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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* Tape: NM-95-014OT001, NM-95-014OT002

* CCINTB Tape ID: T95-10, T95-11

* Length: 2:05:30

* Knightswood, Glasgow, 17 February 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Nancie Miller

* Transcribed by Annie Nissen / Standardised by Sarah Neely

* NM=Nancie Miller / VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: Only interview with Nancie Miller; Sound Quality: First tape good, second tape poor.

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[Start of Side A]

VB: This is Tape T95-10 and I'm Valentina Bold. I'm about to talk with Mrs Nancie Miller of Knightswood in Glasgow about her experiences of going to the cinema in the 1930s [Muffled Sound] Aehm [Rustling] This should be about right.

NM: I wondered if...

VB: It's one of these wee clip-on ones, so if you don't mind.

NM: No, I was going to say if you wanted a wee table. There's a wee glass table at your back.

VB: Ah, that might be useful. As I say, I'll just clip it on here.

NM: I'd say there's a first for everything.

VB: Yes. It's got really good erm [Rustling] it's got very good pick-up so it should come over nice and clear, erm…

NM: Well this is it, because, erm…

VB: Yes, that's quite handy actually, so I can… [Rustling]

NM: 'Cause you did say they didn't give you a car.

VB: That's right. Well no. Occasionally, we're supposed to get hire cars, but erm as with everything these days, money's quite tight, erm, so all very economical. So any, I think that's, erm, seems to be working okay [Pause 5 seconds] yeah, I just made a note of a couple of things that you did say, that I did want to ask you about.

NM: Yes, surely.

VB: Erm, one thing that I would like to ask you is a couple things about yourself, just so I can get an idea…

NM: A picture, a profile [laughs]

VB: [laughs] a profile. Erm I'll just fill that in while we're chatting. Erm, is that your full name, Nancie Miller or?

NM: Well, it's Agnes.

VB: Agnes.

NM: Yes.

VB: And can I ask when is your date of birth?

NM: [date redacted] 1920.

VB: [date redacted] **1920. And were you born in Glasgow?**

NM: Yes.

VB: Can I ask what your father did?

NM: Well, for many, many years he was unemployed.

VB: Right.

NM: Erm, from before I went to school, which would be when I would be about four maybe. He was in the war.

VB: Yes.

NM: You know, the First War. And erm, I think, had a brief spell in the railway or something after that. He was a Carlisle man.

VB: Right.

NM: And was on the railway Carlisle to Glasgow.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: Which is why he came, and travelling on, well it'd be a mate of his, was this man who had married a Glasgow girl, was living in Glasgow. My father travelled up and had no lodgings, so my

aunt said erm - well, she wasn't my aunt then, she said, oh - you know, sort of, come and erm you know stay with us overnight. So he dropped into the habit of every time he was up in Glasgow, he stayed with this mate and his wife. And it must have been one of the times he was there, my mother went round and then for some reason every time the Carlisle train was coming in, she was there. [laughs]

VB: That sounds romantic. [laughs]

NM: She was there, yes. So, that's what brought him to Glasgow.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: So I suppose after the war, for which he'd volunteered. My mother lived in Bridgeton at that time, I think she was born there. And she erm [pause 4 seconds] well, they got marr... They didn't have to get married, they didn't have to in those days, but they got married and erm she stayed with her mother of course. But because it was Bridgeton, he just went out one day and volunteered, didn't tell her, didn't tell anybody, for the Bridgeton the HLI. And it was either the 8th or the 9th, but it was a Bridgeton crowd and erm before she knew it, and she was pregnant then, and away he was, away to the war. So that coming back from the war, he had this... had left the railway, you see, to go to the Army and, I think, a wee bit like the last time, they had to take them back. But, I don't know, I think times were bad and didn't last long. He was in the railway for two, three years and erm, by that time, I was here and then he was unemployed. And in actual fact, I was working at fourteen, before my father was working.

VB: Really?

NM: Father only got work, casual work about 1935/36 and then, because the people didn't... weren't so aware, but, you know, the unrest in Europe, and the war and the armaments. So he got into the Parkhead Forge, so... but, of course, this was, you know, two/three years before the war, but this was them getting ready. But, you know, people didn't know that. So that erm, yes, he was unem... all my childhood, he was unemployed, mhm, which made for kind of, dare I say it, hard times.

VB: Am sure it was.

NM: It did, mhm, it did.

VB: Am sure you weren't alone either, I mean, it must have been a difficult time for a lot of people.

NM: Oh no, no, no, we never thought we were poor.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Nor did we ask for things, we knew it was hopeless. We just never thought of it. No, no, it was... no thought of staying on at school. Nothing like that.

VB: Did your mother work at all or?

NM: Yes, mother went out cleaning. Sometimes three different places in one day. In the very early days, she used to take me with... it was mostly houses.

VB: Right.

NM: Big houses. Giffnock, that sort of thing. And in the very early days, she had to take me with her. But seemingly, I cried every time she disappeared from my sight, so it got that I had a sister, one sister, four years older, and erm it got that she had to take me to school, which they allowed. So she dragged me away to the school at four. And I don't know if you've ever seen it, but you know how there's the desk and then there was two wee seats behind the desk.

VB: Right.

NM: Do you remember seeing a desk like that. And then two wee individual seats that went up with a bang. And in between that was a space and that was where I sat, in the space! A wee bit each side, between my sister and the girl who was next to her.

VB: So that was you at school at...

NM: At four.

VB: Oh, I see.

NM: Yea, yeah. And the girl who sat beside, my sister's best friend, she didn't seem to mind either. My sister didn't seem to mind. And I sat there quite happy and erm I can remember, the teacher didn't seem to mind. Nobody minded. I wasn't the only one. As a matter of fact, my husband, who was six years older than I was, which means six years earlier on, he was dragged to school at three, with his big sister. So this is what childminders did in those days.

VB: Yes. You must have been very well-behaved if nobody…

NM: Well, I kind of blotted my copy book, because they had little kind of china inkwells with ink, which only got filled up on days when there was going to be good writing and I had got a wee bit

paper, blotting paper probably, and I found a few dipped in the inkwell. 'Cause nobody was listening or bothering with me, and I started throwing these wee inky papers [laughs] so that I was really… I think they stopped me coming, I don't know, or else I remember I was checked. First time I was ever checked.

VB: Oh dear.

NM: But I do remember my sister used to answer questions, you know, you had to put up your hand to answer questions, and she was a clever girl and when she answered it correctly, I remember beaming as if it was me, that had answered, you know. So, already I knew the importance of learning.

VB: Yes.

NM: So that was me very early on. Then, 'cause at five, when mother couldn't take me, she was working. My aunty, the same one who lived round the corner, Aunty took me to school and while other children were crying for their mothers and… I wasn't bothering, I was used to the school, I couldn't wait to get. So there I got to the school and was quite happy, and was there until I was eleven. In which time, my sister of course had left. And I must say, I enjoyed school, really truly enjoyed it. In fact, I loved it. This is it, you see, there was never anyone at home.

VB: Yes.

NM: Mother out, my big sister away at the other school, the big school, and erm father, I'm afraid away, any money, drinking. And erm this was it, I loved the school. So that was the early… well, this is the Aunt being so handy, which I suppose people miss nowadays, 'cause I… mother wasn't in, I could run round the corner. Mind you, Aunty wasn't always in either, she worked too. But if she was in, you know, a piece of jam or something. And she had a piano, and I got playing the piano. I think I played hymns, picked up by ear. And she had a revolving bookcase, which I'd never ever seen before and she'd let me do that, turn this round, and take out books. Not children's books, but I had a respect for books. So, Aunty was very good to me and in actual fact, took me to see my first erm coloured film.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: I think that'd be about… I was ten, it was about 1931. 'Cause we had to stand in a long queue and it was in the Coliseum in Eglinton Street. See we were on the South Side, which was really the Gorbals. But we walked. Nobody thought anything of walking, but when we got there, there was a big queue. There was only Aunty and me. Though she had three children of her own and there was

my sister, but I think me being the youngest of the five, she kind of… maybe I was well-behaved. So we stood in a long queue, I knew it was the pictures we were going to and we got in, it was *The Desert Song*, and it was coloured. It was John Boles and he sung 'One Alone' and then there was the 'Riff Song' and oh, it was really wonderful. But I mean that was the first and sort of only colour film until coloured films came in.

VB: It was very early, yes.

