

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

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- * Prestwich, Manchester, 1 May 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Irene Dennerley
- * Transcribed by Valentina Bold and Maggie Lackey/Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- * ID=Irene Dennerley, VB=Valentina Bold

Notes: First of two interviews with Irene Dennerley; 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 tape introduction]

VB: Well that's what I'm interested to know what it was like for you really. The other thing that I was wanting to do before we started talking about cinema was to ask you one or two questions—

ID: That's all right.

VB: Just about yourself.

ID: If I can answer them, I will. [laughs]

VB: Right, great. [laughs] Erm, one thing I wanted to check was, was it Manchester you were born in?

ID: No, I was born in Warrington.

VB: Right.

ID: They call it Cheshire now, I don't think it is Cheshire but still. They mess everybody about with the districts.

VB: Oh I know, well same with Scotland they've been changing them.

ID: it's true, yeah.

VB: So when was it that you came to the Manchester area?

ID: Well I was born in Warrington. But I suppose my mum met my dad somewhere, I suppose it was in Warrington and they came, he lived in Manchester so right away like they came over to Manchester, so it's a long time ago. 'Course, they're both dead now I'm sorry to say, it's a long time ago.

VB: Can I ask what it was your father did?

ID: My father was a waterproof garment maker. That's making, you know raincoats and macs and stinky it was, [laughs] but still it was a trade you know. And at that time I suppose that like it was very popular and I suppose, well it must be being made now mustn't it. I mean people have raincoats and macs don't they, so it must be somewhere going on now. But there was a lot of it at that time.

VB: I was going to say because I've talked to a couple of other people that came from families that worked in the business.

ID: Yeah, There was quite a lot of it you know and of course when I got, I went to it the day I was fourteen if you don't mind. [laughs] I mean whoo, my mother had eight children, oh God [inaudible].

VB: Did she work herself?

ID: No, only in the house you know. They were very good parents being honest, and erm I know like the day I was fourteen because, I hadn't even got my school leaving certificate but being honest, it was a new thing, and I didn't really care a lot. You know as long as I was sort of helping a bit, but as the babies kept coming. I mean I was very tired, I mean I minded them and all the rest of it but I mean, when you're fourteen, especially in that age when I was fourteen you knew nothing about babies. I always used to, I always remember I used to always wear ankle strap shoes, very posh you know and erm I remember once my mother says, "I'll get you a pair that are sweet", and she sort of had this baby and I said, "Why'd you go and buy that when you said you would buy my shoes?" Now when I think of these things, you can't, but well you can in a way, believe how innocent you were but you were, you know. And again, they didn't get no family allowances them days and beside that so it wasn't for that. Erm, there was no pills, there was nothing, so I suppose if they come to have the

baby, they come to have the baby and that was it, you know. Not like today, today there's no excuse is there. But I mean then, I mean when you think of it there was every excuse you know. But when I had our Lynn and [name ?] you got eight shilling for your first child and you didn't get any more monies. I only had another one and I was determined I wouldn't have a lot. There was five years between them two. But erm how can I put it? I think in the old days, and yet we were very happy. My mum used to come to the pictures with us every other night.

VB: Did she?

ID: Yes, she used to love it, it was really, really good. I mean now when I sort of go down the road 'cos that's where we lived that way. It's got an awful name now. Most of them have, wonder this hasn't got an awful name too. Only Prestwich was always supposed to be such a nice place that people right away don't throw a nasty name at it but we've got some, some say all right, I mean I'm not saying all of them. The old Prestwich people are lovely. You see what happened here, ten years it got being modernised these houses, that's what happened. I was quite..., all the ground right round you know but I was quite happy there. Another thing that happened was, I've been a widow a long time, I've been a widow seventeen years and the thing was I had friends and of course they still had their husbands and that and so when they knew about the modernisation of course they went looking. I think they had an idea what would happen and I didn't. So I'm not saying there's not some nice people round here because there is but I like the older sort better because, well somehow I don't know how to [inaudible] with these younger ones you know. Just they're all right but they really get on my nerves, there's not much understanding in them. One of the families right across the road you know I never seen one of their children all winter when it was the [inaudible] and she lives just across the road. Now since it's been a bit warmer probably won't do it perhaps now you're here and you're telling someone. They're nice children, I'll say nothing about them, but it's right opposite me. There's nothing I can say and [inaudible] and on Saturday night they were up till half past eleven, juggling you know. Now I have the telly in my front room and last year I says to my, I don't see her too often, I mean she lives in North Wales but I mean they come when they can and I just says to them, fed up I says because I says, if there's anything on the telly, where once I could go and see it I can't now, I can't hear it with all these kids. It's only sort of been the nice warm weather. So you know and I like nice weather as much as anyone but you don't normally tend to [inaudible]. And I [inaudible], she says right, so the next time they come they brought me the little telly. Now it's not bad but the thing is it's not, the other one isn't newer than that you know, I've had it a year or two, about five, six maybe seven years and I'm still paying for it. I mean, anyway that is never going to be mine. I could get another as well but it's all right but how can I put it? I can't hear it so it's very clever that sometimes 'cos if you're at the back it's not so bad. Now next door but one, she's got three

children and she's a nice person so but they mostly a lot of the time play in the back. So can you understand I have it front and back and it's nobody's fault but when you getting on a bit it's something you can well do without. Now when I say anything at all to our Council, they go on about the flats they've got. I don't want a flat, why should I move? I've been on this estate for over forty years. My doctor's at the corner, you know the post is round here, the library's round here. Why should I move, you know? So I mean you might say, well why should they move but even so I've been here before them. First come, first served isn't it, you know, and I think they should pander to you too, so she says, we send letters round. It's not supposed to be hindered in any way. I says, you must be joking, I said, this is [inaudible] pretending over the Council, and I says, [laughs] I says to her, the next time anything come crying they're homeless and all the rest of it I said, why don't you put them next to the Lord Mayor or next to, or you know next to you. And it's a [inaudible], made me laugh and all the fellas are sat listening there like this. So they says, [inaudible], [both laugh] you know. But, you know it's not too bad sometimes, better in the winter mind you, not better for all of their support. It is better where peace is concerned, you know and the thing is, how they're going on about the war. Well of course I was a young lass then, I was on munitions you know, doesn't throw me a bit. Of course I'm glad it ended but when you've said there you've said the lot, you know what I mean and I thought, this lot will never know what it was like. I mean when you're all going out, that was a, in the war you know when it first began and that, they closed everything for about six month and the people were fed up enough and after six month, I don't really know what, when did it blinking begin? I think it began in September. I've forgotten now but after six month they decided that all the picture houses would begin again, all the dance halls would begin again, you know and it would be a lot happier for people. The thing [inaudible], everything at night was blacked out.

VB: Yeah

ID: You only had tiny little lights you know. [laughs] [inaudible], 'cos they ask, in 'The Guide', we have a paper called "The Guide, it comes out once a year and they wanted to know where you was the night of the Blitz. Well I wrote a, it's upstairs somewhere and I wrote a story about the night of the Blitz for them you know. And oh they were [inaudible]. Come and take your photo [inaudible]. Don't come and take my photo. I said no, I said you just asked for a story, you 've got the story, I don't want you know any fuss or anything. But I know I did say, that's 'The Guide' [inaudible] so probably [inaudible] or whatever you call you know. And oh that was terrible. [laughs] But I was saying it brings back you know sort of memories and I said to my daughter, the thing I remembered about it, I only worked on light munitions, you know what I mean, and how can I put it, the big ones are [pink?]. Well whatever was done it was done at the bigger places like Metrobix I think, things like that. I used to drill bullets but when I say drill them, they were in the shape of the bullet and we

drilled the holes right, but there was never no, where we were, never no gunpowder or anything on the place, you know. And what it is now I can tell you, it's only in Cheetham now, you must have come through to get here [laughs] and, what's it now, this place was I think it was called Stephen Street. It's near the prison, near the prison right down there, Strangeways, and erm it's a car park now. You know, it's funny that 'cos it was like, it's about two years ago but we were sort of going that way 'cos see I know that way, and I was going down there because I'd something I wanted and somebody told me about, down at the bottom of, South Hall Street now, that, the Pakistanis had all these shops so I forget what it was now I wanted and then if I went I might see something that I liked down there. So I thought when I was going down Cheetham Hill, oh I'll go this way 'cos you can go on a bus and go right along Bury New Road. Did you come up the Old Road?

VB: I think I came up the Old Road.

