

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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- * Ipswich, Suffolk, 13 October 1995: Valentina Bold interviews George Turner
- * Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- * GT=George Turner, VB=Valentina Bold
- * Notes: First interview of two with George Turner; Sound Quality: Good (tape faulty)

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

VB: [tape crackling] You were telling me about the different kinds of cinemas and how there was one that was known as 'the fleapit'. Erm, could you tell me a bit more about that?

GT: Well, this used to be eh, in Ipswich it used to be called the Empire Theatre in Fore Street. And that used to be called 'the fleapit' or 'the tuppenny rush'. 'Cause, those days it used to cost you I think, fourpence to be on the balcony and tuppence down in the stalls. And they used to get various things like cowboy films which used to consist of eh, Tim McCoy. He used to be cowboy.

[Clock chimes in background]

VB: Oh that's lovely. That looks lovely. Thanks very much. [Coffee being brought in]

GT: Have you switched it off?

VB: Oh that's all right. I'll just leave it on.

[Dog gets taken out of room]

GT: [laughs] And course in those days, you see eh, there wasn't real live entertainment about for people of my age. That'd be about 1935. Somewhere like that.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And course eh, we always used to go the pictures on the afternoon or sometimes twice a week. You used to have to queue up. But that's because they used to be in a great demand. If there was a good film on. And, as I said, it used to cost fourpence or tuppence. But then you could only stay as a period when the first picture starts until the end. And then you used to all have to turn out. And then the next session used to go in. You see. They also used to have one main, two main pictures. There used to be the main picture and they used to have a bit of news. And also they used to have what you'd call a serial. It used to carry on from week to week. You know. You used to go and they used to come on the next period and say, well how do you get out of this, you know. And then start all over again. So you was more or less thinking to yourself, oh well, I must go and see that because so-and-so got caught in some sort of a eh, you know, bother, when the film finished.

One chap used to be called Frank Merriwell [fictional character played by Donald Briggs]. He was in the *Undersea Kingdom*. And he used to be trapped under water and something, then, course, you used to like to go back again to see it. [pause 3 seconds] There was also another one in Ipswich called Poole's Pictures [referring to Poole's Picture Palace]. That used to be a little bit better class, the other one used to be. And course, they had things like erm, Buster Keaton. 'Cause he was an early stage one. He was a comic. And Will Hay and all those types. And then you also used to have to queue up as well. There used to be two performances. One in the afternoon and one in the evening. And of course there used to be eh, mostly cowboys. And eh, another one used to be, William Boyd used to be called Hopalong Cassidy. And course that was one of the favourites we used to go and see. I was just trying to see what I can say now.

VB: Well, I'm very interested in what you've just told me. Erm, one of the things that I wanted to ask a bit more about just from what you were saying just now. Erm, you were saying for instance, that the Poole's Picture Palace was a bit grander. What was it like inside?

GT: Well as I say, there used to be stalls, you see, down the bottom here. And then of course the verandah used to go round like that, you know.

VB: Was that the circle?

GT: Circle, yes. Oh it used to be a circle. Oh yeah.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Used to be a circle. And then the picture you'd see at the bottom was more or less a square screen. It wasn't, not like now. The big wide screens or anything like that. Oh no.

VB: Mhm. So was that more of a treat to go to? Compared to the other ones.

GT: Oh yes, it was a treat. Because you see, as wages were those days, ye see, they wasn't very big. 'Cause I mean I started work and I got ten and fourpence a week. That's all I got. So my mother bought me a bicycle. That used to be paid on the never-never [hire purchase]. And course we used to romp in on a Saturday afternoon. And during the week if there was anything good on.

VB: Mhm.

GT: We used to put a bike up for threepence on a Saturday afternoon at a place called the Running Buck. And it used to be under lock and key, you know. And you used to hand the little ticket in when you went to fetch the bike.

VB: I see. I mean I was wondering actually, if you didn't mind, if I could ask you one or two questions about yourself?

GT: You ask me what you like. I'll try and help you. About myself?

VB: Just so I can get an idea about your own--

GT: Oh. [laughs]

VB: If that's all right.

GT: Yes, yes.

VB: That'd be great. Erm, I might just take a couple of notes while we're talking. The first thing I wanted to check that I had right was erm, the place you were born. Were you actually born in Ipswich?

GT: No, no.

VB: Right.

GT: I was born in a little village called Ashbocking.