NM: Yes, very early. But it was coloured.

VB: How did you feel seeing that because it must have been...

NM: Oh, I had, I was short-sighted [laughs] we weren't really near enough for me to be happy, but because it was coloured, I could see it. Oh yes, that was wonderful, I remember that. Well that's what over sixty years ago and I do remember that. I remember my sister being a wee bit annoyed that she didn't even know I was going and sort of Aunty hadn't thought of taking her and...

VB: Oh [laughs]

NM: But the thing was this time she was working, she couldn't have gone anyway.

VB: So was that during the daytime that you went or?

NM: This is just what I'm trying to think. It was dark, but of course, you see in the winter it could be dark about four-ish.

VB: That's true, yes.

NM: No, I can't remember. It's not that my mother wouldn't like me out at night. I mean, we were out at night, we thought nothing of playing in the street at night, but you had to be in by ten o'clock when the pubs come out. You had to be in before that. But erm that was a very early film. Now, of course, the schools took us once a year to the pictures.

VB: Really?

NM: Mhm. What did I see in the school pictures? Well, the first one I saw was *Little Women*.

VB: Right. When about would that be?

NM: By this time, I was at Strathbungo's school. I'd passed my qualifying [pause 3 seconds] I got a prize, in the playground of my wee school, 'cause I had done so well. And it was Charles Kingsley's 'The Water Babies'. Well, I didn't like the title for a start.

VB: [laughs]

NM: I thought for goodness sake and it was... do you know, it was ages before... I mean ages, maybe a year, before I read it, the title just put me off. And erm, then I went up to my big school, which wasn't the one my sister had gone to. She had gone down the road, because all her friends were going there. I had gone up the road, because all my friends were going there. The difference being she did cooking, and laundry, and things.

VB: Right.

NM: Whereas I did shorthand and typing, and bookkeeping, and French, and Science, and Maths and she got none of these things and she was clever. And when she was going to that school, which was Adelphi Terrace, but it's not... it's still there, but they use the building for various things.

VB: I was wondering when you said that, I couldn't quite picture it as a school.

NM: No, it isn't a school now, but it was a school. And you could get to it walking down our street, you know, all the way down. She didn't take a tram or anything. Neither did I, unless in the very depths of Winter, when you could... children got a ticket called a ha'penny half, a purple ticket, and it said child on it. To be honest, even after I was fourteen, I kept asking for it.

VB: [laughs]

NM: And I got it for quite a long time too. So my father said erm when she was... my sister was going to this school, he said, he was so annoyed, he didn't... he himself was a great reader and knew the importance of education. And alright, he hadn't had, he was more or less self-taught, but he wanted us to, you know, do something with our lives. And I remember him saying, well, you can put on your Sunday coat and erm we'll buy you a new case, and you can get new shoes, things we couldn't afford really. But no, she wouldn't go and she didn't go. And she regretted it. [Pause 3 seconds] When I went up to my school, with her Sunday coat, which had now come to me [laughs]. 'Cause I remember it had a fur collar and it was August [laughs]. It was a lovely blue coat. Of course, I knew in time, she would, you know, grow out of it and I would get it. And I kept saying to her, are you not done with that coat yet? [laughs] So I got the coat, but of course, that wasn't suitable, I had to get a trench coat...

VB: Right.

NM: I had to get a gym tunic, I had to get a white blouse, I had to get a school tie, I had to get a badge, sewn on to the tunic. And we couldn't afford any of these things. And my mother, I think it

would've been her own, navy blue set of skirt, opened it up all up, washed it, turned it and made me a tunic, a very nice tunic. So much so, that the teacher asked me where my mother had bought it. She was very clever with her hands. She again worked in Templeton's as a weaver and should've been a dressmaker.

VB: Right.

NM: Very clev .... It was a lovey tunic and for ages I used it as a skirty. The blouse wasn't just white, it was kind of creamy and I didn't like to tell her. The tie should've been a silk tie, but the colours were right, but it was a kind of ...you've maybe seen them in the men's ties, kind of knitted, silk knitted.

VB: Oh, I know what you mean.

NM: Little boys used to wear them long ago.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Silk-knitted ties. Straight.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Going like that, stripes. The colours were right, but it should've been silk. I never said. Erm I had a velour hat, which we'd to wear, so you see they were so particular, really so particular. But because my father was unemployed, I was given free books.

VB: Right.

NM: And of course every one was stamped, property of Glasgow Education. I mean it got to the end of what we now call a term, I mean there were no thoughts of children's feelings then, they said, stand up all those who get free books, or, come out here, all those that get free books and bring your books with you, 'cause they'd all to be handed in. And they were going over to see you hadn't, you know, wasted them or torn them. There was no... well, when I got up to this big... in the wee school it didn't matter, but in the big school, well, it was mostly people from Cathcart, Mount Florida. A wee bit better class shall we say, not really better class, but wee bit more money. People... fathers working. That was a sore point, that really was a sore point. Anyway, I'm away from the pictures.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Once a year they took us to the pictures, and this was Strathbungo, that took us. The first time they took us, was to the BB Cinerama and we saw *Little Women*, with eh Katharine Hepburn as Jo

and... Mhm I forget the other girls. Oh yes, Joan Bennett was Amy. Joan Bennett was Amy. Erm, I think it was Elisabeth March or somebody was the very tall girl that got married quite early on in the story. And erm I forget who was Beth, the one that died. All I know is that I wept buckets when Beth died.

VB: [laughs] Yeah. I was going to ask if you enjoyed it?

NM: Oh, I did, I loved it. Oh, I loved it. I loved it, yeah. In fact, it seemed to have made more of an impression on me than some of the... funny I can't remember the other films. And I went two or three times, but it maybe that... first year I would be twelve by the time they would be taking us. My birthday being in August and the school went in in the August, so I went in just about my twelfth birthday. Although the qualifying I would be about eleven and a half.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Erm so then I would have one more time, and I think I missed the third time, because I was leaving anyway. I was able to just walk out of school and nobody... thirteen and three quarters and nobody said, are you not coming back or what are you going to do, or cheerio even. [laughs] But there was prize-giving in the Dixon Halls, once a year they held that and that was the June. That was up at the top of Cathcart road, Dixon Avenue. And that... I'm not sure if I got a prize. I did very well the first year. I think I was second or third, and of course, this was me competing against a lot very clever... girls only, very clever girls. They next year, I slumped a way down, to thirteenth or sixteenth even. Way, way down. Nobody said, why's this child... nobody said. I remember my father being disappointed, but I never said, he never said, teacher never said. But, the year I left, I had picked up again and I think I was second again. I can't remember if I got a... I don't remember that I got a prize, but I think I got a certificate. But then nobody said, are you coming back? And I was going to be fourteen before the... practically on the day the school returned, I was going to be fourteen. But in my mind, I wasn't going back, 'cause we needed the money and I thought no, if I could just get a job. And I'd learnt so much about unemployment and I thought, if I could erm get a job. So of course that was the school holidays in the summer. We weren't going away, we never went away. I only went away when my Aunty took me. She sometimes took us to Girvan and the year I was fourteen, took me to the Isle of Man and I mean, that was marvellous, that was... and I was still wearing my coat with the fur collar. I've got a snap and when I look at it now, and I think July, and the summers were hot and there I was, the pink linen frock that had been made down from my big cousins, and this same... I loved that coat, you see. It was probably too short for me by that time.

VB: It sounds very stylish with the fur collar.

NM: It had and it must have been quite good fur. I don't even know if it was new when my sister got it. I don't know where it came from. I think maybe one of these big houses, more than likely. It just appeared one day. My sister never went and got fitted for it or anything, it just appeared one day and fitted my sister and it was her coat. And then, it was my coat. And I loved that coat. And there I was on the Isle of Man, with my coat, with the fur collar [laughs]. I've got a snap somewhere. A walking picture it was, 'cause there was three of them and my mother must have kept one [mumbles]. But, anyway, I wasn't going to let the grass grow under my feet and before we went to the Isle of Man, I was... maybe a wee bit like... in Knightswood, there's quite a community, but over in the Gorbals it was more so. And erm we used to walk about. But you see, by this time my mother thought I was too big to be going out to play. Although I was still not fourteen, but too big to be going out to play. I wanted a ball or skipping ropes, uh, can't go to play anymore, too big. And I wasn't even... I'm tall now, but I wasn't tall then, I just shot up at sixteen. I was walking along, it's called Cumberland Street, and it kind of branched off a big main busy street, branched off my street. And as I passed this shop, a Chandlers, in the window it said, Girl Wanted. Oh, I thought, the very thing, Girl Wanted. And I always liked the smell of this shop, kind of carbolic, soapy, and anti-septic, and firelighters [laughs].

