

Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1996 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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* Fakenham, Norfolk, 2 May 1996: Valentina Bold interviews Jack and Rose Smith

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn and Julia McDowell

* JS=Jack Smith, RS=Rose Smith, OP= Other person, VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: Second interview with Jack and Rose Smith as a couple; they were previously interviewed with other clients of Cranmer House on 24 October 1995, and Jack Smith gave a solo interview on 21 November 1995; Sound Quality: Fair; 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: [tape starts mid-conversation] I was remembering that when I was here the first time, you were telling me a bit about going to the cinema in Wells [referring to Wells next the Sea]. Were you saying that was the first place, the first time you went to the cinema was in Wells?

RS: Yes.

VB: What was that cinema actually like?

RS: Oh I haven't been lately.

VB: You haven't been lately.

RS: No.

VB: Was the cinema in Wells, eh, was that quite a big one?

RS: Yes, it was a big one.

VB: Yeah.

RS: But it closed.

VB: Right.

JS: Oh, there was two in Wells [referring to Regal Cinema and Park Cinema]. One at the corner and the one at Park Road.

VB: Ah right. Yeah. 'Cause I don't know the area very much at all so I'm not sure what Wells is like. I'm just going on what you've been telling me about it. Eh, so there were the two in the town then? [pause 3 seconds] I was very interested by some of the things you were telling me. And eh, I mean, you mentioned a lot of stars when we were talking and I was wondering if I could maybe ask you a bit more about that. Erm, I mean people like Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert.

JS: Yeah.

VB: For instance. What was it about them that made them so good?

RS: Sorry?

JS: Well, they was husband and wife, wasn't they?

VB: We were saying, [to RS], Jack Hulbert. And Cicely Courtneidge. Erm, I know your husband liked them very much.

JS: Yeah.

RS: I can't hear very well.

VB: Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge.

RS: Oh yes.

VB: Yeah. Did you like them as well?

RS: I don't know if I saw them, did I?

JS: Well you've seen everything. You went to the pictures a lot.

VB: I remember you said. Yeah.

JS: And then the funny thing, on eh, wireless on the morning they were talking about George Arliss.

VB: Ah!

JS: He was a straight actor but very, very [good?], you know, at that time.

VB: Mhm.

JS: They were talking about him on the wireless. [pause 2 seconds]

VB: Yeah, 'cause I remember you saying that you liked him as well.

JS: Cicely Courtneidge, then. 'Course eh, Jack Hulbert, he had a big chin. More like erm, Bruce Forsyth.

VB: Yes. [laughs]

JS: They was very, very good. I mean they was comedy. They'd be together mostly.

VB: Yeah. I mean I do actually have a book with me of thirties films but I realise that's not going to be, eh, you probably won't be able to have a look at that yourself but, erm, it's got some of the

stars that you mentioned, like... I mean, I'm just opening it almost at random, it's got Greta Garbo and Warner Baxter--

JS: Mhm.

VB: People like that. And I think there is actually one of Jack Hulbert. Yeah, Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. And as you say with that, that, huge chin.

JS: Yes.

VB: Aye. It's a nice picture of her as well. She's got a little hat on.

JS: Uhuh.

VB: Erm, a nice smile as well. [pause 3 seconds] I mean, I was wondering as well, erm, you were saying you didn't go to the cinema very often. What was it about, why was that? Was it just erm, not something that you did?

RS: Did I what?

VB: Going to the cinema. Was it just something you never liked doing much?

JS: Well, actually that was the sort of natural thing to do. More or less, you know.

VB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] 'Cause it was interesting the differences in people. You know, some people going quite a lot and others not so much. Erm...

JS: I mean, it's strange. There's still several cinemas about in different towns.

VB: Mhm.

JS: I mean, there's two or three in Norwich.

VB: Yeah. Yeah. It sounded like there were more cinemas around though--

JS: Yes. [laughs]

VB: When you were younger.

JS: They were talking about that the other morning on the wireless. Erm, one of them in Prince of Wales Road what changed its name. That used to be the [pause 3 seconds] [inaudible] and now that's the Norvic or something.

VB: Right.

JS: In eh, Prince of Wales Road.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Because there used to be two in Prince of Wales Road, round about twenty yards from one another [referring to the Regent].

VB: Yeah. 'Cause one, another thing I was wanting to ask you about was if your own family went to the cinema much. Did your parents go to the cinema?

RS: No, I don't think so.

VB: They didn't.

RS: No. 'Cause one, she lives in Walsingham.

VB: Yeah.

RS: And it's difficult for her to get from Walsingham so...

VB: Yeah.

RS: And eh, Janice lives in Shrewsbury so we don't see much of her.

VB: Yeah. Yeah. That's interesting.

JS: My mother and father neither of them never went.

VB: Did they not? Just never at all.

JS: No. No.

VB: Do you think that was something that was true of your parents' generation? That they just didn't...

