

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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- * Bury, Greater Manchester, 5 September 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Jimmy Murray
- * Transcribed by Valentina Bold/ Standardised by Jamie Terrill
- * JM = Jimmy Murray/MM = Mrs Murray/VB = Valentina Bold
- * Notes: Second of two interviews with Jimmy Murray; 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.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

VB: [setting up tape]. Use it as evidence. [laughs] That should... I'll just put that beside you, if that's okay. That should be fine. Might try and get it a wee bit less tangled though.

JM: [Mother-in-law?]. Sorry. Are you fine now?

VB: Yeah, I'm fine. Yeah.

JM: Because, the one we forgot, last time was, Sir Harry Lauder. You see? I thought, now, blinking heck! We can't forget Sir Harry. Can't say he were great or anything but eh, it passed time at that time like, with his walking stick and his kilts and that like. So, I thought, we'd better mention that lad. There's lots of things here. Well I asked eh, I asked the wife. I said, about film, when I said last time that eh, she wouldn't know anything about it. I said, "There's no cinemas there now, in that area where they live. How did you, how did you go on?" She said, eh, "Oh they came round with the mobile".

VB: Ah!

JM: To the eh, parish hall or whatever you'd term [call] it. And eh, must've been like a magic lantern show I should think [laughs] in them days.

VB: Ah, that's interesting.

JM: So!

VB: I've heard the same thing, in Scotland they did that in--

JM: Yeah! And it's still the same now. They still, I notice this time they still had no cinemas in that, in that area. So they must still do this. Of course they don't need... they've all got Sky television.

VB: Yeah.

JM: And they can get eight or nine stations on their eh, on the television.

VB: Yeah. That's int-

JM: Austria and all sorts. In fact, the first film, when I got there this time, looking through was eh, the one I mentioned before. *The Third Man*. *Third Man* and eh, *Inspector Morse* in black and white.

VB: Oh [laughs].

JM: I don't know why it's in black and white but it's in black and white. Yeah. So that were their contribution to eh, films. Must've had them in the parish hall and that were it. They still have no cinemas there now.

VB: Yeah.

JM: In that area.

VB: So they must've been having the European films?

JM: I don't know what films they had. But eh, they must've made some German films. Because they was mostly all German speaking in that area so--

VB: Yeah.

JM: There we are. And eh, she's never seen a great lot a films over here 'cause they never went! We went in the sixpennies down at the Empire. That was near where we lived. Just round the corner. Yeah. There was another one here, a series of eh, what they call, 'believe it or not's'.

VB: Mhmm!

JM: By a Ripley. *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* It was very, oh it was in the 1930s, well in, actually about 1930. And it were all the different things in the world. One was the eh, the Hanging Tower of Babylon. The one that impressed me was er eh, a Chinese dentist. And this Chinese dentist was in the bazaar. And they used to just go to him. And with his fingers, he pulled the teeth. Now, to keep in practice, this was the best part of it. To keep in practice, he'd keep his fingers eh, strong. He'd crack walnuts!

VB: Aw! [laughs]

JM: With his fingers! They were the two things that eh, but all the others were, eh. Another one was eh, a man that had cut his own hair, for eh, thirty years using two mirrors. Mirror at the front, mirror at the back and then cutting. A perfect cut. Just like the barber. That was Ripley, Ripley's eh, Ripley's 'Believe It or Nots', that one.

VB: Oh! So they were sort of astounding facts.

JM: Yeah! It was on eh, so many a week. Like they show on telly. Different things... but that one with the nuts, I thought--

VB: That's amazing.

JM: Cracking walnuts! When you think of the thing. Yeah.

VB: I mean that must've been quite something to see these sort of things when you're, you know, quite young.

JM: Yeah! Yeah!

VB: It obviously made a big impression.

JM: Yeah. Well it stuck there and eh, you were waiting, 'Believe It or Not'! And they were out of this world things, what they were showing like you know. They were great. Ah. I remember them ones.
[laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Ooh! Looking at these over here. Also I see...

VB: You're right though. We didn't say anything about Harry Lauder.

JM: No! He didn't do a great lot of films but he was the main export from Scotland, kind of thing. And I thought, I thought, oh! Harry Lauder! Can't think what his films were about.

VB: No.

JM: But he had all Scottish scenery and everything, like. Apart from that eh--

VB: Did you find him funny?

JM: Oh yeah. At that time. Yeah, oh yeah! Just, I can't really remember him much.

VB: Mhm.

JM: We definitely went to see eh, you know, big billing Sir Harry Lauder. Like eh, kind of like Norman Wisdom or something like that. Doing that type of eh, that type of thing. Yeah. [pause 3 seconds]
Then there were another two from America, the eh, the elderly ones. Wallace Beery. There was two

Beerys. Wallace Beery and Noah Beery. Noah Beery. I think that was his son that's done eh, Jim Rockford's father.

VB: Oh right!

JM: Yeah. But Wallace, Wallace Beery. There was a big film there. Wallace Beery and Maria Dressler. [referring to Marie Dressler] She's a right oh, rough looking. *Tugboat Annie*, the film was called. About something they had to get this tugboat somewhere. And eh, it broke down. So, Wallace had to, it was marvellous, to eh, cover himself all over. Draw the fire from the firebox and then clamber in and then the thing or something. It was out of this world like but eh, them, those were the two. These are real old ones these ones.

VB: I can just about picture him. Well, I've not seen that film. But he had a very sort of--

JM: Very rough face.

VB: Rough looking face.

JM: Rough face. Yeah. Something like Victor McLaglen type face.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Like very rough. Yeah. But they all made films! [laughs]

VB: Mhm.

JM: Another one here was the old eh, Frenchman. Chevalier.

VB: Aw yes. yes.

JM: Ooh, with the bottom lip and the straw hat.

VB: 'Cause we talked a bit about Jeanette MacDonald. Did she not make a couple of films with him before she went on to make films with Nelson Eddy?

JM: Ah. I can't think of that one.

VB: Mhm. I'm sure they made a--

JM: Yeah.

VB: Was it *The Love Parade*? Something like that.

JM: Ah, they could've done. But I can't just think of it.

VB: I think it was quite a, I'm sure it was quite an early one, you know, before she went on--

JM: Yeah. Before she went on with the other.

VB: Went on to be famous.

JM: That was the same as that Jones I talked about. Jack Jones what was on here, singing.

VB: Yeah.

JM: His father was in a little part in one of the eh, before he became known. Before he became known, he played a little singing part in eh, eh, Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy's *Rose Marie*. He played a little part in that before he came into his own.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Ah. Saw that in the paper. Next time everybody's waiting to see him. "Oh that's Jack Jones" like, you know. Yeah.

VB: I just saw, talking about Jeanette MacDonald, I just saw *Maytime*.

JM: *Maytime*, Yeah. *Maytime*. They were brilliant films. There were no doubt.

VB: It was great. You can really get lost in a film like that.

JM: Oh Yeah. Yeah. Always marvellous how they eh, in them singing things, in a kind of a café somewhere, next minute they dancing or something and a big stage at the end. It eh, oh.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause you were saying that you, you know, that you really liked Jeanette MacDonald.

JM: Oh yeah.

VB: What do you think it was about her that gave her that special appeal?