VB: Yes.

NM: I always... it always wafted out as you passed and I thought oh, I like the smell of that shop. There was a very good Chandlers close to us, but this was a cheap shop. Prob... maybe my mother used to send me there, as I seemed to know the shop. But in I went and I saw the man, who I presumed was Jack [laughs] it maybe was, I don't know. But I said, you want... yes, you want a girl. And I said I want the job, 'cause this was to I presume serve and maybe erm sweep up, you know, clean up. And erm, he said, you can start in the morning. And at this, I don't know, maybe a week day, but already it was... he said to me, where are your books? The only books I knew was school books or library books, I didn't know what books were. But what he meant was insurance cards.

VB: Right.

NM: So I said, I don't have any books. And I said, what kind, and he must have explained it, and I said, well, I don't have any. So he sent me to the Labour Exchange to ask for books and I went, asked for books, and the woman said, erm the usual thing, your name, your address, your date of birth and what not. And when I told her my date of birth, oh, she said, you're not fourteen for six weeks yet, I can't give you books. But I said, I have to, I've got a job and I start in the morning. [laughs] Well, she

says, you just have to wait and tell the owner, 'cause they didn't... nowadays, they'd probably ring Jack and say.

VB: And say, yes.

NM: No, I had to go back and tell Jack, I couldn't get any books. And I said to the man, I can't get any books because I'm not fourteen yet. He hadn't asked what age I was and he said, well, I can't keep the job for six weeks, so I lost it. I lost it before I had it. [laughs] I was so unhappy, and I was so pleased with myself after going home and saying... no, I don't think I had gone home. See there was never anyone in. No, I think I'd made my way to McNeil Street, the Labour Exchange. So I had it, and lost it all in one day. But then my father said, the Glasgow Herald, that's the place where you'll get a good job. You've got to get into an office, he said, and you'll get a good job. He thought I was clever. And, of course, we couldn't buy a Glasgow Herald, 'cause I think even then it was tuppence. But in Buchanan Street, the Glasgow Herald, they maybe do it to this day, I don't know, there was a free one…

VB: Right.

NM: that people could look at. And it was in the foyer, you didn't have to go into the main building. I don't even know if it is in Buchanan Street. No, I don't think it is.

VB: No, I don't think it is, erm…

NM: Well, it was in Buchanan Street then and it was a lovely big, marble building. So I had to touch down there every day, walk and read these advertisements, and take a wee paper and pencil and mark the job number. All you needed was the box number.

VB: Right.

NM: Then I'd come home and write my letters and then, of course, if you didn't have a stamp. So you'd go back and you had a free post thing.

VB: Right.

NM: And even when the building was closed, this was outside for replies for jobs and you'd put your letter in there. Sometimes I went back, sometimes my father did it for me. But this was the answer. But within a fortnight, I got a job, so there I was away.

VB: Where was it you worked first?

NM: Erm, John Stewart, an ironmonger, wholesaler in Mungo's in Oswald Street.

VB: And was that office work?

NM: Yes. I got a letter on the 1st of September 1934. So I wasn't... about a fortnight past my birthday.

VB: It's amazing actually, you were very lucky.

NM: And the letter said, please attend at the Counting House. Well, initially I thought it was a rhyme you know, counting out your money. I went to the Counting House and the cashier will see you, Mr Burns. So Mr Burns. And in those days, you didn't wait until the next Monday, you started the next morning. That was the way they did it, so I went in. I had... I've seen it since on television actually, it looks like Dickens when I look at it now [laughs] big desks, there were three desks there, all joined together. And back to back with them was another three desks. And you perched up on a big high stool, and these were mostly bookkeepers, and me. I sat up there and I was in charge of the post, and petty cash, and telephones, and I had never answered a telephone in my life.

VB: A very responsible job for a 14-year old.

NM: I didn't even know anybody that had a telephone. It was not just that we had none. I didn't know anybody that had a telephone mhm but, erm, I stayed there a couple of years. They weren't very good on rises. I started from nine to half past six, every day nine to one, half past one when I got the post, you'd had to sit and wait for the boss to sign the mail. There was a whole big row of typists and erm they all had their own desks away over there and they would take the mail in to be signed, and leave it in the basket. They'd all be away, put on their coats, good night, the lights went down

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

NM: I mean I was working until about seven at night.

VB: It must've been quite exhausting that.

NM: Really. And my father counted and said you're doing a fifty-one hour week.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But erm so... the first year I was timid, but by the second year, I was beginning to think, this isn't good enough. And if the letters weren't out by the time the typists had gone home, I would go and knock on his door and say, have you signed the letters, Mr Goodall, because erm I'm still here.

And I was the only one that was there and he would never start to sign them right away, but he'd say, I'll bring them out when they're ready. Sometimes it'd still be ten minutes after that. He brought them... of course had to make sure they were all in the right envelopes, had the appropriate stamps and I needed to get to the Post Office, and some had to be registered. And I think now, you know, however, that's what I did. After a year, I asked for raise... I was getting eight shillings, four pence off for a stamp. And when they said eight shillings, I mean that was magical to me. Because our rent was eight shillings and I really think that's what clinched me taking that job. I thought, I'll be paying the rent. Father still wasn't working, big sister wasn't working by this time. She had come out of school also at fourteen, immediately got a job in the Daily Record Office. And about a year later, they'd taken on a lot of school leavers, but a year later, she was... not sacked for any misdemeanour, just that erm the children's column or whatever it was she was, she wasn't writing it of course, but whatever she was engaged in, erm I remember they used to dress them up and take them out as a publicity stunt.

VB: Right.

NM: 'Cause for years she had a picture of herself as Red Riding Hood with her group of Daily Record people. But she probably got too big and too old for this sort of thing.

VB: Yes.

NM: And that was it, she had to go. And she didn't work then until she was about eighteen.

VB: So obviously your wage must have been...

NM: Well there was only my mother doing the scrubbing, and me.

VB: So what did you do when you came out of John Stewarts?

NM: Well the reason I left was, the first time he gave me two shillings and then it was ten shillings. When the second year was up, well I'd just had my sixteenth birthday, a wee bit more worldly-wise, went in and asked for a rise, he didn't say no, but he didn't... this is still Mr Goodall, he didn't say no, he didn't say yes, he was sort of uh, oh, we have to see. And I thought, oh enough is enough, to myself. I went home, told my father, oh, he said, that's no use, he said, look for another job. Then I had to go in my lunch hour, to the Daily Rec... not the Daily Record, the Herald, in Buchanan Street and then erm get job numbers. But it wasn't so bad, I was on the spot, from Oswald Street it was easy. But this next job I got was away in Kinning Park.

VB: Right.

NM: And eh, you know, that erm was... that needed a tram card, couldn't walk there.

VB: Was that in an office as well or?

NM: It was. I was eh offered fifteen shillings to start, which from twelve shillings was an awful lot.

VB: Quite a jump.

NM: Yes. I think I stressed him that I would need, you know, tram card, fare and all this, but I got fifteen shillings to start, and a very nice boss. He was a paint manufacturers. And I had the Mail Room to myself, so that the telephone exchange was in the Mail Room.

VB: Right.

NM: And I had all the post to do. And in the lunch hour when all the typists were away, I would nip in and practice on the typewriters. And I was going to night school and all this. But after I was there a year, I'm sorry to say [laughs], but I set the place on fire...

VB: [exclamation of shock]

NM: Mhm. My Mail Room's here, and the Science Lab was there, and in between the Science Lab and my Mail Room was the stationary place, which was stupid, wasn't it. And then all these big choirs of note... sheets of paper, that I had to keep the typists' drawers supplied with, all these big foolscap envelopes, all sorts of envelopes, honestly, bookshelves, you know, this went up quite high and as I say I really wasn't all that tall. And the scientist, who was a nice man, wore a white coat, which impressed me greatly. But he got to leaving things sort of... there was no door, no door from the Mail Room to this room.

VB: Right.