VB: I remember you telling me about this on the phone. I just wanted to check I had that right.

GT: That's right, yeah. Ashbocking, yeah.

VB: Yeah. And can I ask what your father did? For work.

GT: My father was a labourer.

VB: Right.

GT: Farm labourer.

VB: Right. Did your mother work herself?

GT: No. Mother never used to work. No.

VB: Right. And can I ask how many sisters and brother you had. Or were you an only one?

GT: Well I got eh, [counts], one, two, [pause 3 seconds] three brothers--

VB: Uhuh.

GT: And two sisters.

VB: That's great. And I remember you telling me you went to work yourself in the farming.

GT: Oh yes. I went to work in the farm--

VB: Yeah.

GT: As a poultry boy. You know, you started just feed the chickens in the mornings and then you used to feed them again in the afternoon--

VB: Mhm.

GT: And collect all the eggs and do all the cleaning up and taking the huts to pieces and clean them all out. Just to keep the things healthy.

VB: It sounds like hard work actually--

GT: Oh well it used to be. Oh yeah, it used to be.

VB: For a boy. Mhm. And then you went on.

GT: I left there--

VB: Mhm.

GT: After a bit. Because there really wasn't much money. And then I went on eh, feeder and sacker on the threshing machine. Because they don't do it now. 'Cause it's all done by combine [harvester].

VB: Mhm.

GT: And I used to be feeder and sacker. 'Course they was much more better wages they used be then. And that used to be ever so hard work.

VB: Mhm.

GT: D'you want me to say anything else about it?

VB: I mean it's very interesting. Not on the cinema. But I don't really know much about that.

GT: No, no. That used to be a threshing machine. And eh, there used to be an engine driver and there used to be me and another chap. We used to take it in turns. Sometimes I used to be on top of the drum. Cutting the [inaudible] to let him go in the drum. We used to take the seed out and eh, stack the straw. An while we were doing that the other chap used to be down below sacking up the corn, you see.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And then they used to have a weighing machine. That was for weighing. On the farm. You also had to weigh at the same time for wheat. Because that was flour running out. But things like oats and barley. Oats, you couldn't do that. Because that was too quick. As soon as you got one you had to put another bag on to take the other one off!

VB: Ah, so it sounds quite complicated.

GT: But it is really.

VB: Yeah.

GT: But really it isn't, really.

VB: I suppose when you know what you're doing it's not so bad.

GT: Oh yes.

VB: So, was that near Ashbocking that the first farms were at?

GT: There used to be an area--

VB: Yeah.

GT: Round there. 'Cause you used to have to cycle. Because that would probably be within eh, say, fifteen-mile area of eh, Ashbocking. 'Cause the main place where the engines used to be worked from was a place called Otley.

VB: Ah right.

GT: Otley.

VB: So did you live in various places then?

GT: No, no. I used to travel by bike.

VB: Ah, I see.

GT: Backwards and forwards. Oh yes, I used to come home at nights, you see.

VB: I see.

GT: Oh yes. Early in the morning, till late at night.

VB: And when was it you came to live here in Ipswich?

GT: Well it wasn't until 1986.

VB: A-ah, I see. Right. That's great. And can I ask erm--

GT: Ask what you like.

VB: Well, I was wanting to ask what year you were married in.

GT: 1942.

VB: That's great. And does your wife work? Or did she work?

GT: No, no. Actually she's not my wife.

VB: Ah, I see. I see.

GT: See. No.

VB: And do you have children yourself?

GT: Oh yes. I have five.

VB: Right.

GT: Uhuh.

VB: That's great. Well that was all I really wanted to ask. The only other thing was erm, eh were you raised in a particular religion? Church of England or?

GT: I was Church of England. Yes.

VB: Right.

GT: C of E, yeah.

VB: That's great. And I wanted to ask if you had any strong political views. If you were a member of a party or anything like that.

GT: What in regards? Religion?

VB: In terms of politics. I mean have you got any strong--

GT: Well, I'm more or less erm, Liberal really.

VB: I see.

GT: Uhuh.

[Clock ticking]

VB: It's just it's interesting to ask to know if people's politics affect what films they like. That sort of thing.

GT: Oh I see, yes.

VB: Erm, it wasn't, you know, to be nosy from that point of view.

GT: No, no, no.

VB: So that's. That's great. That was really all I wanted to ask. Erm, in that way. Eh, so, were there other cinemas in Ipswich apart from the two that you've just mentioned?

