

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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- \* Bolton, Greater Manchester, 8 May 1995: Valentina Bold interviews John and Marion Cooper
- \* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn and Julia McDowell
- \* JC=John Cooper/ MC=Marion Cooper/ VB=Valentina Bold
- \* Notes: First of two interviews with John and Marion Cooper; 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 details.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[tape introduction by Valentina Bold]

**JC:** [mid-conversation] It is useful. We had an oral history section at one time in the WEA in Bolton.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And eh, your information, it's got to be in Greater Manchester really, hasn't it? As far as you're concerned.

**VB: E-erm [rustling]--**

**JC:** You don't want to go out.

**VB: Well basically I'm interested, particularly in Bolton as well as in Manchester.**

**JC:** Oh yes. I know.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But what about outside, shall we say Blackburn?

**VB: Mhm. Not so much in Blackburn.**

**JC:** Supposing in Blackburn, supposing I gave you a reference.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** This is oral. Oral. Of eh, the North West Sound Archive.

**VB: Oh yes. Yes.**

**JC:** Mr Ken Howarth. He knows me well.

**VB: We've actually been in touch with the North West--**

**JC:** Have you? And he's very helpful and it's at Clitheroe. Which is an hour's drive from here. And it's a nice place to visit.

**VB: Yeah. We have been in touch with the Sound Archive.**

**JC:** Have you been in touch with Ken Howarth.?

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** Because he's been to Bolton and done courses for us.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And they have a tremendous library of archive material for you to delve in. Do you know his address? Have you got it in your records?

**VB: Yes. Yes. Yeah.**

JC: Ken Howarth. Are we switched on?

**VB: Yes, we're switched on now. I'll just take that reference, if that's okay, that you mentioned just now.**

JC: Get that first.

**VB: That's great. Eh, no, as I say, we've been in touch with the North West--**

JC: Yes.

**VB: Sound Archive and as you say--**

JC: Mr Ken Howarth.

**VB: Yeah.**

JC: Right.

JC: And in Manchester since you're working from the university eh, Val.

**VB: Yeah.**

JC: And since you're working from the university of course, you will know about the North West Film Archives.

**VB: Yes. We've been in touch with them.**

JC: Right.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** You know about those.

**VB:** Erm, this Halliwell book looks--

**JC:** Get that. That's a very useful reference.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Now then, have you got that down?

**VB:** Yes.

**JC:** And have you put, [Halliwell's] 'Film Guide and Reviews, Bolton Evening News'.

**VB:** Yes, I've got a note of that too.

**JC:** Because, now, you can also jot down the... the man to see when you go, I'd go to this library, when it's open, is Mr Barry Mills.

**VB:** Yes. I've been in touch with Mr Mills. [laughs]

**JC:** Right. And he knows me too. They all know, mention me.

**VB:** Yes.

**JC:** They nearly all know me. Barry Mills. And erm, and he, a lot of the material of course is indexed.

**VB:** Yes.

**JC:** Including, I've no doubt, film reviews by this man. In the 'Evening News'. Michael Fish,

**VB:** Right.

**JC:** See. And all that. So, well I'm glad you've got that then. Now, I was given this reference by a Ken [surname redacted]. I think I've sent you his address.

**VB:** It's probably in the last letter.

**JC:** And it's on there. It was the last one.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Together with two or three more. I've also given one a questionnaire direct to another person and written my name at the bottom. Hopefully-

**VB:** Oh that's very kind.

**JC:** That will be helpful.

**VB:** Right.

**JC:** You can't give them to everybody who's over seventy-odd. It's got to be people we know, who're intelligent enough to, you know, and interested in local history. They're the people, aren't they? Oh eh, yes, right. Just put that to one side. I don't want to lose that. [pause 2 seconds] So, ten of us. Yes. very good. It's a big project. Really. They're going to delve into it.

**VB:** Mhm.

**JC:** Because there's so many, really, sources like the archives. Now tell me what you know about Mass Observation. And erm, Dorothy Sheridan at Sussex. University.

**VB:** Erm--

**JC:** Do you know anything about that?

**VB:** I do. I've--

**JC:** It saves me telling you about these things if you know about it.

**VB:** Yeah. Yeah. Well erm, I've had a look through--

**JC:** I know they're a mine of information.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Now then, what do you know about that to begin with?

**VB:** Well I've read through the book obviously--

**JC:** A bit louder. I'm not deaf but--

**VB:** I've--

**JC:** We all speak Lancashire like.

[laughter in background]

**VB:** Yes. [laughs]

**JC:** You speak Scottish.

**VB:** I've read--

**JC:** [hearty laughter]

**VB:** I've read through the published material from the Mass Observation Archives.

**JC:** For the Bolton area?

**VB:** Yes, for Bolton.

**JC:** Worktown it's called.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** Right. And 'The Pub and the People'.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** Right.

**VB: I've had a look through that.**

**JC:** That's local. Worktown was local.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And Blackpool. Right. You've had, you know about that.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** And you know you can get it at Bolton Library. At least. It may be Manchester as well.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** That's Mass Observation.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But I don't know really. I, I worked for Mass Observation a little while.

**VB: Oh really!**

**JC:** As a volunteer. During the war.

**VB: That's interesting. You did?**

**JC:** Eh, but not on this project in Bolton.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** But I did do kind of volunteer work when I was at Mass Observation during the war--

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** They're all celebrating [laughs] [perhaps referring to VE celebrations going on].

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** [laughs]

**VB: That's interesting. 'Cause I was wondering--**

**JC:** Mass Observation.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** But I've never, later I've to come to think that there was a lot of unnecessary material that they got together and resourced. They weren't selective. It was in the days before sociology really got off the ground properly. And eh, they recorded everything. They saw a man in the street "What kind of cigarettes are you smoking?" As though that'd be of any [interest?]. Anyway, [pause 2 seconds] I wonder, oh no, well, the person is Dorothy Sheridan. She's erm in charge of the archives. At Sussex University.

**VB: Mhm.**

**JC:** Now then, the one other thing I can tell you about this archive. [pause 3 seconds] I don't know to what extent it's been indexed down there.



**VB: Mhm.**

**JC:** Otherwise it's going to be a laborious task. But I think it has been to a degree. And eh, she's been in touch with us, in Bolton, recently. To say, that, they're encouraging various groups throughout the country to do some current Mass Observation projects.

**VB: Ah. That's interesting.**

**JC:** And they've also got a package together which involves a lecture, I think by herself. And perhaps some examples of the material. And they're quite prepared to come out and give this lecture to various organisations. We're going to have it but it's a long term off now. It'll be twelve months off.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** But we're going to have her to come. But she is circulating around. She's prepared to give lectures on Mass Observation. But your problem is to extract about the cinema.

**VB: Yeah. I know the--**

**JC:** How are you going to do that?

**VB: Yes. There are two people working on the project. The Project Director has been down and looked through the archives already. So she's going to be doing more work there.**

**JC:** Oh on this project?

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** There's a few of you on this project, right.

**VB: Two, two people.**

**JC:** Yes, that's right.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And have they been down to Sussex?

**VB: Yes. Yeah.**

**JC:** Oh. So that's fine. So you know about that.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And she would be very helpful. And extract from there, what you can about the cinema.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Oh, yeah. I'm glad you--

**VB: It sounds like a great source.**

**JC:** Pardon?

**VB: It sounds like a wonderful source, from what you're saying. And from what I've heard from the other people.**

**JC:** Oh yes. Well I think eh, [pause 2 seconds] I don't, erm, in Bolton, they concentrated on everything and you've got to extract just about the cinema.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But you'll find that there's quite a lot of material in Bolton. About it. So, ah, that'll be a useful line of enquiry for you, won't it?

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** So, now ask me some questions, why don't you? While the tape recorder's switched on.

**VB: Right. [laughs] Well, I was wondering if--**

**JC: Are you switched on?**

**VB: Yes. I've switched it on. Yeah. I was wondering if, before we actually started talking about the cinema, if I could ask just one or two questions about yourselves.**

**JC: Yeah.**

**VB: Just so that I get--**

**JC: That's a good idea. That's a good idea.**

**VB: A bit of background. That would be great. Erm, 'cause I have both your dates of birth.**

**MC: Yeah. Have you got that?**

**VB: Yeah. From talking on the phone--**

**MC: Oh yes!**

**VB: When I spoke to you before. Erm, but I wanted to ask, were you both born in Bolton?**

**MC: Erm, yes.**

**JC: More or less. My wife, I was in the middle of Bolton and my wife was at Little Lever. That's a few miles out.**

**VB: Right. Okay. And can I ask both of you, erm, what sort of work did your father do?**

**MC: My father?**

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** My father was in a bleachworks.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Textile bleaching.

**VB: Ah, right.**

**MC:** Yes. Cotton.

**VB: Right.**

**MC:** Yes. And bleachworks.

**VB: And did you mother work as well?**

**MC:** Yes, I think my mother worked there too. Until we were born. And then she didn't work again.

**VB: Ah I see. Yeah. And can I ask how many of you there were in the family?**

**MC:** Three.

**VB: Right.**

**MC:** A sister and a brother beside me.

**VB: That's great. That's great.**

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB: And can I ask you the same?**

**JC:** Yes. Carry on. You can ask me anything. That's right.

**VB: Yeah. What was it your father did?**

**JC:** Eh, my father was in the textile, cotton spinner.

**VB: Right. Is there a main place?**

**JC:** See being a textile area.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** And that was when the eh, most people was connected with the textiles. Like in Glasgow, shipbuilding.

**VB: Of course. Yeah. Yeah.**

**JC:** So my father was a cotton, operative cotton spinner.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And you want my occupation?

**VB: Erm, yes, that would be great.**

**JC:** Well I started work, well, it's difficult. I'd quite a few occupations. But it's always been in the textile trade.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Let's summarise it by saying I started work, like my father. Working with my father as an operative cotton spinner.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And then I eh, worked in the textile industry most of my life. Teaching and lecturing in textiles.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And I finished up at the Bolton Institute of Higher Education.

**VB: That's great.**

**JC:** As a college lecturer.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** In textiles.

**VB: Right. Right. And did your mother work at all?**

**JC:** No. She died young.

**VB: Ah I see. So did you have brothers and sisters then?**

**JC:** Yes. Brothers. And eh, they worked in the textile trade too.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Cotton trade it was. Textile trade it was. Cotton trade. Yeah.

**VB: So how old were you when you left school at first?**

**JC:** Fourteen I left.

**VB: Fourteen. That's great. Erm, and I think you were saying when we talked before that you worked in dairying. Was that right?**

**MC:** Yes.

**VB: Right.**

**MC:** Yes, yes, yeah. Yeah.

**VB: Yeah. Just to make sure I've got that right. And has it been in the Bolton area that you've both lived in most of your lives then?**

**JC:** Yes.

**MC:** Yes. Yeah.

**VB: Right.**

**VB: And can I ask what year you were married in?**

**MC:** What year?

**VB: What year.**

**MC:** '48.

**JC:** '48.

**MC:** Yes.

**VB: That's great. And do you have children yourself?**

**JC:** Yes.

**MC:** One son.

**VB: Right. That's great. Erm, and I know you were saying that you were sympathetic to the Labour Party.**

**MC: Yes.**

**VB: Is that--**

**JC: Sympathetic?**

**VB: Your Labour Party. Interested in the Labour Party.**

**JC: We're not members.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: But eh, Marion's father was eh, was a--**

**MC: A local councillor. My father was a local councillor for years.**

**VB: Ah I see, yes. So you were brought up within that--**

**MC: Yes.**

**JC: Well we are what you might call eh, left wing people.**

**MC: Left wing.**

**VB: Yeah. Erm, and can I ask if you have any strong religious views?**

**JC: No we haven't. Neither of us.**

**MC: No.**

**VB: Right. That's great.**



**MC:** We don't attend any church.

**VB: Right. That's great. As I say, it's just really so I can get an idea--**

**JC:** Oh yes.

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** That's [inaudible; overtalking]. Yes. That's all right. Don't worry about that.

**VB: Right. I know, it sounds sometimes as if it's sort of nosy.**

**JC:** It's completely opposite to what Mass Observation would do.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** They didn't get any background information.