NM: No door from this room to the Science Room. He had a very tiny wee place too. He got that he was laying things out sort of in his doorway and then kind of round, and then in the Mail Room. And I was standing on a lower shelf to reach to a higher shelf to get envelopes. And came down and the hem of my skirt caught... it's like the... big, it was glass, but it was like the big things they make wine in now, it was just about this height, with a big glass stopper. And it was clear liquid, I didn't know what was in it, but the hem of my skirt caught it, toppled it, and it fell down. And stuff ran out and it just looked like water to me and I thought what could I wipe this up with. I thought oh my... and I went into... and of course, my feet were saturated with it and I walked into the Mail Room, looking for something to wipe up the floors I thought. But in the Mail Room, there was a gas radiator. I think they still have them, stand up quite tall, you lift a wee door at the bottom and light the gas.

VB: Right.

NM: It was always lit before I went in, I didn't light it. But, of course, the minute between me tramping it in, the minute the stuff ran in and reached the gas, it went puff, and then went into the... it was a paint manufacturer's, you've got to remember, there was a lot of all sorts of inflammable stuff. And there was a big coach yard and then the factory where they actually made the paint. It didn't go up, at least I don't think it did [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Oh dear.

NM: And when I looked down, my shoes were on fire.

VB: You were lucky to get out in one piece actually, it's a...

NM: And I got a fright and I ran down the stairs, and ran right out the door into the street, Portman Street. And the minute the fresh air hit me, I thought, oh, I'd better go and tell somebody the place is on fire [laughs]. So there was an office down below. I rushed into the right hand office, and by this time, my overall was beginning to burn, but I was numb, I didn't feel any pain [pause 3 Seconds] and before I could gabble out, they saw me and there was one girl, a typist from the room upstairs, who should have been in her room, but had been down chatting to the girls downstairs. She was a Girl Guide, and I admired her greatly, she was a Nancy too... but it was her machine, I think she knew, I used to use it. And erm she grabbed someone's coat off the peg, wrapped it round me and made sure all the flames were out and took me in to an interpreter's office, a German. And said sort of, you know, this girl's been... something happened, she had an accident and we're going to get her an aspirin and a cup of tea [laughs] and I'm sitting there with this cup of tea and an aspirin [laughs] and the place is all burning up above. In the typists' room, and there all in the typists' room and then the bosses' room, I don't think the bosses were in. But this Nancy, who is as I say very quick, and wouldn't... she ran up, she heard the cracking, 'cause I hadn't been able to say what happened. I just said I spilt something and it had caught fire. I didn't seem to know the place was on fire, I thought it was just...

VB: You must have been in shock.

NM: I thought, it was just me that was on fire. I thought it was just me that was on fire. So she ran up and warned the girls, nobody was hurt. Everybody got out, everybody was out in the street. The boss arrived in his car. Building is blazing by this time. Ah, it's all my f... if I could have run, I would have run away. But the boss sat me in his car and told me not to worry. And I remember saying, oh, but my coat's up there. It wasn't the same trench...

VB: [laughs] I was just going...

NM: [laughs] no, it wasn't the same trench... wasn't my blue coat, I think I'd grown out of that. It wasn't my same trench coat, but it was a trench coat, so I must have had two when, one must have been to wee for me... And I said, oh my coat's up there, I think my purse was in my pocket, and I was getting all kind of worried. Oh, no, don't worry about a thing. And the brigade, oh, they were still fighting it, 'cause they didn't want it to get to these big vats of paint. So, the boss detailed somebody to run me home. I'd only once been in a car in my life. And he was going to run me home, they didn't know where I lived. I mean people didn't... bosses didn't care then where they lived and he sent his secretary with me, and she'd to come up to the door. And all the time we were going to my place, I thought there'll be nobody in, my keys are in my purse and… but I didn't want to say anything. But funnily enough my mother was in. And she nearly fell away when she opened the door and I'm standing all [reground?] and bedraggled, half-burn... I still had my half-burnt overall on and this Miss Marten said what had happened. Well she didn't say what had happened, she just said, there's been a fire and erm well, we thought it best to bring Nancy home, because, you know, she got such a fright. I think my mother asked her then, but my mother was... we were all upset. So Miss Marten said she had to hurry away, because she had to get back to arrange... she was the organiser. And I remember my mother took off the burnt stockings and shoes. I don't know... my feet were red, but they weren't burnt. And for once it was leather shoes. Well they were all leather shoes really in those days. Although they were saturated, they were still cut in one piece, but shrivelled. And I remember, she put me to bed, which was so unusual. It was the kitchen bed, just a... not a bed, just the planks in the wall. I don't remember... I don't know what was happening. She put my burnt, all my burnt things, she shoved... there was a valance in front of this bed arrangement you see, and I don't know why she just shoved everything... all the burnt things she shoved below the bed, because I could still smell them. And I think somebody came the next day from the work, because I thought I'd have to go to work the next day. I think somebody came... or Miss Marten had said to her, send her in tomorrow, 'cause I remember I was in the house the next day. But, my father came in either that night or the next night and it would probably be the Evening Times, 'cause it was nearly always the Evening Times we got, 'cause it was a big paper and on the front page there was the fire. 'Cause a fire was quite a big thing in those days.

VB: I bet, yeah.

NM: And here was this fire and the blaze, but they didn't know how it had started [laughs] they didn't know how it had started. Because I remember my father saying, I think I should ph... not phone, but go and tell them how it started [laughs]. It was a mystery how it had started. But all these

fire brigades called out, and the building was lost, demolished, gone forever [laughs]. Gee whiz. And then I think Miss Marten came back to see me and said, if you feel well enough, come in, because there wasn't... they didn't have porta cabins, but there was a kind of caravany kind of thing that they were temporarily using as an office and there was a phone in it, and they needed somebody to do wee jobs, me. But the typists were all sort of off. Everybody was off. But Miss Martens was doing the letters that had to be done, and she needed me to help her. So in I went. All I can remember is looking in the building, seeing all the blackened beams. Oh and I really felt terrible. And she says to me, well, you will have to give me a note of all the things you've lost. And that was the first thing for the insurance. And of course, I was so honest, you know. So of course I said I've lost my trench coat, and my shoes were ruined, and my overall, and my purse, and oh, I don't know, two or thru'pence or so, whatever I had in there. I mean I was so exact, right... and she said, you'll get a voucher and go to, and where did you get the coat. And funnily enough, I mean I don't think it was bought new for me, but the coat had been out of Paisley's, so I thought well it's not telling a lie and I said, oh, it was from Paisley's [laughs] but by this time, if I'd had any sense, I could've got something else.

VB: Yes.

NM: [laughs] No. And away I goes to Paisley's and buy another trench coat [laughs].

VB: [laughs] Oh dear.

NM: But I did get new shoes and erm I think they gave me a pound sort of compensation and erm, but the next thing was, I had to go to court, 'cause the scientist was... by the time I had been in to see the big boss and told him exactly what... and I just exactly told him how I had climbed up for the envelope and my skirt had caught the... by this time, you see, my mother thought I should be wearing longer skirts. So, anyway, they were maybe not trailing round my ankles, for me they were trollopy, and it was that skirt that caught on the... because before that, to suit my blue coat, I just had them up to my knee.

VB: Right.

NM: But erm, there you see, I had to go to court and the scientist was there and, oh, I hated to blame him, and I could see the man, and oh he was a really nice man and... but I just had to say the truth what happened. So I don't know whether he lost his job or not, or whether they would re-employ him.

VB: Right.

NM: But I had to go back and forward to this wee kind of temporary office. And erm, as always I conferred with my father, and I said, oh I'm fed up of trailing away to Kinning Park to that wee stuffy place and... I hadn't had any... I hadn't the cheek to ask for a rise, but my father said they've probably done very well out of the insurance.

VB: I'm sure.

NM: 'Cause he read up a lot and he said, there's a new building going up and, it's taking in a bigger building in a different... more modern building and the mere fact that they weren't getting on to me, at all.

VB: Yes, yes.

NM: They were so nice to me and they weren't sacking me.

VB: Yeah.

NM: He said, oh they've probably done very well out of the insurance. So I thought, oh well then, I'm due my trench coat. But I thought it... I thought I had to exactly replace you know. I said I'm fed up of going all the way there and I want to get back into the town, as we called it. I want to get back into the town, I'm fed up of being a way out there. So this time it would be about 1936.

VB: Right.

NM: Back I came to the town. Always the same place, back to the Herald Office.

VB: Right.

