

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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* Needham Market, Suffolk, 8 November 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Leonard and Mickie (Minnie) Rivers

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn

* LR=Leonard Rivers, MR= Mickie Rivers, EI=Eileen (friend), VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: Second of two interviews with Leonard and Mickie Rivers; Sound Quality: Poor; 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 introduction]

LR: Film called *The Wrecker*.

VB: Oh!

LR: With Jack Holt

VB: Yes.

LR: I've never heard of the film since.

MR: [laughs] [inaudible]

VB: I've a feeling you mentioned Jack Holt the last time I was here. And eh, I didn't know very much about him at all. Erm, was he quite a well-known star at the time or--

LR: Well, now.

VB: Was it just that one--

MR: There weren't as many stars about then as there are now.

VB: Ah.

LR: I was taken up by mother.

VB: Mhm.

LR: Up to [inaudible]. And that's where I saw him.

VB: Ah I see.

LR: But the only bit I remember of the film is [inaudible] called *The Wrecker*. And he [inaudible].

VB: Ah! [laughs]

LR: He [says something about railway line; inaudible].

VB: Ah I see. Was it a comedy, or...?

LR: We-ell, I don't know. I shouldn't think so.

VB: Yeah.

LR: [inaudible]. Jack Holt in *The Wrecker*. [inaudible]

VB: Ah.

LR: I remember that bit, you know, where [you get this steam engine?]. [says something about railway line and train; inaudible]. His name was Jack Holt.

VB: Right.

LR: H, O, L, T. Not H, A, L, T.

VB: Ah, I see. So it must've made a big impression on you then. That, that scene anyway.

LR: Well eh, [inaudible; says something about being a toddler?]. Well they [pulled?] in the talkies. [pause 3 seconds] That's who I saw. But the rest of the film I remember nothing about.

VB: Ah.

LR: [inaudible] I wasn't very old. Well I am now but eh, there you are. That's the only bit I remember-

VB: That's lovely. Thanks very much. It's amazing how these little things stick in your mind, isn't it?

LR: Mhmm.

VB: As you say, that one scene. Just pop this over here actually.

MR: [inaudible]

VB: Ah! I think you'd done the first version of that when I saw you last.

MR: Oh that was that little--

VB: That little one, yes. How beautiful! They're lovely. [voices in distance; inaudible] They're so unusual.

MR: [voice in distance; inaudible] [laughs]

VB: You've got a wonderful erm sense of colour and everything, I think. These are lovely.

MR: I try.

VB: [laughs]

MR: I thought you'd like to see them.

VB: Ah!

MR: [inaudible] I like Christmas shopping [in Ipswich and every festival?] [inaudible; I hate it?]

VB: Aw!

MR: Never mind, so--

VB: Well, at least, at least you're in the mood.

MR: I like to get it all done before the crowds.

VB: Yeah.

MR: 'Cause you know basically what you're gonna give. If you run out of money it gives you another week to choose, so that's one or two more pennies. [inaudible] We'll manage. There's such a lot of us, that's the trouble, we're just such a big family.

VB: You were saying with all your friends as well--

MR: That's right. Ah. Never mind, that's how it goes. Ah. [pause 2 seconds] So what did you want to ask?

VB: Right. Well I noted down one or two things. Erm, I mean some of the stars that you mention I was quite interested to ask you a bit more about. Erm, I mean you mention people like eh, Charles Boyer--

MR: Oh-h!

VB: I mean, what--

MR: "Ooh my da-hling!" [laughs]

VB: Ah. What was it about--

MR: He was French wasn't he? The most wonderful accent. And a dark brown velvet voice. I mean even now at my old age, he makes me toes tickle!. [laughs] He was lovely.

VB: So it was the way he sounded--

MR: Oh yes, yes.

VB: That was part of the attraction.

MR: He was attractive but erm, [pause 2 seconds] to us schoolgirls, he was old. Because I was only a girl. Fifteen, sixteen. But erm even, oh, few months back we watched one of his old films. Well just caught the end of it 'cause we always watch 'Countdown' and 'Fifteen to One' in the afternoon and try and compete. Thrilled to bits when we get a question right and the others get it wrong!

VB: [laughs]

MR: Often happens... more often happens in the reverse order. But erm, we caught the end of one of his films and I said to Leonard, "Oh! Ah-h-h." [laughs]

VB: It's interesting that you say at the time he seemed too old. So he wasn't someone that you had a--

MR: Oh-h no!

VB: Strong romantic interest in then.

MR: No, no, no. It was just, just the way he sounded.

VB: Ah I see.

MR: I've got a thing about voices. Men's voices especially. I don't like loud voices. I don't like people shouting. But this chap has got the most beautiful rich dark brown velvet voice. And I don't think I ever heard a voice like it again. Until I spoke to my niece's prospective husband [pause 2 seconds] on the wedding day and he was French. And he'd got that same dark brown, velvet voice. But erm, his behaviour didn't match. But there we are.

VB: Ah, you can't have it all! [laughs]

MR: [laughs] No, you can't. But Charles Boyer was special.

VB: Ah. It's interesting. 'Cause some of the other stars that you mentioned when you say that about the voice erm, I mean you mentioned Ronald Colman as well. He's got a--

MR: Oh, beautiful way of speaking.

VB: Yeah.

MR: Lovely diction. We used to get that then. All film stars looked good, and spoke well. You all right Leonard?

LR: [inaudible] do they?

MR: No, they don't.

LR: The diction is--

MR: Gone.

LR: Gone.

MR: I think that goes because erm, now regional accents are in favour. At one time you had to speak King's English or, or you were nothing, were you? I mean people with Suffolk accents like myself and my husband, that was awful. But now, you see, they're encouraged. [pause 2 seconds] And I don't think people were taught quite the same way. They're discovered now [inaudible]. They don't sort of have actors and actresses who play this part and can go on to another and another. There's so many of them, I think, now. More selected for that special part. They don't seem to use them, anywhere else. So... they're typecast more, aren't they?

VB: That's interesting.

MR: Don't you think so?

VB: I think you're on to something there. I mean it sounds as if the stars of the thirties were more-

MR: Versatile.

VB: Versatile. Yeah, that's right.

LR: Yes. They were.

MR: They were.

LR: Part of their erm, eh, [fame for parts?] is they spoke English. If they didn't speak English, they didn't get in--

MR: On the other hand, when they needed an accent, they often didn't do it quite as well as a natural would've done.

VB: Yes.

MR: Six to one and half a dozen to the other.

VB: That's true. Yeah.

MR: What you gain on the swings, you lose on the roundabout, etcetera--

VB: And yet, when you were saying that, I'm thinking of a film like *The Ghost Goes West*.

MR: Yeah.

VB: Where it's set in Scotland and--

MR: Uhuh.

VB: Still very enjoyable.