JS: Well! That generation they was all... [pause 2 seconds] Actually, [pause 3 seconds], when my father, when they was young, that age, there might have been one at Fakenham, there wasn't any in Wells--

VB: Mhm.

JS: You know. That was after that when they started the building of them.

VB: Oh I see. Of course. So they just didn't have the chance.

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. It sounded, from what you were telling me, as if the way of life was, was very much different to erm, the way it is now really. Eh, I mean I wanted to ask you a bit more as well about your first jobs. Erm, I know you [RS] were saying you worked as a, as a nanny--

RS: Yes.

VB: When you left school. What was that like?

RS: Oh, it was lovely.

VB: Yeah.

RS: It was lovely. I did nothing but take the children out and ask the chauffeur to bring the car around. That was a real nanny that was.

VB: Yeah. So they were quite a well-to-do family then?

RS: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

RS: In Devonshire.

VB: In De-, ah! I see. Yeah.

RS: It was lovely.

VB: Were you there for long?

RS: Mhm?

VB: Were you in Devonshire for a long time? Or was it just a couple of years?

RS: Eh... [pause 4 seconds] Quite a long time, I think.

VB: Yeah.

RS: I can't remember how long.

VB: Yeah.

RS: They had two grownup daughters as well. But eh, Ken and Gwen came over the other day and eh, said that they'd both got cancer. Their parents are dead now. And eh, they'd both got cancer.

[pause 3 seconds] So, they used to walk across the fields, with no shoes on and all that kind of thing. It was silly really. Still... [pause 3 seconds] I had a lovely time there—

VB: It s—

RS: I used to take them, I had to take the boy to see their parents at nine o'clock in the morning until ten past. That's all the time they had with them. And the same in the evening. Ten to six till six o'clock and then they were put to bed.

VB: It sounds quite a disciplined--

RS: Yes, it was.

VB: Way of life. 'Cause I was hearing a bit as well about how erm, parents at that time were perhaps more disciplined with their children. Do you think that's right? I mean, your own parents, were they quite strict with you?

RS: Oh yes.

VB: Yeah.

RS: And eh, they both had single beds in one room.

VB: Mhm.

RS: And I slept next door to them.

VB: Mhm.

RS: It was lovely.

VB: Mhm. And I know you were saying your first job was in farming.

JS: Pardon?

VB: When you left school, did you go straight into farming work?

JS: Eh, I worked on a farm--

VB: Yeah.

JS: For a time and then, [inaudible], you see. But about four years working for somebody else.

VB: Yeah. Was that quite hard work that?

JS: Well it was hard work but if you were strong enough to do it, that was all right, you know.

VB: Yeah.

JS: And eh, actually speaking, when I started work I used to work for a farmer and a cattle dealer. So there was always a lot of droving. You know, driving the cattle from market to market. And so we used to get so much money for our lunch when we was out. So at our age, we were sitting pretty really.

VB: [laughs]

JS: For the money, I mean, what other people would get. I mean we used to go to [Wighton?] on the Thursday. Take some, bring some home, cattle. And you'd get half a crown for lunch. Sometimes we never bothered with it and we just got the half a crown--

VB: [laughs]

JS: Or sometimes, [laughs] we just went and had a three [pound] of chips and a little bit of fish!

VB: [laughs]

JS: In some ways we was the lucky ones. We was earning a bit of money!

VB: Yeah.

JS: You'd go out, you'd go to the pictures, well it was more or less dancing then than it was pictures.

VB: I remember you telling me a bit about when you were courting and going to the Hippodrome.

RS: Yes.

VB: What was--

JS: Oh yes!

VB: What was that like?

JS: The Hippodrome. That was good that was.

RS: Yeah.

VB: Was it expensive to go there?

JS: No, I don't think so. [pause 3 seconds] Oh, that was erm, trying to think of some of the people. Oh, you see, erm [laughs] Billy Cotton was there. Well, you know, 'A Lovely Bunch of Coconuts'. And of course, we were sitting in a box, we'd got a box. And he come out and he was smiling at us and he said, "[inaudible] cotton wool balls."

VB: [laughs] Did you dress up when you were going out?

JS: Oh no, no.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Well I didn't but you know, but some of the ladies did.

VB: [laughs] Did you ever try and copy the sort of clothes that the film stars were wearing when you were...

RS: Did I what?

VB: Did you ever try and dress like the film stars or did you get ideas for fashion or--

RS: Oh yes.

VB: You did.

RS: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

RS: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause looking at some of the dresses and erm, the hair and everything in the films of that time were very beautiful eh...

RS: Yeah.

JS: I remember Cyril Fletcher come to Norwich Hippodrome.

VB: Ah! [pause 3 seconds] It sounds like you were getting all the big stars and...

JS: Oh yes!

VB: Yeah.

JS: They had eh, good people there. [pause 6 seconds] 'Course they used to put some good plays on up the theatre and all at Norwich.