**VB: Well I think it's important to get an idea--**

**JC:** Oh it is. It is. Aye.

**MC:** Yes.

**VB: Of people that are telling you about...**

**JC:** That's right.

**MC:** Yeah.

**VB: The other thing that I'd like to ask as well is, because I'm tape recording this, erm, the tapes are going to be kept in Glasgow University.**

**JC:** Yes.

**VB:** Initially. And it's possible that people in the future might consult them.

**JC:** That's correct. We've no objections.

**VB:** Right.

**MC:** No.

**VB:** Can I ask you in that case, if you'd sign this?

**JC:** Yes. That's right.

**VB:** Just to say that you don't mind.

**JC:** No I don't mind.

**VB:** To stop you from suing us. [laughs].

**JC:** No.

**VB:** That would be great. Erm, just see if I've got a pen actually.

**JC:** I've got a pen here.

**VB:** Ah, I've got one here. That's just to sort of keep the administrators happy. [laughs]

**MC:** Oh yes.

**VB:** So, if you could just sign it at the top there. Erm, you know, if you want to have a look through it.

**JC:** No, it's all right. I know what this is about because when eh, when we had our oral history project--

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** With Ken Howarth up at the--

**MC:** It's the 8th today, isn't it?

**VB: The 8th. Yeah. Then I'll sign these too.**

**JC:** This was just coming up that we had to safeguard ourselves.

**VB: That's great. Yeah. Well this is it.**

**JC:** Telling people and making sure they'd no objections.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And it's standard practice now, isn't it?

**VB: That's right. Yeah. Although I've heard that there's never been even one case of people--**

**JC:** No.

**VB: Suing over oral history. [laughs]**

**JC:** No. No.

**VB: You never know.**

**JC:** No you don't.

**VB: That's great. Well that's that official business [laughs] over.**

JC: [laughs]

**VB: Now we can get down to the fun stuff. Erm, the first thing that I was wanting to ask you both was how often you went to the cinema when you were growing up?**

JC: Oh eh, we'll start with me and then my wife after.

**VB: Right.**

JC: Because eh, she lived in--

**MC: I lived in a village. I lived in a village.**

JC: A little village. Which eh, not in the town itself.

**VB: Right.**

JC: Now, and then again, I'd like to say, that eh, although I was born in Bolton, I lived mostly outside in Farnworth on that area which was a part of the Bolton borough. So my early filmgoing was in Bolton. But it was before the thirties.

**VB: Right.**

JC: It was in the, in between twenties and thirties. But you're not interested in that, eh.

**VB: I'd be interested, you know, briefly about that. 'Cause it's interesting to get a background of--**

JC: So my first experiences of the cinema would be in Bolton, round about the eh, from about 1924 to about '27. When I moved out of Bolton. And I was a boy then. A boy. There were many picture places in Bolton then. My nearest from where I lived in an industrial community, was about five minutes walk away. It was called The Atlas. That's its name. And eh, they had eh, films every night. And they changed them twice a week. And then they had, in addition, Saturday afternoon matinees for younger people. In the early days I went to the Saturday afternoon matinees, which were mostly

all, I'm telling my memory of this, cowboy films. Tom Mix and those other, eh, actors of the day. Eh, cowboy films mainly, the things that stand in my mind. Wild West and the like. Those drama things. And eh, but the thing I remember, it was threepence to go in, during the week at night. We went occasionally at night. And I think it was a penny to go to the Saturday afternoon matinee. In the evening, but not the matinee, in the evening, there was, I remember, there was silent films. Then of course, and there was a pianist to accompany the films. Eh, this I suppose, all the films were like that then. And erm, that was, erm, but in the afternoon matinee for children, eh, eh, [pause 2 seconds] yes. There was a pianist as well. And eh, and they were very well attended. And I think eh, I would go about once a week. Because that's all we could afford. Living in an industrial community. Like eh, all of the communities. So, eh, now that was in Bolton.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Am I right to continue?

**VB: Sure.**

**JC:** Shall I keep going? Now then. Then I came to live on the outskirts of Bolton. Farnworth. And Kearsley. Farnworth, Kearsley. And Farnworth was my nearest, eh, part of Bolton. The township of Farnworth. Eh, a satellite township around the Bolton area. I was older then. And I'd started work in a factory at fourteen. And I was living in the Farnworth area. I don't think that I went to the cinema until, while we were there, until I was actually working. I was living in this area from twelve to fourteen years. And only when I started working, and later probably, did I, say sixteen, seventeen. Did I go to the cinema. I went to the cinema because it was the acceptable thing for young people. Young teenagers to go and see the films on Saturday night. We didn't have a cinema in the little village I lived. It was a mile to the town. And we'd no cinema in the little village of Prestolee where I lived. It was a mile walk to the nearest eh, eh, township that had cinemas. So we only went on a Saturday night. Because that was, of course, the regular night for relaxation. As it is now. In the town of Farnworth, without counting up, there'd be half a dozen cinemas of different kinds in that area. And erm [pause 2 seconds], so our typical Saturday night entertainment with other teenage friends, was to go to Farnworth. Half an hour's walk. And amongst all the things we did in the town, we would always visit one of the cinemas. And all the things we did, and then, back home. Now then, I'd rather you asked me some questions rather than carry on now.

**VB: Right. Well maybe could ask--**

**JC:** I could go on.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But eh, but I'd rather you asked me some questions.

**VB: Sure.**

**JC:** From now on. Rather than, erm, that you're particularly interested in.

**VB: Well that's great to get a--**

**JC:** How much it was to go and things like that.

**VB: Yes. Yes.**

**JC:** So do you want to have a--

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** Well. Yes. We only had, we had one cinema in our village. Erm--

**JC:** Two miles from Bolton.

**MC:** Oh yes. We were three miles from Bolton. Yes. But I never went to that cinema at all, when I was a child. Most of my schoolfriends would go, at least twice a week. But we sort of weren't erm, [pause 2 seconds] oh, not encouraged. It was just never [pause 3 seconds], dreamt that we would go at all. I suppose at home we would be reading or, I don't know what we did. But we certainly didn't go to the cinema in Little Lever. In fact I didn't go to that cinema until I was quite grown up! [laughs] Erm, some Saturdays, my father would take my sister, and me, to Bolton. He, mainly, to go to the [court?] library in Bolton [possibly referring to the Little Bolton Town Hall]. We didn't have a library in the village. Then. And he would go off there. He would dump us in the Reading Room while he

went to choose a book. And I can remember the titles of the books that he left us looking at. 'The Lady'. 'The Queen'. What peculiar books they were. Now all this was preliminary to being taken to the cinema. We got to the cinema, and my father knew the lady in the, what d'you call it? Where you paid. In the thing. They always had a few words together. And I should think that we got in very cheaply. Would think so. I think I would be about eight, and my sister would be ten. Always got quite good seats. And it always finished up with erm, what d'you call those things? That, repeat, one that erm, was continued next week. Some desperate thing was happening and we never saw it again. 'Cause we never went the following weeks.

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** We never knew what happened. [laughs] And then we walked home again. And it was three miles to walk home. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** We walked there. And I can't remember whether we had any tea. Oh yes, we did! We went into the market. Erm, there was a very big market in Bolton. And father would say, "Now, you can just go there and you can have a drink. And a sandwich." And we sat up on high stools. But you don't remember those, do you? And we just had that, in Bolton, before we went in the cinema. And then that was it. And then home again. And that was all our erm, [pause 2 seconds] that was all my recollection of going at all. But I do remember my brother coming with us once. He was two years older than my sister. And he would take, when we were allowed to go to the cinema with him, when we got to this place, my brother said, to the lady in the thing, "Oh. My father knows you!" So, whether we got in cheaper or not because my father knew her, I don't know. But we always had a sort of, a titter about it. So, aw.

**VB: I mean, what was that cinema like that you were going to?**

**MC:** What was it like? Erm, what was it called? The Imperial. It was at the, it's where Boots is now.

**JC:** You're talking about going to Bolton.

**MC:** Oh yeah.

**JC:** Yes. It was the Imperial.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Which was typical eh--

**MC:** A typical Bolton cinema.

**JC:** Typical Bolton cinema.

**MC:** Yes. I can't remember.

**JC:** But you had one in the village. But it was a much smaller.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Rough and ready place. But you never went to that.

**MC:** No, we didn't go to that one at all.

**JC:** No.

**MC:** No.

**JC:** No.

**MC:** I don't remember much of the films.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Yes.



**MC:** I think the only film that I remembered, really and truly, and I enjoyed, was *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. And I think I would be about, [pause 2 seconds] sixteen. And that was when we'd gone to my aunt's and we were allowed to go to a cinema, near to where she lived.

**VB: A-ah.**

**JC:** Yeah.

**MC:** And, that was it. And I remember streaming tears when I came out. [laughs]

**JC:** [laughs] Right. Can I continue with mine?

**VB: Yeah. Sure.**

**JC:** Right. Well eh, that's reminding me too that were continuous prog, there were eh, serials on the matinees that we went to.

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm.

**JC:** Eh, whatever it was. Westerns or anything else, they were serials so we could, serials to be continued, the following week. But, coming back to the, the Farnworth area. Farnworth, Bolton. Where they had about six cinemas. A typical Saturday night, for most teenagers, eh, and in particular this little group that I was with for a few years. It would be that we'd meet up together, about six. We would walk up to the town of Farnworth. We would then eh, go, normally, go into one of the billiard or snooker halls that were eh, going. At that time. We would spend, spend about half an hour or more in this place. Either playing snooker and billiards or watching eh, watching others. While the first hour, first house of the pictures was taking place in one or other of the cinemas. So, we had to make the maximum use of the evening while we were up [in Farnworth?]. So we'd enjoy ourselves from the first house doing other things. And then, we'd go the cinema. Although, we never went in pubs, unlike modern youth. We would never think of going into a pub, up to the age of say, twenty. And having a drink, before we went to the pictures. We would normally, perhaps go and play billiards. Then we'd decide which pictures we were going to. And eh, eh, and they varied from, some quite run-down cinemas, at least one. Where you were actually sat on forms [wooden benches]. And it was threepence, to, to, to go. And then, there were others, better equipped. And

everything. One was a theatre converted to a cinema. One was I think, specially made, as a cinema. One was a tram shed converted to a cinema.

**MC:** [chuckles]. Very rough.

**JC:** Yes. So there was some were rather rough, some were quite pleasant. And nicely heated. And warm and comfortable. So erm, so then we would go to the second house of the pictures. Or, we'd arrive halfway through the first house. In which case, there were always queues to go in. Queues outside. Eh, because there were continuous performance then. So you'd have, you might get in halfway and stay in until you, and say, "This is where we came in," and then you saw it a second time round or came out again.

**VB:** [smiles]

**JC:** But, erm, but, and then, these queues, there would be an attendant or, or an usherette. A man who'd come down and say, "Now, there's room for six in the ninepennies." Or, "There's room for two in the one-and-threes."

**MC:** [chuckles]

**JC:** And, on a rainy day, you wondered whether, when you had in mind to pay sixpence, whether if it was raining and you were outside the cinema, you could afford to pay a shilling or one-and-three to get in, if only to get in out of the rain.

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** That was the dilemma.

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughing]

**JC:** That we, or your working lads, were facing. But when we did get in, it was always nice and comfortable in most of them. And I think that the warmth and the eh, [pause 1 second] kind of

comfort. And the plush seats. The darkness and everything. Had a strong, an appeal to us. As the actual films themselves. It was an oasis of comfort and warmth in most of them. Which, in some instances, was even better than our own homes in a way. And eh, eh, and we'd just fluctuate to one or the other, according to which cinema was showing the film which we thought we could all agree upon. And then, having seen the film, second house, eh, finishing about 10 o'clock, we would then, the second half of the evening was to get some food somewhere before we had to make this trek back home. And eh, it normally consisted, mostly of my teenage friends... [tape cuts out].