MR: Oh yes. Never saw that. Haven't been to the films, to see a film since, I think *Doctor Zhivago* was the last one we went to see at the cinema.

VB: Right. I was thinking, I think that was a Robert Donat one.

MR: Oh, he was nice, wasn't he?

LR: Yeah.

MR: 'Mr Chips'. [laughs] *Goodbye Mr Chips*. That was a tearjerker, it was so sad. Robert Donat and Irene Dunne. All those old stars, they were lovely. 'Course now, I mean when we watch and we think they're corny! [pause 2 seconds] They've gone and we're still here! We remember them, who they were. But we've got used to the modern actors and actresses, haven't we?

LR: Donald Sinden is the man.

MR: Donald Sinden? What. [laughs] He was lovely when he was young but he hasn't grown old as gracefully as a lot. He's got fat and podgy. [laughs]

VB: I mean it's very interesting what you're saying. Because it sounds like the qualities that we want in a film star were different then, from now.

MR: That's right. That's right.

VB: I mean, what was it that drew you to certain film stars, do you think?

MR: Well, mostly it was because, "Oh we enjoyed them in that. We must go and see... the next one."

VB: I see.

MR: We often went for the actor or the actress--

LR: Rather than the film.

MR: Rather than the story.

VB: Ah.

MR: 'Cause when James Mason came. I think *The Odd Man Out* was his first film. I'm not sure, I think it was. And he'd got an ordinary face. I mean he wasn't handsome, but he still spoke well. Erm, he was handsome in a rugged sort of a way but not like Robert Taylor. [laughs]

VB: Oh no. [laughs]

MR: He was a real glamour pants!

VB: Was it the looks of Robert Taylor that--

MR: Oh! Oh we was a real glamour boy, wasn't he? [laughs] Lovely. Yeah.

LR: You didn't see the earlier films?

MR: Well I saw one or two. Not as early as you. Because you are that much older than I! [laughs loudly]

VB: [laughs]

MR: [laughs]

VB: Not that much older [laughs] if I remember rightly.

MR: I married an older man! [laughs]

VB: Ah. I see.

MR: He had attained his majority and I hadn't. [laughs] He whipped me from my cradle.

VB: Ah! [laughs] Poor fella.

MR: [laughs] [pause 2 seconds] Two years nine months makes a lot of difference. [laughs]

VB: Ah, that's true. [laughs]

MR: [laughs] When you're old.

VB: Ah, dear.

MR: Never mind. I shall only be two years difference in the next few days. Next week, I should say.

VB: Ah. Is that your birthday?

MR: Yes. Birthday coming up. I shall be seventy-three you see, and he's already seventy-five.

VB: Ah.

MR: He's still a much older man. [laughs] But he was going to the pictures I suppose a couple a years before I started going. 'Cause I didn't start going regularly until I was about sixteen or so. That's when I starting telling fibs. Telling my mother I was at my friend's and I wasn't. I was out with a boy and I'd gone to the pictures. [laughs] *The Four Feathers* I think was my first great advanta... adventure. Ralph Richardson was in that. C. Aubrey Smith. And I can't remember the others. But that was--

LR: I remember Anna Neagle. Um. Opening the Ritz.

MR: Yeah I remember that. I was working in the road where the Ritz was at the time.

LR: Mhm.

VB: Did you actually see her?

LR: No.

MR: I did.

LR: I didn't. I went the next week.

VB: Ah.

MR: I did, I actually saw her. 'Cause the Ritz cinema was in the centre of the Buttermarket. You know where the Buttermarket is? You seen that gorgeous building that's all closed. In the Buttermarket. The Ancient House.

LR: Ancient House. [inaudible]

MR: Now what have they got there? They've made the entrance to [pause 2 seconds] Buttermarket precinct from the other end of town. You go down a passageway.

VB: Right.

MR: And there's an office supply shop on the corner now.

VB: I think I know where you are. Roughly. Yes.

MR: The Ritz cinema stood about there... [pause 2 seconds]

VB: Right.

MR: So it joined the Ancient House. And I worked at the cleaner's shop, on the opposite side of the road. So naturally I saw Anna Neagle. We all saw Anna Neagle. [inaudible] and customers and everything else [inaudible]. And she was absolutely beautiful. Marjorie Robertson her real name. [laughs] I remember that bit! [laughs]

VB: What was she like?

MR: Oh she was all dripping in something lovely. But erm, [pause 2 seconds] you didn't see a lot of her. I mean she stood and greeted the crowd and all the rest of it. She was ushered in. [inaudible] All the ceremony was going on the foyer.

VB: That's wonderful. 'Cause she was one of the biggest stars then as well.

MR: Oh yes. Yes, yes. She hadn't been discovered that many years, had she? Ooh, Cochran's back row chorus girl. [laughs]

VB: It must've been really exciting.

MR: Oh it was. Well of course we were all into it weren't we? We were there. We were her, weren't we? You see, I was only a girl then. 'Bout erm, oh, about fifteen?

VB: Mhm.

MR: [pause 2 seconds] [No more? 'Cause I left that job.

LR: I remember going to the Ritz.

MR: She was blonde and beautiful. She got her hair in a beautiful style. All curling round the back.
[laughs]

LR: [inaudible; says something about cinema] And of course, the cinema in those days... you had er...
[pause 2 seconds] [inaudible] And of course there was an organ.

MR: In the cinema, they had an organ.

LR: In the cinema. And that used to come up. [inaudible; says something about screens?] And there was stage shows. You could spend hours in there...

MR: Had a nice restaurant there as well.

LR: I remember. [inaudible] He was a [Japanese fellow?]. He was on the stage. He had a sword. He had a top. Don't remember the top that would spin?

VB: Right.

LR: Spinning top. You wound it round a string. [inaudible] And it come spinning along. And you used to catch it on its edge [says something about sword and shoulder?] And back again.

VB: [laughs]

LR: [inaudible] I've never seen er since or any act [inaudible].

MR: They used to have lots of those single speciality acts in those days.

VB: You were getting live entertainment as well?

MR: That's right. Not every, not all the time.

LR: Oh, yes.

MR: And I think that was quite a big gimmick when the place first started. It got down and down and then of course it wasn't so long after that, that the war came along. And that put a blanket on lots of activities, didn't it? For one thing, the picture houses weren't quite well, weren't very well supported at the start of the war 'cause of blackouts.

VB: Yeah.

MR: But as people began to get used to the blackouts, they became braver and more adventuresome and we all went out again.

VB: But that sort of stopped the sort of--

MR: That's right. That's right. And I suppose, you see, the fact that money wasn't quite as freely available was it?

VB: Yeah.

MR: There was other things for the film industry to spend their money on and they were making records of what was going on, weren't they?

VB: Well that actually leads me onto something we didn't talk about before which was other things apart from films, like the news.