JM: Oh well, as you said, she'd a lovely voice and eh, that was the main thing like, you know. And the dresses what they had. You know, the period eh, the period things. In fact, eh, he's dead now, the lad that lived behind me here and eh, he's been dead about four year. And they were on, an old film of those two. He said, "Oh! They're on tonight." And he was in the 65 Group. [likely referring to the Army Reserves 65 Works Group] He'd go home to watch it. You know, even, although he'd seen it many times, you know, he was still, still there.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause I mean I was impressed by the way she erm, you know, her and Nelson Eddy sort of sparked each other off I suppose.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: They seemed to have a good partnership.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, they were brilliant. There were no doubt about that. [pause 3 seconds] And then with the colour. It might not have gone down as well in black and white, but when you got the coloured ones and everything. You know. Like Chevalier. He's worse talking in part French and what have you. Oh my goodness! The stuff we used to watch were out of this world! I don't know why. Aw. Good grief.

VB: I mean I'm wondering, seeing someone like Chevalier, did he seem sort of exotic or, erm--

JM: No. I think it was just a matter of him, well, could have been. He, he was different to ours. Like, another one here eh, Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtney [referring to Cicely Courtneidge]. Now, he was something different. He were a Frenchman. Being French, we didn't meet many Frenchmen, no, we didn't meet any Frenchmen so, he had that little lisp and what have you, of the eh, of the France. Where eh, Courtney [sic] and Jack Hulbert. They were really English corn. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Ah. Any road [anyway], as I say, we'd watch anything. If the price was right, we'd go and watch anything.

VB: Yeah.

JM: So, that were not so bad. [laughs]

VB: 'Cause I mean I was interested in that, 'cause I've heard people say in Glasgow that in some ways they started to think that they knew America. Through seeing all the Hollywood pictures. [laughs]

JM: Oh yes! Yeah.

VB: Erm, even though they'd never been out of Scotland.

JM: Yeah.

VB: They felt that America became like a sort of--

JM: Well, like I say, we knew all about the gangsters and the eh, you know, the cowboys. I mean, you were brought up with cowboys so, you saw the wild plains and everything. Even though most of it was took [filmed] in the studio. You could see them behind like. Aye.

VB: I mean did you feel that the stars were people that you were, almost like friends? Or did they seem distant? Or--

JM: Oh no. They were eh, they were very, you knew 'em, you kind of knew 'em personal. You know. There was a different eh, well, a different speaking and eh, eh, better put on and everything, and eh. As I said before, if we made a good film it was a classic. If we made a good one. They're still going. But there, every one of them, you seemed to, you never seemed to be bored with any of the films what they had. There was always something new. Whether it were a gangster or a cowboy or eh, a comedy. They always seemed to put the, way in front of us all the time. Ah.

VB: It sounds from what you're saying as if was a very exciting thing to go to some of these films. The real--

JM: Yeah, they eh, I mean if they had a big one on, like *Ben Hur* or something. Or when we come to the more modern ones like the Goldwyn ones. With the dancing girls and all that. Everything was there. Spectacle. That were another one that were in here. Eh, Eddie Cantor. Now when they put his on it was *Roman Scandals*. Eh, the sets and everything. You know, they were fantastic to see. Where we couldn't do that over here. We'd no, no chance of putting a set like that on.

VB: Yeah.

JM: It might be Café de Paris or something like that. Be a little stage and somebody singing but--

VB: I've not seen that one. What was that about?

JM: What eh--

VB: *Roman* eh--

JM: Well he was a comedian to start with. Well not so much a comedian but he had big rolling eyes.

VB: Oh yeah.

JM: Eddie Cantor. And he used to roll them away. And, as you say, he was something like a, a George Formby, over here. The same type. The same type of thing. But, they used to put these magic sets on of old, old Roman eh, eh, emporiums and all the rest of it like, you know. Massive things. As I say, all of a sudden they'd be doing something, next minute they'd be big vast columns. And Eddie in the middle. And a big eh, big baths and all this sort of thing. Really went to town. He [pause 3 seconds], I don't think he was funny as, as George Formby. But the way they treated him there like, you know.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Aye. Eddie Cantor.

VB: Actually, just when you were describing him, I think I have seen one of his films. Erm, *Whoopee!*

JM: Yeah! That's right. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause that's the one that's set in eh, South America or something, and there's lots of cowboy-

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JM: Well, this is what I say eh--

VB: Dances.

JM: All this, all this eh, all this set out for us like, you know.

VB: Yeah. He is very funny actually. I really enjoyed that one.

JM: Yeah. But it was the eyes more or less.

VB: Yeah.

JM: He'd roll the eyes. Ah. [someone comes in with refreshments] Mind the way, love.

VB: Thanks very much! [pause 3 seconds] That looks lovely. [pause 3 seconds] That looks really delicious. Thanks very much.

MM: [inaudible, in background] ... and salad cream, that's all.

JM: Salad cream, yeah?

VB: Erm, yeah that would be nice actually.

JM: Yeah, love!

VB: But as you say, yeah, he is quite similar to Formby. Eddie Cantor. He's a similar sort of...

JM: He was, well they were both comedians to start with, kinda thing--

VB: Yeah.

JM: You know. The films were entirely different. Same as George there. His film, *Isle of Man*.
[referring to *No Limit* (1935)]

VB: Yes.

JM: The *Isle of Man* races. So that was his set, his natural set. Where Eddie Cantor had the big eh, the big studio job. Millions behind it, kinda thing, you know.

VB: Yeah. It is interesting when you have--

MM: Only have salad cream.

VB: Oh that's lovely. Thanks very much. That looks great. Erm, you know, I like the way you put that. Their natural setting, sort of thing.

JM: Yeah. This is where, this is where we got the things done, not on the cheap, but cheaper than eh, cheaper than America. [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

JM: Aye.

VB: Did you like George Formby? 'Cause I don't think we talked much about--

JM: Well at that time, he was the, he was the in thing. So eh, well, you went to see him. And he were very good.

MM: [inaudible]

VB: No that's fine. Great.

JM: He were very good at that period. As I say, same as Gracie Fields. Eh, she had her period of everybody went to see Gracie Fields and then, when it came George, everybody went to see, see George. They were just at that period. That eh, they made a series of 'em--

VB: So he was sort of, all the fashion at that time?

JM: At that time, that particular time.

VB: Yeah.

JM: George went ou-- Grace Fields went out, George Formby was coming in and that covered that one like, you know. Yeah.

VB: 'Cause I was interested as well erm, someone was saying to me that they enjoyed Gracie Fields films because you could sort of recognise the--

JM: It was the area.

VB: That's right. Yeah.

JM: All the mills.

VB: Do you think that's right? I mean, was that part of the appeal?

JM: All the mills and everything. Round Rochdale and eh--

VB: Yeah.

JM: I don't know how other people could understand her because eh, she sound and spoke, broad Lancashire. Really broad Lancashire, like. But eh, she eh, well her films must have sold.

VB: Mhm.

JM: You know. And the rest of it. Yeah. They've still got a museum or something in Rochdale for her. And eh, I think she was from the same period that's in *Coronation Street* now. Bet, Bet Driver at that time. [referring to *Coronation Street* series actress Betty Driver]

VB: Really?

JM: Yeah. And they had another one there, I think she... Where Gracie was singing the eh turn, and she went on to be an opera singer I think. And, where Gracie was singing the eh, the songs, she was singing the opera. And I think they were both of the same--

VB: Kathleen Ferrier. Is that it?

JM: Eh, no not that one. Somebody called Turner.

VB: Right.

JM: I think she was called Turner. I'm not quite sure on that one.

VB: So it must've been something in that area.