ID: Was it sort of, was it a double decker bus or a small one?

VB: Oh now you're asking. It was kind of quite a fancy one but like a coach more than a bus.

ID: Nice, yeah. Where did you get that then?

VB: From Piccadilly.

ID: Yeah probably, there's a lot go to Piccadilly [inaudible]. A lot of them, the 135 and the 136.

VB: The 135 I think it was.

ID: Yeah, the 136 sort of, it does go up the road to Whitehill but then it still goes to Bury mostly but it'll turn down I think it's that [name] Lane it's called. It's rather a nice road and it lands at Bury but it's not going the road way all the way where the 135 is, you know. And of course [inaudible] but we had loads of little buses but being honest it's a long time since I've been to Piccadilly so I just don't know where they land, you know.

VB: There seem to be quite a number.

ID: Oh there's a lot of them there and you know, and another thing I haven't been on, oh I am a baby, I must try and go on one of them, is the tram. I've never been on a tram. [laughs] The thing is why I don't go on them, I only, I go to my sister's if I can, I won't always be able to do it, but I don't tell her that or she'd be playing the mummy [inaudible]. It's not very far, it's down South Wales she lives. It's lovely, it's Gwent, I don't know if you've ever been there but it's nice and I only go once a year generally about July, August, something like that and I just for that once get a taxi from here to Piccadilly Station. Do you know it's six pound?

VB: I was going to say, I bet that's--

ID: Now if I wasn't so barmy [inaudible], I could get a taxi yes from here to Prestwich Station which is sort of just down there. It's a pound, and then I could get that tram and it goes right into or under Piccadilly Station. But I'd have only sort of had steps or something to walk up, I'm already on the station then. So I'd be saving about twelve pound, you know, and I always say, oh you are [inaudible].

VB: Mind you, it's easier if you're--

ID: I'm not frightened of it at all, not at all. The thing is I can read but of course to read proper I need my glasses on. Everybody's eyes goes a bit wonky as you go on, and the thing is when I've packed up them glasses are away in my case somewhere and you're carrying a case and you're carrying a handbag, you know and of course like I say it's only once a year I go so I just think to myself, I mean if I haven't got all the money to go my daughters'll [inaudible]. I don't want them to because I mean to say this one's got three. Ooh, she'll have to wait a bit before her money comes in won't she, you know something like that. So I'm not greedy like that but my sister says, "I'll come with you to the station." This is another one who lives in Salford but up to now when it comes near the time of course she's never come with me to the station if you know what I mean. So I'm not bothered, so in that way I'm a bit of a fool you know. So what questions do you want now, I've told you my life story nearly.

VB: The other thing I wanted to ask was what it was your husband did, what sort of work he did?

ID: My husband, well first when I first got to know him he was on coal, he was you know he worked for a coal merchant but after a while, after quite a few years I think he had what I can remember, he had a duodenal ulcer and so he had to give up that carrying you know. They carried the coal then in sacks on their back and he had to, I don't know what happened, he used to go to [Station's] for that. Whether it come with the coal truck, and then they had to shovel it into bags you know and all that. So it's funny this but after that he was a milkman [laughs] and he worked for the Lancashire Hygienic Dairies.

VB: Right.

ID: I'll show you this little thing. It's [inaudible] up till now I keep giving it a [inaudible] once to have it done. Can't keep doing that, but it's on the back.

VB: Oh that's lovely. [reading] 'Presented to Frank Dennerley by the Directors of Lancashire Dairies'. That's a beauty.

ID: He worked for them for about twe--

VB: It's a watch, It's lovely.

ID: Well my friend, when the strap broke to tell you the truth, I'm not a good liar or I might spin a few [inaudible], the strap went of course, that went, something else, now I paid the jeweller, I mean you just have to believe them don't you. I think it was, I don't know if it was eighteen pound or something for the back. I don't know if it wanted cleaning. Now I think there's something wrong with this so I'm going to wait a bit, go to a chap who could do all this, but she took it somewhere in town this lady I know and when she come back she, and that was only the start. She says to me, "Do you know how much that watch is worth?" So I says, no not good at them things, you know. So I says, why, so she says this jeweller who she'd known forever erm said it was a very good watch and it was worth over two hundred pound. Now whether that is true or not, but why should she tell me that. She says there's a little old jeweller he knows what he's talking about. So I said it doesn't make any difference, I'm never going to sell it. I says even if it never went I'd keep it till I'd pegged out. I says I can't keep having it done but you know I thought, once there was chaps who could do this but now I think it is that, what do you call it that you twist round? I think it is that because it seems loose to me, you know. So I just think that's what that is, I don't know...

VB: It's a lovely watch anyway.

ID: Yeah, but erm I mean that's what she says. What it was worth I didn't know, I just know that they presented it to him for twenty years' service. I think he worked there about twenty-three, twenty-four years you know. And I mean in them days they had to get up about four because they used to get, the 135 was called the 35 then and it used to go down to the top of Derby Street. That's where Lancashire Hygienic Dairy still is. There's another place in Unsworth that's a bit that way but whether it's the place where the men take the milk from I don't know. But the place is still in Derby Street I know that, you know. But event--, I didn't know, you see I used to work I think at [inaudible] as I called it, they call it North Manchester now, but I think I worked there about, let me be honest and think, I think it was about twenty years I worked there but only part-time sort of five while [until] eight in the evening and then I worked ten years at Heathlands. It's a Jewish home [inaudible]--

VB: Oh I was there about two days ago [inaudible]. It's lovely, yes.

ID: Yes. I worked there ten years--

VB: Well that's a coincidence.

ID: I worked then at Heathlands I think it was four while [until] eight. I think it was four while, yes it was four, it was five at the other place. And why I did that was because we had two girls and they were, if I wasn't in my husband was in, 'cos you know a milkman they're out early but they finish

early too so I could easily go up at four or five and do my little job, you know. But that's how I worked and I think it's a jolly good idea, you know because at least there's one parent there with them, you know. They were two very nice girls I can tell you that, you know. I've never heard them, you know give cheek or anything and I don't think they were ever smacked or anything. And they knew and dafter than me and I never smacked anybody anyway, never had any need. But well I believe in them things, you know. So...

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

ID: Do you mean [inaudible]?

VB: When you were married?

ID: Well I didn't have a wedding gown, not as a wedding gown [inaudible]--

VB: I meant year--

ID: What?

VB: Year, the time you were married and you know the year, nineteen--?

ID: Oh, right erm let me think. Got my wedding [inaudible] upstairs but I don't know where. Take me three hours to find them now I suppose, in a handbag somewhere. I came up here in nineteen, nineteen, wait a bit. The war was over, when was the war over? 1946 I came up here, yes 1946. I thought you meant what gown I wore. It wasn't white and all the rest of it, no.

VB: Had you been married for a few years before you came here or?

ID: No, no.

VB: Right, that's great. And another two things I was wanting to ask you was firstly were you brought up in a certain religion?

ID: Well we were brought up nice but erm, and my father was Jewish.

VB: Oh really.

ID: He was Jewish, yes. My mother was Church, well she was Methodist I think. [laughs]

VB: Oh really, right.

ID: [laughing] You can tell I'm funny, can't you?

VB: No, that's interesting. So did you [pause 1 second] were you brought up to respect both the--

ID: Yes

VB: Religions?

ID: Really I, when we were small, things were different when you were small you know and my dad's mother and fa-, I think [inaudible] if I'm being honest, long time ago. My, they came from like haunted people from Poland like. I forget what part, a woman did write, a Jewish woman did write it for me once, I don't know where that, that'll probably be upstairs somewhere.

VB: Right.

ID: But she did and it was because she said, I mean I wasn't even here then but she said, it was close to the Russians came every so often and [inaudible] killed the fellas and raped the women you know and all that business.

VB: Yes.

ID: That at the end, I don't know where they got the money from but quite a gang of them, shame it sometimes about Jewish people isn't, quite a gang of them came to come over here, 'cos I always remember my mother used to say to my dad, "Well, where did you go to school, dad?" He says, Charter Street Ragged School, I don't know where the rags was he made! 'Cos he was a funny man. He used to make you laugh you know. [inaudible] grandparents. But he did used to make you laugh you know. And being honest when he came over, he came over with the man that he went, my dad went to work for then. His name, he's dead, he's been dead a long time, his name was Louis Fidler and he was over, he used to be called H and L Fidlers and they would be sort of manufacturers of this, you know these works, this mackintoshing. I think they had raincoats till, my dad was on the mackintosh side, you know.