MR: Uhuh.

VB: I mean was that--

MR: Oh that was very important. Very important.

LR: Oh er news.

MR: Pathé. *Pathé News*. Erm... [pause 3 seconds] What sort of other news did they...? Different cinemas had different ones. 'Pathé Gazettes'.

LR: Pathé was the--

MR: Yeah that was the main one.

LR: That's the main one.

MR: And then there was erm, [pause 3 seconds] they used to do spot items on various... You know, they'd take a certain thing and elaborate on it. A special news item. Within the news, quite often. But, of course, you see these erm [pause 4 seconds] filmmakers for cinema, they got a better coverage than we got through reading the press because the press was blacked out, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

MR: And we used to long for news of the boys overseas. I mean my husband went to France in October. Erm October the second. 1939. And I didn't know where he was. I got a letter every day but they were all censored weren't they? Didn't know where he was or anything like that. And they didn't tell you exactly where the boys were but you'd see pictures of them eh, doing various things. Digging in and filling up their sandbags and reinforcing this building and that. And you sort of peered on this big screen [to see if he was there?].

VB: I was going to say. I bet you did.

MR: I know erm, when erm the evacuation at Dunkirk was on, [pause 2 seconds] I was in such a worry because I hadn't heard from Leonard. And one day, my mother used to take the Daily Mirror in those days. And eh one day there was a picture of a soldier on a stretcher being given a cigarette. [pause 2 seconds] And I said, "Leonard. I know it is. I remember his nose!" 'Cause it was quite a distinctive one. [laughs] "It's Leonard, I know it is."

LR: [inaudible]

MR: And I hadn't heard from him. And they were saying that all wounded were being brought home. The evacuation of Dunkirk was complete. I didn't know if he was a prisoner--

LR: [And he's still here!?] [laughs]

MR: If we'd lost him or anything else. And I tried to ring up the War Office. To get them to identify that soldier and they couldn't. So I rang up the 'Daily Mirror'. And they told me that they couldn't name people in the pictures. And I was convinced that was Leonard. Got over the radio that the evacuation of Dunkirk was complete. 'Cause we hadn't got television in those days. [pause 2 seconds] And two days later I got a pencilled postcard [pause 2 seconds] that he'd posted on the station on his way from Dover to South Wales where they sent him. It was posted at Redhill in Surrey.

VB: Ah.

LR: [inaudible]

MR: It was date-stamped. Redhill, Surrey. And it just said, "Arrived safely. Love, Leonard". And one little pencilled kiss on the back.

VB: [laughs]

MR: And that's when he told me he had the most enjoyable meal of his life. When he had a cold sausage sandwich. [laughs]

LR: Cold sausage. It was beautiful. [pause 5 seconds] [inaudible] We hadn't had food.

MR: He was glad of that. But the news was terribly, terribly important. 'Cause we, we learned a lot that we couldn't read in the papers. And interesting items on the Home Front too. About the women making munitions. And saw how hard some of these females worked and you never thought it was in us. I mean now we're given the same as men, don't we? 'Course we do. I did for a big part of my work in Lowestoft. I had to 'cause I was on equal pay. But I was using my head. [laughs] Not my might. But now you have to use brawn as well, don't I? [laughs] Never mind. That was very...

[person knocks at door; conversation in background; inaudible]

LR: Mhm. [pause 4 seconds] Up the road there's a farm...

VB: Ah, I see.

[conversation continues in background; inaudible]

MR: Ooh – it's beautiful!

[conversation continues in background; inaudible; laughter]

LR: [A pair of rabbits?]

VB: [overtalking; inaudible]

MR: This is Val.

EI: Hang on, I'll take me shoes off.

MR: There's no need. [inaudible] This is my friend Eileen.

EI: Hello Val, Pleased to meet you.

MR: Val has come and we're talking about the cinema.

EI: Oh yeah.

MR: You remember? Told you she came once before.

EI: Was that the lady who took you to the meeting that night?

LR: No.

MR: No. This is the lady who I spoke to on the radio...

EI: Oh-h Yes! That's right.

MR: [inaudible] radio and she came to see us one morning.

EI: That's right!

MR: And she asked us if she could come back and we talked a bit about pre-war cinema.

EI: Oh, I see!

MR: [So you know something about it, don't you?]

EI: [Used to be able to catch you at the old Picture House?] [inaudible]

VB: Ahh!

MR: Come and sit yourself down.

EI: Minnie. This is my day off. I left off at quarter to eleven.

MR: Oh, well done.

EI: Had a quick wash. Put a clean frock on. [Talks about son; family commitments; being asked to do errands and the fact it's her day off.]

LR: [inaudible]

EI: [He's going back to the pictures?] [inaudible; laughs] I planned... [inaudible]

MR: Well I don't think that's fair of your son.

EI: We've really got enough work for another man.

[conversation between LR, MR and A; inaudible].

EI: Let me just put this cigarette out.

LR: [inaudible]

EI: Oh! That's beautiful. That is lovely.

MR: [inaudible] [Dove Cottage?]

EI: They are beautiful. Aren't they?

VB: **Just lovely – they really are.**

MR: [inaudible] [fishing line?]

EI: Fishing line? I thought that was that florist's wire. [inaudible] What a crafty, good idea, isn't it?

[conversation in background; about curtains]

MR: [laughs]

EI: Anyway, [to VB] it's lovely to have met you. Sorry I can't stop. Pictures used to be one and nine [around 9 pence]. Yeah one and nine.

MR: [laughs]

EI: And what we used to do, [quiet voice; inaudible; says something about school] Well the cinema was empty, well half empty [inaudible] [mums were there?]

MR: Which cinema was this?

EI: Picture House. Which is now--

MR: I was offered a job in [inaudible]. I went after a job, that just after I was married Leonard?) and er they were advertising-- [tape runs out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

EI: Old Mr Oliver. Old Mr Oliver.

MR: Frightened of him.

EI: Let me tell you a quick story and I'll run. My dad didn't like Americans. [whispering] [inaudible] You ask my dad. "Your papa says you can come out with me" [said with American accent]. Well, I was over the moon. [inaudible] That was wonderful. At nine o'clock at night, dad was a bit stern, so I [inaudible] "Yes, dear, very nice young man." [inaudible] You're going out with an American man. So I said, "Do you mind, dad?" "Course I don't mind, dear", he said, "If that's what you want, you go ahead. Before you know where you are, you'll fall in love with him," he said, "You'll get married, and you'll go across the water and we'll never see you again." I said, "Oh, all right!" He said, "I've got three other daughters," he said, "I've got a son," he said, "My son'll bring home a wife one day, she'll take your place. We shall never miss you dear but you'll miss us!" Oh! So I was supposed to see him at eight o'clock on the Sunday and I [found him and I thought "I'll never see you again"?]