VB: Yeah. Did you go to the theatre much then? Were you going to the theatre much at the time?

JS: Not a lot. It had to be something special.

VB: Yeah.

JS: I remember one I know I went to see, erm, 'Forever Amber'.

VB: Ah.

JS: Have you read that book?

VB: I've heard of it but I don't know it.

JS: Don't you? Well that's--

VB: Is that not a bit, eh--

JS: A bit sexy, you know.

VB: Yes.

JS: There's a man who's a little bit mental. Sort of thing, yeah. 'Forever Amber'. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: It sounds like there was a lot of different entertainment--

RS: Oh there was. Yes.

VB: Available. Yeah.

RS: Mhm.

VB: When was it you came back from Devon to these parts?

RS: When did I come back?

VB: When did you come back from Devon?

RS: I can't remember. Erm...

VB: I was just curious 'cause I was wondering how the two of you met. Had you known each other when you were younger?

JS: No. No like eh, Rose's husband died.

VB: Yeah.

JS: My wife died.

VB: Yeah.

JS: I just happened to go to, she was at her sister's--

VB: Ah I see.

JS: And I called in there one night and...

RS: Jack's wife died on the way to hospital. From asthma--

VB: Oh dear.

RS: Didn't she?

JS: What?

RS: Your wife died on the way to hospital from asthma.

JS: Yeah.

VB: Mhm. [pause 4 seconds] That's...

JS: We once went... [laughs] When I was staying with Rose, before we was married, up in [Derbyshire?] we went to the [laughs] theatre there. Phoo! The smell of fish! [bursts out laughing]

VB: [laughs]. Ah! You've obviously been married quite a while though.

RS: Yes.

VB: When was it that you married?

RS: Sorry?

VB: When did you, when did you get married?

RS: Erm...

JS: Forty-two years.

RS: Well we've been married forty-two years.

VB: Forty-two years!

RS: So erm, that was in the Methodist Chapel.

VB: I see.

RS: In Wells.

VB: Yeah. So were you raised as a Methodist then?

RS: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

RS: I was a Methodist.

VB: Yeah.

RS: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: It's a, it's a long time.

RS: 'Tis, yes.

JS: But I remember, villages, you know what, then. There were two or three [inaudible] in Wells.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Twice a week they used to put a bus on to take you to the pictures at Wells.

VB: Ah.

JS: 'Cause I remember, 1947, you can't remember that. [laughs] There was a lot of snow. They got in the pictures at Wells and when, [laughing] and when they come out it was about three foot of snow! So they couldn't get out! [laughs] You know, and that was the bus always used to--

VB: I see.

JS: Go.

VB: Yeah. Was it quite full? I mean was it a full bus that went out to get to Wells?

JS: No, actually. [pause 3 seconds] It used to do eh, Binham.

VB: Mhm.

JS: And eh, Warham and then Wells. That's all they done. Them three, two villages and Wells where the pictures was! It used to be nearly full up!

VB: That's amazing. 'Cause I remember when you were telling me about how you knew a lot of the people that were in the picture house when you got there.

JS: Yeah.

VB: It sounds like it was quite a focus of interest.

JS: Yes!

RS: We lived on The Buttlands.

VB: Ah!

RS: A big house there. Called White Stones. And it was right opposite the telephone kiosk. And on the first turning to The Buttlands. But eh... [pause 3 seconds] I don't know why we left. Why did we leave? Oh, I couldn't do the stairs, could I?

JS: Pardon?

RS: I couldn't do the stairs at The Buttlands--

JS: No.

RS: No. After a while.

VB: Mhm.

RS: And eh, so that was when we went to Mill Road. [pause 3 seconds] That was nice there but nothing like the Buttlands.

VB: Mhm.

RS: It was lovely.

VB: Mhm. It's very nice round about here actually.

JS: Mhm.

RS: Sorry?

VB: It's very nice round here.

RS: Ooh, it is.

VB: Yeah.

JS: It's a lovely place.

VB: Yeah.

JS: It's a lovely place. [pause 5 seconds]

VB: I mean, it was interesting as well when erm, you were telling me about playing football and all the sports and outdoor sort of life. When you were growing up. [pause 3 seconds] I'm sure, I'm sure that's why working on a farm wasn't, didn't seem like hard work. You must have been quite fit, [laughs] with all the...

JS: Well it was. [laughs] It was hard work but if you were strong enough, well you never noticed it.

VB: Yeah. Could I ask you both, did you have brothers and sisters?

RS: Sorry?

VB: What sort of size of family you came from yourself. Did you have brothers? Sisters?

RS: Oh yes!

VB: Yeah.

RS: I've got eh, a sister in Wells now.

VB: Ah, I see.

RS: Erm... [pause 3 seconds] What's her name? What's Win's name?

JS: Pardon?

RS: What's Win's name?

JS: Win's name?

RS: Yeah.