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**JC:** For refreshment. either [pause 2 seconds] we might get some chips. Which was relatively cheap. Perhaps, threepence. And eat these chips on our way back home. Or, which wasn't uncommon, we would call and we'd have a hot, black pudding. The Lancashire black pudding. Hot. Straight from the pan. From a little stall. That was eh, open, every night. But eh, particularly Saturday night and that was a penny. And that was our typical Saturday evening. For me, up to perhaps, for one or two years, eh, perhaps up to about 1937. Eh, no, no. 1935. Perhaps. And then personally, I personally withdrew from that form of Saturday entertainment. And eh, I, more or less what you might call joined not an organisation, but a movement. It was very prevalent. In the industrial communities of [pause 2 seconds] cycling. Because there was opportunities there for working-class boys to buy a bicycle for about four pound. Either join a cycling club. Or go on their own. And from there on, that type of Saturday night didn't exist for me. We would go, I spent most of my weekends cycling in the country, youth hostelling, going all over the place. And it was, and it was typical of a development in the working class, what you might call, culture, at that time. You may have found that, Val, in your researches, did you?

**VB:** I haven't really come across cycling as such an interest that you're talking about actually.

**JC:** Yeah. It was an interesting development.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Throughout England. I think it was the same in Scotland. Not a mass movement. Not a mass movement. But it was a development that opened up the countryside to working-class people. They were cycling before. As a matter of fact on Saturday evening, we, we eh, attended--

**MC:** No Friday.

**JC:** Friday night. We attended a lecture by Wendy's husband, Dennis. Who's just written a book on the--

**VB:** She mentioned that actually.

**JC:** Of the Clarion Cycling Club.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** And eh, it was a launch on the book. Of this club which is fifty years old. But it was in the thirties, up to the war, that was the great expansion of that. And I think that probably would impinge upon cinemagoing too. It would affect it. In that eh, people were tending.... They had the means to go in the countryside to spend their leisure on Saturdays. Without having a car.

**VB:** Right. I see.

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Can you stop it a second? Just to say--

**VB:** Yeah, surely.

**JC:** Just to say [recording stopped; recording re-started]

**JC:** Switch on.

**VB: Erm, well I'll probably ask some more when your wife comes back as well. Just to get her reactions--**

**JC: Well she won't know a lot about the cinema.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: She didn't go much. But go on.**

**VB: Eh, well I'm interested in that as well because it's,**

**JC: In her social life—**

**VB: It's good to get a sort of background of people who were very interested and people--**

**JC: That's right.**

**VB: And people who weren't so interested.**

**JC: Well, my wife, you'll find--**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: You know, notice she's different teenage background from me.**

**VB: Yes.**

**JC: Because, she lived, she came from a family which were more, [pause 2 seconds] eh more socially minded than my family. Eh, like he was a founder of the Labour Party. He was chairman of the Council. Twice. Was my wife's father.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: And they had more, she lived in more, what you might call a, a literary background.**

**VB: Yes. I was wondering when she said that.**

**JC: A literary background.**

**VB: Yes.**

**JC: And she still is very interested in literature.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: And reads a tremendous amount. That was her background. So that, the cinema then. Pictures then would be, oh, "Pictures? No. You're coming a walk with your father. And we're going over the, eh, we're going a walk." And also, they would go to Clarion Club Houses, which were going. There was one in Glasgow in, in this book. They were more eh... And of course, they were two sisters. And that's different. Because her brother went to Canada eh, in the thirties. So two sisters. And it's a kind of a feminine background.**

**VB: Right.**

**JC: A more sheltered background.**

**VB: Yes.**

**JC: [bursts out laughing] Right eh, Val.**

**VB: Well, I mean, I was really interested to hear. I mean obviously the cinema was an important part of your life up to the time--**

**JC: Yeah. It was.**

**VB: You got involved in cycling. Did you have any favourite stars among the stars of the thirties?**

**JC:** [pause 2 seconds] No. I didn't. I didn't. I knew, there was no hero worship with any. For me. It was just a film.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** I knew them as eh, I knew them as, these people as so-called stars and all that. But eh, [pause 2 seconds] musicals and Jeanette Macdonald and all that. But they were just people to me. They were... I never had any hero worship with any of them.

**VB: So was it more the stories that you were interested in, or...? What was it you liked about--**

**JC:** About?

**VB: About pictures. Were you drawn to certain kinds of films more than others?**

[pause 2 seconds]

**JC:** Well, [pause 2 seconds] in the early eh, early thirties, I think I was more interested in comedy. Comedies. 'Cause they were the easiest to appreciate. Eh, Laurel and Hardy, and all that. Previous to that, there was Charlie Chaplin. I remember seeing Charlie Chaplin films earlier in the twenties. Eh, and eh Laurel and Hardy. Slapstick comedians. They, erm, they were [really?; inaudible] and I enjoyed them and the like. Laurel and Hardy. And then perhaps, in later, in later years, in the later thirties, see, a lot of this is my personal development. You see. But eh, I moved over to being more interested in dramatic. Films with drama in it. Eh, that's probably my own personal development at that time. As a late teenager. No, I would be eh, working then. I would probably be coming up to twenty. Then eh, it seemed to be a kind of, an ephemeral attitude towards the films. To me. Eh, and I'd only watch, go and see the epics. And then, an interesting development it's worth noting. In Bolton. Eh, I should perhaps follow this one up. And then eh, in Bolton we had in Bolton two theatres. One erm was a music hall and one was, erm, one... well they were both more or less music hall types. Variety. Well established in Bolton. And they were in competition in the early days, eh, later on. With the films. But there was never any, what you might call, drama. In Bolton. What you would call real drama. Eh, there was only musical comedies and things like that. And variety. Then a repertory theatre opened up. And it was called the Lawrence-Williamson Repertory Company.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Now everybody over seventy, or over sixty-five probably in Bolton, well, not everybody. Lots of people will know about this. And, and they did a play and they were good plays. I'm talking about now drama. Eh, you know, like eh, like erm, erm, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'. But that wasn't a play. But eh, eh, 'The Second Mrs Tanqueray'. And, you know, those that were going at that time. And eh, they were a repertory company and they were in Bolton for many years. Up to the war from about the mid-thirties. And then I, strangely enough, I left my teenage friends. I, I could see in the cinema on Saturday night, that wasn't my lifestyle. And then I became a loner. If you like, a loner. I sought my entertainment as a loner. And for many years I went to see these plays. At the Hippodrome it was called. In Bolton. Erm, that's right. it's knocked down now. Eh, because, [pause 2 seconds] I'd gathered that eh, I knew a bit more about drama. I'd read more. You know, your educational development and you're going to evening classes. I went to evening classes for many years. In the WEA as well. And you developed. And then I left the cinema. It ceased to have any interest, more or less, for me. And I kind of moved for my entertainment, to drama. And they were very good repertory theatres. They must've been to do a play every week. Eh, repertory theatres don't now, do they? They swap with one another but they didn't. And there were some very top quality literary plays done by them of a modest standard. And they competed with the cinema at that time in Bolton. So that will be a feature in Bolton. Maybe in other times, the rise of the repertory movement. And how it possibly weaned people from a degree of triviality in a lot of the films at that time. And eh, now another, do you want to go any further than the thirties?

**VB: Erm, not so much. But I mean I'd be interested in the entertainments that've interested you.**

**JC:** Right.

**VB: As well.**

**JC:** And then the war came in '39.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** I think this repertory theatre continued a bit during the war. But it's recorded in the Bolton Library and some people that you interview would know more about it. It'll be in the records. But I



think that was going. And the cinemas were going and blacked out and all that. But there was an interesting development in the war. In 1939. Which, I think, have affected, to a degree, the cinemagoing public. And the public in general. As part of the, eh, [inaudible] we talked about it. The [edict?], and I've not seen any mention of it. The government realised for the morale of the country, there'd have to be entertainment. During the war. Because a lot of the cinemas shut and things like that. And people wanted the morale maintaining. So, what they did, they formed an organisation called, all this is documented, the Arts Council [referring to Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA)]. Nothing like the Arts Council it is now. The Arts Council. This was a London-based organisation. And they, then organised concerts, plays by extremely top quality actors and orchestras. And they toured the country. Because, they couldn't play in London. Bombing everything. And all the provinces got the top quality entertainers. Did you know this, Val?

**VB: I didn't. No. No.**

**JC:** Follow this up.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** The top quality entertainers. For instance, I saw in Manchester, in '39, [pause 3 seconds] eh, a production of, a full production of 'Peer Gynt'. With the drama, the music, and the dancing. [pause 2 seconds] Ralph Richardson. The leading role. Sybil Thorndyke, opposite. And that was in Manchester. And in Bolton, we had the top quality orchestras. They were all on tour. The London Symphony Orchestra, playing. And the Halle Orchestra was just formed. And that toured the country. So we had in the country then, touring but mostly on the artistic side. There were no kind of comedy shows and all that. But they were all, the arts if you like. Drama. Eh, acting. Orchestral. Eh, and we were encouraged and they were cheap, to go. So that gave a lot of people, including myself, an independent, erm. My wife too. She said, "D'you remember this? Going and seeing that." You fancy, we could see that. During the war. We could see that. And then when the war ended, they were all drawn back to London. So that was a fixture, eh feature, which I think may have slightly affected cinemagoing.

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

**JC:** I think it was called the Arts Council. Just verify.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Eh, right. And eh, and then since then, in the later years, I would only go and see the cinema, the cinema when there was some outstanding film.

**VB: Mm.**

**JC:** You know. Some outstanding film. That's all. Anything else you want to ask me while you get the chance?

**VB: Right. I mean it's interesting, as you say, to get this picture of the, all the entertainments that were on offer. 'Cause--**

**JC:** Yes.

**VB: Erm, I wonder if we could go back a bit. 'Cause I was wanting to ask you a bit more about some of the cinemas in Bolton. In the thirties.**

**JC:** Yes.

**VB: Did you ever have favourites?**

**JC:** What I can remember, I can't remember a great deal. Not living in Bolton.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But this book, eh, eh, that I've given you, that will list them all.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But anyhow, see if I can, ask me something what I remember of them. In Bolton.

**VB: Did you have any particular favourite cinema that you particularly liked or?**

**JC:** [pause 3 seconds] Yes. The two, what eh, yes. The two which I would go to when I did go in the thirties would be the Theatre Royal which was, which was eh, eh, as the name implies a theatre first. And the Capitol, right opposite, in the centre, the town centre. And they usually got the new films before the others. And they were a bit more luxurious. Where you might've paid, in the thirties, eh, nine p [sic], or a shilling. They'd be one-and-three and one-and-six. You know. And they were favourites. But you always had to queue. And there was one other called The Queen's. That's one I'd go to. But, even all the provinces around, I don't know how many cinemas in Bolton which were recorded. There'd be at least thirty. Even a mile out of town. In the little community, would have a cinema. The Gem and the like. Eh, but they got the films, later than the town centre films. The Capitol, the Theatre Royal and the Queen's.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And there were others like, there were a few others in, no, there weren't many in the town centre. Yes, there was one called the Rialto. Which was unlike the others, not being a theatre. It had been a skating rink [referring to the Astor]. Converted. So many films, many places that showed films. They were erm like that. Some were theatres which were very comfortable. Some were converted eh, skating rinks, eh, converted erm, tram sheds. Which, and may have had good seating in. Plush, real seats. But they all had that kind of, they didn't have the atmosphere of the theatre. The theatre has as you know, a cosy, closed, musical atmosphere, doesn't it?