JM: Round about the same time. And eh, I think they both came from Rochdale. I'm not... But Gracie was the film... one of the films where eh... Her only black mark was going to America during the war. You know, she went to America with her husband and eh, she came back later but it took the edge off her popularity. They seemed to think anybody who went out of the country was ducking.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Ducking their responsibilities kind of thing. Ah.

VB: That's interesting. I mean, did you know a lot about stars' personal lives? Was that something that something--

JM: Not, not really. She was just an ordinary, eh. Even though she starred in pictures I think she was just put down as an ordinary eh, still an ordinary person. You know. She was still like classed as a mill girl. 'Course most of her films were about mills. And eh, mill girls, in aprons and all the rest of it.

VB: So she wasn't really... Was she not in the same sort of group as your average film star?

JM: No. Not really. She didn't strike you as having the, what you'd term the edge. Eh, the edge of the superstar or anything like, you know. Not eh, you could associate yourself with it. You know, being in a mill round this area, you was in eh, in her group kinda thing, you know. I think all the mill girls used to try and sing like her when they were at work and all, kinda thing, you know. Sing as you go.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Oh.

VB: It's interesting. 'Cause it sounds like from what you're saying that, you know, she was someone that was more, sort of one of us.

JM: Yes. That type of thing.

VB: Yeah.

JM: You just eh, you'd expect her to walk round the street or something like that kind of thing, you know. All the films were based on that. Eh [pause 3 seconds] you wouldn't expect eh, Jeanette MacDonald to be walking round the street at that time. [laughs]

VB: I know. [laughs] Not in one of her film gowns anyway. [laughs]

JM: [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

JM: Same with Formby. He was eh, just the same mould. And, you know, you could associate things with him like, you know. Ah. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: It's so interesting that. You know, thinking about the sort of appeal of certain stars and, you know, what it was. 'Cause I was thinking about that after, after we'd talked last time. And the sort of people you mentioned, and, do you think there were certain qualities that appealed to you in stars that you looked for?

JM: Eh, well, them two in particular. Eh, I should say would do. 'Cause they just seemed to be the ordinary, ordinary person. I should think such as Norman Wisdom as we see now. I've never seen any of his things. Little bits on here. You'd associate with something, you know. An ordinary, down-to-earth, British person kind of thing, you know.

VB: Yeah. I mean, some of the other stars that you mentioned, say someone like Spencer Tracy. I mean, how did you feel about him? Did you feel--

JM: Oh, all you could feel about him was that he was a big, the big star. You know, he'd really entertain you, kind of thing. He, he was brilliant. One thing I remembered after it, when I said about one of his films. It wasn't eh, *Captains Courageous* where he didn't speak. It was one later. It was a prisoner of war. A prisoner of war film [referring to *The Seventh Cross* (1944)]. And it was my brother-in-law that said, he was on for twenty minutes, the first twenty minutes, just with facial expressions. And never spoke a word. Now that is a marvellous eh, marvellous actor kinda thing, you know.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Eh, well you'd go a mile to see one of his films. Whatever it was. Eh, I think some of his later ones were a bit of a comedy. I didn't really see that one. The eh, something with a black girl or a black man and his daughter. Something, I can't quite-- [referring to *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967)]

VB: Oh yeah. The one where he's a lawyer?

JM: One of the very last ones what he made.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Erm, I couldn't really associate him with, acting in more of a comedy than the serious, the serious parts.

VB: Right.

JM: 'Cause he, eh, he was eh, was it *Northwest Passage* and eh, *Captains Courageous* and this prison film. I mean they were three-- they'll be showing them till we're ninety-five.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Might not be around when we're ninety-five [laughs], but they'll be still showing them.

VB: Yeah. So was it the sort of skill as an actor that you admired in--

JM: Yes. Yeah.

VB: Spencer Tracy.

JM: I think everybody['d had to?]. You know they'd say, "Oh, Tracy film on" like. You know. Ah. But I'm one, if I've seen the thing once eh, if they put it on here, *Captains Courageous*, I wouldn't bother watching 'cause I've seen it and I know the end.

VB: Mhm.

JM: So, but as for watching... Oh yeah. I'd go anywhere to watch Tracy. Now another one at that time, Lionel Barrymore. He was another in the Tracy mould. You'd go and, you'd go and watch him, kind of thing. You knew you were in for a good eh, a good film. And good acting and everything like, you know. He was an [inaudible] that one.

VB: Really? [laughs]

JM: In his films. Oh aye. I always thought he'd be a [nice one?].

VB: 'Cause there's a few of the Barrymores. 'Cause, in *Maytime* I think, there was John Barrymore.

JM: Yeah well, that was John.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, well he took the opposite type. More sophisticated type.

VB: Yeah.

JM: All that kind of thing. He was more or less on the loving side than eh, the old fella, old Lionel. Yeah.

VB: I mean again, as you say, very skilled actors and--

JM: Oh yeah, yeah. They were. You got your money when you paid to see them eh, make their films. But there were that many of them. There is none really now, is there? You know. compared to what there were then. Eh, as I say, that were just a few that eh--

VB: Yeah.

JM: You know.

VB: I think you're right. 'Cause I mean, another one that came to mind when you were talking was eh, Fredric March. I mean he was--

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: I mean in that sort, I don't know if you agree but in that same sort of, you know, skilled actors.

JM: Skilled actors.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. As I said there were that many to try and remember. You know.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Every week you'd [see] somebody, somebody different, but you know you were going to get a good film kind of thing, you know. Where now, I don't know what they do nowadays. 'Course, I say, I've never been to any film eh, in this last fifty year. Only been to about five. But eh, up to then...

[tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

VB: Erm... I mean someone else that you mentioned was erm, Robert Donat.

JM: Donat! Yeah, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JM: He was one of the eh, one of the best we had over here. We had a few good ones here like. We'd eh, eh, Mason, eh, John Mills, eh, Stewart Grainger. You know? And Donat. But compared to the ones we've been mentioning, you could go on and on and on over there. [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

JM: The American films. Eh, and of the ladies, we had Margaret Lockwood. I've seen her film in Austria. Eh, where she's speaking German. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: One of the first dubbed ones I saw that.

VB: Mhmm.

JM: It was in Austria and eh, well actually the same town, if you can call it a town, as this lad that's just won the eh, French Open. Muster. [referring to tennis player Thomas Muster]

VB: Mhmm.

JM: Only a little place. A lot smaller than here, Bury. And eh, that was only time I went in the cinema in Austria. And eh, it was dubbed. The highway, the one where's she's a highway eh, the one where she's a highway lady. [referring to *The Wicked Lady* (1945)]

VB: Mhm.

JM: And that was when you see Margaret splattering away in Deutsch. [laughs] Ah.

VB: [laughs]

JM: But she, she was very good. 'Course there again we, we went for the beauty. I don't know about the acting but we went for the beauty. Like eh, Elizabeth Taylor and eh, they were all eh, Rank. The Rank Starlets. [referring to the Rank Organisation and their youth talent]

VB: Yeah.

JM: With the eyes. And the make-up and the eyes and all the rest.

VB: So, do you think you looked for different things in the actresses than in the actors?

JM: Eh--

VB: Stars or--

JM: I should think so. One I used to like was Jean Arthur. I liked her because she'd a different voice to all the rest. But it was what I termed as eh, she had a crack in her voice. Funny, funny, I can't really explain it any better than that. But eh, she did quite a lot of films. But it was her voice more than anything, that I used to listen to. This funny little cracked tone what was in it. I didn't go much on the, the Harlow or the eh [pause 3 seconds] them type. I liked the solid actress. Eh, I think, was it Jean Arthur did the eh [pause 3 seconds] forget which one. But there was [pause 3 seconds] one, 'every man has a great woman behind him' [possibly referring to *You Can't Take It With You*]. I can't think. I don't know whether she did that one or, or someone else. That was a magic film. More on the actress than the actor.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Eh, I think that was the word. It's to do with the woman behind the, the eh famous person like, you know? Yeah.