GT: Oh yes. There used to be several. Oh yes, there'd be several in Ipswich. There used to be eh, the Regent in Ipswich. There used to be, as I say, the Regent was a later date, really. And the Odeon used to be later on. But there was one called the Picture House. The was one called the Ritz. An there was one called the Central. The Central was one of the older ones. That got burned down but I can't tell you exactly the year.

VB: Mhm.

GT: That was another one we used to go to.

VB: What was that like?

GT: Well that used to be more of a, one or two cowboys. Not quite so much. Erm, I suppose you could say. Eh, how can you put it, erm, you know like you've got now. Of eh, something had happened to somebody and they got a film about it all. They sometimes made up a love film or

something like that. Or a marriage or what happens, you know. One or two perhaps murder ones.
Mhm.

VB: Mhm.

GT: That used to cost you more to go there than what it did the other.

VB: Ah, I see. Yeah. 'Cause I found erm, I don't know if you've seen this book about cinemas of East Anglia.

GT: No I haven't.

VB: Erm, and I did notice that unfortunately there was only one picture of an Ipswich cinema in it. Erm, it's got quite a lot of photos. And it was the Odeon. I don't know if that's one that you remember.

GT: This one?

VB: Eh, yeah. With the inside of the Odeon.

GT: The inside of the Odeon. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: It's not a very good [laughing] copy, I'm afraid.

GT: No. Odeon Ipswich. Ah. [pause 2 seconds] 'Course it's quite a while since, cause the Odeon is a new one, you see.

VB: Ah, I see.

GT: Well, it's several years old. I mean.

VB: Yeah.

GT: I don't know exactly how old it is. [Coughs] But I just wondered about the inside.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Oh is this, ah this is the outside, in the street, surely?

VB: Ah is it?

GT: Yeah, this is the entrance in the street.

VB: Ah right. Okay.

GT: I believe. I would think so. I'm not sure. And then it looks if you got a place there where you go in. And they're standing on the side.

VB: Yeah.

GT: No, the light's there! Couldn't be.

VB: Mhm.

GT: No, the light's here, look. Could be outside. Odeon. [pause 2 seconds]

VB: How did you [tape crackly; voice fades away] actually get to the cinema? Was that cycling as well or?

GT: Oh yeah.

VB: Ah I see.

GT: Oh yeah. Cycling. Or you could, you could walk, you see, actually from the eh, Running Buck to where I was. You could have walked there. Because, as I say, sometimes money used to be tight so therefore you didn't bother to go by bike. You could walk, healthy enough.

VB: Right.

GT: And you also could put your bike up closer. If you wanted to. In somebody's back. Somebody you knew, you see.

VB: Ah, I see. So how far was that for you to?

GT: It wasn't too far.

VB: Ah.

GT: Well for me to come in from Ashbocking, roughly about seven miles.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Seven miles into Ipswich and more or less into the centre of the town.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And there used to be seven miles back.

VB: It's quite a walk, [laughs] actually.

GT: Well we used to cycle, you see.

VB: Ah yes.

GT: Cycle, you see.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh yeah.

VB: Did that make it more of an occasion do you think?

GT: Well, it did. In Ipswich we used to go with friends, you see.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Sometimes you probably had a lady friend. Or you probably had a mate, you know. And you used to, cycle, go somewhere and you used to have a little drink on the way home. And something like that.

VB: Right.

GT: More or less make erm, a day of it. And then, course, it used to be back to the grind, you might as well say, on Monday morning again.

VB: Mhm. So when you mentioned the cowboy films of some of your early eh, memories. Did you have any favourites? In the stars?

GT: Oh yes, there used to be one called Buck Jones.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And course, as I said, this one ere, William Boyd used to be Hopalong Cassidy.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And then eh, and then Tim McCoy. He used to be another actor. He used to be in a cowboy film. Tim McCoy. I can't remember much about the others 'cause, as I say, Buster Keaton used to be a comic one. 'Course there used to be Laurel and Hardy. Of course there were comics in those days.

VB: Yeah.

GT: You see.

VB: 'Cause I've heard people talking about folk like erm, Tom Mix.

GT: Tom Mix! Yeah, Tom Mix and Buck Jones.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh yes. They were all there.

VB: Right.

GT: Oh yes. They were all there.