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And you got that in some of the old cinemas. And, and the newer ones. No, only the later ones. Oh yes, there's one other thing I remember. And this would be typical in Lancashire. There was another cinema called the Lido. Now all these cinemas were all within a hundred yards of the town centre. And that, eh, eh, was the first I think to have an organ. And it had a cinema organ. It didn't come up out of the ground, like it did at Blackpool. Reginald Liversidge, was it? At Blackpool. When the theatre organ came. You knew about that, didn't you? D'you not know about that, Val? Oh well, then you must find this out. It was an interesting, very interesting development in cinema culture. [pause 2 seconds] For a working-class culture. The working class had not a great deal of knowledge naturally. Of classical music. It was a music-hall music that eh, in the working class. And eh, but they could appreciate what was known as the cinema organ. Organs in general. Now the cinema organ

was an organ, big organ, developed from the church organ. But, was made to play concert music if you like. It would play drums and clarinets and all kinds of things. And some of the larger cinemas had a cinema organ. So when it came to the interval, then, the curtain would draw. And somebody would come on. An organist. And for about eh, half an hour, twenty minutes, he would play popular tunes of the period. On a cinema organ. I think that's how you got the name, cinema organ. Now there's one particular one what everybody in Lancashire knew about. And that was at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool. It was a shilling to go on the train from Bolton, Burnley and our industrial towns about forty miles out of Blackpool. It was a shilling to go on the train to Blackpool. And I think eh, even in some instances, it'd include admission to the Winter Gardens. And in the Winter Gardens there was, probably the most famous organist, cinema organist of all time. He was called Reginald Dixon. Reginald Dixon. And this organ, when the films'd finished, and the curtains drew, it came up from underneath the stage. And he was sitting in front of the organ. And the whole thing came up, like that. Till it was on level with the stage. And then he started up, [sings] "Oh I do like to be beside the seaside". And that was the signature tune. "I do like to be beside the sea." And he played his signature tune. Reginald Dixon. And he was probably the most famous organist in Lancashire. And now that was, that was showmanship. But lots of cinemas in the big towns had an organ, during the interval. Mostly the smaller cinemas. They simply drew the curtains and eh, showed adverts for eh, soap and everything. And things like that. Local adverts and things like that. Eh, and of course, they came round with their ice cream and chocolate bars and things like that. [bursts into laughter]

**VB: [laughs] So, I mean, that's like--**

**JC:** Are you finding this useful?

**VB: Very much so. So, I mean, did people actually go into Blackpool specifically to see this--**

**MC:** [comes in] [We'll be ready in?] [inaudible] You can stop your chatter now.

**JC:** Right.

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** What? Yes? What?

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** [whispers] You're on air.

**VB:** [laughs]

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** What d'you know about Reginald Dixon?

**MC:** Oh, Reginald Dixon. Well he played the organ, didn't he? At Blackpool Tower Ballroom, at Winter Gardens. I don't know.

**JC:** Did you ever go?

**MC:** No. We never went to Blackpool as children. We went to Fleetwood. [laughs] Next place on.

**JC:** [laughs] And you, erm... I always wanted to go on the train to Blackpool. You can go evening trips from here.

**MC:** Oh you can go evening trips from Bolton.

**JC:** A shilling.

**MC:** Oh, I thought it was half a crown. Oh no, you can go to Windermere--

**JC:** No, half a crown was all day. But you'd go at night for a shilling.

**MC:** Oh well we never went.

**JC:** No, I know.

**MC:** [laughs] I don't think we would be allowed to.

**JC:** And I've given some information about cinema organs.

**MC:** Oh yes, cinema organs too.

**JC:** Don't you remember?

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** I think there was one eh, in the--

**MC:** There was one in Bolton?

**JC:** In the Capitol or the Theatre Royal, for a short time.

**MC:** Could have been the theatre, I think, but not--

**JC:** And I think that's how it got its name, the cinema organ. But there were a lot of them in London--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And the like. And the big cities. Because they were expensive. They couldn't be in eh--

**MC:** Eh, yeah. Yeah. Yes, we're nearly ready. Yes, I think you can come in now.

**JC:** Come in.

**VB:** Great.

**MC:** [take care with that step?]

[recording stopped] [recording starts] [sound of cups and saucers]

**JC:** And he never went to the theatre eh, concert.

**MC:** Did he not?

**JC:** No.

**MC:** Oh-h.

**JC:** He was interested in different things really.

**MC:** Yes. That's right.

**JC:** He was interested in bowling and gardening.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** He wasn't bookish and all--

**MC:** Oh well, my father was.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But Marion's father was very, very bookish.

**VB: Yes, 'cause I was interested when you said that. You know, that he took you there and he knew the woman.**

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Wait a minute. You're all right. And eh, it struck me then, when you eh, mention now that eh, he didn't really. So that eh, she, [pause 2 seconds], mhm, they were even more of a literary family.

**MC:** Yes. Yes. I suppose we were. Yes.

**JC:** Working class, just like anybody else.

**MC:** Oh yes!

**JC:** But your father was more interested--

**MC:** Oh yes, he was.

**JC:** In books.

**MC:** In books. My mother was too. But we all would read.

**JC:** And then, you see, my father would spend his leisure time eh, eh, after work. He would go the village, we had a little village outside Bolton. Like Little Lever, but another one. And he would, it had what they called, they were all over the country then. There were a few left, working men's clubs.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Did you know about those?

**VB: Yes.**

**MC:** You'd have them in Glasgow.

**VB: Absolutely. Yeah.**

**JC:** National Association of Working Men's Clubs.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** And they'd a bar and drink and all that.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But they weren't excessive drinkers.



**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** They'd have a bowling green and billiard table.

**MC:** That's what my father wasn't interested in.

**JC:** So--

**MC:** In bowling.

**JC:** Eh, a typical evening for him, he'd come home from work. And we lived incidentally right next door to the factory.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** I could hear the factory working from where we lived. So he'd come home, have, no, and then he'd go, call in, and then he'd go straight to the working men's club, which was eh five minutes' walk away.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And then he would have a drink. If that's winter time, he would then come back. But in summertime he would then eh, eh look after the garden. That was his hobby. All round the bowling green. The border. That was his garden.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And then he would go round and tend that.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And at weekends he'd go for... So his life was--

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm. Quite different.

**VB: Ah.**

**JC:** And although my father was a Labour man--

**MC:** Yeah, yeah.

**JC:** He never--

**MC:** He wouldn't have been politically active.

**JC:** Well he weren't political.

**MC:** My father was.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** No. No.

**VB:** I mean I was very interested when you were telling me about that. About the Clarion and the--

**JC:** About what, Val?

**VB:** The Clarion and that sort of movement.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Where's the book, Marion?

**MC:** Denis's book? [referring to 'Fellowship is Life' by Denis Pye]

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** You can borrow this.

**VB: Yeah. 'Cause that's something that I didn't--**

**JC: You can borrow this.**

**VB: Well that would be great.**

**JC: Yes. You can borrow this. Or you can buy one off Denis.**

**VB: Well maybe I should! [laughs] Maybe I should.**

**JC: Will your funds [cope with that]?**

**VB: Erm--**

**JC: I mean your research funds.**

**VB: Erm--**

**JC: Four pounds.**

**VB: They might do. They might do, yes. I mean this looks very--**

**JC: Well, you can borrow that.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC: Yeah, you can borrow it. Yes, you can borrow it.**

**VB: That would be great.**

**JC: And this is the publicity. That's Denis.**

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** 'Fellowship is Life'. That National Clarion Cycling Club. Now, wait a minute. Eh, it's a slice of working-class history.

**VB: Right. Yes.**

**JC:** Really.

**JC:** Yes. And eh, you'll find that eh, that's the founder, Robert Blatchford. And the Clarion. The clarion call, you know.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** All rally round and everything. Now although the later chapters are about the Clarion. That's the review.

**VB: Ah.**

**JC:** In the local paper.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** The '[Bolton] Evening News'. That eh... [pause 4 seconds] You see, look at this, it's typical. I've just taken this at random. 'Women, Cycling and the Clarion Vans'. Now then, this period is between 1890, it's going on this page. 1890 and 1900. They even had vans, which went round the country. There's a picture of one eh, distributing the paper about the Salvation Army.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And talking about Socialism [and ideas of the day?].

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And eh, you'll find that it starts with the early history of it. Cycling and Socialism, the Clarion. And how it started. And everywhere a little bit comes in. Eh, it's an interesting slice of working class history. You know about, don't ye, or do ye? About in Manchester and Denis was one of the founders of this. There is a very good library of history of well, it used to be called the History of Labour. Labour history. And it's now, I think, history of working class life. And Denis was eh, it's a library in Bolton, which is full--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** But that's all political that. You're not on a political project.

**VB:** **Actually, I mean one thing that crossed my mind when you were talking about, I mean, your father for instance. Did he ever, was he interested in political films? 'Cause I know there--**

**JC:** Interested in what?

**VB:** **Political films. Because I know some of the Labour Movement erm--**

**MC:** Erm, I wouldn't, I wouldn't think so. Well I don't think there were any political films going in our young days.

**VB:** **Right.**

**JC:** I can't remember any.

**MC:** I can't remember.

**VB:** **He wasn't involved in any film societies?**

**MC:** No. No. He wasn't.

**JC:** No. No. No.

**MC:** He was just a local councillor. For quite a number of years. And erm, No, I can't remember any eh political films at all. Can you?

**JC:** Eh... [pause 2 seconds.

**MC:** I wouldn't think so.

**JC:** Not really, no.

**MC:** No.

**JC:** Well there was, I think eh, later on, when I was in the thirties. I think and I worked in Manchester for, during the war years I was in Manchester.

**VB: Mhm.**

**JC:** And eh, there were cinema clubs. I did see the odd film. Then. You know, these eh... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

**JC:** No, so, all these classical films.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** No, I don't think.

**JC:** *Battleship--*

**VB:** *Potemkin*. That sort of thing.

**JC:** Yeah.

**VB:** But not in Bolton itself.

**MC:** No.

**VB:** That's interesting.

**JC:** Aye.

**MC:** Yes.

**VB:** I mean--

**JC:** Are we switched on?

**VB:** Yes. [laughs]

**JC:** Carry on then.

**VB:** I was wanting to ask a wee bit as well about the cinema that you mentioned in Little Lever.  
Was that like?

**MC:** You mean the cinema?

**VB:** Yes.

**MC:** Well, it was, I think it was purpose-built. As far as I remember. It wasn't like a converted barn or anything like that. I think it was purposely-built, as a cinema [possibly referring to the Palace Cinema]. And I know it changed at least three times a week. The change of film. Three times a week. And I remember a girl I went to school with at the time, she could go at nearly every change of the cinema! I wish I could go like that. But it appeared that erm, now what happened? Some shops in the village, they would display what the cinema was. And this girl's mother, she worked in the mill,

and she patronised this shop. It was a grocers, confectioners, I think. And I think she would buy quite a lot of food at this shop. So they'd say, "You can have a ticket." You see. Or, "You can have a ticket." Or, "You can have two tickets." So this Audrey, that I went to school with. She could go whenever there was a change of cinema because the mother had got the free tickets you see. But we never, [laughs] we weren't in that.

**JC:** Oh yes, I remember that. It was throughout--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** That the cinemas, they distributed a lot of complimentary tickets.

**MC:** Oh yes.

**JC:** And they gave them to the shops who would put a poster in the window.

**MC:** In the window.

**JC:** Advertising the films.

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm.

**JC:** And they, in the shop, would give it to the best customers.

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB:** I see! Yes.

**MC:** Those that spent the most money! [laughs]

**JC:** Complimentary tickets.

**VB:** 'Cause, I mean I was interested over lunch, when you were saying that you didn't really read the notices in the 'Bolton Evening News' or anything.



**JC:** I didn't, no.

**VB:** About the films then. I mean how did you decide what films to go to? Was it erm, more or less--

**MC:** D'you know, I can't really, d'you know, I hardly remember a film that I went to see. Do you?

**JC:** No.

**MC:** I would be going perhaps to see films later than you. You would be doing other things. I don't know what you did.

**JC:** Yes.

**MC:** That's before I married you [laughs].

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** Well I would say the answer as far as I was concerned, I think most people were like this, that... [pause 3 seconds] The films when they came up to Bolton, they'd already been seen in Manchester. And they'd been seen in London.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** They first started in London. And then they, after about a month, they then went to the provinces like Birmingham, Manchester.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And then they'd go to Bolton. And then they filtered down to places like Little Lever.

**MC:** [chuckles]

**JC:** And the little [outs?] of Bolton, months later than that.

**MC:** Oh yeah!

**JC:** Or six months later. So that you got to know about it.

**VB: Ah.**

**JC:** So and so's seen it in Manchester. We must see this. It's good.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** "When it comes to Bolton, we'll go!" Or if you lived in Little Lever, say, "This is on at the Capitol. When it comes to Little Lever we'll go. It's cheaper to see it in the provinces."

**MC:** [laughs] Oh yeah.

**VB: [laughs]**

**JC:** [laughs] It was a cheaper rate.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**JC:** So I think that's how we got to know.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And then it was in the national press. And film stars were so popular, heroes, weren't they? In those days.