MR: [laughs]

VB: Crafty!

EI: As a tactic, it worked. And do you know, it's rotten because, years and years after, my brother's first girlfriend [inaudible] "She's pretty, but I don't like her." [inaudible]

MR: [laughs]

EI: [voice in distance; leaving] Have a nice afternoon!

LR: Erm, thank you. [pause 3 seconds] [Min?]

MR: [laughs] [goes out of room]. Just a minute.

LR: [inaudible] told you a farm up the road.

VB: I see, yeah.

LR: It's erm called Cherry Tree Farm. [inaudible]

VB: She seemed like a very nice person.

LR: Yeah. One son. [inaudible] Very nice.

VB: Mhm.

LR: [inaudible] He's got a horse. [inaudible]

VB: I see.

LR: [inaudible] stables, and er, [inaudible] [eggs?] every morning and evening [inaudible] [drying?]

VB: Yeah.

LR: Whatever the weather. You'd see it if you went up for a [inaudible] Have you been to [inaudible]

VB: I haven't really, no.

LR: You go up a hill, and there [inaudible] going [down?] to the top of the hill, there are [inaudible]

[MR returns]

MR: Do you think she looked nice? Did you think [Eileen?] looked nice? I thought she looked nice in my suit! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

LR: [laughs]

MR: That's one I've never liked. And I think I've only ever wore it once. And she came and helped me when Leonard was away. And I was turning out wardrobes and washing them out, sort of thing. And I put several things out that I don't wear because I'm cramped for space. And eh [inaudible] she thought the clothes won't fit me. But I said, "Well that's an elastic skirt that. And it's an Eastex so it was nice when I bought it."

VB: It's lovely. [laughs]

MR: So, she was thrilled to bits with it. So she brought me a little thank you gift. Two little codling and two whiting that were caught yesterday.

VB: Ah.

LR: [inaudible]

MR: so we've got some fish for tea tomorrow. I've got fish in the freezer but eh when it's fresh caught out of the sea, they're gorgeous. [laughs] So there we are. So where have we got to?

VB: Eh, well actually the other thing that I brought with me that I thought you might like to see, erm, was a couple of erm film books--

MR: Oh yes.

VB: I brought down from Glasgow. [laughs] Eh that we've got in the office. There's one from 1938.

MR: Aw!

VB: And this one's from I think, slightly earlier than that. [laughs]

MR: Oh, Norma Shearer. Norma Shearer.

VB: I thought you might enjoy that.

MR: They're a bit old, aren't they?

VB: Yeah. But a lot of the stars you mentioned of course are--

MR: Anna Neagle, there she is. Told you, she was blonde and curly. [laughs] I don't like touching books when they're like this.

LR: 'Course everyone spent a lot of time in the eh [inaudible]

VB: I'll bet. Yes.

LR: [inaudible] [pause 3 seconds]

MR: Robert Donat. [pause 4 seconds] Didn't see that one. Clark Gable. Oh, yes. [laughs] *The Citadel* – I read the book of that and I saw the film. That was at the Gaumont. That was during the war. The [inaudible], I saw that. [inaudible] *Lost Horizon*. Saw that one. [pause 2 seconds] *Three Smart Girls*. Seen that.

VB: We talked a bit about Deanna Durbin before.

MR: Aw yeah. Her beautiful voice. *Night Must Fall*. Yes, I remember that.

LR: Oh Deanna Durbin's singing was, never heard the likes before or since.

VB: Mhm.

LR: Marvellous voice.

MR: Don't think she'd go very far now.

LR: And erm, [pause 2 seconds] she still sings. But she lives in eh France you see.

MR: [inaudible]

VB: Ah.

LR: [Southern?] France. Married.

MR: Told you what I said about Robert Taylor. Weren't he a handsome brute?

VB: [laughs]

MR: Wo!

VB: [laughs]

MR: He could take me to the ball any night! [laughs]

VB: [laughs] **Think you'd have had a long queue.** [laughs]

MR: [laughs] [inaudible] [pause 3 seconds] [Sonny Hale?] Oh, Gracie [Fields]. [pause 3 seconds]

VB: **Did you like her films as well?**

MR: Oh yes. I liked her films. I liked her [probably referring to Anna Neagle] especially as she got older, she played more serious parts. When she played erm, [pause 2 seconds] like when she played Edith Cavell [referring to *Nurse Edith Cavell*]. And *Odette*.

VB: Oh yeah.

MR: Those were post-war... Oh yes and here's *Dangerous Moonlight*. Aw-ah! That's where the 'Warsaw Concerto' was first heard. And it's still a very erm notable piece of music, isn't it? Still popular piece of music. [pause 3 seconds] I like music too.

LR: Pop... popular music, isn't it? Bang bang bang bang bang. New tunes.

MR: Marlene Dietrich [as she called it?] [laughs]

VB: [laughs] **Was she someone that was particularly popular or--**

MR: Marlene Dietrich?

VB: Yeah.

MR: Well I think she was more popular with the men than the women. The women didn't like [her legs, did they?] Jealous. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

[pause 3 seconds]

MR: Leslie Banks. Flora Robson. I never thought she was much of an actress but she was. I suppose she didn't appeal to me as a girl because she wasn't pretty enough was she?

VB: Ah, I see.

MR: More of a character actress. You don't appreciate that when you're a young girl, till you learn a bit about life and what it's all about that you understand what they're trying to show you. Errol Flynn. Another naughty boy. Loretta Young. She was never... Never did anything for me. Here's Deanna. She bubbled didn't she? Ray Miland.

LR: Oh Deanna Durbin. She was something else.

MR: Lovely picture of her here. Look.

VB: Ah.

LR: Yeah.

VB: She's got lovely eyes actually.

MR: Mhm. She twinkles, doesn't she?

VB: Yeah.

LR: That girl could sing.

MR: 'Waltzing, waltzing high in the clouds" [sings]. [inaudible] Bette Davis. [pause 2 seconds] I remember her in *Dark Victory*.

VB: Ah.

MR: A wonderful picture. If ever you see, get the chance to see that, you must. It's only a black and white. I think of that so much. Every time I think of my sister, I think of that. Because my sister died with a tumour on the brain, and that's what Bette Davis had in *Dark Victory*. [pause 4 seconds] Virginia Grey. Joan Bennett. Remember her. Carole Lombard. [pause 6 seconds] Spencer Tracy. He was nice. [chuckles] [pause 4 seconds] [Dorothy Lamour?] Doesn't look as nice as there as she did on the screen. Vivien Leigh. Gorgeous. [turning pages] Myrna Loy. And William Powell. He made *The Thin Man* series didn't he?

VB: Yes, yes.

MR: Don Ameche. He's still alive. Quite an old man now.

VB: That's right, 'cause he's made films quite recently, hasn't he?