NM: Got my box numbers, got the job with Hotpoint, the electric appliance place in West Campbell Street.

VB: Right.

NM: Oh and I loved it. And it was mostly from there and I was seventeen-ish, seventeen, and then that was me ready to set off for the pictures.

VB: Right.

NM: And I was in the town, so quite often I didn't go home. I just... oh I was getting quite sophisticated by this time, you see.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: I had finished with the Night School and I thought erm no, no, I'll just take a piece of sandwich, just take a piece to the office, and we were allowed to make tea. And then I'd meet my girlfriend and away we'd rush to the pictures. Oh, it was great.

VB: So that must have been with the pictures in the town you were going to then?

NM: Yes, when... when I was erm still sort of closer to home, it was always the Coliseum in Eglinton street. This was apart from when I was a child. When I was a child... see there were a lot of cinemas. In my one area, there was about five cinemas.

VB: Really? As many as that.

NM: Aha. There was one in Cumberland Street, one in South Bellington Street, The Wellington Palace, where you always caught fleas.

VB: [laughs]

NM: there was one called The Paragon, another flea place. So these two places my mother wouldn't let me go to.

VB: Really.

NM: A very odd time I went, but I knew myself it was dirty and smelly and not nice. You had to walk to get to them. No, I didn't really go there much. But in Crown Street, which was quite close to us, there was the Crown Cinema, which we called the Crowny. And that was where, in my very early days, you know, twelve/thirteen-ish, we used to go round to the Crowny, and I saw *Frankenstein*, you know the first *Frankenstein*. And that would be about 1933, 'cause I was still at school.

VB: Is that the one with Bela Lugosi in it?

NM: No, it was Boris Karloff.

VB: Sorry, I meant to say Boris Karloff, yeah.

NM: Yes, Boris Karloff. It was in black and white. And I went with... this time, I had two or three friends. I had friends from school, but they didn't always live beside me, so I still was friends with people, up the next close.

VB: Right.

NM: So this is my chum up the next close, who is a wee bit older than me. Her and I used to... well, we went to this *Frankenstein*, and it was really her idea, 'cause I didn't know that I would like it. Of

course, like everybody then, I thought that Frankenstein was the monster. Everybody thought Frankenstein was the monster. I mean, years and years later, people thought Frankenstein was. We went to see *Frankenstein*, we were sitting... it must have been in the evening, pardon me, 'cause I know it was dark and we were sitting and when it got to the bit where the monster is coming to life, I got such a fright, I think I screamed and I'm not a screamer. I don't know what I'd do if anything was attacking me, 'cause I'd just dry up, but I think I screamed. All I know is, I got up and ran… this seems to be me in times of trouble. Get up and run. And I ran to the exit and realised it was dark and I was too frightened to go out and go home myself. So I stood at the back of the picture house, I don't know whether they still have it, but they used to have a wooden kind of rail, balcony, kind of wall thing. And I stood sort of... I came to about the top of it, I could see over it, but just, I was kind of half looking and half hiding and waiting till this picture would be finished. And my friend she sat through it right to the end, she didn't get up and run after me and at the end, I got her, just for the sake of the company home. Oh and she was telling me how stupid it was and all the rest of it. But I never was... that fear stayed with me, even years later, first time it came on television, which was now thirty years ago. Well, maybe not 30, but an awful long time ago. Oh yes, thirty. We had our first television set in 1952 for the King dying. George VI dying. When George VI died, we didn't get it for that, but I do remember, that was one of the first things I remember seeing on television. George VI. So yes, it would be thirty odd years ago. They had... I couldn't watch it on television, all these years later. That fear was so strong. I hated that film. Absolutely hated it. And the very odd time when Boris Karloff, who I believe is a very private man, appeared as himself, I couldn't look at him.

VB: Really?

NM: No, couldn't look at him. I never was so afraid in my life. The things children can look at now. I have two grandsons and it's not a case of 'not in front of the children' [laughs] It's 'not in front of the granny'. Oh, I was so afraid. And that was a very early film.

VB: I was going to say, were you always like that, did you always dislike sort of horror films, the frightening ones?

NM: Oh yes. I don't think I knew *Frankenstein* was a horror. I don't think I knew what it was at all.

VB: Mhm.

NM: And then when I got to know it was about a monster, everybody said Frankenstein was... I must have told the girls at school I was going and they must have told me Frankenstein was the monster.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But it was such a foreign name to me, I didn't realise that was somebody's name. I... I just didn't know what it was. I don't think I even... I just thought this was a name they were given to this thing, I didn't think I knew it was a man.

VB: Yeah.

NM: I just know it was dreadful. I've remembered one of the school films now, it was Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers [pause 3 seconds] and I... I can't remember... it might have been A Fine Romance, I don't know if that was the name of the film, but that was one of the songs, 'A fine Romance, my friend', I won't sing it. And another one was erm 'Isn't This a Lovely Day To Be Caught in the Rain', now that might have been thirty-three [from *Top Hat,* 1935].

VB: Yes.

NM: Yes. Oh, I thought they were wonderful. And all the partners he ever had after that, and probably, especially Rita Hayworth, probably very good partners, but nothing was ever the same as Fred & Ginger. I mean they were a one-off. They were great. Yes, that was one of them. They must have thought that was suitable for children.

VB: How did that actually work, 'cause I was going to ask you about… did they take you during the school day to the film? Or?

NM: Well we had a special day.

VB: Right.

NM: This would be the summer time... no, this was probably be before the school would break up. But I know I missed the final one 'cause I wasn't there and I wasn't going back. I think I must have thought in my mind, if I go back for that, they might keep me or something, I don't know. But I'd made up my mind, I wasn't going back, I was going to get a job. Terrified I wouldn't get a job, because by this time my sister had to go to what-was-called, you know where the one bureau in Glasgow is, [Baru?]. Well she had to go to the [Baru?] school for half-a-day, learning, the other half she was to be looking for a job, so that changed her all that much. She had to do this... oh mind the terrible girls she met at this place and my sister could stand up to anybody. Although she was quiet and, in many ways, a wee bit stronger than me inside [Rustling] she could stand up to people and I think they kind of intimidated her a wee bit, apart from swearing, and the things, tricks they would play, and stealing. Oh, I was terrified that if I wasn't working, I'd have to go to this [Baru?] school. I

mean that really terrified me too. That, that was another reason why I thought, I think this is why I working in Jack's store, anything, but the [Baru?] school.

VB: Yeah.

NM: 'Cause my sister went there for several years. And, and even finally just got a job because my mother knew somebody that knew somebody that was leaving her work. And this was the Two-Max, this was a knitting machine place, they knitted jumpers. It was down the Rutherglen Road. And they told my mother who to ask for.

VB: Right.

NM: And she got in there and she was there about a year and then she got into the Co-Operative at Shield Hall, the same sort of work, the hosiery. And she was there till she married. But she'd... she'd... and by this time, she'd experience of this hosiery thing, but I mean I had no experience of anything.

VB: Yes.

NM: Nothing. Except that I could count, and I could write, and was reasonably intelligent.

VB: Yes. I was meaning to ask you, did you work right through at Hotpoint until you were married? Or?

NM: No, no [laughs] Oh, no. That would be too simple, no. Erm the way they took us down to this, as I say, I think it was the BB Cinerama, which was at Eglinton Toll.

VB: Right.

NM: So, we walked from the school, which was would be about a mile. No, they would choose a day before the school ended in June.

VB: Yeah.

NM: And say, that's the day and we're going to see such-and-such a film. Of course we had to pay for it, but it was only coppers. It was only coppers. And when we come out the cinema, we all just went our own way home. And I was quite happy, 'cause that was me on my way, half-way home. So it was good for me. Yes, while I was on the Hotpoint my family moved. Moved from... I don't think my father was working yet, or he was doing casual jobs on building sites. Somebody he knew said... I mean, my father wasn't a joiner or anything like that. A labourer more than anything. But this man said, sort of, turn up and we'll see if we can get you, you know, some work. Just do what I tell you to

do and sort of follow me, and this and that. And I'll put you wise. So he did, but whenever it was wet days there was no work. It was very kind of off and on. Very kind of off and on. And well, what did he get? He would get... he got nothing from my sister, but while I was still at school, I think he got two shillings from me. And that's old money.

VB: Right.