VB: So was that something you enjoyed at a particular age? Or did you continue to--

GT: Well of course I enjoyed it at a particular age, ye see. Until I, cause I married before I was twenty-one, ye see. So then, course, I'd a different thing in life than, I didn't go to the pictures quite so much.

VB: Ah, I see.

GT: Only when I was courting my wife, you see. That's when we used to go on odd occasions then. 'Cause things began to get a bit serious then.

VB: Mhm.

GT: So eh, we actually couldn't afford it.

VB: Mhm.

GT: 'Cause you see, at that time aw day, when I was courting my wife, see I was eh, I started driving a lorry about eh, when I was sixteen. Sixteen or seventeen. A Model T Ford, they used to call them. More or less one of the first motors that was about it. A little old lorry. And then erm, I used to go about from various shops in the town. And sometimes in the country. To deliver little erm, meal for different little farms or, grains for pigs and cattle and all those things.

VB: Ah I see.

GT: And then I can remember when I passed my test, first day out on my own, I was coming home along the streets in Ipswich. And 'course, a police, one of these long job police cars with the running board on, and he come out, turned, and I clipped it and I took the running board clean off!

VB: Aw!

GT: Out like shots. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Ah. So you stopped going to the cinema so much.

GT: I did, yes.

VB: At that time in your life. I see.

GT: Mhm. Uhuh.

VB: Erm, I mean you mentioned, erm. Another thing I brought with me just now was erm, some stills from the films. When you mentioned eh, Laurel and Hardy there.

GT: That's right. Yes.

VB: Were they particular favourites of yours?

GT: Oh yeah! Oh, yeah, very much, favourite. Matter of fact I've got one or two I bought, one or two of the films here.

VB: Ah.

GT: I've got one or two. We went to London some while back and eh, course really, I don't suppose these were done by the BBC what we've got. I reckon somebody had the erm, what d'you call erm, video of Laurel and Hardy. And they took some off and we bought, I think three or four for about five pounds.

VB: A-ah!

GT: Just thought I'd show you one or two.

VB: Oh great.

[Dog comes in]

VB: Hallo. Hallo. [VB speaks to dog]

[pause approx 45 seconds; clock ticking loudly in background]

GT: That's one from some while ago.

VB: Oh-h!

GT: [I don't know?] it that's one made by the BBC.

VB: Oh great! Charlie Chaplin.

GT: Charlie Chaplin.

VB: Aw, Boris Karloff. This looks great!

GT: You see there's the ones.

VB: Yeah.

GT: There's one called the Busybody.

VB: Oh!

GT: Goodbye.

VB: Well what was it about Laurel and Hardy that you particularly liked?

GT: Well, they were comics. Really comics, you know--

VB: Yeah.

GT: And jokes. How they used to talk and how they used to always be eh, Laurel used to, no Hardy used to, he was always on to Stan Laurel. "Oh you stupid!", you know, and all things like that.

[laughs] He'd smack him on the head and he used to go, [makes crying sound]. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]. Aw! Oh these look tremendous. I mean, Charlie Chaplin. Was he someone else you liked?

GT: Oh yes, Charlie Chaplin. I used to like Charlie Chaplin the same because he was a comic and the way he used to walk and swing his stick and, all! He used to get up to all sorts of things, you know.

VB: Mhm. Did you like the horror films as well? The Boris Karloffs?

GT: No. Not too much.

VB: Yeah.

GT: One or two but, not too much, no. Not eh, not Boris Karloff.

VB: Mhm.

GT: We didn't mind eh, when I was younger but course, now I got older, I don't even look at them now. [laughs]

VB: Mhm.

GT: I mean, I wouldn't look at them now.

VB: Ah. Even just reading what these are about. [laughs] You can picture them. I've not seen all of these.

GT: No they're still Laurel and Hardy. 'The Chump' [possibly referring to *A Chump at Oxford*], *The Music Box*. Because they used to be, oh, great to see. But these are not quite up to the mark as this one was.

VB: Mhm.

GT: 'Cause this one was made differently. 'Movie Greats', VHS, you see, that was made by...

VB: Mhm.

GT: And we bought that.

VB: Did you ever go to see films more than once? Eh, I mean it's nice having them on video. Did you ever--

GT: Well. [pause 3 seconds] Well, I think, probably I did go and see one or two more than once. But I can't really recollect now. But eh, I know we used to go and see erm, erm, you used to see eh, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire--

VB: Aw-w!

GT: And such films as those. I have seen those once or twice.