**VB: I found actually,**

**JC:** Oh, they were real heroes, weren't they?

**VB: Some things from the 'Bolton Tatler'.**

**JC:** Specially the women—

**VB: Erm, from the thirties. I mean, here's one from the--**

**MC:** Bolton?

**JC:** Tatler.

**VB: Bolton's Tatler. I don't know if that was one you read yourself.**

**JC:** Don't think so.

**MC:** Is that Deanna Durbin?

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** You see, if you mention films, I could tell you if I'd seen it.

**VB: Yes.**

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's just getting them from your memory.

**VB: Yes.**

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** But eh, you see, especially in the thirties.

**MC:** And would this, this would be published in... 1931. Never heard of that.

**VB: Yes.**

**MC: Bolton's Tatler.**

**JC: Now, do you know--**

**MC: This month [inaudible; overtalking].**

**JC: Ah, but that's one of this chap Halliwell's publications.**

**MC: Oh right. Mhm. Mhm.**

**VB: Is Deanna Durbin one that you liked?**

**JC: Yes. I remember. I remember a little about her.**

**MC: She was, was she a singer? Deanna Durbin.**

**JC: Think so.**

**MC: I don't think we would go to that.**

**JC: Well, you hardly ever went.**

**MC: Mischa Auer. 'Hundred Men and a...' [referring to One Hundred Men and a Girl] I don't think I saw that film.**

**VB: Mm.**

**MC: March 1938. No. Don't remember that.**

**VB: Did you go to many musicals, or?**

**MC: Mhm?**

**VB: Did you go to many of the musicals?**

**MC:** Erm--

**JC:** Yes, I went to one or two musicals.

**MC:** Yes. I think we would.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** But can't think what they would be, now.

**VB: You mentioned Jeanette MacDonald earlier on.**

**JC:** Jeanette MacDonald.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** I remember Nelson Eddy.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** They were the late thirties.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** But I only went because eh--

**MC:** All your friends went.

**JC:** All you, eh, yes. Yes. [inaudible] I don't remember that film. Strangely enough. 1938.

**MC:** No.

**JC:** *One Hundred Men and A Girl*. Well, see that wouldn't appeal to me I don't suppose.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** At that time. Eh, but they were, these were idols you see.

**MC:** Oh yeah.

**JC:** Film stars were idols!

**MC:** Oh yeah, you'd really go to see the film star rather than the film.

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** Oh, what was that one called? Erm--

**JC:** Oh, this is Gracie Fields isn't it?

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** *Sing As We Go!*

**MC:** I'm just trying to think of one.

**JC:** Gracie Fields. We did see all those because she's Lancashire. From Rochdale. We would never miss Gracie Fields, anywhere. Eh, because she was a Lancashire idol.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And also, I remember we had her on records. The old records. And I remember having Gracie Fields on record and one of these [gramophones] with a horn on that you wound up. That was eh about 19 [pause 2 seconds] 27. But eh, yes, well of course there were certain films which impinged upon your own locality which you never missed.

**VB: 'Course. Yes.**

**JC:** Naturally. Because you were connected with them.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And eh, this 'Tatler'. Let me have a look at this. "Published monthly, in the interest of picture and theatregoers." It had a Theatre Royal and Hippodrome.

**MC:** Ah yeah.

**JC:** The Hippodrome later went to the repertory theatre.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** And this was in '38.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Eh, the Lawrence-Williamson Repertory Theatre.

**MC:** Oh yes. Yeah. Yeah.

**JC:** Ronald Colman. I remember them but eh, there were all in... James Hilton and *Lost Horizon*. I enjoyed that very much.

**MC:** Oh yes. Yeah.

**JC:** That was a good film.

**MC:** That was a good film.

**JC:** That was very good. I enjoyed that. I saw that.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** That was one that eh, a kind of a futuristic film.

**MC:** You need to see them written down. Oh yes, I saw that, you know.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** But you can't bring them to mind.

**VB: Actually, one of the things I've got with me, I don't know. Erm, we made up a list of sort of top ten films of the thirties.**

**MC:** Oh!

**JC:** Oh! You read them out.

**VB: The British and the American ones.**

**JC:** Oh yes, these were [inaudible; overtalking]

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Ah, I see. Oh yes, Ralph Lynn.

**JC:** The British [Documentary] Movement started a bit later. You know about [John] Grierson and all those. Grierson--

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Founded the very important School of British Cinema. But that came after the thirties.

**VB: Yeah.**



**JC:** [Another film?], on the *Night Mail*. Have you seen that?

**VB: Yes. It's wonderful.**

**JC:** Still, you can see it now and then, on in special places. [pause 2 seconds] *Rookery Nook*. Yes, I think I remember. I wouldn't go out of my way in those days to see, *Rookery Nook*. Any of those, myself. *Cyanara*, yes.

**MC:** Oh I remember *The Ghost Goes West*. That was Robert Donat.

**VB: Aw, that's wonderful. Yeah.**

**MC:** Mhm. Oh *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*.

**JC:** Yes, but 'The Private Life of', yes, Charles Laughton [referring to *The Private Life of Henry VIII*]. That, I did see. And--

**MC:** Yes. *The Private Life of Henry VIII*

**JC:** That was an excellent film And I look back on that. That was a classical. Really... was that. But I do remember seeing that. It was good. And I think I would go and see 'Lives of a Bengal Lancer' [referring to *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*]. Gary Cooper was very popular, in the thirties. Eh, handsome.

**MC:** [inaudible]

**JC:** Eh, ladies' man, you see.

**VB: Ah.**

**JC:** There was a lot of romance in the cinema then, wasn't there?

**MC:** Mhm. Oh yes, there was.

**JC:** There were the ladies--

**MC:** Oh, Greta Garbo.

**JC:** Actresses for the men. And then there was Gary Cooper and those handsome men. For the ladies [inaudible].

**MC:** Top Ten Films of the Thirties. [laughs]

**JC:** Robert Donat. Right. And he also did *Mr Chips*, didn't he [referring to *Goodbye Mr Chips*]? That was good. About the schoolmaster.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And it's been done since. That was a play really, converted to a film.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And that's been done since. D'you remember? 'Mr Chips'. And Robert Donat. And eh, yes. And *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*. I would go and see that.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Those are... because it appealed to [Dan?]. To Londoners, this film. "Must see it". Manchester. "We'll see it when it comes to Bolton". And we did see these top films. Because information--

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Anna Neagle, eh, yes. I don't think I saw *Victoria the Great*. Eh, Anna Neagle. But I remember. And eh, George Formby. *The Citadel*. Yes. *The Citadel*.

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB: Was George Formby not one--**

**JC:** I don't think I'd see that.

**MC:** Oh, I wouldn't go to see erm, George Formby.

**VB: Mhm.**

**MC:** Or *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

**JC:** No. No, I wouldn't go to see them. But *The Citadel*. Yes.

**MC:** Or Deanna Durbin.

**JC:** Eh, that was Cronin wasn't it?

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** Eh, Cronin's novel.

**VB: Did you like the sort of literary films? 'Cause you mentioned *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Did you like films that had that sort of--**

**MC:** Yes, I would think so. Yes, yes. Not, in a way not frivolous films.

**JC:** And I liked those too. In eh, in the later days of watching films. Because I'd read some of the books.

**MC:** Yes, and [inaudible; overtalking]

**JC:** And if you've not read the books and you're not from a family with books. See we hadn't books in our house. I can remember one time there was only one book in the house, and it was *Oliver Twist*. Nobody never ever read it but it was there.

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** And eh, so we didn't possess books.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Eh, You did you see.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Your house. But later on, eh, I think in the later thirties, as I got into my twenties, early twenties.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And I'd read Cronin.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And other authors at that time. Therefore the film appealed to me more so.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Whilst, previously, if you're not of a literary turn of mind, it becomes show, show business.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Whereas then, it has a certain amount of kind of literary content. How does this compare with the book?

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And then, as I say, and then later on, eh, a lot of those people developed drama as such. And see it on the stage. As distinct from the film.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And then now it's come full circle. Back again, hasn't it? Really.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Mhm. We never go to the cinema these days. I don't know when I last went.

**JC:** Very rarely. No.

**MC:** Do you know when you went to see a film?

**JC:** Well, it's some time ago. But we haven't been very much, have we?

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Television's killed that. You know, it comes on television. And in later years, eh, it becomes more eh, more of a task. Not a task, more of a chore to, if you need the car, you're worried about your car parking. And things like that. So you tend not to travel much--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** As you did, for your entertainment. Eh, as you did, when you were younger. Or when you were in your sixties say but eh, although you've a car, [pause 2 seconds] your entertainment is not quite as mobile and flexible when you're, say, over seventy or over sixty.

**MC:** Oh no. No. That's true.

**JC:** You tend to eh... [pause 2 seconds] And you've got to watch that, as you got tied to the eh, the television, haven't you? You've got to do your best and see what you can. By the way, have you heard of The Octagon in Bolton. You know that, do you? Marvellous theatre.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** And eh, [pause 2 seconds] they're the, they're the modern equivalent of what was the Lawrence-Williamson Repertory Theatre.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And eh, it's a very good theatre and the centre of community life in Bolton. Cafe. Anybody can go in at any time. And they've got a theatre in education. They go round to the schools. And the like. And eh, they do a nice mixture of say eh, classic films. Shakespeare. Together with eh, like eh, Bill Naughton. Eh, you've heard of Bill Naughton? The lifeboat owner. Bolton author. Died now. Eh, I think they're doing one very shortly. Eh, Bill Naughton. But they all, they all fill up. But they still do in between, good classical dramas which, they know will only play to three-quarters of the house. But, it's part of the policy to bring drama to the people.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Eh, it's very good. Yes, I remember some of those. Eh [I don't know if?], she'll like this. Have you heard of any the Top Ten Films? 1930.

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** I'm not surprised.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** *Rookery Nook* of course. That would be top. Because, well, this is interesting. It would be because, it was played in London. *Rookery Nook*.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** By eh, that chappie, who came, who became head of Mind. The eh, and he's now retired from there. [referring to Brian Rix]

**MC:** Who?

**JC:** Erm [strains to remember], Ralph... [pause 3 seconds] There was a series in London, running, at that time, of farces, on the--

**MC:** Oh, Tom Walls. And Ralph Lynn. And all that lot.

**JC:** Yes, Ralph Lynn. Tom Walls.

**JC:** And there was another, there was another man who was there for years on end. And then he left the theatre and he went as eh, chairman of this charity called Mind. And you see him a bit on television. And eh, you see, so again, it would filter up to the provinces, about these farces running in London. At the eh, certain theatre they were always, they were always at. A certain theatre in London.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** All these farces. Eh, Ralph Lynn started them all going. Well, naturally, they'd filter up to the provinces. They'd run in London and then they'd make a film on these stage successes in London. Eh, wouldn't they?

**MC:** I suppose so. Yeah.

**JC:** And *Sally in Our Alley* you see. They were, they were all... Gracie Fields became a national hero kind of, didn't she? At that time.

**MC:** Mhm. Oh I remember another film that I liked, and that was *Brief Encounter*.

**JC:** Oh that! Yeah. That was during the war wasn't it?

**MC:** Was that during the war?

**JC:** That was during the war.

**MC:** During the war. I can't remember that. That was a good film.

**JC:** Eh... [pause 2 seconds] Yes.

**MC:** You would queue up for that. [laughs] You'd move up to the one-and-sixes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** [laughs]

**VB: Yeah, it's a wonderful film.**

**JC:** Eh, [pause 3 seconds] how they would know. I was saying how would you know these were the top then? They would know because of the box office.

**VB: Yes.**

**MC:** Oh.

**VB: It's based on the fan magazines as well that--**

**JC:** The what?

**VB: The fan magazines. You know, people have--**

**JC:** Oh yes! There were magazines! There were magazines going, weren't they?

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Film magazines.

**VB: Yeah. Did you ever read any of the film magazines?**



**JC:** No, we never had any. No. You see there were some people who were fanatic about, about the films. It was their whole life. As television is now. And while we were in that category, it was just a diversion for a Saturday evening or something of that order.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Wasn't it? Really.