NM: And I think he got about a pound for him and my mother, and about two shillings from me. And nothing for my sister, 'cause she was at an age to work. There was no to work.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But she was of an age to work. So as soon as I was working, he got nothing for me, but that didn't matter, 'cause my eight shillings paid the rent.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Erm, that erm

VB: Did you go to the cinema, 'cause obviously, money must have been quite, quite...

NM: It was.

VB: Quite hard to…

NM: Yes, and I handed in every penny of that money.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Except four pence for the stamp. That maddened me that four pence for the stamp. You've no idea. And as soon as I got to 16, of course, it was one and tuppence for a stamp.

VB: Right, yeah.

NM: But when I was young, that four pence really annoyed me. Erm I think my mother would give me the odd sixpence. Although to see pictures was so cheap. I mean the likes of the Crowny there, it would be tuppence in old money.

VB: 'Cause I mean you mentioned going to the matinees in the…

NM: Yes, in the Coliseum, that's right. And sometimes we'd go a night, when I was about fifteen or sixteen, and it was a sixpence. But you see, I got a sixpence. And it was... my mother was...

[End of Side B]

[Start of Tape 2, Side A]

VB: So you managed to…

NM: Well, I always had a spare Saturday. Mind you, I was working all these hours. I think my mother thought I deserved…

VB: Absolutely, yes.

NM: Yes.

VB: So was it...

NM: Six pence.

VB: Was it a relaxing thing for you?

NM: Oh, we loved it. This time I was friendly with another girl, who'd been at school with me, a lame girl, who had met up again at the night school. See the night school, I went back to our own school, for the night school. And I loved that [doorbell ringing] Oh, I wonder if that's Edith [laughs] I'm not [inaudible]

VB: I'll just put this away.

NM: You see this thing nowadays, when it's erm say for instance a wolf whistle when you walk. In those days, the men they didn't always look at me 'cause I wasn't really... well, it's still a prob... you know.

VB: Oh, I don't know [laughs]

NM: I was so kind of naïve, but they used to tip their hat to me and say good morning and smile and all that. And in the shop next to Tom's, there was an awful nice wee man, a man in his forties, a very nice wee man. And he never... even though his back was turned, I don't know, maybe he knew the sound of my footsteps. And he always came out and say, ooh, good morning and... and then Tom was there [pause 3 seconds] and I'm so used to all these men, even going along Ingram Street and then down [inaudible] saying hello, good morning you know. Maybe the smile was still on my face, I don't know [Rustling noises]. But behind my back, this nice wee man, about forty-five, said to Tom, you know, there's a wee girl that comes down here every morning and smiles up in your face, you never look at her. Tom says, really? Well let me know the next time she's coming. So, I'm walking down the [Rustling] … When I got to Tom's place, I realised, yes, I had kind of hesitated and I don't know why and Tom's with a customer and he had his order book in his hand, taking down a man's

order. And he stepped forward and he said... and he lifted his hat, and he said, 'Good morning, dear. Would you like an apple?' [laughs] I was so taken aback. So I said, yes, please. So out in these cases and oh, they're all beautifully shiny and polished. It all came in tissue paper and this was all folded behind it, oh, it just looked lovely. And he just plucked one out the middle of them, making a space and giving it a good rub on his coat, McIntosh red, and he gave it to me. And I'm in a dream wandering around to my desk. And I sat at my desk and thought, oh my, that's awful nice of him [laughs] And then I don't... he spoke as if he knew me. Now how could know me and I put it in my drawer and it was ages before I ate it, but I finally ate it. And then, every morning after that, every morning, an apple. It wasn't always a McIntosh, 'cause they weren't always in, sometimes it was a Cox's. And he would say to me, this might not look so nice, but it's a beautiful apple. This went on for about a fortnight, it was three weeks. And then, he worked on a Saturday too, and I was going off one Saturday and he said to me, strawberries are coming in. I'd met him in the May see, so this would be about June. Strawberries are coming in, would your mother like to make jam? I don't think my mother had ever made jam before, she never had money to buy the fruit. Not only the fruit, but you needed the sugar as well. I said, oh, I don't know, I'd need to ask her. He said, do ask her, 'cause there's some beautiful strawberries, and I'd sense enough to ask, how much it would cost. And he told me the price, but he said, I'll give you a bargain. So, oh, I went home so fast. I'd never told her about the apples, but she knew I worked in a market building. So I said, one of the men in the fruit market... 'cause you see to me, no, in actual fact, Tom was twenty-four. But erm I don't know, I thought he was so much older then. And I said, there's a man in the fruit market, wondering if she'd like strawberries to make jam. And she said, oh, I don't know. I said, well, sort of he'll give me them cheap, I know he will and, in actual fact, he never took any money. I said erm she said, how many would it have to be. I said, well it needs to be more than a pound or two, it needs to be about six pounds. Och, my father said, take them, we'll eat them together with ice cream [laughs]. So, she said, oh, alright, tell him alright. So I said to Tom, yes. I said six pounds, so they were in wee two pound baskets. Three wee two pound baskets. And Tom had put a piece of wood through them and had tied it all on, so he just had to lift the one, end of the rope. So he said, erm I'll carry them. He knew where I lived, he'd asked me. I was walking as always and he said... because we'd moved, you see.

VB: Mhm.

NM: We'd moved from [inaudible] small picture houses and moved. We moved about 1937 and I think it was due to my father drinking. As I say, he only had this casual work, and sometimes got money in the hand. That was a mistake.

VB: Mhm.

NM: So, it was better not working, because of course there was always [inaudible] men coming around. When I was a wee and Mother told never to open the door. Where's your mother? Where's your father? [inaudible] I never had to tell anybody anything. Somebody reported my mother for working. She was reported for working. We knew who it was, it was a neighbour. Oh dear, that's another story. We'll have to write a book about all that.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But, eh as I say, I think that's why we moved and I was about seventeen [pause 3 seconds] and I'd got this job in the Hotpoint, which I loved and well, for the first time, was one of the girls. You see before that I was always just a junior by myself.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But I was a junior short-hand typist, and I was one of them and I loved it. Oh, I really loved it. And out the blue, my mother said, we're moving. My sister too was amazed, but my sister by this time was going with a boy and was going to get married. It didn't worry her so much. Of course, she was going to Edinburgh, it didn't worry her so much. Oh, I was devastated. This was the house I'd been born in. The only place I knew. I knew every inch of it and erm, but I mean, they didn't take me to see it, they didn't discuss it with me in any way.

VB: Mhm.

NM: They just said we're moving on Tuesday, Wednesday, whatever day it was. So that when you go out in the morning, don't come back, go to this address and it was Duke Street.

VB: Right.

NM: In Glasgow. Near to the High Street end.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Mhm. Just past the prison. In those days, it was a huge High Prison home. Way, way up. 'Cause there's houses now.

VB: Yes, I was going...

NM: And they've still got a bit of the wall. The retaining wall that runs along Duke Street is the old prison wall.

VB: Is that ....Right.

NM: It's only maybe about, my height now.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But oh, it was about twenty feet high in those days. So it was the first close past the prison, looking into the cemetery. Over at the cathedral, you know. Well they maybe said to me, sort of two days before the time, the move was taking place. I mean there was no use me saying, oh, I don't want to go or, I mean there was no question of that. But in my lunch hour from the Hotpoint I rushed along one day to this address. Oh, I nearly died. Do you know what a wide pent is? Well, it's not a close, it's just a huge wide opening, with the width like that.

VB: Right.

NM: There's one wee bit, of kind of pavement to the left and the rest is cobblestones. And it goes through to a big gate and when they opened this big gate, it was a skin work. And the day I went, there was a horse and cart going in, and I thought, oh my goodness, 'cause in my mind I thought, I'd have to have a look the door, 'cause they said it was three stairs up. Three stairs up. And in our old house, we never ever had a bathroom, but in our old house, we had an inside toilet and a wee scullery. This house had no scullery and an outside toilet out in the yard, oh and I mean everything was against it, but in my mind, I thought I'd go and have a look at the door, but I never went up, couldn't get by the horse and cart. I think I was frightened of the horse, or the man that was leading the horse, I don't know. I didn't go ... I just looked in dismay and went home and said, you didn't tell me it was up a pent. And she said, no, I knew you would be annoyed. It wasn't even a close and that really, oh, that put me off that house. But I went back to my work and then the next day that we were making the move, I left my old house in the morning, and I had to go there at night. And at first, I absolutely hated it, hated it. There was never ... my mother used to say, you're never any help and it's true, I never did any work in the house. Mind you, I worked all day already and my mother was still working. And by this time my father thought he could get on at the forge. And of course, in later years, I discovered she'd made the move because of his bad companions. She got him away from this certain crowd who had daubed her life, all her days.