JS: Smith.

RS: Oh Mrs Smith! Of course.

VB: [laughs]

JS: [laughs]

VB: That's why you forgot. [laughing]

JS: [laughs]

VB: Ah.

RS: She lives in a big house as well. On The Buttlands.

VB: Mhm.

JS: No I had two sisters and erm, three brothers.

VB: Uhuh. That's a good size of family.

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. And the other thing I wanted to ask was erm... [knock on door]

OP: Sorry to disturb you. I'm sorry your coffee's not here yet. Would you like a cup of coffee, Rose and Jack? Together?

JS: Pardon?

OP: Would you like a cup of coffee with Val?

JS: I don't want one. Maybe the young lady would like one.

OP: Rose, would you like one?

RS: No thank you.

VB: Yes, that would be great.

OP: You don't, I'll just make one for...

VB: That'd be lovely. Thanks. Yeah. 'Cause the other thing I wanted to ask, just so that I had it right, was eh, what your parents did for a living. What sort of work your father did.

RS: He was a gamekeeper.

VB: A gamekeeper! Ah!

RS: Eh, royalty. Erm... [pause 3 seconds] Who was it for? [pause 4 seconds] Who was dad gamekeeper for?

JS: Lord erm... [pause 3 seconds] [laughs] I can't think now.

VB: Mhm.

RS: That's many years ago now.

VB: Sure. But was that in the area he was working?

RS: What?

VB: Was that round about the sort of, you were brought up in Monmouthshire, is that...

RS: Yes. Monmouthshire.

VB: Yeah. So that's where your father was a gamekeeper. Yeah.

RS: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] He worked for some very well up people there. They used to clothe me. Buy me capes and all sorts of things.

VB: Mhm.

RS: 'Cause there were, there were five of us.

VB: Mhm. [pause 4 seconds; coffee arrives] No, that's great [to OP]. Thanks very much. Thanks a lot.

OP: [inaudible].

VB: Lovely. That must have been quite a, quite a, erm, it sounds lovely, from what you're saying, to be brought up in that sort of setting.

RS: Yeah.

VB: Sounds like you were very lucky.

RS: Yes, I was.

VB: Yeah.

RS: There were five of us. But I was the favourite sort of thing.

VB: Ah, [laughs] I see.

RS: [laughs]

VB: You weren't the youngest? Were you the youngest?

RS: Mhm.

VB: Ah, I see.

RS: And I'm eighty-four now!

VB: Oh well. [laughs]

RS: So is Jack.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Pardon?

VB: Neither of you look it, I have to say.

RS: Sorry?

VB: Neither of you look eighty-four.

RS: No.

VB: It's a good age.

RS: Jack's eh, three months older than me.

VB: Ah. What did your parents do? What did your father do? What kind of work?

JS: He was erm, farm foreman on three farms.

VB: I see.

JS: Well then, after we took the farm, a small farm, he took one and all then.

VB: Uhuh.

JS: But he was sort of farm foreman on three farms.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Those were the days when he never had a, he used to have a pony and cart to drive round in.

VB: Oh. Yeah.

JS: [inaudible]. I'm blind now. I think a lot.

VB: Yeah.

JS: I was thinking of Wighton. That's only a little village where I was born. I remember there was one lady there had a donkey cart, what she used to take people to the station. All the luggage and that. [laughs] Another one had a pony and cart! To do the same thing, you see. All them little things.

VB: Aw. It's hard for me to imagine because it sounds so different from...

JS: Yes.

VB: When you think of the traffic and the...

JS: Yeah.

VB: Do you think that made, do you think life then was eh, you know, you may not have had the cars and things...

JS: We was far happier. There wasn't the boredom. Young ones, they got nothing to do. You know, they say they got nothing to do now. But where I lived in Wighton, when I was in Wighton, there was a by-road to go round and go into Wells, you know.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Wells would be about a four-mile walk. And about three mile the other way, when we come home. Well then after tea we decided just to go for them walks! Like that.

VB: Mhm. I know what you mean. 'Cause I was brought up in the country myself--

RS: Yes.

VB: And me and my friend, we would just go and walk about and talk and eh, there always seemed to be something to do--

JS: Yes.

VB: Even though you weren't erm, paid to do something. [laughs] [pause 6 seconds] I don't know if it was like that for you but there were always erm, animals to see--

JS: Oh yes.

VB: And, just really watching what was happening.

JS: Yeah. But erm, at winter time, we used to have, once a week or perhaps twice, we went to [inaudible] dances.

VB: A-ah.

JS: About four or five of us. Summertime there used to be some but, we went, but we weren't so keen on them in summertime.

VB: Mhm. That's interesting. I suppose in the winter there was maybe less to do outside or--

JS: Yes.

VB: Yeah. Did you ever, say in the house, did you ever have singsongs?

JS: Oh, yes!

VB: You did!

JS: Yes.

VB: Yes.