VB: I've got one of theirs here.

GT: They're quite good.

VB: Yeah.

GT: They're quite good ones.

VB: I think it was *Top Hat* I've got.

GT: *Top Hat*, yes. [Tape crackles].

VB: Were you a keen dancer yourself?

GT: No. Not really, no. I have tried but I never really got round to it. I seem to be a bit too awkward I think.

VB: Mhm.

GT: But I like more or less, country and western.

VB: Ah. Mind you I think everyone's awkward compared to these two.

GT: Oh yes. Oh! They were great, they were.

VB: Ah.

GT: Did you ever see them?

VB: Oh yes. Wonderful.

GT: Yes, yes. They were. *Top Hat*. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Yes. They used to be very good. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

VB: Mhm.

GT: As matter of fact if we do, sometimes we used to record one or two on Channel 4. Sometimes they used to come on Channel 4 in the afternoon. Since I've retired. And 'course, I don't think I've got one of these.

VB: Mhm.

GT: But eh, we have recorded them and got them there now.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Tony Hancock. We've got Tony Hancock. We got a bit of his. He's a comic.

VB: Mhm.

GT: He was a very good.

VB: Oh yeah.

GT: Then 'course there's his friend that used to be with him. Erm. [laughs]

VB: Oh, erm--

GT: I can't think of his name now.

VB: He had Sid James, didn't he?

GT: Yes! Yes! Sid James!

VB: Yeah.

GT: That's right. He was in a film with Sid James. We've got one of those.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Yeah.

VB: Don't know what other ones I've got here erm--

GT: Let's have a look and see what else you've got.

VB: Erm...

GT: See if I can remember any.

VB: Oh well, here's a different thing again. Shirley Temple.

GT: Shirley Temple. Yes. Oh we used to see Shirley.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Shirley Temple. She was quite a character, she was, Shirley Temple.

VB: Was she someone that you liked?

GT: Well yes, yeah, I used to like her. Oh yes.

VB: E-erm.

GT: Deanna Durbin. Used to be another one.

VB: Oh! I've got one of her as well. I just saw erm, *Three Smart Girls* myself,

GT: Did you?

VB: A week or two ago. Yeah.

GT: Oh!

VB: Was she someone you particularly liked?

GT: Well yes I did. I liked her very much. Yeah. Very good singer. Very good singer.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Very good singer.

VB: Mhm.

GT: There used to be a chap, 'course he's passed on now. Mario Lanza used to be another one.

VB: Mhm.

GT: He used to be very good too. Mario Lanza.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Uhuh.

VB: She must have been very young in some of her films, Deanna Durbin, mustn't she?

GT: Well yes, she was. Yes, she was.

VB: Yeah.

GT: I suppose, I don't know. I couldn't tell you exactly how old she was but she, she was eh, [pause 2 seconds] I should say about sixteen, seventeen, something like that--

VB: Mhm.

GT: I presume. 'Cause as I say, I never really took any particular notice. She looked very young. You know what I mean.

VB: Mhm.

GT: I couldn't say exactly how old she was.

VB: Yeah. Yeah, she seems well, as I say. I've only seen *Three Smart Girls* and she was very much the baby of the family in that one.

GT: Oh yes. Baby of the family. Yeah. I just couldn't think now what she used to be in.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Erm. [pause 2 seconds] Another one of Deanna. Durbin. See as I say, there are other ones. Ginger Rogers used to be in *Top Hat*. And then there used to be one or two more. 'Course, I mean, I really... [laughs; inaudible]

VB: Yeah, of course, yeah.

GT: Marriage being on. See you had a family of five children. You had to bring them all up.

VB: Yeah.

GT: And then, 'course, you got the war days before that. The Second World War. 'Cause you went in that and so on. 'Course there was several of them I did see when we was in the Army.

VB: Mhm.

GT: But erm, we never took too much interest of them then.

VB: Yeah. I mean, did you have any favourite stars yourself? Say in the women. Erm, the actresses. Did you have any favourites?

GT: Oh yes. I used to erm, Ginger Rogers,

VB: Mhm.

GT: Used to be one aw my favourites. And course, Marilyn Monroe used to be another one.

VB: Uhuh.

GT: Mhm.

VB: What was it... [tape cuts out]

[Tape sputters but not recording]

[Recording recommences]

GT: Yes, oh yes, they used to be very smart.

VB: Mhm.