VB: 'Cause someone else we mentioned was Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

JM: Well, them two! They were out of this world. My eh, that's another one. The youngest, the youngest daughter, she oh, "Fred and Ginger's on! Fred and Ginger." Whether it were black and

white or what. "Oh, Ginger! They're on!" Yeah. But that, I mean theirs was solely the dancing because Fred, we have to face it, Fred couldn't sing.

VB: [laughs]

JM: But he eh, he could dance. There were no doubt about that. There was another, they'd sit in a café, at a little table, the next minute there'd be a big stage there, with flowers all round. They'd be dancing away there! Half as big as Bury, the thing, but eh, [on again?]. [laughs] Yeah. A big massive stage. Where, as I say, there'd be a little fiddling thing for eh, somebody here to be dancing on.
[laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Another, another one, talking of American films, I remember we went in the Odeon one night. We'd, [pause 4 seconds], we'd been for a swim in the reservoir and as we were coming back we said "Go on. We'll go in the Odeon." We goes in and they showed a short film before the big film and it was a marvellous setting. Something like California, with these eh, villas. The point is they were, I don't know, who the swimmer was, could've been Esther Williams for all I know, all I remember. And they were just walking out of the, what you term the dormer, onto this springboard and diving into their own swimming pool. [referring to the so called "aquamusicals" genre of films]

VB: Aw!

JM: And they were photographing it under the water. And there was about half an hour, the film. They were all doing the different dives and all this magic sunshine behind, and all the rest. That were about 1938! I think it were Esther Williams. And the underwater shots, you know, they weren't too, they weren't too clever with them at that eh, that period. But there, the best what there was at that period, with her under the water. But eh, showing different ones coming out of the villas, and diving into the swimming pool, you know. Couldn't do it here 'cause we had no swimming pools.

VB: [laughs]

JM: We only got the sunshine.

VB: Aw.

JM: Ah.

VB: It sounds wonderful. I mean, the lifestyles in these movies--

JM: Well eh, that was the thing. I'd just come, I'd had a swim in a dirty reservoir the other end of town, and eh, and then you walked in, they were strolling out and doing a double somersault or a swallow dive and going into lovely clear water, you know? And turned somersaults underneath and the lot. And I thought, "it's not on, that." Even the sunshine were better than what we--

VB: [laughs]

JM: What we were having. Yeah, I think it was Esther Williams. She was one that were eh, I don't know how they build eh, like Tarzan, you could build this thing round his swimming. But how they could build one round such as Esther Williams and finish up in a swimming tank or something.

VB: [laughs]

JM: There were loads of beautiful other swimmers around this time, but the Yanks could do it.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yes.

VB: Well I mean--

JM: No expense was it, like, you know.

VB: You think of someone like Sonja Henie as well and--

JM: Well I've just put her down now!

VB: Ah!

JM: That, I mean eh, she's another, they'd be eh, doing something, next minute she'd be on a lake. You know eh, outside lake with all trees, covered in snow and everything. Doing her fancy eh, twists and turns. Another one, a big attraction was that one, you know, that was, that was really something new at that period like, you know. When she got her Olympic crowns or whatever it were and they starred her. That were a change. Instead of seeing gangsters shooting each other you saw Sonja diving about on skates, you know?

VB: [laughs]

JM: I tried it once but no chance.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Skates were too big and the pair of size nines on a pair of [size] six feet!

VB: [laughs]

JM: So, I always thought they were very skilful, the skaters, after that. I just put it down here, I thought, "them." Marvellous how they, erm--

VB: Aw. So that must've been quite a novelty to see her then.

JM: Well, as I say, at that period, up to her winning the eh, the crown, they never done anything like this. But, the Yanks again, as soon as she do, potentially, eh, let's do an ice skating eh, let's do an ice skating thing. Then that were the start of all ice skating, I think, on films.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Having her, doing, yeah.

VB: As you say, it's amazing how they can use someone like that and build some sort of--

JM: Yes! She's not an actress or anything.

VB: Yeah.

JM: She's just a skater and then they just built it round her. Money no expense. They must have got their money back like. But eh--

VB: Yeah.

JM: It was a novelty. Don't know how many films she made. I don't think she made a great lot kind of thing. Because the novelty would wear off for something else but, ah. They got her at that time. Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] And then you had Bogart and Edward G. Robinson. And all the, you know, you got that many you can't eh--

VB: I mean what do you think the appeal of the sort of gangster movies was? Was that something again?

JM: What eh--

VB: Well, you know, we were talking about erm, the Formby ones where you thought you could see him round the street. And then these ones where you get the big scene.

JM: Yeah.

VB: What do you think it was about the gangster films that appealed?

JM: Well, everybody thought eh, after you'd seen Astaires and that, everybody thought they could do this. You went to the Palais, [referring to Bury dance hall Palais-de-dance] and you thought you could do this three-point turn or something, [laughs] whatever, whatever we termed it as--

VB: [laughs]

JM: And eh, oh yeah. After you'd seen it, you'd go there and think, ooh ah. Do a bit of Fred like, kind of thing. You couldn't but you felt like getting on the dance floor. That's how you associated yourself with eh, Fred and Ginger kind of thing, you know?

VB: Yeah.

JM: They made it look that easy. You felt, you felt you could do this type of thing, you know? Ah.

VB: So when you saw the gangsters did you come out eh--

JM: Yeah! You'd eh, as I say you'd go to the Palais after and eh, later on in the week, you'd think, do a bit of Fred here kind of thing.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Never fell over but still. You still did it bad as to what Fred and Ginger did! Or else it was your partner! [laughs]

VB: We can blame them anyway. [laughs]

JM: Or two left feet.

VB: I mean what about when you saw someone like Edward G. Robinson or eh, Cagney? How did that make you feel?

JM: Well, sometimes it did brush off a little bit. Because it was the way you wore your trilby or had your cigarette. Just, just jotted one down here. Eh, trilbies, macs and cigarettes, and this was the eh, this was the American type. You take Bogart, Edward G, eh, any of them. It'd be the trilby at one side and the cigarette in the hand or in the mouth or something like that like. We tried it with Crosby once when he smoked a pipe and quite a lot switched to pipes, you know. It didn't do any good. They soon left you with a dirty tongue but--

VB: [laughs]

JM: You'd be doing a Bing Crosby, holding the pipe, in the corner of the mouth or wearing a trilby like Edward G. on the side of the head. Bogart or something. That's how you associated with them,

in a way. But in your coat, you had your hand in your pocket like. A little, no way of shooting anybody like, but still. [laughs] You did little things what they eh, what they did.

VB: So their sort of style you admired?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

VB: The way they carried themselves.

JM: The little things what they--

VB: Yeah.

JM: You felt a little bit tougher like. And I say dancing, you tried it at Palais and eh, you felt better. You know, you'd brace yourself a bit more. But the others, you just took it. I tried this pipe job, but oh no. No chance. Go back to cigarettes. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Let Bing Crosby smoke his pipe! Ah. And everybody tried to sing like Bing Crosby so, all these things brushed off on you. Yeah. [pause 4 seconds] Ah, it's funny that. I put that one down. Showbiz macs and, everybody had a long mac and, all the rest of it. Ah. [Eddie Cantor?]. [pause 3 seconds] That was another one, *Stage Door Canteen*.