MR: An old man now. George Formby. Last time I went to the pictures with my husband we saw George Formby in *Trouble Brewing*.

VB: A-ah!

MR: At the Gaumont.

LR: Do you know his fingering of the ukulele was said to be so fast [inaudible]

VB: Mhm.

LR: And he could do [inaudible] filmed his fingers [inaudible]

MR: You can't take that as gospel. That's just what he said. There's no proof of that, is there? Oh but look at the gowns they wore... Wonderful full skirts. Aw!

VB: Was that part of the appeal of them?

MR: Oh yes! Because we had so little. I think I had two dresses. Maybe two or three skirts, no more and that was about everything. I know I didn't have very much compared with a lot of people because I was one of five. And like I said before, I had to be taken away from grammar school because my mum couldn't afford a replacement uniform. Which was wrong. These days, [pause 2 seconds] I don't know what would've happened. They would have to have done it because everybody wears school uniform these days. But in those days you only wore uniform when you went to school after you'd passed your scholarship.

VB: Mhm.

MR: Or if you went to a private school. But the clothing aspect, oh-h-h, you used to drool and dream, I wonder if I could do that to my old dress? I could do that. You'd see them with a dark dress and a different coloured sash. And you'd got about half a yard of taffeta. And spend all night making a sash. And, do a little bit of trimming somewhere else on the dress, to pick it up. You know. That was all inspirational, weren't it? I mean, lots of people couldn't do that sort of thing, I know, but it was um... Ah there... that's how he used to look. That isn't a good picture. His eyes were more come-

-

VB: Ah!

MR: His eyes were more come to bed than that. [laughs]

LR: Mhm.

MR: He was lovely.

VB: [laughs] So, so even then you were good at making clothes and--

MR: Oh yeah, yeah.

VB: Ah, I see.

MR: My mum used to go to jumble sales and come home with a dress, outsize dress, and fit me out of it. Had to. Hadn't got the money. I used to earn, when I first went to work, I earned seven and sixpence (about 37 pence). I had to—

LR: [inaudible]

MR: I had to pay my mother seven shillings a week (about 35 pence) and buy my stockings out of the sixpence (4 pence). The cheapest stockings you could buy were nine pence a pair. And they were lisle stockings with an artificial silk covering. And of course you got to want a pair of silk stockings. You went up to one and nine, one and elevenpence (about 9 pence).

VB: So you would have to save a bit to--

MR: That's right. You didn't have very much.

VB: Yeah.

MR: And then when I got a rise and I went up to ten shillings a week, I had to give my mother eight and buy all my clothes. The fact that my mother had seven shillings a week off me meant she'd go to a jumble sale as I say and buy something. I'd bring it home, unpick it, wash it, turn it, if it was turnable, and remake it. Had to, to have anything to wear.

VB: Mhm.

MR: When I got married I got about a dozen sets of underwear, ready, for when I got married. But they'd all been made with bits that I'd cadged 'cause I'd worked in the factory of the... I worked in the office of the factory in Ipswich. And I was friends with Bob the storeman. And he used to give me oddments.

VB: Ah, I see.

MR: And I had to do a panel on a pair of French knickers. Or perhaps I'd go to a sale and there'd be a half a yard of what we called Sparva material. And that would make one half of a pair of pants. And you'd go and buy the other half yard at full price and you'd got, you know, things for next to nothing.

VB: Ah I see.

MR: Surprising the things you can do. Well look at people now. They still go to jumble sales don't they?

VB: Yes. Obviously you have that sort of talent as well. I don't think everyone could be so enterprising--

MR: Well, I used to make my children's clothes. I used to make the boys suits. And turned their trousers upside-down 'cause they used to wear wider bottoms than they do now. And make myself a skirt. He'd wear through the seat of his trousers, cycling backwards, forward to work. But the legs were all right. Take it all to pieces and put it together in a different way. 'Cause I hadn't got a very good waistline then like I have now. [laughs] But, never mind. I've enjoyed doing it. Used to get a kick out of making something out of nothing. Great fun. [pause 3 seconds] Yes, I remember a lot of these pictures. Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] Greta Garbo.

VB: Oh. That's the one where she has the, where she wears the red dress.

MR: Yeah. Jane Withers. Oh she was... Didn't last very long but she was so cute. She was lovely. [pause 4 seconds] Ronald Colman. [pause 7 seconds] Irene Dunne. Oh I remember her.

LR: [coughs]

MR: Cowboy films never did and never have appealed to me. Never. [inaudible; says something about westerns] they're lovely stories, but I just don't like them. [*The Draft?*], I remember that.

VB: What was it about westerns that--

MR: Don't know. Don't know. Don't think they were glamorous enough. Horses and deserts and things. Didn't appeal to me. I wanted to see a pretty film. [laughs] Take you away from yourself and that sort of thing. I mean my daughter would go mad over it 'cause she's horsey but--

VB: Ah.

MR: I'm not. [laughs] Oh what else. Anna Neagle again. [pause 4 seconds] Anton Walbrook. [pause 6 seconds] [Ginger?] At our golden wedding we've got a video of that. 'Cause Leonard couldn't start the dance with me, my brother was there and he did it. And he said, "Come on, Sis. Do your Ginger Rogers bit?" And he sort of spun me round.

VB: [laughs]

MR: [laughs] Aw dear. *One Hundred Men and a Girl*. [pause 6 seconds] Jack Hulbert.

VB: 'Cause you mentioned him as well, and Cicely.

MR: That's right.

VB: Yeah.

LR: [coughs]

MR: I told you the little song. "Who's been polishing the sun? Driving all the clouds away. They must have known just how I like it. Everything's going [sic] my way" [from the film *The Camels are Coming*]. That's when I was a little girl. And we had that day treat to the cinema. When Princess Marina married the Duke of Kent. These are wonderful books, aren't they?.

LR: [They are?]

VB: It's amazing just seeing the, well for me, I love looking at the, the sheer numbers of the stars!

MR: Yeah. [laughs] That's right. Fabulous. [laughs] What made you so interested in films?

VB: I don't, I don't know. I've always erm, I used to sit and watch matinees with my mum--

MR: Yeah.

VB: On the TV. And the older films and I think that was how I got interested in the thirties films.

MR: Uhuh. Don't think they make films like that any more.

VB: No, they don't, no.

MR: I don't think so.

VB: Just films that you can, like you say, sort of lose yourself in.

MR: You live them don't you?

VB: Yeah.

MR: You're there. Amongst it all.

VB: Yeah.

MR: [laughs]

VB: And as you say, everything's so lovely to look at. The music's beautiful and--

MR: I mean the sets weren't always as good as eh, as good as they are now. But they hadn't got the right sort of cameras to film outside, had they? Then. It was nearly all done in the studio. And that was obvious when they were walking on the floor erm as compared to walking outside.