VB: Yeah.

NM: But now that he'd had wee bits of money now and again, they were back on him again. These were [inaudible] it was men and women, it was a gang. Grown-up, mixed family.

VB: Mhm.

NM: It was a very disreputable reputation. They were on the same street as my Auntie, who by this time had moved to Queen's Park. My Auntie had gone up in the world. She was on her way up now, beautiful, big house. Semi-rural up in Queen's Park. And erm that was the reason my mother moved. But this is it [inaudible] She couldn't tell me all this in front of my father, of course.

VB: No, of course. Yes.

NM: And then she was... if I was out and about at night, she'd be in bed, when I come back. There was never any conversation. But erm this is making the whole point, as I say loathed it and in one way, it was handier. Again, I walked, but it was an easier walk. Just along to George Square and round to West Cambell Street. Erm but erm funny thing, by the time the war came, the skin work went on fire. [often fast?] when I say [often fast?] I mean so congested.

VB: Yes. I was thinking that...

NM: It should never have had a skin work in among houses.

VB: Yes.

NM: But when the skin work went on fire, [my father's getting everybody, said in?] the kitchen, which we always lived in. The other rooms were just the bedrooms. Out the window, he's enjoying it all, and I can remember him saying to me, look, do you see the rats.

VB: [gasps]

NM: And I couldn't look at the rats. And he said, can you hear them squealing. And I couldn't listen to them squealing and that place burned down, and that building was demolished. And that did away with the need for the big gate, and all the... so, would you believe it, they made it into a close.

VB: Uh.

NM: They made it into a close and used this bit for a mission hall. Father wasn't so happy about that [laughs] made it into a betting shop, yeah, a mission home, but they were quiet decent people. And I had a close at last, 'cause I never would take anybody there. Not until we'd... I couldn't believe it, when it turned, never in my life in Glasgow knew a pent to be turned into a close. So the power of prayer.

VB: Yes, yes.

NM: It was a close, but that was only because the place burned down.

VB: Yeah.

NM: And eh I suppose who ever owned the land, the factor or whatever, decided, well, it's well to use up this... [inaudible] Oh I think it was in the days when they thought, they were trying to be environmental in a kind of a way. I think they planted some trees.

VB: Right.

NM: From our window we could see them, we'd no direct access to them, but we could see them. Our direct access was on to the [cobbles?], the cemetery.

[Pause 3 seconds]

VB: Did you go the pictures round about there as well? Or?

NM: No, I discovered the dance [laughs].

VB: [laughs] Right. So as you got into your later teens, you were...

NM: We, we still went to the pictures, but, as I say, it was from the office then.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: Finish at the office, meet at the Paramount, which is now the Odeon. And eh, then to the pictures. But by then, it was, the pictures were getting more American.

VB: Right.

NM: You know, they were getting sort of...

VB: Right. 'Cause I remember you said that you really liked Robert Taylor when you were...?

NM: [laughs] Oh, I was daft about Robert Taylor.

VB: What was it about him that... ?

NM: I don't know. And even after I found out he was a Jew, that never put me off. I mean I can't... somebody told me, his name was Arlington Bruch or Brugh or something, and he's a Jew. But it didn't matter what anybody told me, I didn't care. I... I liked his voice and I don't know, I just fancied him [laughing] mind you, I don't think I ever told Tom that.

VB: No [laughs]

NM: 'Cause Tom looked nothing like Robert Taylor. And I remember when he married Barbara Stanwyck, certainly she was Jewish too. I think that was when somebody told me he was a Jew. And I thought, oh, well, I don't know, well... I didn't mind him getting married, but, you know. I thought she's too old for him. In actual fact, she wasn't that much older than him, but she was a bit. Ach, no, no. I think he's still living, but I don't even know. I have the feeling... so many of them are dead now.

VB: Yes.

NM: Yes, so many of them are dead now. But I saw him in 1936, I think it was the *Broadway Melody.*

VB: Right.

NM: See, they used to have a *Broadway Melody* every year. I saw one in 1933, that was Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler and I can't remember, the next one sticks in my mind, was *Broadway Melody of 1936*. I was still living on the South Side, I was still going to the Coliseum and it was Robert Taylor. And oh, I was desperate to go and see that. And by this time, we had... this same friend of mine, who had been at school with me, but as I say, was so lame, couldn't really take an active part in, like the things I was doing. But we met up again at night school and got quite friendly. And she and I... it was her Sunday school teacher. We used to have tuppence to spend. We were dragged into some work for her granny or something, or her uncle, and got tuppence, and used to buy ice cream. An Oyster ice, it was like a wafer on it, with the shape of an oyster.

VB: I know which one you mean.

NM: And eh, I think it was a Friday, it was a certain night we did this, and round we would go and get ice cream. Maybe we just made [Willy's?] tea or something, We did something for her granny anyway. I once went... Oh, here's my son, Gordon.

VB: Ah.

[Pause 9 seconds]

VB: I was trying to... I did actually bring a couple of photos of stars. I was looking for one of Robert Taylor, but I couldn't find any.

NM: No. And I really didn't... the friend I was at school I think sent away, I was never in a fan club, I think I sent away for eh not Robert Taylor's, Bing Crosby's or someone…

VB: Right.

[door opening – NM's son, [name of son], comes in]

NM: Hello.

Gordon: Oh hello,

NM: This is Valentina, remember I told you.

Gordon: Oh, hello, hi.

VB: Hello, pleased to meet you.

Gordon: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to crush your hand.

VB: Oh no, it's okay.

NM: Oh I have on my microphone [laughs] I've had on my microphone, but Edith came to the door.

Gordon: Oh, I see. Right, I'll be slightly off out of sync there. I'll leave you in peace, alright.

NM: Okay, dear.

[Sound of Door closing]

NM: Ah, I didn't expect him till much later.

VB: I see.

NM: Erm with the pictures I sent, I think I sent off for stupid things like Jack Oakie, or somebody, or somebody kind of daft.

VB: Right. 'Cause I remember one of the things you said was that you got Gracie Fields autograph.

NM: That's right.

VB: Or you didn't get Gracie Field's autograph. Or?

NM: No, I think I got her autograph.

VB: Ah I see.

NM: It was with George Formby when I lost my book.

VB: Right.

NM: I think it was George Formby.

VB: Did you like George Formby?

NM: Oh, I hate him.

VB: Right [laughs].

NM: I never liked him. This was the same girl, the lame girl. It was her that wanted George Formby's.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: I don't think we knew who it was going to be and we discovered it was him when we were waiting anyway on Princes Street. Most stupid thing we ever did, because we actually had some quite good ones. Laurel and Hardy came to Glasgow, I didn't have theirs, but they came to Glasgow around 1932.

VB: Right.

NM: They came to the Central Hotel and came out on the balcony, sort of Hope Street and Gordon Street, it kind of faces that way. And my father and I went. My father took me. And I remember him lif... he was a very tall man, I remember him lifting me up on his shoulders, so I could see them. And they were out there for ages, doing all sorts of antics. Crowds and crowds of people, all the traffic stopped, and eh that was about 1932 'cause I was still young enough to be lifted up. And as I say, I wasn't all that tall in those days. And eh after that, I quite liked Laurel & Hardy films. Before that, I didn't. I hated the Stooges and never realised the Marx Brothers were probably very clever. But it was all over my head, I didn't understand it at all. And erm the Stooges, I didn't, I didn't like them at all. But Laurel & Hardy was... and I liked the signature tune and my father used to sing. Father used to sing. He was a great singer. When I say great singer, I thought he was a great singer. [inaudible song titles?] and he used to step-dance too, you know. He used to teach me to do it and...

VB: Did your father like the movies as well then? Was he a picture fan? Or?