Wasn't bad when you got used to the smell. You know we used to think it smelled but if you come out and you took lunch, you couldn't eat that lunch 'cos it smelled of this stuff, like the smearing stuff they used to put on. And I forget just where it was but this Louis Fidler his very eldest daughter, she's about eighty-something now. I just once says to her, well where did you come from? They never, well you see my dad couldn't tell us much because when they come here he was only about that big, so I mean he didn't know it all, you know. And I would just say, did it all happen? She says, "Oh yeah," you know, and she says it was [inaudible] and the only thing my dad didn't do was get as rich as your father. She says, that's true she says though he was a good worker and he always worked for them you know. But she said, when they first came they settled in Greengate, which wasn't such a great, I don't know what it's like now, haven't been down there either for years but it's some part of Salford, Blackfriars or somewhere like that. And she says, they both had little houses there, very poor district

and she says then they both moved up to Hightown and they both lived in, I think it was Thirlmere Street I think it was called. Like they followed each, they didn't but it was like they followed each other about. And then they went to, it's flats now it is but it was big houses then. They went to Bury New Road near Devonshire Street and we went to live in Devonshire Street, so it was like you were following each--

VB: It's interesting, yes.

ID: It was this lady who told me. I know we lived in Devonshire Street, I remember that part but I mean and I used to say, well it makes us laugh when we asked dad, why aren't you as rich as you know Mr Fidler. He says, don't suppose I was as clever as Mr Fidler he says but he's a good friend but he's dead now. He died in Heathlands. But erm this is true and now like that's how I got to know a few things you know, otherwise I mean I don't think we ever spoke about it much. I mean my dad had only come that and he spoke perfect English and everything so I never even thought he'd been born, it began with L but I can't think what it was called, somewhere in Poland something you know but that part is probably true, I mean I wouldn't have been told it otherwise, you know. And I still know that lady today. I know she's eighty or eighty-one. Nice woman. [laughs]

VB: It's interesting that the two families came together like that--

ID: Yeah, yeah. I used to say, oh wonder they arrived, but he didn't get as rich as, I think my dad was too soft. But he was a very nice man as it happened, you know. I've got nothing against anybody's religion, I like a person as a person and what they're like. It doesn't matter to me what religion, I mean you can't help it can you if your parents like... So my mother she once said like when she was being brought up she was a Methodist. I realised, she once told us that she did try to, she did change in a way like they do in the Jewish religion you know. And she, oh she used to make some lovely food what my dad's mother must have taught her you know and she said [laughs] she once went to the Shul, you know the Shul is like a synagogue. It was near, oh I think it might not have been that one. It's not there anyway now but I don't think it would have been that one but she says she once went, she put her nice clothes on and the women must have to go upstairs or something in the balcony part. And she says she went and behind the [inaudible] these two women said, I wonder what that shiksa is doing here. Well that means a Christian, you know. And she says, I just got up and he come down and he come home and she says and, she says to me dad, I'll never go again you know. I've done everything I could, I turned and there's something, when they say turn, I'm not sure really what it means but I think it means that somehow they sort of had a little bit of a committee I think, three or four men, I think. I'm not sure what the lady [inaudible], I know it's being changed. I don't think it's rude or anything, it's like perhaps us being baptised or something. But she says, I went through all

that, and she could cook lovely. I can cook fish lovely you know and then [inaudible] or something in different ways, it's true that but [inaudible]. And you know she learnt it all and everything and she says, I'm not going to a Shul to have two women say, who's that shi-, what's that shiksa doing there. I don't think that would happen today but it did then and it was very hurtful.

VB: I was going to say, it must have been.

ID: You know I mean like she did her best and all the rest of it and it doesn't matter what religion you are, if you're a nice person you're a nice person aren't you. So I can't see, I can't see the sense in that at all, I just can't. It's just like a lot of things isn't it, you know I mean erm, I wouldn't dream of saying, what religion are you, you know and all the rest of it 'cos like I say, if you're nice you're nice and that's the end of it. Religion really doesn't come into it does it. So erm but you know I've nothing against them 'cos the few I know all right and beside this is a long time further on isn't it and you know I think they sort of learn you know. Like sometime I know telling my daughter this she says, oh I don't know, [laughs] just like that but I find them not bad at all. I'm not saying they're never terrible like but the ones that I know is all right. What my daughter seems to think is if you work for nothing they'd let you, you know but like—

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

VB: Have you had any strong political views?

ID: What do you mean?

VB: Have you ever been a member of a party or?

ID: I've not been a member, you mean the voting and all the rest of it? I've never been a member of anything but I don't like the Conservatives because I think they're all for the rich I really do, and I think they're mean and greedy especially to a pensioner. Now I'm a pensioner now and I get, wait a bit I'll tell you, I'll have to think what I get, it's all this much money, I can't think what I get, got a book somewhere haven't I. I get, we've had a rise in April. We had a rise of one pound twenty-three pence. Wasn't that gorgeous? I get, oh I've got a book haven't I, got a book. But I forget what I get. It's sixty something. [inaudible] There you are that's my book. This is what, I get, oh I'll get it in a bit. Told you I can't see without glasses. I get sixty six pound, sixty-four pence and out of that-, luckily when you been in these houses a long time you don't have to pay your rent, so that's not so bad, after years and years, I mean I bought it. I've round here forty nine year but besides that everything else like electricity, gas, water rates, everything else I have to pay out of that.

VB: It's not much, it's not a lot at all.

ID: Like we get-, like you get your pension tomorrow. I get a little bit but it is only a little bit. I'm only there an hour or two, I'm not there hours, you know what I mean. It doesn't take hours so I mean, not hours of time, but the thing is you see, you have all that to pay and you have people like this Kenneth Clark or whatever his name is. They have nothing to pay for. I didn't know that. Big houses, sometimes two. They don't know what it is to pay out you know like them things and I think when you've, oh get out of here [speaking to an insect] , when you've worked all your life you know and paid all your dues and all the rest of it. I know some don't but some are ill and then some are scroungers as you call it. Well [inaudible], what is it? Get out, oh it's one of them things isn't it. Not a bee is it?

VB: It's a wasp.

ID: Oh heck. Don't like them. Out. And well if you start with them they go for you.

VB: I know.

ID: And erm, so I don't think that's a lot at all.

VB: No it's not, no.

ID: I mean you know it's, like I say when you pay them, I have to save up every week, you know 'cos I mean I don't owe anybody, but you have to pay all these things you know. So erm it's not easy. But I mean no, I don't say like I would starve in any way, but I said I've got two good children, they won't have me starve and I won't starve but it's very hard going.

VB: No it doesn't leave much room for--

ID: So the Conservatives, no. Erm I [inaudible], isn't it?

VB: That's right.

ID: [inaudible] is he still here? But how can I put it? Erm, I vote this time because he has been in office, had a bad accident, don't know if you've read about in the paper but he had smashed his leg up and he's a Liberal and so for the last few years I have voted Liberal. It's Labour who's in here and it will take Liberal a bit to butt out [Lees ?]. Well I just know the lady and this chap who smashed his leg up and this is for a turn. He's stood about three years I think and it's for a turn to get him in again you see so probably vote Liberal you know. Otherwise it'd been Labour. I would never vote Conservative because I think they're very greedy and I think they're just for theirself and after saying that I think they're out for themselves. [laughs] So I sort of like this cha-, well you know so he comes round now

and again. But there's a lady too, what's her name? [Jane High?]. She's quite, quite nice, you know if I write a letter to her she answers as quick as she can and as nice as she can, you know and she seems quite nice. Not that I'm always [inaudible] for them or anything but Labour, [sighs] well I mean if it was out of Labour and Conservative I'd vote Labour, you know. I mean I can't help it. I don't know what circumstances you come from or anything, it's nothing to do with me but the thing is I think a lot of rich people are greedy, I really do. They're never satisfied are they and I mean fancy giving somebody a rise of £1.23 and that is, that is what we got, £1.23 and remember that the electricity went up and the gas went up, you know, [inaudible] isn't it? He didn't get it to what he thought he'd get it [inaudible] but there you are. Erm otherwise I'm very well in touch with erm a Conservative, well he's [over?] the thing. [inaudible]. Oh you can see there's still some [inaudible].

VB: Ah yes.