VB: Yeah.

MR: The sound betrayed that that was all going on inside. But you didn't care. You didn't care tuppence. You were there. And they were in this marvellous place. You'd see Michael Wilding with Anna Neagle in *Spring in Park Lane*, and the dresses and the drapes, and oh-h-h!

VB: Ah.

MR: The music and him. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: Oh it was lovely. [laughs]

VB: As you say it doesn't, when you were saying that about, about the scenery, and I was thinking of ones with, I think Sonja Henie, when they're in the Alps.

MR: Somewhere, yes.

VB: And it's obviously painted--

MR: That's right.

VB: Behind them. But it doesn't matter.

MR: It doesn't matter. You're there.

VB: No.

MR: I never had the chance to ice skate. I used to roller skate.

VB: Ah!

MR: But erm that was only illicit skating. When my mother wasn't watching. Because I wasn't supposed to be out you see. My mum never liked us playing outside. 'Cause I lived in the town centre of Ipswich. [pause 2 seconds] Erm, quite near where the Town Hall is now.

VB: Mhm. Ah yeah.

MR: And erm, [pause 2 seconds] when she'd gone out I was supposed to be looking after the children but [I used to sneak out?] [laughs] Specially on a Friday night. I was left to polish the sitting room area on a Friday night. Didn't have carpets on the floor. Lino. I used to have to wash and polish that and all the furniture on a Friday. If my dad was in work I got a ha'penny pocket money. That would buy you five chocolates. Or two everlasting sweets. [laughs] Long strips of toffee like that. [bout three each way?] And that wasn't wonderful toffee but it took a long time [laughs] to get rid of it you see.

VB: Mhm.

MR: That's why we called them everlasting sticks. But erm, we used to sneak out. She'd lock me in. But the windows were sash windows [laughs] and I could get out. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: I could... Well I did start to write a book once but I didn't get very far with it. But never mind. But that was all great. The cinema opened up, these lovely plush places. You walked in, you didn't realise that that's all the underflooring that made you feel you were a queen. But you were somebody. Soon as you walked inside there, you felt good. Used to look at the kiosk with all the glamorously packed sweets and chocolates and things. And of course, during the war those shelves became bare. They used to put a few bits and pieces of paper doilies on the shelves. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: And fill empty boxes to remind us of the good old days. But it was still a break from life. It transported you away from the dull things to somewhere special and... [pause 2 seconds] Used to feel like that when I was acting too. I used to belong to a local drama group. [pause 2 seconds] Had some fun. [laughs] Imagined you were all these film stars. [laughs] I remember when I was Fanny in *Gaslight* [probably referring to the part of Bella]. Dress rehearsal night. They used to let eh old age pensioners in for nothing to give us an audience. [pause 2 seconds] 'Course in *Gaslight*, you know the story, how the light goes down. Ingrid Bergman played that part in the cinema [referring to

Gaslight]. And eh, we had an old person who [inaudible]. Her name was Ellen. And she was just a little bit simple. The hem of her clothes had come undone. She put it up with a safety pin. [laughs] And she was sitting right on the front row. "Ooh the light. The light, it's going down. He's coming back!" And she said, "Look out girl! He's now gonna get ye!" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: Aw dear. [laughs] Never mind.

VB: Aw.

MR: All your memories forgotten and somebody like you comes along and stirs them up you see.

VB: Ah.

MR: You forget a lot. And you sit and reminisce and one thing leads to another. [laughs] Super. Nice, Leonard?

LR: Yeah. Lovely. Do you wanna have a look?

MR: No. 'S all right. You carry on enjoying yourself. [inaudible]

VB: Probably you wouldn't remember anyway, 'cause there's a couple of years of [inaudible].

MR: [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: What year is that one?

VB: I think, I think it's about 1934.

MR: Oh yeah. No, I wouldn't remember them.

VB: Yeah.

MR: [laughs]

VB: Of course some of the stars still crop up.

MR: Yes. Yes. Because the erm cinema was silent till about 1927. I think the first... sound film that was in Ipswich was Al Jolson [probably referring to *The Jazz Singer*].

LR: The talkies.

MR: Sound films. I think Al Jolson was one of the first ones. [pause 3 seconds] We used to be walking along the town, on my way to various functions that I had to go to with my mother. See all the lights and the smell and the warmth come out from the cinema. "Come on! Don't you look at that!" [laughs] I got so I could sneak in. Felt ever so guilty. Terribly guilty. And I always got a headache in the pictures. Always did. One time I had a really bad migraine, I didn't realise they were migraines then. I used to get bilious attacks at the time. But of course it was, as we know now, a migraine. But when I went to the cinema, when I was sitting too close, because I had to. 'Cause we didn't have enough money to sit further back. We often used to go in the fourpenny seats and ease our way back. [laughs] Into the ninepennies. As long as the usherette didn't remember us. [laughs] But erm, she used to say, "You've been doing something wicked," and I thought "If you only knew!" "That's God, punishing you!" she used to say. [laughs] Well, that's wrong isn't it? That's wrong. I don't think there's anything [inaudible], however strict or religious you are. I think that's... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

VB: I mean, as you say, there's so many different--

MR: Oh. Yes. Yes. I mean, there's the educational side--

VB: Yeah.

MR: As well as the entertainment, isn't there?

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

MR: Every time. [pause 3 seconds] It's just like television now. You see it's in our homes. Got it here all the time. We take it for granted.

VB: Mhm.

MR: But possibly, if Leonard and I were mobile [pause 3 seconds] we would want to go to the cinema sometimes. It's only because we know we can't do these things, you stop talking about them or thinking about them.

VB: Yeah.

MR: We don't party any more. I went to a party last Saturday week. Leonard was away. And somebody said to me afterwards, "Never seen you look so happy for a long time." And I said, "Well you don't know what it feels like to be out, at night. All done up." You look good and you feel good. Because for me, getting ready for that party was like it used to be when we were going to the pictures. Part of the fun of getting ready was to spruce yourself up.

VB: Mhm.

MR: [laughs] And lots of women wore hats in those days. But terrible if you sat beside somebody with a big one-- [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MR: Or behind them rather.

VB: Yeah.

MR: Awful 'cause I wasn't ever a very big person. A bit like this. [demonstrates] Tip the seat up and sit on top of the seat [amused voice]. And the people behind you'd say, "Sit down properly!" [laughs] Never mind.

VB: [laughs] It's interesting when you describe it. It sounds like it's more than just the film.

MR: Aw, it was lovely!