VB: Mhmm.

JM: The eh, all the stars was in it. You know. Everybody went because it was perhaps about two hours. And everybody that was in America I think turned up at the *Stage Door Canteen*. You know, "Oh, so and so's on! So and so!"

VB: [laughs]

JM: Bing Crosby'd pop in. Bob Hope. You know, things like that like.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, just for a fleeting glimpse. That was another one, the big bands. All the big bands. The Dorseys and the eh, all the rest of it. That was another thing. All of a sudden, a big band'd appear and all they [could fit in the club?].

VB: [laughs]

JM: Massive band, bashing away. [laughs] Ah.

VB: [laughs] Did you like the songs from the pictures? Did you... was that part of the attraction, the music?

JM: Oh the music! Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, everybody. 'Cause they were all big band music at that time like. You'd no groups or anything. And there were that many big bands. Again, we tried to make 'em over here. But, when they, when they put Dorsey or somebody over the other side, it was the full treatment. But they always had one thing in... in the film. And they were always eh, with America being so big, they were always going on trains. To Buffalo, and then on to so and so. And the train would be going and they'd be flashing these names on, Buffalo so and so. So and so. And erm, I'd love to know how many times, that train was in different, different films.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Dashing along the track, with all these places they were going. 'Cause in different films, if it went into a variety, they'd be moving from eh, Bury, Rochdale, Heywood and all the rest of it.

VB: [laughs]

JM: And that always came up, on the train.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Yeah. Off to Buffalo. [laughs]

VB: It's like that, the other thing that they do with erm, a spinning newspaper. You know, when you get the headline.

JM: That's, well, the same thing.

VB: Yeah. [laughs]

JM: They use that in I don't know how many films. Every other film I think, they use one of them. It were always the--

VB: The headline. Yeah.

JM: Yeah. The train.

VB: [inaudible] or something. [laughing]

JM: Yeah. The train and the headlines. Yeah. Ah.

VB: It's quite good though, isn't it? You feel you--

JM: Well you go and you see all these places, aren't you? Ah.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Ah. Oh, as I say, there's that many. That many in my lifetime. [laugh]

VB: Actually, one thing that I brought along that I thought you might enjoy having a look at was erm, a book of stars that we picked up in Glasgow.

JM: Aw.

VB: From 1938. It's eh--

JM: Yeah.

VB: One of the Daily Express ones I think.

JM: Oh. [pause 4 seconds] Good grief.

VB: 'Cause there's quite a few of the people we talked about. [laughs]

JM: Oh yeah. Mhm. Clark, you seen them mentioned? Clark.

VB: No.

JM: You've not? Good grief. [pause 3 seconds]. Oh, *The Good Earth*. Muni [referring to Paul Muni]. Eh. *Lost Horizon*. Yeah, that one. Ronald Colman. The mind boggles, doesn't it? Tracy, *Captains Courageous*. [pause 4 seconds] Garbo, I didn't see much of her. The last one I saw of her was the eh, where she was a Russian eh... [pause 3 seconds] I forget what that one were called.

VB: Mm.

JM: She was a Russian reporter. Eh, a propaganda something [probably referring to *Ninotchka*, 1939]. That was about the last one I saw of er. Deanna Durbin. [inaudible] [Jackie?] Cooper. Jean Arthur. That's the one. *The Plainsman*. That's the one with the cracked voice. Jean Arthur. That's her. Ah that's another one, eh, that were a classic. The 'Dead End Kids' of eh, of Bogart. [pause 4 seconds]. Irene Dunne. Mmmm. See how everybody tried to be Robert Taylor!

VB: Ah.

JM: They had their hair eh, they had their hair done, you know.

VB: Slicked back.

JM: Oh yeah.

VB: [laughs]

JM: And the parting and everything, yeah. Yeah, oh yeah. Robert [Taylor]. He was the in thing at that time.

VB: 'Cause did he not get married to Barbara Stanwyck?

JM: I think he did.

VB: Yeah.

JM: But then they married so quick, didn't they? [laughs]

VB: That's right. So many. [laughs]

JM: That was one I saw too, Anna Neagle in the eh, Victoria [referring to *Victoria the Great* (1937)] was it?

VB: Ah.

JM: As I told you before, she opened the Odeon 'cause she was the Odeon eh, star.

VB: Yeah. She was really lovely actually, wasn't she? I mean she was very beautiful in her--

JM: Oh yeah! Yeah.

VB: In her films.

JM: Yeah. Oh, that was a brilliant film that. The Victoria, eh, the Victoria one.

VB: Did you like films with a sort of historical slant to them?

JM: Well you got these eh, like, when you got to the Errol Flynn with the costume things. Now them were eh, the sword fighting and the eh swashbuckling. So those were, the old Douglas Fairbanks Senior, he was one of these. Like the Errol Flynn of the day at that time. With the sword and all the rest. And the gear. The old gear.

VB: Ah.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: 'Cause when you say Errol Flynn I was thinking of Robin Hood.

JM: Robin Hood. And eh, what was the other? [*The Black Swan* I think it was, the navy one. And, aw great. Dietrich. [pause 3 seconds] Oh there's one there I forgot, Charles Laughton. He's eh, his bounty one. [referring to *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935)] And what was the painter? Which he did, the *Rembrandt*.

VB: Ah.

JM: He did *Rembrandt* I think it was. Where he went a bit mad.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Now he was, he was in the same class as eh, Tracy. You'd definitely go and watch, you'd definitely go and watch his eh. This friend I said over here who died, he'd go a mile to watch this, "Errol's on, Errol's on. It's a film with Errol." He's sixty-five year old! He's still going swashbuckling!

VB: [laughs]

JM: Ah.

VB: Could you imagine, when you were watching a film like that, could you imagine yourself with--

JM: Oh aye, I should think when you were eh, when it's your day, eh--

MM: Another coffee?

VB: That would be lovely. That was delicious. It really was.

JM: [laughs]

VB: Thanks very much. It was lovely.

JM: Now, there's John Barrymore.

VB: You were saying you could, when you were watching Errol, you were--

JM: Yeah. Oh yeah, you'd be him. Oh yeah, yeah. You was on that ship or wherever he was. You were there. You were fighting.

VB: [laughs]

JM: Like the film, that film, *The Three Musketeers*, you were with them all the time like, you know. Oh yeah. You'd try to imagine, what it was like in those days. Eh, it was like somebody in another twenty years, trying to imagine what it's like now. Eh, when in them days, with all that fancy gear and eh. [pause 2 seconds] Oh aye, it were more so when colour came out, you know. You saw the real blood then, instead of the dark stain or something.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Oh, every page. Every page. Tyrone. Every page is one that was... seen. Now that, she was brilliant. She was the best of all.

VB: Bette Davis.

JM: Bette Davis.

VB: Yeah.

JM: She was really good.

VB: What was it about her that you admired?

JM: Well, she, she drew you into the story and eh, you know, I think she should've finished before she appeared at the end there. All bedraggled and full of wrinkles and that. She should have left it something like she was there.

VB: Yeah.

JM: But she was another like, well, she was another Tracy and erm Laughton and, really, eh really good ones. [pause 4 seconds]. Oh, that type of thing were eh all of a sudden, they put a big set on.

VB: [laughs]

JM: [pause 6 seconds] [looking at book]. Every one.

VB: It's a great book that, isn't it?