ID: You know [inaudible]. I think like that's Mr [name], he's the Conservative, he's in Parliament, he's the MP and erm, I forget what it was once. I mean not that any of them give you anything [inaudible]. But erm [sighs] this time, I had sort of a niggle sort of thing, and you think, why should these young kids, it's ever so wrong, taking all these holidays. Why not, so I can be a bit sarcastic. So I don't know [inaudible] but I just, so I says to Mr S-, I've got, 'course his address is there in London, you know. It started a long time ago that I wrote to him, anyway my letter, how about taking a few pensioners, I'd love to go to Israel, I said, it'd be too hot for me, I don't that I'd love to go, and I thought it was something to say. I said, I would love to go to a nice warm place for a couple of weeks. I says, I've never done anything wrong, I'm an angel [laughing] I said. I said I've got [inaudible], I haven't done anything wrong, why can't you take a few people like me, I could get money to live. Well that was, like it were genuine, but it were still a laugh you know. I did it, my latest grumble is, don't know if you read it in the paper but not long ago the firemen were out fighting fires. They were at this [inaudible] health centre which even now is a poor district, rather poor, who look after the people of the district. They smashed it to pieces these louts you know or punks or whatever you call them, then started throwing stones at the firemen doing what harm they can to the fire engine and I wanted to know, while they're at a fire why can't they turn the hose on them, you know. I do, I still want to know that and this [inaudible], he could have read it, he said, I have sent your letter to the Home Office. So we'll wait and see what they say which won't be nothing. [inaudible], I didn't know, he believes in capital punishment, and I didn't know that. But I thought, well you know either make very sure, I wouldn't like when I was younger that Derek Bentley as he were got you know hung for something he hadn't done. I wouldn't like anything like that but even so if they had a doubt they could jail them for quite a long, long, years. Because we're full of crime aren't we--

VB: Yeah.

ID: I mean to say, you're frightened to go anywhere yourself. I won't go to town by myself. I've not been for ages in the Bury [inaudible], well I've not got much time and even so Bury's not far off, not that I love it better in town but there's a lot of beggars in town and I thought blimey 'cos it was someone in this town, you know. You never know if it's genuine or not do you and there's so many thugs that they bang into you and all the rest of it I mean and you're frightened in a way and you shouldn't be like that. I've never been frightened before, it's only these last few years that you know, well quite a number of years now and you shouldn't have to live like that should you. And so well it's just my grumbles you know but I've never met him personally. I've seen him of course, we have a paper called 'The Guide' on a Friday night, it's all about Prestwich, little bits. Anyway and I've seen him in that, I know when he has those what they call a surgery you know. But I mean I've never bothered him that way, but erm as you say [laughs], there's been a lot of ways that I want to know why, you know that's all I mean to say, if you're never going to know why, you're never going to understand anything are you?

VB: That's right, yes.

ID: So that's you know because it really puzzles. And I asked him, I mean he's supposed to be much more brainier than me. So this last letter I think is supposed to be at the Home Office. But you see they've all got ways of wriggling out of things. I once wrote to thingy, John Major you know, 'course I don't know if he ever reads it, got a letter back from his secretary of course that at the time he was away. Just typical to me. I think if they can't answer anything, they're away and there's nothing he can do about it is there. So you know I just don't know. But just an ordinary person wanting to know a few things, that's all. I mean we live in a country that's supposed to be law and order and justice and it's not justice is it to me. You know a lot of people are much worse off than me and you know I dunno, perhaps just being a Member of Parliament I'd have got some good money wouldn't I? [laughs]

VB: [agrees]

ID: So I don't know.

VB: I was wondering having read your letter there were one or two questions that I wanted to ask you a bit more about—

ID: Aye

VB: I mean, you talked about going to the Saturday matinees as a child.

ID: Oh yeah, yeah.

VB: What were the cinemas round here that you went to?

ID: Oh gosh [inaudible] haven't you. [both laugh] Well, I suppo-, well when I was young, when I was really young I lived in Devonshire Street so one of them would have been the Devonshire. I don't think it's there now but that's what it was called then because they had a stage there, there were a Charleston competition. Didn't get much, about half a crown I think but still. [laughs] It was daft, yeah. [inaudible] and there was one at Great Cheetham Street near the bottom. I think that was called the Empire. And then there was the Rialto Picture House which, in a way it's still and I think it's still called the Rialto. That's on Bury New Road near Cheetham Street. I don't know if you know any of these streets but that's where it is. Quite busy there and it's erm, I think it's a bingo hall now that, you know. So them were all near to Devonshire Street, you know. So that's the pictures that we used to sort of go there, and again I think from there we moved to, oh we moved quite a few times. We moved to Waterloo Road. It was one on what they called Broughton Lane. I think it's still called Broughton Lane but they used to call it the bugs house, you know. I don't think you got anything, but it was one of those. In the front was like forms [benches], you know. 'Course we were only little kids, we didn't care you know. And erm what else was there? Higher up where you get up to Great Clowes Street, that was a bit off there, that was the Tower, you know one of the picture houses. And then coming up the road, say coming up to Cheetham Hill Road there was on one side near [inaudible] Road, the Shakespeare down this other street, it was called the Premier. Now the building of the Premier's still there but course it's not a picture house, don't know what it is. Then a bit lower down there was an Odeon near Queen's Road [referring to Odeon Cheetham Hill] and I think that's the B, is it the B&Q? I think that is that, the building is sort of thing so they tell me. Then there was the Temple and that was taken down. I think that's down now. I think that's near the very old graveyard, St Luke's it was called you know, so I think that's down. So there was quite, quite a lot of picture houses, you know, and I think like to get in on a Saturday matinee it was twopence or threepence. I don't know now when I think of it that how I could bear the news but, the noise not the news, you know. But of course I could suppose bear it then, you know. And it was a treat you know, used to really enjoy it everywhere else where you go when you're a kid [laughing] you know, so it was very nice that. But how can I put it? Well I always liked picture houses. Not been to one now for about ten years but even so that's because it's in the town now. We had one in erm, by Blackfields, the Mayfair up to not too long ago. I think it's a children's amusement place now you know, because not too many went. Erm, yeah at one time, so what I think what has done it all is the big television, you know 'cos we didn't have no television and erm well but the radio made me laugh because we didn't really have radios like transistors and all. Not that we had all this business you know, and we didn't have

transistors and things, well I don't think so. I remember our wireless. We had some sort of a wireless but you had to go for the stuff. It was like accumulators or something they used to call it, you know. "Don't spill any on your clothes," 'cos of some sort of acid or something. I wrote a little letter about, it's in the thing, do you want to see that?

VB: Yes.

ID: It's only little. Makes you laugh. Well somebody in Postbag [in 'Manchester Evening News'] wrote, well they didn't write that, they sort of wrote erm about something. [looking for letter] So I did answer that, but that was one where, [inaudible] all over them. That is where I did get a reply, but you'll have to just wait a minute. That's my local history, I like local history but not wrote to him for a long time.

VB: Can I ask just while you're looking for that?

ID: Yes.

VB: You mentioned quite a number of cinemas there. Were there any that you particularly liked or did you have favourites?

ID: Well the thing is, when you're a child you probably have to go to the nearest picture place there is. You know looking back, I mean it was nothing like as busy as it is now but if you had to cross roads and everything your mother wouldn't let you go, you know. But—

VB: Yeah.

ID: In my time I mean I've been to them all I think. [looking through papers] I sent a cheque, why haven't I got the [inaudible]? Not got it yet.

VB: You were saying before that you used to go with your mother sometimes as well.

ID: Oh my mother used to love going to the pictures.

VB: What kind films did she like?

ID: Well, I mean when we used to go with my mum, we were a bit more grown up then and so of course it was nice, nice pictures. I remember once in the war, because the picture houses mostly had shelters and I think this was at the, I think this was at the Premier and it was something about Warsaw and the planes coming over and the bombs, you know. I remember my mother says, "Oh my God,!" You know, and all this row was looking up, thought we had a bomb in the picture. [laughs]

VB: Oh dear!

ID: Oh God it was—

VB: 'Cause—

ID: Oh yes she was fond of a good picture.

VB: 'cause I've brought with me, I don't know, I thought you might be interested in seeing this book about, erm, picture houses in Manchester.

ID: Ah.

VB: I don't know if there are ones from your area in it. But it's certainly got some of the ones in town.

ID: Ah, the Odeon [referring to Odeon Manchester] and them.

VB: Yeah.

ID: I can't see this without my goggles. Ah, it's only a little thing [inaudible].

VB: Here's one of the, a page-boy at the Oxford, Oxford Road. I don't know if that was one of yours.