JS: Well of course there was nobody in our family [laughs] could play a piano!

VB: Ah, I see.

JS: At all. [laughs; pause 3 seconds]

VB: And did you play games and things at home or... [pause 3 seconds]

JS: Well I remember when we was, [pause 3 seconds] draughts and all them sort of games.

VB: Yeah.

JS: We'd have a game at some of them. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: It sounds from what you're saying as if you were never really bored. There was always something to do.

RS: Yes. My father walked across two ploughed, two fields. Deep with snow, when I was born. To fetch the nurse. [laughs]

VB: Really!

RS: [laughs]

VB: That would be the midwife, was it?

RS: The what?

VB: He was getting the midwife.

RS: Midwife.

VB: Yeah. He must have had a very busy life if he was a gamekeeper.

RS: Sorry?

VB: He must've been very, a very busy man if he was a gamekeeper.

RS: He was. Yes.

VB: There'd be a lot to do.

RS: Yeah.

VB: Did your mother work on the estate as well or was she just raising the family?

RS: She was with the family.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I know gamekeeper's wives are sometimes eh, expected to do a bit of, you know...

RS: Yes. She didn't though.

VB: She didn't do anything.

RS: 'Cause there were five of us, you see.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] Did they have, did the family ever have guests down to the house?

RS: Eh... [pause 2 seconds] No I don't think so.

VB: You didn't. I was wondering when you said gamekeeper, if they ever had shooting parties or anything like that.

RS: I used to do bed and breakfast when I lived at White Stones.

VB: Ah, I see. Yeah.

JS: We used to have a lot of relatives, you know, from London and that. They used to come quite a lot. [laughs]

VB: Mhm. Was that to get out of the city and have a bit of a...

JS: They used to come holidays and then perhaps we would go up there for holidays.

VB: Ah, I see. Did you do that when you were a child then? Going up to London for...

JS: First time I went up to London I was three, and I can remember that!

VB: [laughs] That's amazing.

JS: 'Course the policeman come after me 'cause I was climbing on [laughing] the Queen Victoria Memorial outside Buckingham Palace. [laughs]

RS: [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Bit of a troublemaker then! [laughs]

JS: [inaudible] walking on them steps. 'Course well it hadn't steps really. Brickwork done round.

VB: Aw dear.

JS: And then after that, I remember, I hadn't left school and we went to Southend on holiday. I remember going down there with my mother.

VB: Ah. What sort of things did you do when you were on holiday? Did you...

JS: Well you used to more or less walk round the shops and sit on the beach! [laughs]

VB: Mhm. Yeah. [laughs] It's enough, isn't it? If it's a nice summer.

JS: Yes.

VB: Yeah. So you were going up to London fairly regularly though with your...

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Fairly regularly. Went up every [inaudible], you know.

VB: How did that strike you? The city. Did you like going to the city?

JS: Oh, I didn't mind going to that. Just for a holiday, I didn't want to stop there. But that was nice to go for a holiday.

VB: Yeah. Did your family go on holidays much when you were a child, were you...

RS: No, the family didn't.

VB: No. [pause 4 seconds] I suppose if you've got relatives to go to it makes it, makes it easier.
[pause 4 seconds]

RS: We've been to all over. We've been to Scotland. Eh, Isle of Man. Erm... [pause 3 seconds] Where else have we been? [pause 4 seconds]

JS: I was on holiday up in London when erm, the exhibition was, Wembley Exhibition.

VB: Oh.

JS: 1924.

VB: Yeah. That must've been quite something.

JS: Oh, that was. Yes. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: Was it very busy when you went? 'Cause I imagine something like that being...

JS: Oh... [pause 4 seconds] You was willing to walk, if you understand what I mean.

VB: Mhm.

JS: 'Cause it was a big place, you see, to see what they got there. Well that was Canada on that stand. They had a big cow made out of butter.

VB: [laughs]

JS: Then they got the Flying Scotsman, the engine in there. And, ooh, and I tell you what I did see there, the day I was there. Jackie Coogan.

VB: Oh really!

JS: But eh, Charlie Chaplin wasn't with him.

VB: Yeah. He must've been very small, Jackie Coogan. In 1924!

JS: He was small.

VB: [laughs] 'Cause I remember you telling me about seeing the film [referring to *The Kid*] and erm, you know, and one of your first memories was going to see Charlie Chaplin.

JS: Yeah.

VB: That's amazing. Must've been quite exciting, seeing a film star.

JS: Yes. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: 'Cause I was wondering, do you think the films in the thirties were worse, better than the films that they make now or... The films in the thirties.

RS: They do what?

VB: I was wondering if you preferred or thought the... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

JS: There's too much violence in all of them.

VB: Yeah.

JS: There's hardly a film today what there aren't guns in it.

VB: Yeah. It's interesting what you say. 'Cause it's different from, I know when I came before we were talking about westerns--

JS: Yes.