JM: Every one's a winner. [laughs]

VB: Yeah. [laughs]

JM: [laughing] Everyone's a winner. Good grief. [pause 6 seconds] Myrna Loy, Fredric March. These two. Now, that was a real good eh, that was a real good comedy. With a little bit of a plot in it and all.

VB: Yeah. With Myrna and Powell.

JM: That one. Even to the dog. [referring to *The Thin Man* (1934)]

VB: Yes.

JM: Even to the dog. That was eh, really, dry humour as you'd term it, wasn't it like, you know?

VB: With the little terrier.

JM: Really good.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Muni. [pause 4 seconds]. Don Ameche. He's only just, he hasn't been dead long, has he? Don Ameche.

VB: No. He's someone else who had a long career, isn't he? He was making films right up--

JM: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JM: George.

VB: Aye.

JM: [laughs]

[MM enters with coffee]

VB: That's lovely. Thanks very much.

JM: Are you putting all this on her bill?

VB: [laughs]

JM: [laughs] Don't tell her yet, I said don't tell her yet.

VB: I don't think I'd be able to afford this sort of food and [laughs].

JM: You were saying, that niece of ours that had been for two days in Vienna, they were charging two pounds, two pound something for a cup of coffee.

VB: Yeah.

JM: And two pounds something for a pint a beer. For a bottle a beer.

VB: Yeah.

JM: About a third of a litre it is, really.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Good grief. Ah, Cagney. He couldn't really act, couldn't, Jim like. But eh, he filled in as a little eh, a little nasty gangster.

VB: I think you're right, yes. 'Cause he's always the same, wasn't he?

JM: [laughs] He weren't brilliant.

VB: [laughs]

JM: How he come to make that dancing part, I don't know. He must've been eh--

VB: That's right. *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, he was

JM: Aye. I didn't see, I've not seen it. I've heard of it like. But, how he came from gangstering and going to electric chair and things like that, to making dancing parts, I don't know.

VB: Ah. Oh he's certainly good at that.

JM: [laughs]

VB: I remember that scene where he has to turn yellow.

JM: Yeah. At the end. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

VB: Aw.

JM: [laughs]

VB: That was a disappointment for me. I don't think he should've done it!

JM: No. [laughs]

VB: I think he should've just gone. [laughs]

JM: [laughing] Aw.

VB: And Pat O'Brien as well.

JM: Pat O'Brien.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Ah, he was a, he was very cool.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Pat O'Brien with the eh, oh, my goodness. I can remember erm all now looking at this. Ah Jack Buchanan. Maurice Chevalier. Yeah. Yeah. [laughs] Yeah. [pause 3 seconds]. Ah these were the musicals. Goldwyns. [referring to producer Samuel Goldwyn]

VB: Mhm.

JM: How they used to put these things on. [pause 7 seconds]. Robin Hood. Errol. [pause 5 seconds] Aye.

VB: It sounds from what you're saying as if the, actually watching the film, the sort of visual part of it was a lot of the attraction too.

JM: Oh yeah. Yeah the eh, same as now, they really [come?]. 'Cause your background to everything is more, more natural.

VB: Yeah.

JM: And as I say, it used to be the studio.

VB: That's lovely. Thanks very much.

JM: As I say, you were always frightened from eh, always frightened of knocking into the back set of something and it falling down. But you can't knock mountains down. [laughs]

VB: Yes. [laughs]

[noise of tape preparation; pause 7 seconds]

VB: It's amazing. I find looking at that, to think it's just 1938. Saw so many great films. And as you say, so many stars.

JM: There's one or two good ones--

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

JM: Along with the big band. Benny Goodman. [pause 5 seconds] Yeah, the Laughton was eh, the Laughton was a good 'un. [pause 8 seconds] [laughs]

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

JM: Eh, I can't remember now.

VB: Mhm.

JM: They had eh, was it called 'Film Fun'? I think there was one.

VB: Mm.

JM: You were that busy going that you'd eh, you'd no time to read these.

VB: [laughs]

[pause 9 seconds]

JM: He, you've come to one of the English at last. [pause 9 seconds] You just can't believe, aw, there's the eh, Wallace. Wallace Beery.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Yeah. Gene Autry. The singing cowboy. Ah, Raymond Massey. See they tried the other eh, the other dancers, [acting?] but they were no--

VB: Mhm.

JM: Eh, you know, they talk about Gene Kelly and all, but they're nothing compared with eh, Fred and eh, Fred and Ginger.

VB: Mhmm.

JM: Even Fred's eh, other dancing partners. They had the name but they hadn't just the Ginger Rogers name.

VB: Yes.

JM: To eh, to put it over. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: So it was that sort of quality they had together. Yeah.

JM: It was eh, it was that magic eh [pause 3 seconds]. Walbrook. Now he eh, he had the resemblance to eh Donat.

VB: Mhm.

JM: With the little face. Just looking at it now. [pause 6 seconds]. Sonja. Sonja Henie. It is marvellous how they were able to build eh, a film round...

VB: She's got a lovely smile, hasn't she?

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Seeing that.

JM: Yeah, apart from being the world champion like that she had the looks and all.

VB: Mhm. Yeah. She's really lovely actually.

[pause 3 seconds]

JM: Silvia Sims. Oooh! Jack Hulbert. He had a chin like eh, you watch him on television, eh, Jimmy Hill.

VB: Oh yes.

JM: He's just the same, just the same chin. Yeah. Heidi.

VB: Did you like the child stars? I mean, Shirley Temple and--

JM: Well we went, but I can't eh, I can't remember much when eh... We went to see 'em, there were no doubt about that. As I say we'd go to watch anything. But eh, I can't eh... Look at all these. Look at back page. I spent all my money on that!

VB: [laughs]

JM: [laughs]

[pause 4 seconds]

JM: The Marx Brothers. [pause 5 seconds] [laughs] Yeah, it's brilliant that, isn't it? [pause 3 seconds] And that's only a few of them.

VB: I know.

JM: Eh! Good grief.

VB: I know. You see I find it amazing as well, just all these fantastic films.

JM: Yeah.

VB: In one year! It's just... and the stars.

[pause 3 seconds]

JM: I should think my generation seen most of them films, what's in the book, you know, all modern... Good grief. [pause 5 seconds] I don't think they'll be remembering films of today like we talking about these of, these of yesterday.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Aye. No danger. Nothing else.

VB: I think you're right. 'Cause I mean, the sort of films that you've been talking about, you can watch today and they're still--

JM: They're still good.

VB: As entertaining.

JM: They're still good. Any old film I reckon, that they show, they're still, they're still good. As I say in... I don't know whether they're showing any of these in Yugoslavia 'cause I'm not there long enough to see. But the old films from that period, eh, they're English-speaking but they do the subtitles in, in, [some Danish?]. So they're enjoying what we enjoyed forty, fifty year ago! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: They're slowly coming round. But when you see the eh, when you see the difference of the eh, the quality of the film from what it was, you used to think, ooh eh. But you didn't notice it was so rough. [laughs] You know.

VB: Yeah.

JM: When you see now. It's perfect. It looked like 3D, nearly, doesn't it nowadays--

VB: Yeah.

JM: Compared to then.

VB: Did you pay much attention to the technical side of things when you were watching a film in the thirties? I mean were you--

JM: You didn't. You just took it as it eh, just as, I mean eh, it must have been crackling and bumping and banging and all sorts. As I said when the eh, that picture hall we went in, the Castle, it didn't matter whether the trains went rattling by. When they were silent pictures. But, eh, in the middle of a murder scene, you'd have the eh, the train driver blowing the whistle outside. Something like that. An eh, with the building being wood, it'd be shaking. You know, the vital part. Might have been a

love scene, but it'd still be shaking. [laughs] [pause 5 seconds] [MM enters] Can't see any cheques there.