VB: It was the whole--

MR: It was lovely. Well, it was another world, wasn't it? I mean homes weren't as comfortable. Then. As they are now. Nowhere near. You think of the average home, way back in the twenties, thirties. Even forties. They didn't have space in their rooms, did they? There was a table in the middle with chairs all the way round when we got married. Wasn't there? 'Cause quite a lot a people only had the one room and a kitchen. And they had to do everything in that room. We were posh. We had a front room. Used to go in there Christmas Day. [laughs] So was Leonard's mum. She had a front room. It was also icy cold. [laughs] You got warm when you went to bed.

VB: So the pictures was somewhere where there was space and--

MR: Right. There was space. There was glamour. There was warmth, wasn't it? The cinema was warm and they were showing all these lovely things. As I say, you were there. Black and white. But you didn't see it in black and white. It became real. You were there. Super. [pause 4 seconds] When they showed you things like the news and e-erm Kew Gardens and oh-h! You couldn't believe it. All these trees covered in ice and snow. And in later years you'd grow up and you'd see it for yourself and it brings back all those memories. Never forget when I went to Scotland. I went to Scotland in late February. The year before last. And I stayed at Loch Long Hotel.

VB: Ah!

MR: Near Arrochar. And we did various tours. We went to [Luss?] and saw where they make 'Take The High Road' [television programme]. And we went to erm Edinburgh. Where I'd been before. I

wasn't too thrilled about that. But I spent all the time that we had there in the Castle where I'd never been before.

VB: Ah.

MR: And we had a, made friends with people on the coach, because I went all alone. I didn't enjoy the journey a lot. It's a long way there. Then we went to erm Stirling, up into the Trossachs. Och! They're gorgeous! The mountains coming right down. We went to Lake Katrine, erm [pause 4 seconds] we went to erm Glencoe Distillery.

VB: Ah! [laughs]

MR: And I don't like whisky. [So I was quite glad to get out of there?] [laughs] The smell starts you off. [laughs] Oh it was lovely. And I saw where the snow had all started to melt and it was all hanging from the trees and it had got frozen again. One day we wanted to go to erm a special place and we couldn't because there'd been a snowfall. Three foot of snow overnight! You just don't imagine it. When you get up into the Highlands, it's like that, isn't it?

VB: Yeah.

MR: It's wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. We've got some gorgeous pictures.

LR: You could spend a week looking at it.

VB: I know. [laughs] I thought you might enjoy it, so--

LR: Oh-h yeah. As I say, need a week to look through it.

VB: That's right. [laughs] Yeah, I know 'cause there's a lot of information about the stars as well.

LR: Yeah. Any [inaudible]. Any stars?

MR: 'Course there are. Patrick Swayze. [laughs]

VB: Aw. I mean you made me think of something as well there. When you were watching the films, did it ever make you want to go to America?

MR: Oh yes. Yes, yes. I still long to travel. I never have. And I never will now. I'd love to. I'd love to go to Australia now to see my daughter.

VB: That's beautiful, looking at the album. It's lovely. Aw.

MR: 'A trip to the Lochs'. 1984.

VB: Ah.

MR: [inaudible]

VB: [It's nice with the corn, and the harvest's still there?]

MR: It's amazing they didn't gather up the straw, isn't it?

VB: I don't know the hotel but I know Loch Long very well. It's beautiful around there.

MR: Yes. [pause 5 seconds] One little [boat?]

VB: Ah!

MR: [On the Clyde?] It doesn't seem... well, when you think--

VB: Well yes. I mean forty years before that it would have been--

MR: Crowded with shipping, wouldn't it? That bit goes on...

LR: [inaudible] A very large lake. [steam?] [inaudible] By train, in bits. And they were built on the lochs [rest inaudible].

VB: Right.

LR: Lake Victoria.

MY: [You can tell by the people on the bus?] where they make the Haggis.

VB: Right! [laughs]

VB: This is lovely the view. It's beautiful.

MR: That's from our window hotel. [says something about Loch Lomond] We went up the loch but it was really cold. [inaudible]

VB: I can see it's cold. Everyone's very well wrapped up.

MR: There's me. [inaudible] Two big open fires, one either side of the hallway. [says something about twin peaks] [inaudible] [laughs]

VB: These are lovely.

MR: [inaudible] One at Katrine.

[both speaking quietly; inaudible]

MR: [says something about paper weights; gorgeous]

VB: You must have been all over the countryside.

MR: Seventeen hundred miles, I think.

VB: That's a lovely one. They're wee postcard scenes. They're lovely.

MR: Yeah. The sky was blue and ten minutes before that--

VB: It's a lovely album that.

MR: Really. [laughs] It's only a scrapbook. I put some cardboard in.

VB: Yeah.

MR: Stiffened it. And made a cover.

VB: And the ribbon as well. It's lovely.

MR: One or two bits [inaudible].

VB: You're a very good photographer actually.

MR: Ah. Only an ordinary little automatic camera. An Olympus Trip.

VB: Really? Well it gets very good results.

MR: Well as long as you remember which setting to put it on, you know.

VB: Yeah.

MR: It's quite easy.

VB: It's a lovely idea that.

MR: There we go.

VB: I'd love to, I'd love to try something like that [laughs] but I don't think I'm as talented as you. It's lovely. And it's so much more personal than putting them in a plastic--

MR: That's right. Well when you get a pack of pictures out and--

VB: That's the problem. Did you do that embroidery, is that done on the machine?

MR: Yeah. [inaudible] It's a fantastic machine. Cost me lots of money. Wait till after Christmas and see what—

LR: A new one.

VB: That's right. See what Santa brings. [laughs]

MR: See what the Chancellor does then. [laughs]

LR: I bought her that one.

MR: Yes, he bought me that one. Well that all goes part-exchange.

VB: Ah.

MR: So it won't be lost. [Loch Lomond on that one?]

VB: I'm sure like anything, the more you use it the more you realise other things you could do.

MR: Oh yes. Well I felt frustrated at times. 'Cause I don't have time to do what I want to do.

VB: Mhm.

MR: [talks about material; inaudible]

VB: Yeah.

MR: I stitch round the edge of the circle and I put the wire on, then trim it off and then cut it up.
[laughs]

VB: It's lovely. Beautiful for a, as you say, a Christmas decoration, a centrepiece or something.

MR: [inaudible]

LR: [inaudible] used to work at [inaudible]. She's gone now. [says something about Christmas]
[inaudible] [says something about Room 101].

VB: Good idea actually.

MR: [says something about Christmas]

LR: [inaudible]

VB: It's a great idea, yes!

MR: So which part of Scotland are you from? You're not from Grampian are you?

VB: No. Erm I'm from the east coast.

MR: Yeah.

VB: I mean, I was born in Edinburgh but mainly brought up in Fife. I've been in Glasgow for about six years but it feels, it feels like home now.

MR: It does. But your accent's not Glaswegian.

VB: No.

MR: [laughs] You see I've been there twice!