ID: Yeah, I don't think I've been to the Oxford being honest. I've been to like, you see I don't know if they've changed that name. Is there still a picture house further up?

VB: Erm, I think, aye there is, or there still is a picture house.

ID: We used to go to, on a Saturday for a treat to the Odeon.

VB: Oh right.

ID: But that was erm, a bigger picture house and they had a lovely organ that used to come up you know, oh it used to be really posh on a Saturday now and again. We used to go there and of course many a time which is different, I've been to the Ritz [Ballroom] Still a Ritz there, isn't there, I think and there's still dancing. But we used to go there.

VB: Mmm.

ID: You know, places like that. But we were a bit older then.

VB: I see. So you didn't go much into town when you were a child then?

ID: No, not to the pictures no, it was out of bounds I think. Just used to go on a Saturday when I was growing up a bit sort of thing, you know. So that is me isn't it?

VB: Ah yes.

ID: [showing VB a letter she sent to newspaper] This is a different thing you see. She wanted to know how we lived I think and that was in a flat what we had once, I think it was in Devonshire Street. We lived there a long time.

VB: Right. Oh that's interesting 'cos you're talking about your gramophone and radio and--

ID: [laughing]

VB: Special clothes for Sundays and visiting relatives.

ID: [laughs]

VB: Did you dress up for going to the pictures? Was it like a treat or?

ID: Well to be, when we were growing up?

VB: Yeah.

ID: Oh when we were growing up I mean, specially if you were going to town. Didn't dress up like you were going to Ascot or anything, but you dressed up in what you call your best things. And of course if you went dancing, went to Dyson's too, that was in erm Devonshire Street. Oh, it was smashing, there, we used to have a real good time. And say you were going to the Ritz, you know, say it was a Saturday night. I had one or two long dresses, a pair of shoes from Marks and Spencers, believe it or not!

VB: Thanks very much.

ID: That where you see this lady wrote to Postbag. Something, I forget what it was about now, so like I sent her that little letter back and it was, oh a couple of months, happen, this arrived and I thought, I don't even know what it's about. But on the back somewhere, I don't know if it's still on the back. I think it may be down there was the lady's name is it?

VB: Right, yes.

ID: And I thought, oh well I'll write and I wrote back [laughs] and I said, I received this [inaudible], do I owe you any money? I think, oh yeah it's a basic £1.25. And she did write me a letter back and she says, of course not, you did us a favour and wrote to us and so we're sending the book, you know. So I thought oh that's nice of her you know, but erm I don't think you can go wrong when you're telling the truth. And you know, sometimes I've liked the things, it's very rare now that I would erm bother, because there was another, I'm not saying anything's wrong with any of these people but there was

another, and he was a chap, oh our Linda sometimes goes mad with me, it was a chap and what did she say? Oh what was he on about? Oh he was on about the Blitz. I can't see that they're all going to get prizes writing about the Blitz, it's all that now isn't it? [laughs] Anyway he was writing about it and he, you know I wrote and told him a bit about it because I mean we was in the line of the Blitz and all the rest of it. Not a very nice night [inaudible]. So how can I put it? A bit afterwards he wrote again, and he was all right, I'm not saying he wasn't all right but he was going on like he'd invented this story, not me, he didn't say that but you know [inaudible] tell him my dad's name. Dad's been dead a very long time you know. Perhaps you do have to do that if he's putting it into a book form, how do I know? So our Linda says, see you know, you get involved in these things and she says, [laughs] and as well as him telling you that, you were right in fact she says, you know stamps are dear. I says, I know I get quite a few every week, you know. So I said it's just that if you think you can help them in some way you do, you know. So [laughs] I tell them a bit about it. She says, oh well she's a student, she'll be all right. I says, thank you long as I know. So but--

VB: I'm not actually. I'm not a student but I work at a university.

ID: Yes. So I says erm, it was just funny I says what, you know you're telling them this tale which is dead true and erm, I didn't think I'd [inaudible] that night. [laughs] Well it was a bit, a bit of a really funny night 'cos it was a Sunday night, I always remember that. My friend had come for me to go out, you know we were about eighteen, something like seventeen or eighteen. My dad was an air raid warden and the office was somewhere up the stree-, I never got to know where the office was but it was somewhere up, and he just says, it was tea time and he says, where are you two thinking of going? And my friend said, well you know we'll find a picture house or something, because we both only drank shandies. Can't say we never went in a pub but I mean it wasn't for real drink you know. And erm she says, well we'll find a picture house, you know, and he said, I'd rather you stayed at home. So I says, why? So he says, just would rather you all stayed at home tonight. So it was funny that, you wouldn't believe it. [laughs] I went to our front door, this house isn't there any more. I keep going down and all I can im-, no I don't keep going down, it's two years easy since I've been down but the thing is, when I do go down I can't imagine it how it is now. I imagine it how it were, you know what I mean. And when I come home I'm thinking, I think it's a bit of a warehouse but I'm thinking, what was there you know. And in Derby Street that's like was what we called the hills and they're all netted in now to the blinking prison. They're thinking of building on them, I think that belongs to the prison. So nobody can go on them now. And a bit of hills what we could see, well ground, it's not big hills, that is all somehow closed in with buildings you know. And I can't recognise it being honest at all, you know and oh it's that [inaudible] but across the way from it is what we used to call the Warders' houses. I don't know if they still are but they still are all right, there's

people living there. And just a bit out is St Alban's Church, erm if we had a baby I might have it christened. Our two girls was christened there sort of thing, you know. I wouldn't say I know who's there now 'cos I don't but and I don't know, I suppose going down this street which was a hilly place what they've all built up now you know, because I've not been because it hasn't got such a good name these days, so I don't go down there. But we were talking on the front step or something like that and all of a sudden seeing all these lights coming down, you know over the church. And I says to my dad, you know I says supposed to be a blackout, must be a fire somewhere, come and look at these. And there's still a great big school. I don't know if that's there but it isn't the same school if it's there. [laughs] He says get in there. None of them had proper shelters. So I says, what do we have to go in there for? So he said, flares. And you could see the flames coming over but at the moment they were doing nothing but dropping these gaudy things. He says, them are flares, them are German planes. He says, that's why I told you not to go out. He said, they've made their way towards Liverpool. Liverpool had a real bashing that week. So he says, they're going to come here tonight, he says so I want you all in there. It were a great big school, that's what [inaudible]. So we had never experienced anything like that so you know or we didn't know what to expect. It was really, really, horrible. But we still didn't realise that these were bombs, you know I mean you heard this big whistling sound then a big bang. Thought it was firework night, yeah. You just didn't know. And then my friend [inaudible]. It lasted twelve hours that, then started again for an hour and then I had to shift it up a bit but it was awful next morning. And I could have [inaudible]. She says, "I have to go to the toilet." So there was another air raid warden there and she says, "Can I go to the toilet?" So he said, I'll have to come with you, I'll stand away from it you know and there was two of us right, oh I'll never forget because there was a window at the side, and we looked out of it and you should have seen the flames. The sky was blood red you know and you could see flames you know above Manchester, way up in the sky you know. Even then you know I thought, I wonder what's that and you couldn't really imagine what had happened and you know today it makes me wonder a bit. In the morning it wasn't, it was still burning but not as bad as that and there was hosepipes all over the place. Leaving from [name] Road and me mum said, we'll go and have a look at home if it's still up. It was still up and I think it was mostly all right. I don't know if a window or two had gone. And she says, "We'll have a walk down towards the prison." Now after that the prison was always unsafe. You know the big building where the judges used to go. Anyway it's like a hotel they tell me now. It's all been built over, something. And this is why, course you wouldn't know but this is why most districts now, all the houses has been pulled down and these other estates because none of them were safe. It wasn't bad up here. They'd got a few incendiary, or whatever you call them. Can't say big words you know, shame isn't it? But even so I think that's what happened up here. I didn't live up here but,

and erm you know so we had a walk down. Now it's dead true, there was a big jewellers on Bury New Road as we walked down to the prison. There was all sorts outside that jewellers. Nobody as far as I could see touched anything. You know what I mean there was props in the middle of the road, there were 'cos it was all shops. Really in a way I think perhaps the shops were strengthened but I think they're still the same shops and a lot of Pakistanis had them and they tell me on a Sunday there's like a market there, you know. But there was all sorts. And I remember, not saying everybody but there was nothing like it is today, you know what I mean. I never seen one person, they just look sick, they never bent down to pull anything up that was in the roadway. It was a big parachute, they had trams then you see and there was a big parachute over the tramlines you know. That was a landmine that had fell and that probably took about six pubs with it. A line opposite the shops I think opposite the [inaudible], a big shop, a big pub that was at the corner of South Hall Street and whoever was in it was, I don't know who was in it, died of course. It was really, really, awful, you know you could smell that burnt taste all the time, you know. So I would hate that, it was really, really, awful. Otherwise all I know is a woman at the side got hurt somewhere, in bed, she was ill and my brother went to help her. Don't know what happened over there [pause 5 seconds].