VB: No. [laughs]

JM: No. Aye, it made a difference when it was talking pictures instead of the silent, the silent type. 'Course, that was another thing. They had to do all their own eh, all their own stunts I believe. In them days like, you know. Seen somebody now, the latest, who is it? Somebody now he's exhausted or something. He'd been doing his own stunts and things instead of having a...

VB: Yes.

JM: He was in the paper this week or something.

VB: Oh that's right! Erm, the guy who was Superman.

JM: Something like that.

VB: Yes.

JM: He'd been trying to, yeah.

VB: And he's broken his neck.

JM: Yeah. Broke his neck.

VB: Or his spine or something.

JM: Good grief. Well, er, one of the families, one of the families we went to see, her husband, he'd been dead about fifteen year, he was a stuntman for the Austrian erm, for Austrian films. He got killed. About fifteen year ago.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Mhmm. Left this young daughter. She were only about twelve at that time. That's the one that was trying to talk English.

VB: Yeah.

JM: About fifteen or sixteen years ago. He was a stunt man for Austrian Television. Or Austrian, well, it'd be Austrian films I think. Because television is not so good now there. They've only two stations. But eh, aye, so Douglas Fairbanks and all them. They'd be eh, fighting away there and falling off buildings and all sorts.

VB: [laughs]

JM: No stunt men.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 3 seconds]

VB: It's amazing as well. Some of the sword fights and things.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: You mentioned Errol Flynn, with his--

JM: [inaudible] Mind, the very early ones, you always came home then and made a eh, got two pieces of wood. A small one for the cross. And then everybody had a sword then when they came out. When you were about ten years old and everybody had to have a sword fight. Somebody'd get cracked over the head and run home. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Douglas Fairbanks.

VB: I mean, did you do it because I mean, when you think of kids today or, you know, they're playing football and they're the stars.

JM: Oh yeah.

VB: I mean were you being Douglas Fairbanks versus Errol Flynn? [laughs]

JM: Oh yeah. As I say, when you were younger like, you'd come home and you'd make this eh, sword out of two pieces of wood, a nail in. And then you'd be going out, fighting each other. Well, trying to play about. Then, after a week, two days and that'd be gone. Yeah. You'd go back to your skipping rope or something.

VB: Then you'd see a cowboy film and--

JM: Oh, oh, that was... you'd have your gun with your caps.

VB: Ah.

JM: You used to have that little roll of, roll of caps. And eh, if you had one of them you were rich. You had to either use a piece a wood or your fingers. But you had eh, oh everybody was a cowboy.

VB: And was it the same sort of thing? Were you being sort of Tom Mix or something?

JM: Yes! Yeah, the same thing.

VB: Yeah.

JM: In fact, they're still playing it now, these people. I was in their club about two years ago, and one lad had a proper forty-five. [referring to a .45 calibre handgun] Dressed in this cowboy outfit. And he, he paid sixty-five pounds for it, to play at cowboys and Indians. And they had this show on and eh, the quickest draw and you could go and try and compete against him. And they were doing! So the grown-ups are still playing cowboys and Indians what I did when I were ten year old!

VB: [laughs]

JM: Aye.

VB: Oh dear. [pause 4 seconds] It is amazing. You know just the number of films you've mentioned and the stars and--

JM: It's eh... Well when you see that book.

VB: Yeah.

JM: And see how many you've seen, in the actual thing like, you know.

VB: Do you think you were aware at the time, of how lucky you were to... Or was it--

JM: Well, well I'd say now we was lucky.

VB: Yeah.

JM: You know.

VB: But at the time, did it seem something special?

JM: Didn't seem wasted or anything.

VB: No, no.

JM: In that respect. I mean I joke about it like. As I say now, if eh, if I'd have spent more time like, I'd no time for school. I went, and I listened, took it in. But, I always drew back from homework. Because if you had homework, you might not have been able to dash into the pictures at night. So the pictures came before homework. And eh, like we left at fourteen. So, on the last, knowing there were no more school, they used to read the reports out and they'd say, when they got to my name, they got pretty low. They'd say, "We finish at these." But at the last, I can honestly say on the last term, I left on the Christmas, when my exams came, I tried. And when they were reading the results out, they come to the number one, the number two, the number three. And she could hardly get the

number four of the class out because it was me. And I'd tried! 'Cause I thought, "There's no more school." I didn't realise that work would take up a lot of my picture time up either. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: But pictures come before eh, before homework. I'll put it that road [way].

VB: 'Cause I remember when you were talking before, you said that you, it was almost like you were living in the cinema.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah. Eh, I was always. Well up to being say, fourteen or fifteen or sixteen, I was always, went on me own to the pictures. And I could go anywhere. I would go anywhere. Means you got two shillings or half a crown [two shillings and sixpence] spending money then you were right for nearly every night. You know? If you hadn't then your mother was rich enough 'cause she'd an extra five shilling so she could give you another few shillings too. And eh, I'd go anywhere, every night. And eh, that's why I visited so many. And the one down at the corner, just lower down. Which you passed as you go over the bridge where the water is. Just on your right-hand side as you're going back to town [possibly referring to the Empire]. It's an exhaust place now. And that was the one where they had a different pictures three times a week. So, if you couldn't afford to go into town, at least you could go there three, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Mhm. One thing I wasn't allowed to do was go into the second house of the pictures which started at eight o'clock at night and finished at ten. Not until I was fourteen. And when I was fourteen, father said eh, "You can go in the second house." Well! You were about twenty-five year old then, like with this feeling, "Wayhay"! First time in the second, second half! Eight o'clock! "But be back for ten!" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Yes. 'Course, they wouldn't allow them in the second house. The younger, not like today, you know, they can go any time, but they wouldn't have allowed them in I don't think, anyway.

VB: Yeah.

JM: You'd got to prove you were fourteen, to get in, yeah.

VB: So you must've been almost working then, when you were allowed to go. Was that--

JM: Oh, I was working.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Just started work when he said eh, "Ooh you can go to second house now." You know, you're working and you're fourteen like, you know. 'Cause you worked till half past five, wherever you was, and you came home, so pictures started first at six o'clock. So, you were, it were a bit of a run, bit of a run. But eh, oh, yeah, fourteen. "You can go in the second house now." That was a path to my ruination. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Aye. Ah, that's one thing, we're still here to tell the tale.

VB: Oh yes.

JM: Ah. [pause 3 seconds] If ever you say anything like to my... my mate, he's sixty... sixty-six! He has tales to tell. [Annie?], my eh, son-in-law's mother, she's seventy in a couple of month. She said, "Ooh I remember when we used to sit on them forms [benches] in the pictures." And somebody'd get on the end and say "Move up!" So, all of a sudden, the one at that end would fall off. 'Cause they all moved up from one end and push you along, you know.

VB: [laughs]

JM: All have, all have memories of what eh, ah. Well it was so cheap, and there was nothing else. You really enjoyed it. But as I say, even at a penny, you just couldn't get a penny every night to, you know.

VB: Mhm.

JM: People hadn't got the penny, it was a meal. You could buy a big piece of fish for a penny or, you know, chips were only say eh, fish and chips were only about tuppence.

VB: Mhm.

