

VB: He just sort of couldn't--

FM: Well, I studied it when I wrote that book.

VB: Terrible thing.

FM: And eh, now there used to be the headmistress and she died about twelve months ago. Eh, but her sister I'm still friendly with. And em, their father got killed in the Pretoria pit disaster. And the one that's still living, was only three months old. And Nellie the elder one, eh, who was about two-and-a-half, something like that.

VB: Yeah.

FM: And they got no money. No compensation, you know. Unless they were in dire straits.

VB: Yeah.

FM: If they were, they went to their homes and had a look what eh, what the conditions are like.

VB: I don't think anyone would be, well off if you'd just lost your--

FM: That's right.

VB: --family.

FM: And if they were really, really terribly hard up, they got seven and six, and that kind of thing. They just got help if they desperately needed it.

VB: Yes.

FM: And em, I know I got rather angry one day. That Mrs Beckley said to me, "Oh yes!" she said, "That's how those girls were educated." I said, "Well I can remember Mrs Hulme going nursing, eh, so many hours a day." Nursing people in their homes and that kind of thing. And one time she took a housekeeping job where she could have the girls with her, you know, and that kind of thing. So, she didn't get that much compensation. Afterwards they had a public fund.

VB: Mhm.

FM: And that's how they got. And this Mrs Hulme, this friend of mine that still living, her mother, was one of the two that were left eh, drawing off this fund. She was about ninety-three when she died, Mrs Hulme. Yeah. And there was just two of them left eventually. So what's happened to that fund now I don't know. Would you like a biscuit?

VB: Yes em--

FM: That's Scottish shortbread that I've made for you. [laughs]

VB: I might try that, looks lovely.

FM: Supposed to be Scottish shortbread but, when I was doing it erm, I thought, oh I don't think I've put enough flour in here. I was getting a bit bothered. Because actually I made it [pause 2 seconds] I've had quite a busy few days, really. And they were all coming. And I usually do a few biscuits and things. An eh, I thought, oh, I don't think I've put quite enough flour in this. And I put some more in an I think there's a bit too much. Anyway.

VB: Oh, it looks lovely. That's great. [pause 3 seconds] It's very good.

FM: But it is supposed to be Scottish shortbread.

VB: Mhm.

[pause 3 seconds]

FM: It says on there--

VB: I think that's just right. It's delicious.

FM: Do you? Very good. Very good.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] 'Cause you were saying your sister lives, is it [inaudible] somewhere?

FM: Denny. Denny.

VB: Denny.

FM: Do you know Denny at all?

VB: I know where it is. I don't know it but eh--

FM: Well the sort of erm, what's that other, that new town that's been built?

VB: Em, Cumbernauld?

FM: Cumbernauld.

VB: Yeah.

FM: Well you go through Cumbernauld.

VB: Yeah.

FM: It takes you about an hour. Depending what bus you get.

VB: Mhm.

FM: There's like one or two buses go to Denny. But some go a long way around.

VB: Uhuh.

FM: And will take you longer, you see. And of course, I don't know which they are. But em, oh she's been there em [pause 3 seconds] about fifty-three years. She had her golden wedding. But her husband died at Christmas time. And erm, so, so she's, well, she's more Scottish than you I think now.

VB: Well she's been there longer than I have!

FM: [laughs] That's right.

VB: Ah. And does she like living in Denny? Is it--

FM: Oh yes. I think they've built it up quite a bit. They did build one or two high rise flats. We'd call it a village but they called it the 'toon', you know. Em, and then they brought some overspill from Glasgow.

VB: Mhm.

FM: But, as my brother-in-law pointed out, the time they had a big meeting when they were doing this. If they're going to bring people from a place like Glasgow, you must have some facilities for them.

VB: Mhm.

FM: Because they've been used to these facilities.

VB: Yes.

FM: But of course, nobody took any notice of such as him you see. And it has caused quite a bit of trouble. Because there's too many young people there and not enough for them to do.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You see.

VB: Yeah.

FM: So it's not quite as nice a place as it was, at one time.

VB: Yeah.

FM: You know?

VB: It's like that where em, I mean I was brought up in the country, in Fife and we're just next to one of the new towns, Glenrothes. And it was very much like that. That a lot of people actually ended up there from Glasgow and--

FM: Uhuh. Uhuh.

VB: --they didn't even have a cinema until--

FM: No.

VB: About five years ago.

FM: That's right.

VB: And, of course, as you say, people get into trouble. There's nothing for them to do.

FM: Course. Course they do. Of course they do.

VB: Mhm.

FM: But, you see, they don't take notice of people like us, do they?

VB: No.

FM: And eh.

VB: [inaudible]

FM: Yes. I was just going to come.

VB: Right.

FM: Thanks. I'll have one of these. And eh, come on, help yourself.

VB: I might have another bit actually. It's lovely.

FM: You can have anything you like. Just help yourself. My little granddaughter likes the Kit-Kats. She'll stand there. I keep them in that cupboard there.

VB: Aw, I just noticed the cards. Is it your birthday quite--

FM: It was my birthday on Monday. But my youngest daughter eh, made the family tea on Sunday.

VB: Ah.

FM: And so I'd all the family. Which I've like three grandchildren. And the two boys [pause 2 seconds] are older. And they have girlfriends. So there was like erm [pause 2 seconds] two, four, six, eight, ten. There was about fourteen of us, I think.

VB: It sounds lovely.

FM: So em, oh and she made me a cake. I'd forgotten about the cake.

VB: Mhm.

FM: I've got some birthday cake. Would you eat a bit of birthday cake? You might as well.

VB: Em. That would be good actually. [laughs]

FM: Anyway, you could take it home. [laughs]

VB: Your cards are lovely though.

FM: I've got some more in the front.

VB: Ah!

FM: [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

FM: I think you begin to get a lot more when you get older.

VB: Mhm.

[pause 8 seconds]

FM: My sister was a confectioner.

VB: Ah!

FM: My sister was a confectioner.

[End of Side A]

[End of Tape Two]

[End of Interview]