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

ID: We used to go to town, of course the Yanks were in town and everything. I don't know nothing round about, the aunt, she used to bring us all sorts of stuff round to our house from Burton Wood, oh it was a treat, fruit and everything. Didn't know nothing wrong about them. I was surprised like in years and years afterwards reading about they'd been [robbing?] some parts you know, been, not saying any fellas could be you know, he's never ever [robbing?] anything but you know we knew some very nice chaps, you know who was going to introduce us to Clark Gable, which we never got to [inaudible]. [laughs]

VB: That's what I was going to ask you about if you had any favourite stars from [inaudible]?

ID: Oh well he was lovely.

VB: Clark Gable

ID: Yeah. I mean it was lovely, mostly I always remembered him from *Gone With the Wind*—

VB: Right.

ID: You know. Oh he was a lovely, so but saying that there was quite a few, eh, nice blokes--

VB: Did you have any favourites?

ID: Well he was one of course. I mean remember I was a young girl, you're dead romantic then aren't you? Well there was, who was that other one who acted with him in *Gone With the Wind*? He was-?

VB: Leslie Howard?

ID: Yes he was a nice chap wasn't he? There were so many really you know. Is he still here?

VB: I think he is, yeah.

ID: Oh God. [inaudible].

VB: I mean I've brought some pictures with me of stars. I don't know if any of them are your favourites.

ID: Oh I've seen him before, but I don't know who he is. Who is he?

VB: Robert Montgomery I think.

ID: Mhm. I suppose the girls of the day would call him dreamy wouldn't they-, I liked her, and she was lovely, Janet Gaynor.

VB: Yeah.

ID: Most of the blokes were love-, but I like Clark Gable, I like, I don't know what you call it like, the quirk in his face you know. He used to look like right, really sar-, sometimes really sarcastic. But it was a lovely smile—

VB: Yeah.

ID: You know? And he was gorgeous, him, you know. But cor, he was just a fella. Who's this one?

VB: It's one of Robert Donat, is it?

ID: Oh yeah.

VB: I believe he was from Manchester.

ID: Oh I don't know, was he? He was Scotch, wasn't he? I thought he was Scotch.

VB: No I think he's from Manchester.

ID: Oh is he?

VB: Yes well he was in that *Ghost Goes West* wasn't he or was that...? [pause 1 second] He was in that film where he was, he was yeah.

ID: Dunno. But yeah I mean you know, later on you see, and in a way, in a way I'm very glad I lived through it, you know because I mean it wasn't all awful. But I will tell you about Piccadilly Gardens. You wouldn't have believed it at that time, it was like a dirt floor and it was full of shelters--

VB: Right.

ID: You know, air raid shelters. No flowers or nothing, just full of air raid shelters. So when we went to town, you know my [inaudible] we're going to town. Well my friend lived in Ancoats, don't even know where Ancoats is now. It's a while off town, right away somewhere and I wish I could ever get in touch with her because I never have from a long time, but even so he used to say, now don't forget, there's tons of shelters there. And I remember, not like today, hardly any house unless it was a business place had a phone, you know. Not saying that there was no phones, there was in like telephone boxes, but I mean that was only here and there and remember it's pitch dark with little blue lights you could hardly see, and my friend lived at Ancoats and I was telling our Lynne the other day, it was just talking about the war. I says, "I remember we were out one night and her name was Mary." We worked together you see, and she says to me, "I think we'll go home a bit early, do you." So I said, "Is something going to happen, Mary?" So she says, "No but you know I think we'll have an early night and I'll see you tomorrow." So I says all right. So off town somehow this Ancoats, I think it was Ancoats, you sort of, do you know anywhere in town?

VB: I don't, no.

ID: No, but you sort of saw a turn off the main Market Street and got to the back. It was to the back of Piccadilly Station and she lived that way somewhere, you know well to me, and so I walked down. 'Course we didn't have the Arndale Centre. I don't know if you know the Arndale.

VB: Yes.

ID: Yeah well I mean to say it was much lovelier before. We had some lovely little buildings in it and some lovely little [inaudible] pubs like Lister's Bar. Don't tell anybody I told you that. I've been in there, it was a treat you know. I think, I just forgot the name, had lovely little cafes in. Where Lewis's is now in Market Street and you know that's [name] Street where they've made the Arndale Centre. Had all these things, it was so lovely you know and the lovely Victorian buildings, they smashed them all up for the Arndale Centre. In this Manchester they don't never do anything hardly proper, you know what I mean. When I seen it I nearly cried, I thought look they're smashing all the places we've got. That was, you've been in the Arndale have you?

VB: Yes, yeah.

ID: Just a big [inaudible] with all shops [inaudible] you know, and it was really, really lovely there 'cos it was different little places. When we was at work you know every Saturday night there was about six blokes and six ladies or girls weren't they, girls then. We used to say, we'll go home and have our tea and get ready and we'll see you in Lister's. You mentioned Lister's Bar to some people and they'd think you were no good. But you know, we used to have many a Saturday night in there and nobody used to bother you at all, we just used to have a good time, you know.

VB: Yeah.

ID: So it was very nice. But this night, I don't know about this night [laughing] 'cos I forget. She says, so I says well it's a nice night so I think I'll walk. It wasn't a bit like today you know. I mean I forget now if there was buses or trams. They just had a little tiny blue night, could hardly see them and I know I never met anybody I know, and above me I could hear a German bomber. You knew they were German because of the engine used to go ur, ur [deep tone], not like our engines you see, and he used to, and I was thinking, what did my dad tell, I was dead frightened, what did my dad tell me about this German, about this bomber? And he told us once, he used to learn us all these things, that if a bomber was by itself, a lone bomber, it somehow got, is it detached from the main group? And that it probably might have got rid of his bombs and he might not. But at the same time he was by hisself. He didn't want to attract attention so he wasn't going to drop a bomb. 'Cos we had big guns at Heaton Park. Never seen them myself, but they say they was at Heaton Park and this is what they used to warn you about, if them guns went the shrapnel would fall out red hot and it could cut you in pieces. And even from there, you know Heaton Park, it could blow over a big range of things, you know. So I'm walking home only about eighteen, you know thinking please don't drop a bomb, I'm down here, you know. And across the prisons thing coming along the road, past our shelter to get home and it got round Waterloo Road, it was nothing like today and it just got like round North Road and this man comes out of the door, drags me in, old fella it was and he said, you get in there with the missus. Can you not hear that? I says yes and I've walked from the Cathedral. He says, why didn't you call in the prisons at the shelter? I says I didn't want, I wanted to get home, and he knew my dad. He says, "Your dad will be down in a minute," he says, "I'll tell him you're here, the wife's in there." So I went in. She's under the table reading a book with her head stuck out reading the book. I thought, [inaudible] but I didn't go on you know, I didn't say that. Anyway the all-clear went soon after that and my dad did come down the road and this man, I didn't know who he was, but he knew my dad and he kept saying, "Your girl's here." So my dad said, did you walk from the Cathedral? So I says, yeah but I weren't frightened. I said I knew that was a German bomber 'cos of the way that, I

says I remembered what you said, you know. I mean dad I remembered hoping he was telling the truth. And he said, yeah. I don't know that he knew even though they were air raid wardens. He says, it was one on its own. He says he was looking for the coast and he's probably come to the coast now. He says when it's one on their own the guns will not go because that will give him his position and if he had any bombs he'd let them go to be quicker, you know. So he says, we've learnt that lesson well he says so you learnt that lesson well. I thought, I hope I never hear another one myself. So I says, well I says that's how I did remember what you said and I was just wishing I would get home. I never knew, he might [inaudible] under there somewhere. Frightened to death really. Has that [inaudible] gone here [talking about the insect]. Let me close the door. I hate them you know 'cos they stab you for no reason don't they. But how can I put it? So in a way I think it's being younger, they're very much more frightened today. I mean I'm not frightened being on my own if everything's all right, you know but I don't always enjoy it being honest because it's not pretty. That's why I sort, well do a bit of [inaudible] and that's why I read a bit, you know. Our library's been shut for two weeks so I mean it just, you know I'm a good reader but at the moment, I just started this morning, now I just get one or two books and you know an errand or two and scoot home sort of thing, you know. And that's why I thought, I didn't know any way I could get in touch with her. If she wanted she could have come earlier, you know, but erm...