VB: And it's a different sort of violence though, isn't it?

JS: Oh yes.

VB: Yeah. I don't know, in the westerns it's more the, you know, the goodies and the baddies and--

JS: [laughs] Yes.

VB: [laughs] Not so much blood and...

JS: No. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: I mean what do you think it was that made the films then, you know, you're saying they're better than the ones now.

JS: Well that might have been my imagination really. I mean you hear somebody saying, "That was a lovely film," on the telly at nights.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Well, I suppose I can't see nothing now but, well you might see a little bit. Now and again you get one sort of... Now that thing was absolutely marvellous. I could just see a little bit of that. That 'Pride and Prejudice'.

VB: Oh yes. Yeah.

JS: That was serialised, wasn't it? Every Saturday night that come on.

VB: Yeah.

JS: That was really, really good that was.

VB: Yeah.

JS: You could get interested in it.

VB: Mhm.

JS: You don't get many like that now.

VB: Was it the story that you liked about that? Do you think the...

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JS: I was listening to it on the wireless. All the clothes they wore, they're putting on a show somewhere.

VB: Ah. Yeah.

JS: And they were talking to someone and they said, "Will they keep them?" They said, "We can keep some, and the others, we've got to do something, either cut them up and make them into something else..."

VB: Yeah. I didn't see it myself--

JS: Oh you didn't see it? No.

VB: But I heard a lot of good reports of it. Did you like these sort of erm, historical films? I mean I'm thinking about some of the films in the thirties. Things like maybe eh, the ones they made of Dickens. Like 'David Copperfield' or that sort of thing? Or was that something that didn't appeal to you so much then?

JS: I didn't see them.

VB: Do you think your tastes changed then? Say from when you were, I'm wondering if your tastes in films changed from say you were a young teenager to late teens or, older or...

JS: Well eh, [pause 2 seconds] television. It isn't as good as it was for different things. I mean when they serialise some of them there Charles Dickens, like 'David Copperfield' and all that.

VB: Mhm.

JS: Well I know I couldn't see them now. But you never heard nothing about it. We hadn't had the television long, when that was, [pause 3 seconds] 'The Railway Children' was on. And then there was another one on, they've never been on since. Only that once.

VB: Mhm.

JS: 'The Silver Sword'--

VB: Mhm.

JS: That was absolutely marvellous.

VB: Mhm.

JS: But that's never been shown a second time.

VB: Yeah. I think that seems to be the way. If it's something you enjoy, [laughs] you don't see it again.

JS: Yes. Yes I mean like, 'The Railway Children' has been on and on and on! Hasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

JS: 'The Silver Sword'.

RS: Aw it was lovely, wasn't it?

VB: What was that about?

JS: A little boy in a foreign country. He was all on his own and this woman looked after him with her children.

VB: Mhm.

JS: And 'course he was a lot of trouble. Then one day he called her mother!

VB: Right.

JS: At the end, that was the end that was, you see. I don't know, what was his name who was in it? That little man who was in erm, [pause 3 seconds] 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum'. What d'you call him? [possibly referring to Melvyn Hayes]

VB: Oh, I know the one you mean. I can't remember his name.

JS: He was in it as a boy. He was that little boy.

VB: Ah-h!

JS: Yeah. Oh that was good, that was. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: Do you like stories with a bit of adventure in them then?

JS: Well I don't know. I liked erm, [inaudible]. I also liked Heidi.

VB: Yeah. Did you like erm, stars like Shirley Temple? When you're talking. 'Cause she was in the film of that, wasn't she?

JS: Well we used to look at them, you know.

VB: Yeah.

JS: And erm... [pause 3 seconds] What did she used to sing? Eh... [pause 4 seconds]

VB: Shirley Temple.

RS: Yeah.

VB: There's that, 'The Good Ship Lollipop' [referring to *Bright Eyes*] [laughs]

JS: That's right. That's right.

VB: She wasn't around very long, was she?

JS: No.

VB: Yeah.

RS: Show the lady those--

JS: Well eh...

RS: Photographs, Jack. Show the lady those photographs.

JS: Pardon?

RS: Photographs.

JS: What she say?

VB: The photographs.

JS: We ain't got any.

RS: In your wallet.

JS: No, I haven't got no photographs in my wallet.

RS: You did.

JS: No. [pause 5 seconds] But then again when, [pause 3 seconds] oh it was perhaps, ten, eleven or twelve, something like that, they used to have a magic lantern.

VB: Ah.

JS: We used to look forward to that to come. We knew that was coming. [laughs] We'd go into church to see this here magic lantern. That was only sort of slides. They keep slipping... [laughs]

VB: What sort of shows were they?

JS: More or less eh, well some of them was religious films and all that but, there wasn't violence or anything.

VB: Mhm. That must've been really exciting actually.

JS: Yeah. [laughs] Magic lantern.

VB: Yeah. Was that quite, was that quite noisy?