GT: But we used to like the way that they used to do things. Being bossy and that, you know and eh, 'cause there used to be more what used to happen and what used to carry on, you know.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I remember I was talking to someone that was telling me they used to try and act like George Raft and--

GT: Oh yeah. Oh yes. Oh yes.

VB: [laughs] The way they moved and--

GT: Well no, [tape cuts out to end]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

GT: Gracie Fields. [tape cuts out again]

[Recording recommences]

VB: Yes, yeah.

[Dog barks]

VB: So all the comics and eh. [laughs] Erm, here's another type. [laughs] Eh, again it's not a very good photo but...

GT: Ah. That's not Greta Garbo, is it?

VB: Eh, I think it's Joan Crawford actually.

GT: Joan Crawford.

VB: Yeah, yeah. [tape cuts out]

[recommences almost immediately]

[Clock chimes]

GT: Yeah, well I have seen Joan Crawford in a film.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh yes. Various ones.

VB: Mhm. Did you like her as an actress?

GT: Well, yes, yes. She was quite nice. Very firm. Very sterny.

VB: Mhm

GT: Oh very firm and sterny.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Yeah. I thought perhaps she was eh, [tape cuts out]

[recording recommences]

GT: More entertaining really. There's more blood and thunder now. And the singing part is not quite so good. Some of them may be but not all of them.

VB: Ah.

GT: You see, you can't hear what they're singing about.

VB: Mhm. Do you think the musicals in the thirties were of a higher standard?

GT: Oh yes! I think the musicals used to be a very high standard. According to what they had to go on. And to do with.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Oh yes, I'd say they were the best.

VB: Yeah. Cause when you think of things like *Top Hat* or.

GT: *Top Hat*! You don't get that now.

VB: No.

GT: Because you take Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The class. And they were class. Swinging and oh dear!

VB: Mhm.

GT: You can keep you more or less [inaudible] to the seat and watch it. Oh yes.

VB: I mean how did you feel when you were watching a film like that?

GT: Well I mean, I suppose I used to... [tape cuts out; a few words not recorded] Things like that, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh yeah. It was how good we were to erm... [tape fades out; some words not recorded] But now as I say, I don't bother because it's so dear now, isn't it?

VB: Yes! [laughs]

GT: You didn't mind eh, going in the films because erm, you got something that you liked. I mean, we don't go the films very often now.

VB: Mhm.

GT: They got eh, one big cinema in Ipswich here. The new one down at the bottom here. Mean to say, they've got five screens on there now [Referring to the Odeon Ipswich].

VB: Mhm.

GT: But not my type of thing--

VB: Yeah.

GT: I'm afraid.

VB: Did you... [tape cuts out]

[tape recording recommences]

GT: The kind of thing we'd like and that's the particular film we used to have to go. There used to be probably a cowboy film on. Oh yes.

VB: Did you talk about films much with your friends or?

GT: Erm, I suppose we did, at times. About what happened in the film and so on. At that time of day.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Otherwise, after that you more or less thought about, when you got home, you was back home again and you used to have to sort of behave yourself and so on. [laughs]

VB: Mhm.

GT: You never used to think about anything else.

VB: Mhm. I mean were there other things that you enjoyed, erm apart from the cinema?

GT: Oh yeah. I used to like a game of football.

VB: Ah.

GT: We used to have a little [tiny biddies?] team. Yes. Biddies team. We used to play one or two locals. We used to get [cropped?] and... [laughs]

VB: Aw. [laughs]

GT: And of course there were other different things from that when I was a boy. I mean football used to be the thing that, you just had a kick around if you could afford to buy a football. But them most of you used to play spinning tops. Used to buy a top and piece of string and hit it about the street. Like this. And it used to bounce, and you'd whack it like that! And away it used to go! And you'd stand. And you used to enjoy watching it.

VB: Mhm.

GT: And then aw course there used to be other things. We used to make pop guns. With a piece of elder, you know. You know the ordinary elder. And you cut a straight piece off and take the pith out the middle. And then there used to be a hole to go through and then you used to get a [nut berry?] stick and hit the in, make it so it was like a more or less a stem. And then the piece used to be big at this end. So you could pluck at it like that. And we used to knock the end up. So you got a little end with a piece round there. So and then you used to get ordinary newspaper and chew it. Shove it in and then press it real in and it would be a perfectly good pop. And it [wouldn't?] give you a sting if it hit you in the face!