VB: No that's fine. I mean that makes me think of another thing. Did you ever read any of the film magazines like the 'Picturegoer'?

ID: Oh yeah, yes.

VB: Oh really?

ID: Oh yes, some of them. I don't know if they're out now of course but yeah we used to read all of them daft books.

VB: Yeah.

ID: We used to read, what else were, I forget now, 'The Red Letter'. All these sort of things like, you know.

VB: Yeah.

ID: Oh well I was just an ordinary girl who you know, all the love business and all the rest of it.

VB: I brought along, this is from the, from the 'Film Pictorial', one of their fashion features. I don't know if you remember these.

ID: Oh dear. They had some lovely fashions, I'm telling you, they had some lovely fashions in the war. And you don't know how many coats they made out of coloured blankets. They weren't half clever I can tell you, some lovely clothes. Being honest I think they were nicer than today's a lot of them, you know.

VB: Did you ever try say in the Thirties, when you were a teenager, did you ever try to dress like the stars?

ID: Well I think maybe you'd sort of see what they was wearing and try to get something similar.

VB: Yeah.

ID: I'll tell you another thing [inaudible] but I can't now, can't afford it. Marks and Spencers was sort of at the top of Piccadilly, not where they are now. I don't know if you know where they are now, but that's, you know down isn't it, opposite like that way to the Arndale Centre. I'm no good at all, I'm forgetting where they are. And Market Street's this way then isn't it and they're there. And when it used to be, years ago of course, at the top and I used to get some lovely, I always liked nice things. Don't matter now but you do then, when you're younger and I used to get some lovely frocks from there for five shilling, lovely shoes for five shilling. I think the dearest was five shilling. I'm not kidding, it was really, really lovely. Well I've not been in lately but I have got a few skirts upstairs of Marks and Spencers and now when you think, I mean I got them a couple of years ago and they were twelve and fourteen pound.

VB: Yeah.

ID: And when you think of now, I suppose they're more now, what they charge you, well it's the way of the world isn't it, but I mean to say, I always got things there, and a bit of, well not always, now and again but I did get a couple of skirts a couple of years ago. I don't think I've had owt since. I don't--

VB: And you can see them in the fashion [inaudible] as well [inaudible].

ID: You know I forget now, I don't know if it was this long being honest, I forget about, and of course I hat, I never was one for wearing a hat, sort of thing. But I think they had some lovely fashions I can tell you.

VB: Is that Bette Davis in that one--

ID: Which one?

VB: Top corner there?

ID: Here?

VB: I think it might be, I'm not sure.

ID: Can't read without my goggles, you see. Berre Davis, she's a good actress. Is she dead now?

VB: I'm not sure, I think she might still be around.

ID: I'm not sure either but she's a great actress wasn't she?

VB: Yeah.

ID: Oh yeah, we used to love the cinema, I mean it used to sort of really take you out of yourself, you know what I mean. I mean, erm, I think I liked that better than reading, just then I did anyway, you know.

VB: Yeah. Here's another one with Deanna Durbin, I don't know if she was...

ID: Oh she was nice, yeah. A good singer her wasn't she? [pause 1 second]

VB: Did you like, erm, one of the things there was Gracie Fields. Was she one that you liked or?

ID: Well she wasn't bad, do you know what I mean. She was more of the comic style, Gracie. She had a nice voice like for the time and that. Didn't have nothing against her really. She was quite nice. I mean she was a nice singer wasn't she, this girl [referring to Deanna Durbin].

VB: Yeah, lovely.

ID: But I mean it was a different kind. Gracie was like a Lancashire lass wasn't she, you know and her style was different and you know. I used to like her then in the comedy, but I don't know that I would now. As you get older, somehow your taste changes. I don't know for why, but I mean what you would laugh at then like the Three Stooges or whatever they call them, and these daft fellas like Laurel and Hardy, you certainly wouldn't laugh at now you'd think a silly pair of buggers, you know. Sorry about the swearing. [both laugh] But that is what you would think, but then you would think they were marvellous, you know. So you change, your taste does change, you know. But eh, not where Clark Gable's concerned. [laughs] And them fellas, I think they had a lovely--well he did, he had a lovely charm didn't he? I saw *Gone With the Wind* the other week and I thought, oh God wasn't he lovely! But erm, and he was supposed to be here in, you know in the war. Most of the Yanks were at the [inaudible], they were [inaudible]. I think they closed it about a couple of years ago and it's dead true, they used to come to Manchester, one or two, 'cos I had brothers too and one or two brothers of mine got in with them and they used to come to the house and we, perhaps we were lucky, but I don't know. They were awful decent lads and they used to say to my mum, what are

you short of? And they used to ask my mother so, they go on like they'll bring it me. You know, she didn't think it at all, but they did, they brought a jeep, but you know with fruit on and this sort. They got everything, you know, and they were quite, quite nice. They were rather nice, I tell you another thing, we used to get, I'm thinking of a bit of no good here, well [inaudible], not intimately with any of them but the thing is, we used to go in another place and it's still got the name 'Band on the Wall'. Now it's a jazz club or something and it's in the same place where it was then, so I've been told. Is it Swan Street? It's somewhere like that and we used to go in there. When we used to go there used to be about four of us and the landlord, when we first went in he came and he showed us a way out near the toilet, you know. And this girl says, "What are you showing us this way out for? We're not here to cause trouble or anything." And she says, you've got great big waiters you know, could handle anybody. 'Cos a lot of Yanks used to go in and a lot of our soldiers used to go in and sometime when they'd had a few beers they didn't agree, you know. He would have no fighting. He was like a big heavyweight himself. He says, "I'm showing that door because if any fella gets fresh you know that door is a door out." And he took us out, shown us where it was and he says, "And it's right near the road so you're quite all right." He says, I'm not always here, he says, otherwise none of these cause trouble. He says, it can be ours as well as the others, you know. And he was a very nice bloke and now when you see it it's still got the same name you see but it's a jazz club now, I've been told, you know. And I used to say, why do they call it the 'Band on the Wall'? And he says, because of that, and there was a little platform and on this little platform was the drummer. It was big enough to hold about three of them, you know. 'Course it's different now, and they called it the 'Band in the Wall', so there you are. No I mean, most of the time, well we were young, and I think when you're young it's different isn't it. And we sort of did have sort of a nice time, but there were nights when you didn't know if you'd be alive in the morning, you know. And they weren't so nice, but that's how it goes. It would be a lot worse if they was ever any lower, and I know once, that was when it was getting to the end, and I bet in London they had it terrible. And how can I put it, and when it was getting, one Saturday afternoon, there was only me and my dad in, don't know where my mum had gone and my other sisters. And he says, come on hurry up quick down the cellar and I just did this rushing thing, and it was one of those bombs at the end and they say, I wasn't there and I can't remember proper myself, it was in the paper, that it killed, it dropped at Oldham and killed one or two in, quite a few, I don't know if it was one or two or quite a few in a wedding party. It was one of them, what did they call them? Doodlebugs we used to call them, yeah. Oh yeah, I wouldn't like another [pinky?] war, I don't think I could stand it. I, today I'm frightened to death of thunder and lightning and yet I went through all of that. I think I really got used to that. [laughs] And, you know it's just one of them things wasn't it.

VB: I see you looking at the other side of that, there's a Ronald Colman film on the other side--

ID: Oh is there?

VB: Off the front one there. Was he someone that you liked at all? I think it's just on the back of that.

ID: Have these people saved these from, forever?

VB: Well these are erm copies of the originals, yeah.

ID: Oh, where's this thing with Ronald Colman?

VB: Erm.

ID: Was it over?

VB: It's just there on the back. It's not actually a picture.

ID: Oh I see over here, yes.

VB: It's just the advert for *Lost Horizon*.

ID: Yeah he was, oh that was good, yeah I remember that was good, it was. It's a lovely picture. We always was at the pictures.

VB: I mean, looking back on it is there any type of picture you particularly liked?

ID: Well of course, of course there was, nice romantic ones like *Gone With the Wind*.

VB: Yeah.