**MC:** I know, eh, during the war we had erm, a soldier billeted on us. For a time. And he's erm, [pause 2 seconds] now why was he billeted on us? Oh, I know, it was in the Pay Corps. He'd lost an eye. He was only a young boy. I don't think he was twenty. And he'd lost an eye. I think he was a joiner. He was in the Pay Corps and happened to be near where we lived. And he came. And he went at least seven times a week to the cinema. And sometimes he'd say, "Yes. I'm going again." And he'd be... eight times he'd gone to a cinema. In the week. If you can remember my mother, she was horrified!

**VB:** [laughs]

**MC:** "We must get him to do something else. He shouldn't be doing, going to the cinema like that!"

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** And he was quite a good-living lad. And he went to the church, on a Sunday morning, and he came back and he said nobody had ever spoken to him, when he went to church. We didn't go to church, but then.

**JC:** He was German.

**MC:** Pardon?

**JC:** German?

**MC:** No! He was English!

**JC:** Oh!

**MC:** He came from the Mid, he came from somewhere in the Midlands. And he spent every evening and twice on Saturdays.

**JC:** Yes.

**MC:** Going to the cinema. Mother said, "You know, he's a joiner. We should get him to make something. He shouldn't be..." [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** I think he did make something. I wonder what he made.

**JC:** Er, yeah.

**MC:** I think he did. I think mother thought she'd get him going to some evening classes somewhere.

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** Perhaps he moved on. But I remember this. Seven times in a week. And eight on Saturdays.

**VB:** Did your mother ever go to the cinema herself?

**MC:** My mother? [pause 2 seconds] Well, no, she didn't sort of go when father took us. It's funny. You know, we've talked about this since, my sister and I. And we say, "I wonder what mother did when father took us off to Bolton." And Alice says, "Ooh," she said, I'll bet she put her feet up and had a good read." [laughs].

**VB:** [laughs]

**JC:** [laughs]

**VB:** Maybe the only chance she got to relax.

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** Probably. Yes, I think so.

**JC:** Yeah.

**VB:** Did your parents ever go out on their own when you were growing up?

**MC:** My parents?

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** Erm, oh, yeah. But my father was quite a walker.

**VB:** I see.

**MC:** You see. And erm, oh, he would be off walking from quite a young age. The four of us would go out. Not my brother. I don't know how my brother escaped. He would go off on his bike I presume. But we'd go out on quite long walks. But quite often we'd go with father. And then we'd say, "Can we tell mother we've walked ten miles?" And sometimes he'd say, "Yes. Yes." And eh, yes. I suppose really, he knew the countryside very well. Mhm. Quite erm, quite knowledgeable about the country.

**JC:** In between these top ten films, that you've got here which eh, quite good, there's no doubt, [pause 2 seconds] there was a lot a rubbish wasn't there?

**VB:** Mhm.

**JC:** These are just selective. There was a lot of rubbish because they're changing the films eh, twice, eh, twice a week I think most films changed.

**MC:** Were they? In Bolton? Were they?

**JC:** Bolton. Ah, but the bigger ones'd be eh--

**MC:** Just once a week.

**JC:** Once a week.

**MC:** Probably.

**JC:** But there was a lot of eh, trivial films. Produced by Hollywood at that time.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And a lot a glamour films, based round some of these women. Eh, film stars, so-called.

**MC:** Oh, tell you what, *Gone with the Wind*. Was that going during the war?

**VB:** Yes.

**MC:** Or was that after?

**VB:** Yeah. I know it came to Glasgow in about 1941.

**MC:** Did it?

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB:** So probably. Maybe, it might even have been earlier here.

**MC:** Yeah. Yes.

**JC:** Would you think that in your project, the point in general, [pause 2 seconds] you'll get eh, you'll get say a different top ten in Glasgow than the Midlands?

**VB: Without a doubt. Yes.**

**JC:** You think.

**VB: One of the things I've been noticing so far is the tastes in stars in films are very different here.**

**JC:** Yes.

**VB: From Glasgow.**

**MC:** Are they?

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Yes.

**VB: Glaswegians like the erm, sort of gangster films. The Cagney and Edward G. Robinson. I don't know if they were so--**

**JC:** Yes. I remember them. I would go and see them.

**MC:** Oh yeah.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** They were going in the thirties.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** Gangster films.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Edward G. Robinson. There was another film which very much impressed me. At eh, at the time. Eh... [pause 3 seconds] I can't remember its name but I've seen it on television since. It was about eh, Australia. It was a kind of a, a kind of a gangster thing. Based upon Australia. It became a bit of a classic in its own way. It's gone from me memory now. Eh, yeah, eh, but it was eh, wasn't an Australian film. The background was in Australia. Erm, [pause 2 seconds], but you can remember when you see them on paper. Put it like this. But it's difficult to extract from your memory.

**VB:** 'Course. Yes.

**JC:** You'll find that, I think other people, like Arthur Orrell, in particular that you will see, whether it's because they are younger, and Ken [surname redacted], they will have put on a list for you that I think, I found when I talked to them, saying would you be interested, they could sort these films off just like that. They knew far more than I did.

**MC:** Mhm!

**JC:** Look how Ken could rattle all those off.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** That he's seen.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Eh, whether that's because they were ten years younger.

**MC:** Because they're younger. Yeah.

**JC:** I don't know. It could be, couldn't it?

**VB: Yes. I'm sure.**

**JC: Eh, you'd expect that.**

**MC: Yeah.**

**JC: And it's the only way, I can see them on paper, say, "Oh, I remember that."**

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC: "I remember that."**

**VB: 'Cause, I mean I think you mentioned when we spoke before, that you liked some of the epics like *Ben-Hur* and films like that.**

**JC: Yes. Yes.**

**VB: Yes.**

**JC: I think most of us did.**

**MC: Mhm.**

**JC: Now I hate them really.**

**VB: Aw really! [laughs]**

**MC: [laughs]**

**JC: Eh, I don't, oh no. I can't, I can't stand them. I can't stand them on television either. These long epics of three hours. I think they're affected in a way. But anyway, we all went to see these. *Ben-Hur* and these chariots. They ran for three hours didn't they, some of these. Think we had to pay a bit**

extra for these. Eh, *The Ten Commandments*. D'you remember? Do you remember *The Ten Commandments*?

**MC:** Oh I didn't go to see that.

**JC:** Eh, and there were quite a number of epic films going at that, well, I think everybody went to see these.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Somehow or other. [laughs] And of course, they have been redone--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Since, haven't they? Eh, but they were all dominated by the American, American eh, Hollywood, weren't they--

**MC:** Yeah.

**MC:** At that time.

**VB:** Did you have any preference, do you know, with the films that were made in Britain or the Hollywood films.

**JC:** How many?

**VB:** Did you prefer films that were made here, or films that were made in Hollywood?

**JC:** Well--

**VB:** Did you not have--

**MC:** I don't think--



**JC:** I've always preferred, myself--

**MC:** I don't think we concerned ourselves with where they were produced or filmed. You just went to the film itself.

**JC:** Well, I think it all depended, whether you wanted entertainment. Straight entertainment. Now, if you, for instance, supposing *Pride and Prejudice*, shall we say, film, came to Bolton, say.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Then, probably, you would make an effort, even now, to go and see it.

**MC:** Yes, very likely, yeah.

**JC:** Because eh, you see, you're not going in that instance, for entertainment. You're going because it's part of your literary culture. Some of these, with a lot of people, not with everybody, eh, or *Wuthering Heights* was a film going then.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And that was popular, wasn't it?

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** There's been several versions since but, *Wuthering Heights* was going--

**MC:** Yes, it was.

**JC:** At that time.

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** Eh, wasn't it? Well, [pause 2 seconds] you see, that's a typical film which is a literary, a literary background. And not a showbiz. But, a lot of the films, films like eh, well, *Sally In Our Alley* to a degree. And *Rookery Nook*. And *The Ghost Goes West*. They were entertainment.

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** Like going to the cinema instead of going to the Grand Theatre, and seeing variety, that was a form of entertainment.

**MC:** Oh, were erm, Thomas Hardys going during the war?

**JC:** I can't remember any. I can't remember 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'--

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** 'D'Urbervilles', going. Eh, going at that stage.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Think they came later didn't they? The literary, where the film looked to literary sources.

**VB:** I'm thinking that, was there not one of 'Nicholas Nickleby' that was out in the thirties? I think there were some of the Dickens films.

**MC:** I don't remember whether there was or not. I don't remember.

**JC:** Eh, I don't remember a single Dickens film. Eh, I've seen them since of course. And they're very good. Eh, but I don't think in the thirties or during the war.

**MC:** No, I don't think they were.

**JC:** Any of them. Eh, the books were read. But, now why did they not make films of Dickens?

**MC:** I don't know.

**JC:** [inaudible; speculating on that?] There'd be no demand for it. And of course, it would mean, well, there was hardly any British film industry. There was the development of the British film industry. [John] Grierson and others who came. [Lindsay] Anderson.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Anderson. Who came later. Who looked to British sources, didn't they?

**VB: Yeah. I may be wrong actually. I was thinking, I know there was one Dickens one that I can think of. It might've been 'David Copperfield' or--**

**JC:** Yes.

**VB: I'm sure there was one.**

**JC:** Yes.

**MC:** I don't remember seeing--

**VB: It's gone out of my head. Yeah.**

**MC:** A Dickens. It doesn't--

**VB: No.**

**MC:** Come to mind.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** No. No.

**VB: Do you think, I mean, 'cause I was interested as well with, you know, your family were all obviously very interested in reading.**

**JC:** Yeah.

**VB:** Did your father choose what films he took you to, do you think?

**MC:** No, I don't think so. No. Eh, no. If we'd gone into Bolton with him--

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** Oh no. We just went. He'd say, we'll go to the pictures.

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** And, we always hoped we'd go the next week but we never did.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** There is no doubt the, the films, pictures we call them, had a tremendous effect on people's lives. It was the dominating interest. Of every, all people.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** In the thirties.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** More so in the thirties than in the twenties. Eh, eh, and I think also, more so than in the forties. Because the war had come in, and it took a little bit to get film production going after the war. There were a few classics. But in the thirties itself, film culture dominated culture in general. In fact, I used to think sometimes, if I, if I had enough money, I'd go to the pictures every night in the week.

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** When I was about fourteen. If I could afford it, it would be my idea of heaven.

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** To go to the pictures every night in the week. Because, you couldn't do anything else at home, could you, really? Eh, well, we had no books.

**MC:** No, no. No.

**JC:** And the like. And eh, you're living in eh, Glasgow is it? Tenements in Glasgow. We had two-up and two-down houses. Eh--

**MC:** And there'd only be a fire in one room.

**JC:** I know. A fire in one room. And your parents were in that room as well. And eh, and no, bedrooms were not heated and all that. So that, as a teenager, it was eh, eh, in a family... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**JC:** [starts mid-conversation] Might just fit this in in context. Yes, 1930s. Say 1930 onwards. I would be eh, then, I would be about eh, sixteen years of age. And I would be earning, money-wise, eh, about a pound a week. Well, of course, it would be sixpence, possibly, to go to the pictures.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Well a pound a week, you'd have to give your parents [pause 2 seconds] out of that eh, possibly eh, you'd give eighteen shillings and keep two shillings for yourself, roughly.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Eh, for yourself. Well, two shillings, you see.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** And sixpence to go in the pictures. Then that is twenty-five per cent of your spending money.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Isn't it? So, you think, well if you could afford to go every night, first to this picture and then, somewhere else. But the films, most of the cinemas around were showing the same film. You know that. Not just, you couldn't go all round. So that it was a very strong hold on people.

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm.

**JC:** Tremendous. I don't think there's been anything, eh, which has had as much hold on people's interest, as the cinema culture of that age. In the thirties.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Oh. I'm certain about that. everybody went. All your friends went. See we went out to eh, to see a friend eh, who's now about seventy-five. For some afternoon tea. About three week ago. And we were chatting. And eh, I told her, eh, did she go to the pictures? And eh, eh, say about 1930 we're talking about. "Oh, yes!" She rhymed them all off! Oh, she loved the pictures!

**MC:** Who is this?

**JC:** Ada [surname redacted]

**MC:** Oh yes!

**JC:** And she rhymed them all off. And I'm not sure whether I even eh, I even put her name on. Because she was a very intelligent woman.