JM: So if they took a penny off, your mother did without a meal, you know. This type of thing. Which didn't worry you at that age, you wanted your penny for your pictures. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: Ah. [pause 4 seconds] No, I always enjoyed it. [pause 3 seconds] I enjoyed it every time. Don't think they enjoy it as much now as what we did in them days. Not when you could go three or four times a week compared to once a year.

VB: Ah that's right, yes.

JM: With the prices and eh, and what have you.

VB: Yeah.

JM: No way. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: And so many of the cinemas now have got really small screens as well.

JM: Yeah, as I say, I've never seen these like.

VB: Yeah.

JM: So many in a--

VB: That's right. Where--

JM: A little group or something.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Aye. No, it's a... I mean they were full every night, you know, same people getting the money from somewhere to go like you know. I should think my mother went. Monday was washday, Tuesday was baking day. So it'd have to be Wednesday. Everybody did those two things, so Wednesday afternoon, where people not working, could go to the matinee, you know. 'Cause Thursday was cleaning up day, and Friday they waited for the wage to come in, if there was any, you know. So, Wednesday, I'm surmising, was the busy, the busy matinee day.

VB: Ah.

JM: So... But every night was a busy night for me! [laughs]

VB: [laughs] It must've, I mean for your mother, I mean, it must've been a great pleasure if she was working, you know, doing all these household things every day.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

VB: To get out on the afternoons.

JM: Yeah, just that one eh, just that one afternoon. As I say, we'd a lady next door, everybody did more or less the same, the same thing every week. As I say, washing day Monday, that was definitely Monday. And Tuesday, if they were baking, well everybody baked. Made their own bread and muffins 'cause they open fire and the oven there. And eh, so them were the two, two main days that was took up with that one. Why people had to clean up on Thursday as they called it, I don't know, but Thursday was cleaning up day and polishing brasses day.

VB: Yeah.

JM: Or black leading the fire day. So they couldn't go then.

VB: It's the same in Scotland as well. I mean the, erm, actually some people I know in different parts, did it on a Friday.

JM: Yeah.

VB: Others did it on a Thursday to be ready for the weekend sort of thing.

JM: Yeah. Well round here, as I say, washing day, baking day. That was the free day. Thursday cleaning up. And Friday was the clean apron day. Waiting for the wage to come in like, you know.

VB: Yeah.

JM: For the children like, so that were it. 'Cause we'd have no money Saturday and Sunday 'cause we hadn't enough money to go anywhere! [laughs]

VB: Aye. Did she, did your mother have any favourites in the pictures?

JM: I don't think so.

VB: No.

JM: I think she just went in for eh, as I said she couldn't read or write, so she just went in with her... If her mate didn't go in next door, then she couldn't go cause she'd no one to tell her what was--

VB: Ah!

JM: What was going on like, you know.

VB: Yeah.

JM: With the subtitles. So, I don't think she were a big... she'd have stayed home more. All her life she was a staying home one. You know, she weren't one for eh, going out or doing anything.

VB: Mhmm.

JM: You know.

VB: Do you think the pictures was a different sort of experience to people of your parents' generation? Did they see going to the pictures differently do you think?

JM: Eh [pause 4 seconds] well, they hadn't a great... I don't think they'd a great lot of eh, time or money to go... go. It was just perhaps be an odd, perhaps lucky to be once a week. Eh, eh, something in that line.

VB: Yeah.

JM: You know. I don't think they could live in the pictures like the young ones did like, you know. As I say, apart from Wednesday or something like that, one afternoon. Perhaps it couldn't be every week.

VB: Mhm.

JM: You know. It was relax, relaxing. I've never known her to go in, go in at night. Since father would be working. He worked all sorts of funny, funny times on the railway. And women couldn't just, at that time, women just couldn't go out and go on their own to anywhere. Eh, not even to a pub. They couldn't go and sit in a pub or, not like nowadays. Or, go to the pictures on their own and... they'd think they were eh, they'd think they were after another man or something, you know. Or, you know, very, very strict in that time. But for me own mother, she never eh, she never did anything. Never went out or anything. Never bothered. Shopping and looking after the family and that were it. Like this one here. She'd never go anywhere, apart from the holiday and things like that.

VB: Well, I mean, [laughs], that's fair enough, isn't it?

JM: I've said many time. Eh, well we've all the time in the world now. But she'll find work in the house, or doing something.

VB: It's a lovely, it really is a lovely house. It's very--

JM: Yeah. This was done with eh, all the family came, young and old. And stripped it. And then the eh, me daughter in her half term, she's a teacher.

VB: Mhm.

JM: Primary school teacher. She came, and she found out last year she could decorate. Which the majority of woman can.

VB: Yeah.

JM: And eh, she said, "I'll do it." So I did some pasting and she did some putting on. Then every time mother here come into room, she'd say, "Eh", she said, "Get out!" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: She'd be liable to say, "Could he not do?" 'Cause we've always decorated between us like.

VB: Yeah.

JM: She'd say, "Get out!" [laughs]

VB: 'Cause it's very professional. I mean I would've thought it'd had been--

JM: She did all this.

VB: Done by a professional.

JM: Yeah, it took us two days.

VB: It's great with the wee border and everything. It's lovely.

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Twice we've been away, we've come back, we've had rooms done. They've all descended and stripped everything and done it. And this time the eh, they did this. They stripped it on the Saturday, and then eh, we did it on the Monday. Monday and Tuesday. It was done.

VB: It's really, it's a lovely, it's just very nice and light and--

JM: Yeah, yeah.

VB: And summery really, I suppose. It's lovely.

JM: I say, this is it, this is it now. This is it, finished. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JM: No more decorating! [laughing]

VB: Aw, quite a job, I'll bet.

JM: I had some plates to put on that wall but eh, she, "No." I saw some spitfire on a plate. With being in the air force at one time. Thought, "Eeh, that's nice." And I bought one. This is one of the envelopes here. They keep sending and sending.

VB: Mhmm.

JM: And me son-in-law says, "You want another six now. Then we'll have one apiece." Me, like a mug, I goes and signs on for six.

VB: [laughs]

JM: They kept coming and coming. She thought they were only fourteen pound a time. They were twenty-one!

VB: [gasps; laughs]

JM: Good job she never looked at him more. 'Cause I finished up with seven! So they've all got one apiece! [laughs]

VB: Aw. I'm sure they're lovely though.

JM: Oh, they're lovely.

VB: At that sort of price! [laughs] They must be.

JM: Ah, I got four Constables and all for her. And she said, "Don't think we'll put them up." Because they were mine. "Not put them up." So I got four Constables. Same thing.

VB: I like this picture over the fire.

JM: That's, somebody brought it back from eh, Spain.

VB: Ah.

JM: One of my daughter-in-laws. The top scene is the centre of Graz where we go. They have a big clock in the centre of the eh, the town.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I was going to say, it's not unlike--

JM: Well this, this one's just a picture he'd bought in Spain or something and come back with it.

VB: Yeah.

JM: The one up there.

VB: Yeah. It puts me in mind a bit of the photos you were showing me.

JM: Yeah. Yeah that type of thing.

VB: Same sort of house.

JM: Yeah.

VB: And your clock's lovely as well.

JM: Well that's from Switzerland.

VB: Ah.

JM: That was eh, I think , when the second son went over to a niece in Switzerland, they bought him that. To come back with, aye. That's from an old lady what we used to help, that lived across the road. And when she finished she, we got that off her. She went in a home. She's still eh, going. She's ninety-six years old now!

VB: That's lovely. With the horses in it.

[End of Side A]

[End of Tape Two]

[End of Interview]