JS: No it wasn't too bad.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] You didn't ever see any of the travelling cinemas, did you? 'Cause I've heard about some of the cinema shows that--

JS: No.

VB: Toured a bit.

JS: You know what I mean erm, I've heard about them in the paper, locally years ago--

VB: Yeah.

JS: But I never did see one.

VB: Yeah. But they were around, it was just that...

JS: Yeah. [pause 5 seconds]

VB: As I say, it sounds almost like a different world. To me, when you describe it.

JS: Maybe because, you know, where we were situated, we wasn't far off the sea, was we?

VB: Ah.

JS: When we lived at Wighton, we was only three miles from Wells. Summertime we spent an enormous lot of our time down there. Like erm, after cockles and mussels and--

VB: Aw.

JS: All that sort of thing. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: Did you swim a lot?

JS: Swim, a fair bit.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Only, actually speaking, Wells is not the best place to swim. There not a lot of water when the tide was out, and when that was coming in that could be eh, there's a place where the lifeboat [house?].

VB: Mhm.

JS: [Where that come round the coast?]. They used to rush round there.

VB: Yeah. [pause 4 seconds] It sounds lovely spending time...

JS: We was at Warham. Marshes, just about a mile along the road from Wells. We was on them marshes one night. After tea. Don't know what we was doing. Just walking about I suppose. Well, the water come in behind you when the tide come in. Everybody was [caught out?], the seven of us-

-

VB: Whoooph!

JS: [We knew what to do?]. We walked out on the sandbank to erm, there's some sandbanks near Wells. There's erm, I'm trying to think what they call them. With trees on. Well we walked as far as there. [laughs] We couldn't strike a match because, the only one who got any matches, he tried eh, he [got into?] the water and it was too deep--

VB: [laughs]

JS: So we ain't got no matches but--

VB: [laughs]

JS: We could see the people with lights on Wells Quay going backwards and forwards. And we was [inaudible]--

VB: Aw dear.

JS: Till they come early morning--

VB: [laughs]

JS: When we got off. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: Bit of an adventure that.

JS: Yes.

VB: Ah.

JS: Yeah, you see, we used to spend a lot of the time there, on the beach.

VB: Was it quite a busy place in the summer? Wells. Was it...

JS: I should say! For fish and chips--

VB: Yeah.

JS: That the busiest place [laughing] in the world!

VB: [laughs]

JS: I mean Wells has not above two or three thousand people.

VB: Mhm.

JS: But the other side of the road, the flood barrier, there's a little hall [inaudible]--

VB: Mhm.

JS: Well Saturdays and Sundays, summertime, there's enough fish and chip papers along there, they had a big skip to put them in. That [was] full up and they lay everywhere!

VB: Aw. [laughs]

JS: Early morning, thousands of fish and chip papers.

VB: [laughs]

JS: No, it's only a small place.

VB: Mhm. A lot of summer visitors though.

JS: Oh a lot a visitors.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Day visitors and Saturdays and Sundays are very busy.

VB: Yeah. [pause 6 seconds] It certainly sounds like you kept very busy and there was a lot happening.

JS: Yeah. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: I mean, I'm not surprised really, you didn't go to the cinema much. It sounds like you had enough to keep you occupied. I was wondering, did your erm, [pause 3 seconds] did your family disapprove at all of going to the cinema?

RS: Sorry?

VB: I know some people have told me that sometimes eh, the church was a bit disapproving of some of the films. I don't know if that was something you found yourself?

RS: What service?

VB: I'm saying, some people have told me that their church was a bit disapproving of going to the cinema. I don't know if that was something that you ever came across.

RS: No.

VB: No. I just wanted to see. How about you? 'Cause you were saying that your parents were quite strict.

JS: Well they were [inaudible], but they wasn't strict.

VB: They weren't. No.

JS: If my father, I told you, he used to go on three farms, well Warham was one of them.

VB: Yeah.

JS: If anybody was to say to him, "Tell Jack there's a whist drive and dance tonight"--

VB: Yeah.

JS: He'd tell me when I got home. And some nights when I was dressing up to go out he said, "Why are you going out?" Another time, if I sit there, weren't doing nothing, he'd say, "You got nowhere to go tonight?" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JS: No, they was good people. But, you know, they wasn't like that. Because, actually speaking, the religion in the villages years ago was wicked. They all had to go, whoever they worked for, you know, they had to go to church--

VB: Ah. Yeah.

JS: And that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah. Was it Church of England your parents were?

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

JS: I mean some used to go to Chapel but eh, they didn't like it.

VB: Ah, I see. That's interesting. So, as you say, the employers, kind of encouraged people.

JS: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 6 seconds]

JS: I'm trying to think of something else. [pause 3 seconds] But erm, well after we was married, Rose used to sort of run the youth club and all that sort of thing.

VB: Mhm.

JS: So.