**VB:** I'm sure you did actually. That was the one name I had--

**JC:** Ada [surname redacted].

**VB: In my mind, yes.**

**JC:** And I thought, well I'll put her on. And I think I said, "Would you answer a question paper—

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** "On films that you've seen and things?" "Oh, yes!" She wanted. She's very intelligent. Which, again, she's younger than us. She'd remember more.

**MC:** Yes, she is. Yeah. Yeah.

**JC:** And again, she's Farnworth. [inaudible] But you'll get a very good picture of Farnworth rather than Bolton.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Although they remember a bit of Bolton, because it was only tuppenny ride on the tram.

**VB: Right. Yeah.**

**JC:** You see. So, [pause 2 seconds] it was a financial restraint for working-class people.

**MC:** Yes! You'd nothing else to do. You'd nothing else!

**JC:** And then another factor which affect me in seeing films was this. [pause 2 seconds] Round about 1932, when I was about, '31, '32. I decided that, a good number of my friends, but still a minority group, we would try and spend our time in the country. And we'd get a bicycle. A lot of people got bicycles, used to ride round the village at that time. They were cheap. You get one for between four and five pounds. A typical bicycle. Well, eh, I got my first bicycle about 1932. It cost five pounds. And you paid a deposit of about a pound, and then you paid a shilling a week--

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Instalments. For the rest of twelve months. For a year. And then that bicycle became yours.

**VB: Right.**

**JC:** Well, you see, I do remember that that was a sizeable slice out of my available spending money. And that's probably one reason I couldn't go to the pictures.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** For a while, I was paying the instalments on this bicycle. And it was rather interesting, I think. It was quite a well-known person, on television. It might have been Alan Bennett, or somebody of that calibre. Eh, but it was somebody as well known as Alan Bennett. And eh, quite recently, or it might have been Roy Hattersley. It was Roy Hattersley. And he said, that eh, "Yes," he says, "One of the biggest events in my life," he says, "was having my first bicycle. It was a new Hudson. And I got it in 1930 so and so, and it cost me four pounds fifty." Do you remember?

**MC:** Yes. And I said to you, "What was the make of the bike that you first had?" And you said--

**JC:** And I said, "A new Hudson. And it was four pounds fifty."

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** But I paid a shilling a week for mine.

**MC:** Yeah. It was Roy Hattersley.

**JC:** Was it?

**MC:** Mhm. Yes.

**JC:** So there were financial--

**MC:** [chuckles]



**JC:** So there were financial restrictions, on most people. More so if you'd invested some of your money for instalments to buy something like a bicycle. But that, that was the best investment I ever made.

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm.

**JC:** Really. Because it just, like a lot of other working-class people, it opened up our lives tremendously.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** And even in Scotland, in Glasgow, and all those cycling clubs grew up. And to think, in Glasgow, people could be milling around Paisley, shall we say, and all that place. And then they have a bicycle and then they can find, in two hours they can be at Loch Lomond! And then they see The Cobbler [mountain].

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** How it would open their horizon. Same all over the country. Same in here. It opened the country tremendously. Oh well, tremendous country in Lancashire. Contrary to what people think. You know, all the Trough of Bowland and the like. So that eh, well you couldn't afford then to be going to the pictures if you were paying for a bicycle. Or, my interest, and a lot of people switched over more, to more [biking?]. But I don't think the majority did. The majority I think clung to the pictures.

**MC:** Yeah, yeah.

**JC:** Working- class people. And, it would be the same in Glasgow, wouldn't it?

**VB:** Very much so.

**JC:** Same in Glasgow.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** Really.

**MC:** Did you say that it didn't drop off until we got television? Or had it dropped off before television? Became popular. [pause 2 seconds] When did it become... [pause 2 seconds] You know. When it went down and down.

**JC:** Yes. Eh, well, it seemed to go down [pause 2 seconds] in the fifties. Eh, eh and most of the, most of the cinemas went over to bingos, didn't they?

**MC:** Aw, they did. Yes.

**JC:** Or housey-housey as they call it in Scotland. Bingo.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** And nearly all the pictures, went to a bingo palace. And then petered out, with the merger of bingo places.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** We don't have little bingo places. They nearly all went over to bingo.

**MC:** Yes. That's right.

**JC:** And you'll find, in your project, you'll have studied that, won't you?

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

**JC:** What do you think the reason for that was, Val?

**VB: I don't know. Really.**

**JC:** It came that people, it would be with black-and-white television coming, I'm certain. It came in the fifties, didn't it?

**MC:** Yes, it was. Yeah.

**JC:** Because people could afford to go. But eh, eh, they eh, it's a moot point as to whether they were doing themselves more good playing bingo than seeing these rubbishy films, really.

**MC:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**VB: Yes.**

**JC:** It's a bit of activity, but it's only minor, like playing snap. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC: [laughs]**

**VB: I found a couple of pictures in the, I was in the--**

**JC:** Pardon?

**VB: I was in the local history part of the Library last week.**

**JC:** Manchester or Bolton?

**VB: In Bolton.**

**JC:** Oh yes! Yes.

**VB: I found--**

**JC:** Did you see Barry Mills.

**VB:** I did, yes.

**JC:** Oh he's very helpful.

**VB:** He's very helpful.

**JC:** There's two people there.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Barry Mills is the important one for you to see.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** And eh, Kevin Campbell's the next person.

**VB:** Right.

**JC:** He's the archivist.

**VB:** Is he a chap with--

**JC:** Beard.

**VB:** A beard. Yes. I've met him as well.

**JC:** And he is the archivist.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** They all know me.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** They all know me.

**VB: Yeah.**

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs] 'Cause I found a couple of pictures of the cinemas, but I wasn't sure exactly of Bolton cinemas.

**JC:** Oh-h, yes!

**MC:** Oh-h, yes!

**JC:** Yes. Yes. Yeah.

**VB:** I think that's one of the older ones. Erm--

**MC:** Now, this would be, the Imperial. This is the one that father took us to.

**VB: Ah!**

**MC:** The Imperial Playhouse. Yes. It changed its name that. After a time. But that was, it was called that now that... "*The Mystery Man, James Corbett*" [reading advertisements on photo]. Eighteen episodes! And we'd seen one! [laughs]

**JC:** What was it?

**MC:** I've no idea. *The Mystery Man*.

**VB: What was that one like inside?**

**MC:** It was really quite, well--

**JC:** It was right in the town centre.

**MC:** Oh ye-es! It was.

**JC:** Next to Boots. Boots now.

**MC:** Boots is on that site.

**JC:** I never went to that one.

**VB: Mhm.**

**MC:** It would be one of the smaller ones.

**JC:** Yes it was.

**MC:** It would be a smaller one. Let me see. What else was on. Oh, 'Mystery Man'. Oh dear me. *The Mystery Man*. I might have seen it. I don't remember. But I would only see one episode.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB: Is that gone now then?**

**MC:** Oh! Completely gone.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Yes. Gone on completely. It's right [pause 2 seconds] on Deansgate. And Boots eh, is there.

**VB: Oh, I see. Yes.**

**MC:** Boots is built on that site.

**JC:** This is eh, eh, the Odeon ceased, about eh, six, seven years ago. And now it's a big bingo hall.

**VB: Right.**

**MC:** [flicks through pages]

**JC:** And that was built, as you'll find in your researches, it may have been in the fifties.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JC:** Where eh, cinemas were built eh, new cinemas were built. For the purpose of showing films. That was only a short period because there'd been theatres before. And then in Bolton, like everywhere else, only it still operates now, say eh, the Odeon. [inaudible] what was the Lido. And it's still going is it, the Lido. Has it changed its name?

**MC:** Oh it's changed its name hasn't it?

**JC:** Yeah. But anyway, then they went to that four, four, four, you know, four films, you know.

**MC:** Oh yes.

**JC:** You know, you could Studio One, Studio Two, Studio Three, Studio Four.

**MC:** Yeah. But the Odeon we thought was very palatial when it opened. That was quite new and it had a very good eh, cafe.

**JC:** Oh yes!

**MC:** If you went there with all your friends, you know.

**JC:** Oh yes.

**MC:** And had cups of tea.

**JC:** That's the only one I remember was a cafe.

**MC:** Yes. I do. Yeah.

**JC:** Yes.

**VB:** Did you go with your friends then when you were--

**MC:** Did what?

**VB:** Did you go with your friends when you were a bit older?

**MC:** Yes! Yes. We'd go with friends. Oh yes, yes.

**VB:** Was that sort of Saturday?

**MC:** Saturday. Yes. It'll be Saturday too.

**VB:** Right.

**MC:** Saturday evening.

**VB:** A-ah.

**JC:** Oh yes, this is an old one. That's older than, an old one. You see now these films, that are over there, it's all trivial stuff. There's none on this list there. And that's what's typical of the time. Or these very sexual ones.

**VB:** Yeah.



**MC:** I think father must've been utterly bored, you know, with what he sat through. With us. And we could hear people saying, who would sit and say, "And what does it say now?" You know, the words would come on--

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** Before talkies. You see the words would come on the screen. What was happening.

**JC:** Oh they did.

**MC:** And you see, some old ladies wouldn't be able to read. And somebody with them would be saying, "It says," and be saying. All the words.

**JC:** [laughs]

**MC:** That came on the film. I'd forgotten that. That's what happened, wasn't it?

**JC:** I've no doubt it would be.

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** Really.

**MC:** Yes. 'Cause we could read. We could read.

**JC:** There'd not be many but there would be instances like that.

**MC:** Oh yes. There would be.

**JC:** Eh, somebody couldn't read, in the early days.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** When they put subtitles.

**MC:** Subtitles on. Yes.

**JC:** Eh, they had subtitles in the silent films, hadn't they?

**MC:** Oh they did!

**JC:** They had subtitles, hadn't they?

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB:** Mhm.

**JC:** And then they had this woman at the, playing a piano.

**MC:** Mhm. Mhm.

**JC:** To fit the music. And they did it by eh, they just looked at the pictures and played the appropriate music. That's what they did. They didn't play from music, did they?

**MC:** No. No.

**VB:** **The other thing I was wanting to ask actually was, did any of the cinemas have erm, turns or go-as-you-please sort of thing?**

**JC:** Yes. Yes. I was going to mention that.

**VB:** Yes.

**JC:** And I did mention it to you a few days ago. I said, do you remember, 'cause we'd had a chat or two together about this, I said, do you remember. I said, I've an idea that there was a short period of time when, instead of, eh, I think this was in the silent films. Instead of showing all films, there was a break eh, in the middle, and they had something on the stage. A singer. Or an actor. Or something like that. Like a variety turn.

**MC:** I don't remember them.

**JC:** And I do remember. But I can't remember the actual act. It was a change from the films. And there was some kind of eh, little entertainment.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Have you found cases of that?

**VB:** I have. Yes. Yes.

**JC:** Yes. And there were some in Bolton.

**MC:** Oh, I don't remember that.

**JC:** Eh, of cases like eh, eh, and I wonder why eh, eh, why that should be. But it was only for a short period of time. Eh, when the erm, [pause 2 seconds] I don't know eh, I can't remember details of that. But I do know, and I mentioned it to you. I said, do you remember, they used to have some kind of, of eh, a change from the films. It could arise you know, because of, possibly, the changing of the technique of the films behind scenes.

**MC:** Oh, I'd no idea.

**JC:** You know eh, have to put fresh films in and things.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** Because they had two projectors and they'd switch from one to the other. It might have been, for some reason, why they found it technical.

**MC:** Something broke down.

**JC:** To do it. There were also instances, where, whereby you paid eh, sixpence. This would be earlier than the thirties. You paid threepence or whatever it is. And you saw the film. And then when you were coming out, they gave you a free bag. And this bag might have sweets in. Or eh, or an orange you could get instead.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Do you remember that?

**MC:** No, I don't remember. I can remember you telling me.

**JC:** Have you come across that?

**VB:** Haven't, no.

**JC:** And it was an inducement to get people to go. And as you were coming out, you collected your bag, and what was in. And there could be a, some sweets. Or there could be an orange or an apple.