VB: [laughs]

GT: [laughs]

VB: Oh wow! [laughs] I'm glad I wasn't around then. [laughs]

GT: It was just in play, you know. It never used to cause any damage or anything like that.

VB: No, sure.

GT: It used to give you a sting.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Because that was one of the joys in life because--

VB: Yeah.

GT: Because you hadn't got, you couldn't afford other things. You used to have to make do.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Catapults used to be made of ash. I used to get an ash like that and then tie the top together and then you used to go back and cut it when it was fitted up. You used to be able to buy elastic at that time.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Mhm. Used to kill rabbits and all that with catapults.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Little tiny ball bearings used to put in the leather part aw the holder. And they used to [bag?] them. Used to kill rabbits.

VB: Mhm. It sounds very different to life now.

GT: It was. Yes. Oh yes, it is. Very much different.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Very much different.

VB: Yeah.

VB: What--

GT: And of course it's too fast. Life is too fast nowadays.

VB: What about home? Did you make your own entertainment in the evenings?

GT: Oh yes! We used to make our own. We used to play cards in the evening because we got no light at that particular time when I was the age from going to school until I left school. We used to have a lamp standing on the table. And 'course, it be a paraffin lamp. And we used to have a game of cards.

VB: Mhm.

GT: All in the family.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Mhm. Used to like a game of cards, used to. Yes, and mostly what we used to do. And then of course when you used to go out you used to dress up, you know. Ready for off. And mother used to say, "Don't be late!"

VB: [laughs] Oh. So did you dress up to go to the pictures?

GT: Oh yes, oh yes. Used to dress up.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh yes. You'd be in your best clothes because I never had a decent suit. Not until I left school.

VB: Mhm.

GT: 'Cause my mum couldn't afford it. And then she had it on the never-never and eh. And I remember going out, I had a very smart trilby hat and my first suit. And a nice coat.

VB: Ah.

GT: Oh yes.

VB: I don't know erm. I mean I was brought up in the countryside in Scotland and we used to always...

GT: Whereabouts were you brought up?

VB: Erm, Fife.

GT: In Fife.

VB: Yes.

GT: That's just across the Forth.

VB: That's right. And I mean we used to always find that if you were going out, you could look very smart but your shoes used to always get covered with mud and. [laughs]

GT: Oh yes, of course.

VB: I don't know if that--

GT: Oh yes, oh yes.

VB: You could never... [tape cuts out]

[recording recommences]

VB: Well we afterwards walked seven miles or cycled it's--

GT: Oh yeah, course you used to have eh, sort of an old cape on. You used to have a sort of yellow cape you fixed up. And you used to put it on. It used to go over the handlebars and 'course, you got leggings. Sometimes, 'course, your ankles and your feet used to get right wet when it rained.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Oh yes.

VB: Mhm. That's interesting 'cause I was wondering how you kept everything eh, looking smart for coming into the town.

GT: Oh yes. Because we used to have a, a service bus used to run in. 'Course, nothing like they do now.

VB: Mhm.

GT: They used to carry, the early part of the period of my time, they used to erm, there used to be the carrier's cart. I mean they used to take so many passengers and if that was market day, they used to take a crate of chickens or a crate of rabbits to market to be sold, you see.

VB: A-ah.

GT: Oh yes. Everything used to be erm, eh, better, I suppose really. Because I mean, erm, you never got so much hassle. Not like you do now.

VB: Mhm.

GT: There used to be. So much competition there is now. And eh, things not quite so good, I don't think.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Not really. Than what they used to be. Because things, and the people that worked used to be more dedicated to their job then. Because otherwise you was out because otherwise you had to work and if you got flung out of your job your mother'd want to know how you come to do it and what you'd done wrong and so on.

VB: Mhm.

GT: Because you used to get a kick up the backside, you might as well say. A smack, or even a belt or be threatened with the belt!

VB: Mhm.

GT: Mhmm.

VB: So it sounds like your family discipline was much different to--

GT: Oh yes, oh yeah. [tape cuts out]

[recording recommences]

VB: Yeah. It just sounds very different. What you're telling me.

GT: That's true, yes. Oh yes.

VB: Yeah.

GT: Oh. We're getting a bit away from the cinema part. [laughs]

VB: We are. Yes. Erm, I suppose, I mean other thing I was wanting to ask was, if any of the cinemas round here had eh... [tape cuts out]

[End of Interview]