VB: I know, 'cause you were telling me, it sounds like you were very active in the community.

RS: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Then she was a magistrate, you see, for a lot of years.

RS: Twenty-five years I was a magistrate.

VB: I'm sure you knew a lot of what was going on.

RS: Thirteen years I was nursing.

VB: Yeah.

RS: So I've had a busy life.

VB: Very much. Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: I was saying, as a magistrate you must've known a lot of what was going on in the area. [pause 7 seconds] I'm just thinking actually, I should maybe head off.

RS: It's all right. You don't have to [inaudible].

VB: You don't. [laughs] I don't want to keep you. I may have to go myself in a minute or two anyway 'cause I'm going to get a bus back into Norwich.

RS: Are you?

VB: Yeah.

RS: Oh, you've come from Norwich.

VB: Yeah. And I'm going back to Glasgow today so--

RS: Oh gosh.

VB: I've got a long journey ahead of me. [laughs] Yeah.

JS: That is, that is, [about four hundred miles?].

VB: I know. That's right. It must be easily that. But it's quite erm, I enjoyed coming over on the bus and seeing a bit of the countryside.

JS: Mhm.

VB: It's really lovely round here.

RS: [sneezes]

VB: The farms that your father was looking after, were they all round about Wells?

JS: Oh yeah, well we didn't do nothing. I mean if we was sort of making a bit of noise in the street.

VB: Yeah.

JS: Wells is really more or less one street or two streets. You went past the doorway you got a clump behind the ear. That was a policeman, [laughing] stood in the doorway.

VB: [laughs] Aw.

JS: [laughing]

VB: So you couldn't get away with very much. [laughs]

JS: No.

VB: Were your family from Wells as well?

JS: No. Wighton we was brought up in.

VB: From Wighton. Yeah, yeah.

JS: That's only three miles from Wells but--

VB: Were your family from the Monmouthshire area?

RS: We didn't have any family there.

VB: Ah, I see.

RS: Well we did.

VB: Yeah.

RS: We had a brother and sister but they're both dead--

VB: Yeah.

RS: And another sister lives in [Wells?]. And another sister's in a home.

VB: Right.

RS: At erm, [pause 3 seconds] Unthank Road.

VB: Oh yes.

RS: She doesn't speak to anybody.

VB: Mhm.

RS: She's always been a bit queer.

VB: Oh. [laughs] Ah. [pause 4 seconds] As I say, I'm glad you're keeping better yourself 'cause I know you've had a few health problems recently. [pause 4 seconds]

RS: You saw me in hospital did you?

VB: I didn't see you in hospital. I came, I was going to be speaking, I came to see you both, but it was just when you'd gone into hospital. So I had a chat with Jack erm while you were away. But eh, no, that must've been, was it November or early December when you were in the hospital? Towards the end of last year I think.

RS: I don't know what was wrong.

VB: Yeah. Well maybe you've been in since, but I think you were in for a few days at the time. So, I don't know, it sounds like you maybe have been in since then. I think it was November or December. 'Cause I came first in July, something like that, and then back to see you again. So, as I say, it's nice to see you in better health now.

RS: Yes.

VB: I phoned up and heard you had, was it a chest thing?

JS: Oh there was another I was thinking about. You should remember her. Two Ton Tessie [referring to Tessie O'Shea].

VB: Oh!

JS: Do you remember her?

VB: I don't, no.

JS: Well she was very large and, when we was up in London for the Cup Final, we went to see her variety show at the Palladium. And she came on riding an elephant!

VB: [laughs]

JS: Well the funny thing, and the Monday night, she fell off this elephant, so she didn't ride it any more. She led it in.

VB: [laughs] Two Ton Tessie! Ah. Did she do anything else apart from ride elephants?

JS: Oh dance.

VB: She danced!

JS: And eh, play the guitar and that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah. She sounds quite something.

JS: Yes. Well she was. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

JS: She was much bigger than Hattie Jacques. Can you remember her?

VB: Yes, I remember her. Yeah. And she was pretty big as well. [laughs]

JS: Yeah.

VB: Aye. [pause 6 seconds]

RS: Did you know Elizabeth Guest. The daughter.

VB: No I didn't.

JS: I don't want to be rude, but how's the time going?

VB: It's about erm, just coming up for half eleven now.

JS: Oh.

VB: Yeah. As I say, I should probably be heading off, although it's been lovely talking to you both again. Thanks very much for allowing me to come and talk to you.

RS: That's all right.

VB: It's been really good. Erm, 'cause I did want to find out a bit more about the way of life really.

JS: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause it's interesting to eh, kind of put the films in their place--

RS: Yes.

VB: You know, in the whole range of things. Erm, so as I say, thanks very much for telling me about all that.

JS: Oh well, maybe we'll think of something else before you come again. [laughs]

VB: Yeah. [laughs] No, it's been really good. So as I say I'd better...

[End of Side B]

[End of Interview]