**MC:** [chuckles] I don't remember.

**JC:** And I remember that too. I think Arthur Orrell reminded me of that.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** Eh, I think Arthur Orrell reminded me of that. [pause 2 seconds] Yeah. [chuckles]

**VB:** Mhm.

**MC:** Mhm. Looks rather nice seeing that picture of [everyone speaking at once; inaudible].

**JC:** Have you any more?

**VB:** Erm, the only other thing I've got is from one of the--

**JC:** What time is it now?

**VB:** Oh it's about quarter past.

**MC:** It's only a quarter past two. It's all right. You'll not catching a bus.

**JC:** No. You're all right.

**VB:** The other one I found was one of the Odeon programmes from the thirties.

**MC:** Oh yes.

**JC:** Now. Wait a minute.

**MC:** [reads from programme] [inaudible] *Woman Chases Man. Victoria the Great.*

**JC:** Now I'm giving you that.

**VB:** Thanks.

**JC:** So you can put your name on it straight away if you like.

**VB:** Thanks very much.

**JC:** And eh. [pause 5 seconds] The other one. [pause 7 seconds]

**VB:** This should be interesting.

[pause 5 seconds]

**VB:** What sort of films would you go to when you went with your--

**MC:** Mhm?

**VB: What sort of films did you go to when you went with your friends?**

**MC:** Erm, well I suppose they'd be some of these I would think.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Some of the ones that are on here, Jessie Matthews. Those. Janet Gaynor.

**JC:** Oh yes. Jessie Matthews was going.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** Yeah.

**MC:** Jack Buchanan.

**JC:** Yeah. I remember those.

**MC:** Edgar Wallace in *The Squeaker*. I didn't see that. Ronald Colman. *The Prisoner of Zenda*.

**VB: Oh.**

**MC:** I think I would see that.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** "The Sensational *Dead End*". I don't remember that. Leslie Howard. Ooh, I like Leslie Howard.

**JC:** I thought he was later.

**MC:** Oh, perhaps he was. I don't know.

**JC:** Yeah.

**VB:** I think he made some of his early films in the thirties. Although, as you say, he's more famous for--

**MC:** Later on.

**VB:** Later than that, yes.

**JC:** And just in case you forget.

**VB:** That's great. Yeah. I'll get that back to you.

**JC:** I know you will. But it's in case the address gets mislaid.

**VB:** Right.

**JC:** That you can keep.

**VB:** That's great. Thanks very much. [pause 3 seconds] It looks a great wee cinema that. It's got a nice--

**MC:** [laughs] Ornate. It would be one of the eh, cheaper cinemas. Wouldn't it, John? This Imperial.

**JC:** Yes. Have you stuck our name on this book?

**MC:** No I didn't. We only got it on Friday. Stick it on.

**JC:** You get so many books and don't return them. I think it's books more than anything else.

**VB:** Yeah.

**JC:** So I just eh, put one on that. And then, it'll be remind me. Because you'll have some odds and ends given to you, during the project. [inaudible] I'll lend you that.

**VB:** Yeah, the other thing I brought was a couple of pictures of the stars. You mentioned Janet Gaynor there.

**MC:** Oh yes.

**JC:** Another look at these. What's this?

**VB:** That's just one of some of the cinema staff. I was impressed by the uniforms. I don't know if they were as smart?

**JC:** Oh yes. These usherettes. Yes, they were smart. It was quite a, it was quite thing wasn't it? Part-time jobs, weren't they? In an evening. What you got there Marion?

**MC:** Well that's erm, Janet Gaynor. Yeah.

**JC:** I don't remember [inaudible].

**MC:** Well but no, I wouldn't remember—

**JC:** I remember Robert Montgomery. But, you see when you were a lad of about eh, you know, between sixteen and twenty-odd. Eh, well, to me, they never struck a chord.

**MC:** No. No.

**JC:** Really.

**MC:** Mhm.

**JC:** It's probably [inaudible].

**MC:** [laughs]

**JC:** I never got into the cinema, the eh, star thing.



**VB: Mhm.**

**JC:** Identifying with these.

**MC:** Then, I suppose, when it came up to wartime, then--

**JC:** Yes. I'll get myself ready for a minute.

**MC:** Yes.

**JC:** I just want to put my shoes on. And we'll leave about half past two. It's only ten minutes till then.

**VB: That's great. That sounds great.**

**MC:** Yeah. I'll give you that.

**VB: That's great. Thanks. 'Cause I was interested, 'cause it's quite a long time really, the thirties. I mean you were talking about going with your father.**

**MC:** Yeah! It is, isn't it?

**VB: Going with your friends.**

**MC:** Yes. It is.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Mhm. Yeah.

**VB: Was it mainly with your friends you went with later then?**

**MC:** Erm, yes. It would be later. And then I was away from home. I went to college afterwards. To agricultural college. And then eh, I'd be away from home for quite a bit. And then, and then came

back after the war. And eh, oh, we just didn't go to cinemas then. Oh, I went Scottish dancing.  
[laughs] You see. That's what we did.

**VB: Did you ever go dancing locally? Were there dance halls?**

**MC:** Oh, yes! We did. Oh yes. There were dance halls. Yes. There were. Oh yes, we did that. I don't think there were oh, you know, not [pause 2 seconds] great dancers. Ballroom dancers. Periodically, a group of us would go. To the main dance hall. Oh, I think three or four main dance halls in Bolton, that would be popular. And, we would go as a group, I would think. I think that was it. Yes. Different. Life is very different isn't it? [laughs]

**VB: Yes, it really is. Yeah.**

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB: It sounds like you were very busy actually. At that time of your life.**

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB: When you're saying erm--**

**MC:** It's amazing when you get stirred up and remember things that you'd long since forgotten. Yeah, it's true. However. It does us no harm to get our brains to [inaudible].

**VB: Oh. It's been very good of you to sit and talk to me about that. I really appreciate it.**

**MC:** Oh.

**VB: Very kind. [pause 3 seconds] It's nice to get, hear about different parts of the area as well.**

**MC:** Yes. It is. That's so.

**VB: Was it quite a small place then? Where you were then?**

**MC:** It was, how you say, it was a little industrial village. I would think, very eh, closed in on itself. We didn't have a bus into Bolton, you know. It was a case of walking. I think it would be very rough. I would think it would be considered rough. I think. And erm, [pause 2 seconds] didn't have a library. [pause 2 seconds] No. It was eh... I suppose it was quite a, not a bad place to go. And we had an uncle, who kept a farm in the village. So of course we used to migrate there. All school holidays were spent there. And we had one part of the farm, erm, that was like in a little valley, with a river running through it. A very dirty river. You know, coming from a works of some sort but that didn't bother us. We paddled in it and we did all things like that in it. But that was like our, that was our playground. For all the holidays. So, we were much better than a lot of people who just played on the street. And my mother would always know. And she'd say, "Are you coming home for your tea?" And we'd say, "Well, no." Well, she'd make us sandwiches and, we could take sandwiches down. I suppose she would be having a little quiet time on her own without her annoying daughters. So. [pause 2 seconds] Different.

**VB: Mhm. Sounds like a nice place to grow up actually.**

**MC:** Yes.

**VB: Mhm.**

**MC:** Yes. I suppose it wasn't bad. [pause 2 seconds] Mhm. Well my father would, would erm help in haytime, you know. Weekends. And so on. Oh. Oh yes, it wasn't a bad, wasn't a bad life really. I suppose we didn't have much money. And I would think that my father would have quite a lot of erm, erm a broken, erm work. You know, like slack times. There would be. But my mother was a very capable person. She was quite erm [pause 2 seconds]. A very good housewife, I would think. You know. Quite eh, quite good. And she would eh, she sewed and she would dress us and, and so on. I don't think we ever thought we were poor. But I remember one aunt who was much younger. Than my mother. And she'd say, "Weren't we poor?" She'd say, "We were poor." And my sister and I'd say we hadn't felt we were poor. We didn't at all feel poor, at all. We wouldn't have much money. But this aunt, always liked to think that we were very poor. Which was strange that. Because we didn't feel poor at all. Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] There we are.

**VB: I suppose some people like to look on the dark side [laughs] of things.**

**MC:** Mhm! [pause 3 seconds] And we always got a summer holiday. Always had a summer holiday. Erm, one week. And eh, we'd go off, usually to Fleetwood, or possibly Morecambe. Never Blackpool. I don't think I went to Blackpool till I was grown up. I think it was considered a bit rough. [laughs]

**VB: Mhm.**

**MC:** Yeah. But it were the highlight to go off to Fleetwood for a week. And that was the days when eh, [pause 2 seconds] you went to one place, and you provided the food and the lady cooked it. You'd, like, your mother would go and buy something. Some sort of meat or fish or whatever. And give it to the lady. And she would cook that for your main meal. And she would always provide the pudding. It was always rice pudding. But that was, that was eh, oh absolutely universal. And there was a sideboard. And, depending on how many people were in this house, you had a little portion of the sideboard and you would keep, in there, your sugar, and your tea. And things like that. All your own. See. See, you'd never have grown up with that, will you?

**VB: No.**

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**MC:** No! It was! It was quite, quite done. I used to think of walking down the prom. And I used to say, think to myself, or I might say to my sister, "I wish we, I wish we stayed in a house like that." On the promenade. Where there'd be a table in the window and somebody would be having a meal. You know, in this window. We'd think, how rich they must be. [laughs] To be in such a palatial house. Oh, we had a good holiday. Yeah.

**VB: Ah, it's a lovely part of the coast that. I know Morecambe a little. I've never been to Fleetwood.**

**MC:** You've not?

**VB: No.**

**MC:** It's, it's, well, fancy coming here year after year and we thought it was marvellous.

**VB:** Mm.

**MC:** Yeah. Now we never go. And people say we should go to Fleetwood, it has a very good market.

**VB:** Ah.

**MC:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**MC:** The things that people look for. It's a sort of a day-tripperish sort of place.

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** Mhm. And now my sister lives erm, near Morecambe.

**VB:** Right.

**MC:** She lives near there now. [pause 5 seconds]

**VB:** Is your sister older than you, or younger?

**MC:** Two years older. Yes. She's Eighty-seven.

**VB:** Yeah.

**MC:** [gasps] Eighty-seven. Saying how old I am now.

**VB:** [laughs]

**MC:** Birthday this month.

**VB: Ah.**

**MC:** Eighty-five. Ooph! Makes you think. [gasps]

**VB: That's amazing. It really is.**

**MC:** However. We keep getting there. By degrees.

**VB: I wouldn't have said you were eighty-five. You certainly don't look it.**

**MC:** Oh! John keeps me on the move.

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** John keeps me on the move.

**VB: [laughs] [pause 2 seconds] It's a nice little house this. I like it very much.**

**MC:** Yes. It is quite nice.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Well. We've lived here years and years. About erm, [pause 2 seconds] coming up to thirty years.

**VB: Really. Yeah.**

**MC:** This is only the second house we've lived in since we were married. Yeah. We find it quite nice. Yeah. Quite good.

**VB: I like, I've been admiring all your pictures.**

**MC:** Mhm.

**VB: Erm, I like these landscapes.**

**MC:** Yes. That's a Lowry. And that's a Lowry. That's a Lowry.

**VB: Ah.**

**MC:** Eh, we always, one of my aunts, a young aunt eh, my mother's sister. She used to say, "That's me. And that's our Joanna."

**VB: [laughs]**

**MC:** My mother was called Joanna.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** And eh, she was tall. My mother was tall. About five feet ten.

**VB: Right. Yes.**

**MC:** And eh, "Yes," she says, "That's me. That's our Joanna." [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]. Ah. I like your embroidery as well.**

**MC:** Oh that's nice! Yes. Now, a friend of ours, a man--

**VB: Ah, really!**

**MC:** He does embroidery. Eh, his niece, his niece was quite artistic. And she'd a father who was a good photographer. And he would take a photograph of a certain place, in the lakes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** Erm, and she would do the embroidery.

**VB: Really!**

**MC:** She would do the embroidery from the film. His wife died, quite young, and he took to doing this embroidery. It's really lovely isn't it?

**VB: Yes.**

**MC:** I think it's nice.

**VB: Yeah.**

**MC:** There we are.

**VB: Is this your son, when he was a—**

**MC:** Two.

**VB: A wee lad. [laughs] Aw, that's lovely.**

**MC:** Second birthday.

**VB: Very small. [laughs]**

**MC:** There he is now. There he is now. That's his wife. [tape cuts out]

**[End of interview]**