VB: That's right. [laughs]

MR: Funny how you pick things up, really. I used to work, well I didn't work with him. He was a legal inspector. And he came from Glasgow. Um, Dr Morrison. And he'd got this totally different accent. It's harsher. Very harsh. People from Inverness. Edinburgh's nice.

LR: Inverness. The best spoken English in the country.

VB: Pardon?

LR: Inverness. The best spoken English in the country.

MR: The majority of people speak very well but of course we only know people that we've heard--

VB: Mhm.

MR: On radio or television. And like Ipswich, you've got a terrific range of accents... because I mean people [are important now?] I mean, people travel these days.

VB: That's right.

MR: When we were children we were brought up in the village. [Didn't know half of it did you?]
[Says something about boss-eyed?] You didn't go an awful long way. War has changed things. War has made the world so small. Never mind. [inaudible] [pause 3 seconds] So what's your next job on your--?

VB: Well the next thing to do is once I've spoken to some people over the next couple of weeks is to... I'll get back and then start to think if there's any, listen to the tapes again and start to make some sense out of it. 'Cause at the moment I've got lots of information.

MR: [inaudible]

VB: That's right. That'll be a big job I think.

MR: 'Course it will. And where do you do that?

VB: I'll be based in Glasgow. Over the next year. [inaudible]

MR: And what will the end result be?

VB: Well, we're hoping to get a book out of it. And also the idea at the moment is we might be able to do something, make it computer readable. So we could have it just on a couple of

computer tapes. [inaudible] very interesting. And obviously the sort of things [inaudible] as well as being of national interest it's also very much of local interest. So the more people that have access I think the better.

MR: And then people will hopefully, erm, remember, well learn from old people's memories, about the early days. Like Eileen said, I mean Eileen is twelve years younger than I am. But she's got no recollection of war at all. And yet she was a child during the war.

VB: Yeah.

MR: And she was very much affected by it. 'Cause both her parents were in [inaudible].

VB: Ah I see.

MR: And she used to get farmed out to her granddad's farm at [inaudible]. She didn't really know.

VB: I was hearing a bit about her.

MR: [inaudible] But she's worked like a Trojan. She really does. Like I was saying, all these things, people will say [inaudible]. And if they're really interested, they're going to start digging

VB: I think it is. And it's so important erm the sort of things you're telling me about are, it's almost like a different world.

MR: That's right.

VB: And I think it is very important to make sure--

MR: Do you know, I remember Leonard and I queueing for four hours to see Eric Portman in the *49th Parallel*.

VB: Mhm.

MR: That was down in Maidstone. There was snow and ice everywhere. [laughs]

VB: Four hours!

MR: Four hours. To see a film. He was in the forces down there and I was in [inaudible] which I did until he went abroad the second time, I followed him around, and of course when he went abroad again, he stuck me a bun in the oven. My first baby.

LR: Guess what? Our oldest daughter was conceived in Maidstone. We went up to [inaudible] Inn. [inaudible] And ah... got a job... I came back [inaudible] could be the same house that we bought. I don't know. Could have been. [inaudible] Maidstone

VB: [laughs]

MR: Where she was made. [inaudible] Hospital.

VB: Ah. A coincidence.

MR: And now she's manager of BMA in Maidstone. [laughs] It's a very small world.

VB: It is.

LR: Did I tell you how—

MR: Yes, you did last time [inaudible].

VB: I was telling my husband actually about this lampstand, 'cause he's quite interested in that sort of thing--

MR: [inaudible] Did Leonard tell you he finished it off with a piece of glass.

VB: Yes, he was telling me.

MR: [inaudible] Smooth it down without ripping it. Through the grain.

VB: It's very unusual that. I like it.

LR: I've made two lampshades. [talks about wood; something about oak; inaudible] Two bits. "Why don't you make me a lampshade?" So I did.

VB: [laughs]

LR: [inaudible]

VB: That's right.

LR: [inaudible] coffee table. I got that wood from the wood yard. And eh... made that. [says something about tea]

VB: This is lovely.

MR: I keep all my little oddments. [laughs]

VB: It's just the right size actually for all the bits and pieces, isn't it?

MR: Mhm.

VB: Lovely.

[pause 4 seconds]

MR: All sorts of oddments.

LR: Now that wood, it's [oak?] on the outside, came from a disused coal [inaudible]

VB: Really?

MR: [inaudible]

VB: Goodness me. It's really hard, isn't it?

LR: [inaudible]

VB: Beautiful wood.

LR: That's oak at the front. The front. [talks about the table lamp] Somewhere. Bottom of a fence post.

VB: [laughs] That's amazing.

LR: That post is best part of a hundred years old. [inaudible]

VB: That's amazing. You can see the grain as well. It's really... I well believe it's that sort of age, 'cause you can see--

LR: An old friend in the building trade—I'll cut that out for you [talks about a saw] [inaudible]

VB: [laughs] I'll bet.

MR: Well these little bits, they're rubbish. But they've all got little stories.

VB: [laughs]. It's lovely the way the handles are all matched up as well.

LR: [inaudible; talks about the post and doors]

VB: Aw. It's lovely.

MR: [laughs] I [inaudible] four miles for the sale. [inaudible] little village called [inaudible].

VB: Ah, I see.

MR: [laughs] [inaudible; Scottish ancestry?] [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

[pause 7 seconds]

LR: [inaudible] [talks about piece of wood]

VB: Ah!

MR: This is our eldest daughter.

VB: Ah I see. [laughs]

MR: [inaudible] That's on our 20th Wedding Anniversary.

VB: Goodness me.

MR: We went to church to renew [inaudible].

VB: It's a lovely idea.

MR: [inaudible]

VB: Erm, no I don't.

MR: Well he's a mason, a freemason.

VB: Ah I see.

MR: He's been Master of the Lodge. And when his year of office is finished, the ladies have what they call [inaudible]. And she organises it all and they make a lot of money for charity. The masons do an awful lot for charity.

LR: We do not publicise.

MR: [inaudible; says something about buttonhole] [inaudible]

VB: That's a lovely dress that.

MR: [inaudible] I never knew about the masons until [inaudible] Simon [inaudible] [Torquay?] There you go. Do you know who he is?

VB: Does look familiar, actually.

MR: Charlie Williams. The comedian.

VB: Right, right.

MR: We were on holiday on the Isle of Wight and I was sitting on that bench all alone. After lunch on Sunday. This chap came walking along and he said, "Hallo love!" I said, "Hi!" He said, "Eeee! I'm coming up there after thee!"

VB: [laughs]

MR: [laughs] I looked at him and I said, "I know you." He said, "Do ye? Eee! That [inaudible]. That's how I started!" [laughs] And 'course the girls that were in the lounge, the bar, were there.

VB: Mhm.

MR: They were watching me chatting to this chap. And I told Leonard to bring out my camera. There we are.

[End of interview]