ID: And beside that I think I would like really, there was then or was it after when there was these good and bad adventure films.

VB: Right.

ID: They were nice, you know where something was sort of going on all the time.

VB: Yeah.

ID: I didn't like sloppy films, I mean real nice ones you know, I can't really remember the names of them now, but there was some lovely films, you know.

VB: 'Cause—

ID: Well it's, you know, took your mind off things. I mean you was there with them wasn't you—

VB: Yeah.

ID: You know.

VB: 'Cos I was wondering when you were saying that about you know, about the Americans, liking the American films and--

ID: Yeah.

VB: Did you like the sort of gangster films with...?

ID: Not much, well they was killing people. I've seen quite a few of them but no, not much. I don't even like them now, you know. I know some was good like Marlon Brando's been in some of them, but I forget what ones still but, is it *The Godfather*?

VB: Right.

ID: And now they've shown that one on television, I can't remember it all now, but it was quite nice sort of erm watching it, till they're going to kill somebody or something—

VB: Yeah.

ID: You know, and eh I thought that was a bit much. But erm no I like sort of nice adventure. As I say, I was much younger then, so you liked the love bits didn't you—

VB: Yes.

ID: Yeah. Because I mean they weren't dirty or anything, I mean I don't see many films like I say, now. But rh it wouldn't surprise me if they'd got a lot, you know, ruder sort of thing, you know. They may not have done but erm [pause 1 second] I liked them then anyway. I mean, they did take it off you a bit.

VB: Yeah.

ID: And most of them picture places had shelters, you know. So you knew if you went and there was a raid, you know that, so if a, like your dad was in you used to write a little note where you'd gone and if it was all safe, I'll see you in a couple of hours, you know. You had to do all this, or they would have been wondering where you was, so as far as you could tell you told them where you was going, you know, and it was all right. And I loved the munitions, had my first love affair at the muni-, [laughs] at the munitions factory. But yes, right, he happened to be a married man so couldn't take it any further than that, could I? I'm not a homebreaker, I'm not saying I could have been a homebreaker. But I think I could if I'd have tried, but I wasn't like that. I think it always sort of stays

with you. The other way, you leave when your time is up and you go somewhere else and you sort of in a way always remember. I know he's dead, you always remember them but at least you've done nothing wrong so there's nothing to regret and you didn't break anything up, you know and all that. But erm we really enj, I really enjoyed it because it was erm, like I say it wasn't dangerous, not unless you got your hand in the drill and all the rest of it and erm, very rare did you do that. And they used to have the radio on all day, you know and it was smashing and you know, and what [inaudible] used to sort of say, well that's what I mean about the 'Band in the Wall' and about, see we was always with somebody, all these other places what I'm talking about that was in Cannon Street, you know. We used to, when it was Saturday at the time, 'cos the war was on and all the rest of it, till about 4 o'clock, and about, oh must have been about eight of us, easy, used to, you had your friends, and the blokes had their friends. We didn't ask if they were married or not, I don't think the others were anyway, and we used to say, we'll meet you in town, you know at such a time and we'll go, don't tell anybody I to, it's not on is it? [referring to tape recorder]

VB: Still on I'm afraid. [laughs] I can turn it off if you like.

ID: Oh no, doesn't matter. I've done nothing wrong at all, I'm too frightened. I mean there was no pills or nothing them days and I dare say I wouldn't have done anything then because I never was the brave sort, it weren't worth it. But I mean we used to have really nice times, they used to see Mary and I to the bus and Mary used to get off the bus at Ancoats. Forget which way she went home. That great big place, what, was it there then? I don't know, what was it called, what is it called, 'cos it's still there? The great big building opposite Victoria Station, forget what it's called. Mary sort of did used to live that way. She sort of come into the back of Piccadilly Station. I only went home with her once and I know it was that way, but it won't be there any more 'cos it was a very old district and houses like a lot of them were and anyway it's been brought down since, you know. So she used to go that way and I was already on then, if you could know where I mean, on Cheetham Hill Road as it turns round like that, you see. And I only lived at the bottom of this street. It was a big long street, it still is being honest, great big long street, 'cos from Cheetham Hill right down toward [name] Road, so it is a big long street. I suppose now it's built full of workplaces, you know but I don't know what kind. I mean when we lived there that was full of those machi-, you know [inaudible] proof raincoats. Everything was made in Derby Street, the Ice Palace was in Derby Street where they had the skating. Oh, that was another one that had pictures, oh that was mad altogether. Erm, [laughs] dead noisy it was. Oh I forgot about that one, I think it was twopence to go in there, [laughs] and they sold every sweet you wanted and loads of nuts there. Don't know, don't like nuts now but I must have liked them then, oh and it weren't half noisy. I talk about these kids, but see I was younger then—

VB: Yeah.

ID: So I could stand it, and nobody was giving you cheek. I mean, these lot's not lived! But I mean that's what a war does you see. But there, oh nasty, it brings you out. But this was before the war—

VB: Yeah.

ID: The Ice Palace and, I don't know, when would that be? I think that would be in the summer they had the pictures and in the winter all the big ice stars had been there like Sonja Henie or whatever her name is. All them went there and, I love ice skating and yet I never got to go when... I don't think it was very dear or what, but I never got to go when it was the ice skating. But that's what they used to anyway, it was called the Ice Palace. What it is now I wouldn't know—

VB: Right.

ID: All gone, I suppose, but oh honestly it was a great big place and it used to get packed full, and it was very uncomfortable. I don't know if they had forms [benches] in it or what. [laughs] I don't know if the better seats was at the back—

VB: Oh dear!

ID: You know. I mean what could you want for twopence? [laughs]

VB: Oh dear!

ID: You know I'd forgot about that one 'cos I only lived at the bottom of the road, you know. And it was, "Oh we'll go to the Ice Palace tonight." But that was before the war, you know.

VB: Yes, I mean that's really what I'm really interested in.

ID: Yeah, it was dead funny. Now I don't know if you know, I mean there was them fellas used to keep order.

VB: Yeah.

ID: But I think you'd call them, they didn't have uniforms or nothing. They didn't keep order, like. But if they didn't like it, they sort of, it was like boards or something, I don't know how they did it all. I don't know what happened to the ice, but it was like boards and they all used to bang their feet. You know, "Ooh!" They didn't like this, [laughs] you know? So we had great fun, you know. I'm not kidding you.

VB: Oh dear!

ID: But it was a treat, that. Oh I loved the pictures! And I used to like the picture of the week. My mum used to like them, I think, in the week. This was before I went on munitions, of course, and me and my other friends. But even so she used to sometimes come then. And we'd usually go to what they called Ardwick Empire. And they used to have turns [live acts] on, it was a treat. We used to go there, I think it was every Friday night we used to go there. See, I don't know, you can't believe I'm saying every night, can you? But you know it was really smashing, you know. It's no kidding, that, we did!

VB: Ah.

ID: And we used to go there in the war—

VB: Sounds great.

ID: And that was on. Erm, I just to get how you got there. Ardwick it's called. I don't know what it's called now. It's a big place isn't it, where the stars go. What is it called, it begins with A, I think. You know where London Road, well it's not London Road, is it, where Piccadilly Station is.

VB: Right.

ID: Well you call it London Road. It is on London Road, well it was, I don't know if it still is. It's the next thing along and it's a big place. I can't remember what it's called. But where the stars, you know any kind of star, loads of stars are on there now.

VB: Right.

ID: But it must have been altered a bit sort of thing, you know. But I know it's the next stop down and it's got, it was called the Ardwick Empire—

VB: Right.

ID: But I don't know what it's called, is, it's one of them big places where all the stars go, and I can't remember it now. But I've never been since it's been these other stars sort of thing, you know. But erm oh yeah, tons of fun, it was great. The thing is you sort of forget, you know where you've been and you haven't been. But erm like I say now, phor, I don't think I'll ever be going to the pictures again because I mean to say the nearest one to here is Pilsworth—

VB: Yeah.

ID: And that's about two miles before you get to Bury. So to get there, I don't know really, being honest. I know now and again there is a bus goes there but you wouldn't get me there till about 11 and 12 o'clock. And then I've to make my way home--

VB: Right.

ID: And you'd a way. Unless I was going with somebody I wouldn't go to town—

VB: Yeah.

ID: 'Cos we live in different times don't we, you know. That's all. So--

VB: I'm going to have to go back into town now. I'm sorry, I don't want to appear rude or anything.

[End of Side A]

[End of Interview]