NM: My father really was fonder of the Music Hall. He used to adore Evelyn Laye, and there's another lady called Phyllis Dare, who also was a singer. And when I was born, he wanted me to be called either Phyllis, Phyllis was his first choice. If not that, Evelyn. But my mother wouldn't like that. Mother was actually very ill, she'd what we call, [inaudible]. There's a name for it now, I can't remember. But it's very dangerous. It's when the placenta doesn't come away you see. And oh, I was only [inaudible] See, she had me in the house. And before my eyes opened she was rushed away [inaudible] My father had to go and register the name, and when he asked eh asked my granny, my mother's mother, oh, she said, no, none of this, outlandish, English. Because you see, in his style and in his speech, he was English. I've still got a lot of English cousins. I kind of lost touch with them. Now the ones I was close to have died. And he wanted Phyllis, but no, and then he tried Evelyn, no. And anyway they didn't say Evelyn, they said Aevelyn. They didn't like Aevelyn, so he tried again for

Phyllis, no. Agnes, which was my mother's name, and I hated it. I mean I was a wee bit bigger and he told me, you know, you were nearly Phyllis. I said, oh, why did you not call me, I like Phyllis. My maiden name was Wilson, you know. And I said oh Phyllis Wilson or Evelyn Wilson but I like that. But there you are, father never got his way. Yeah, he liked the Music Hall and obviously liked these ladies. He quite liked the pictures too. He especially liked Joan Crawford.

VB: Ahh.

NM: Especially liked Joan Crawford. I think my mother was a wee bit jealous.

VB: [laughs]

NM: He used to say she's got such beautiful eyes and he thought she was a good actress too. But erm especially... and he liked anyone that could sing. Erm he did take me to see one or two films with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy that sort of... and eh they were nice *Maytime*, they were nice. Yes, he liked Jeanette McDonald. Liked singing films. In Carlisle, once or twice, he had walk-on parts in the theatre.

VB: Really?

NM: Oh, he could do anything, long ago. He was a nice looking man and I think he'd been told right from about fourteen or so. He left school about twelve or thirteen. He was... his father was killed in an accident. According to my mother, he was drunk. Something to do with a horse, it must have been a carriage or a cart of some kind. And he was thrown out, the horse bolted. I don't know if he was in charge of the horse, and this was long before I was born. My father was the eldest of seven children, and his mother was a widow and had to get to work. He used to lock them all in, my father, to look after them all. He used to [inaudible whisper] they were making their own bread and jam, and all that. He used to cut them up slices of bread and jam and open a window and get out and just leave them all to it.

VB: [laughs]

NM: Just left them all. He used to do his caddying at the golf course.

[Door opening]

He used to do a wee bit there, like a runner at the race course, there's a race course at Carlisle. He used to do this run at the race course and took up a couple of other things. He walked round [the spee?] or something. I mean they really did do that. Sort of walk from one end to walk [both laugh]

then circle round and walk round the other end. There were such a lot of them. Sit on a wall or sort of... just fall backward over the wall. This is where he used to learn the step-dance thing.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: Gene Kelly does it. You know, it's just like a... to the music, kind of, it's not a tap, it's just like a [sound of foot tapping] It's not as though you shuffle.

VB: Right.

NM: It's a kind of... depends on the music that they're playing. What was the music he sang? [Pause 8 seconds] 'She's My Lady Love', that was one, there were several tunes that he always sang along as he did it. He used to dance about, he was great fun. Just a pity about the drinking, he was great fun.

VB: He sounds like a wonderful person to have as a father then.

NM: Yes, but actually, in one respect, it was mother that kept us fed and clad, worked herself to the bone. Lived until she was eighty-nine, almost ninety. So she must have been strong. Some tiny wee woman. Tiny wee woman. So, yes, yes, he was fond of the pictures, but mostly there was a music hall called the Metropole.

VB: Right.

NM: Down near the old Scotia. They used to go there and there was a Princess... there was a picture house called the Palace Theatre, which was really the back of the Princess Theatre. And of course, the Princess Theatre is now the Citizens Theatre.

VB: Right, right.

NM: That was the Princess Theatre.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: So I presume they've still got the statues, have they?

VB: Yes, yes, they do.

NM: The statues, mhm. Backing on to that was a picture house and you entered off the side street.

VB: I've heard about this before, but I...

NM: Yeah, the Palace picture…

VB: The Palace, right.

NM: Oh yeah, and these long gas jets--

[Door closes]

NM: All the way back to the 1920s.

Gordon: Aha, aha, so awhile ago then, certainly before eh my time.

NM: [laughs] yes.

VB: [laughs]

[Door closes]

NM: Gas jets burning in wire cages. I mean, there was no electricity [laughs] and moving outside of a barrel, and it was oranges, and it was Seville, but she never said Seville, sweet Sevilles, three a penny, sweet Sevilles, and we never ever got any. When you got any, the smell of the oranges when you peel them. They just threw it in. I loved the pictures, that'd be the very early 30s, late 20s and early 30s. This was before... my mother, I say, my grandmother, my mother's mother, was very very fond of the pictures. And of course with father being away at the war, and mother expecting my sister, she lived with her mother, and they were always at the pictures. My mother and her mother. And often she used to say to my sister, you know, it's a wonder you weren't born in the pictures, 'cause they went right up until the very--

VB: [laughs]

NM: her and her mother. Mother would pay of course if they went to the pictures, until my sister was born. She'd say, that often it was a wonder you weren't born at the pictures. It was changed days when it was me, 'cause we weren't with Granny anymore and...

VB: Ah.

NM: and mother was too tired to go anywhere. But an odd time, we had gas and we'd turn it down, or my sister would go to bed at seven and there'd be the two of us in bed, this bed in the wall and they'd say it's dark night now and as soon as they... well I'd be asleep, as soon as they thought we were asleep, away they would go. And they'd either go to the Metropole or to the Princess Theatre, and it was music on. But, my sister knew they were away, 'cause she used to get up. I don't know what she got up to, some sort of mischief. She knew they were away. I don't think she woke me. Mhm, actually, it was quite... she was often left to watch me. As I say, at seven she'd to take me to school and even at eight when I started school proper, she'd take me to the toilet. The infants were here and the bigger ones were there.

VB: Right.

NM: And she'd often come across 'cause I was timid and the toilet doors didn't shut and people used to push...

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

[static sound; 6 seconds]

NM: She liked the pictures too of course. But then, by the time I was sort of thirteen/fourteen-ish, she'd grown away from me.

VB: Mhm.

NM: I can't remember us really playing much together. By time she got to say about fourteen, she didn't want me hanging around. It was all a case of... you know, she didn't really want to watch me anymore.

VB: Yeah.

NM: I don't mind, I really... But erm... yes. Oh, it was an awful time when she died. Although we did kind of grow apart. She went to Edinburgh. She got married, she went to Edinburgh, husband away in the war, she didn't see anyone from home. And then she come back and my mother got her a house, in Duke Street, this time it was a close, and she got a house across the landing, and her husband was still away. And erm

[Traffic noises]

And erm my sister had a row with my father and I mean, she was lonely, you know. And I think it was just... she was twenty-four, which was young. And, I mean he more or less told her to get her own house and stay there, or words to that effect. And she said alright. And the whole thing had blown out of all proportion. And in my mind, I thought it was so unfair. So I said well if she goes, I'll go too. And I did. So I went in and stayed with my sister until the war ended. Of course, I got up every day and went to my work, but my sister wasn't working. She had a nervous breakdown, she was in the house. I think she used to do my washing, because I really was seldom in my own house, really seldom. I think my father regretted it afterwards, I think he did. As soon as her husband came back... oh, I got her a wee kitten. One of my boyfriends was a soldier, he brought me a kitten, and my

mother wouldn't have it in the house, but my sister wanted it, so she took it. So couple of years we stayed quite happy together. She had money from the war, from her husband.

VB: Mhm.

NM: And 'cause I had my pay, 'cause only then did my mother stop taking... my mother never ever asked for anything, but even afterwards when I was in my twenties, I gave my mother an odd pay packet [pause 5 seconds] I think erm I think I must have stopped doing that, or she'd said stop it when I went and lived with my sister, 'cause my sister used to keep a budget of what we'd spend. 'cause the two of us could live on one person's salary **[both laugh].** We were stoic. Mind you, you couldn't get very much to eat. We were rationed anyway.

VB: Yeah.

NM: You didn't count going out. But funny, we never really went out together. I still went out with some of my girlfriends, or somebody from the office. I can't recall us ever going out as friends. But then her husband came home and I don't know, he never left the house. He wanted something better. They moved to a better part of Dennistoun. My sister... but never had children.

VB: Mhm.

NM: I used to tease her, I said, I can't wait to be an Auntie, but never had a child. But she got a job at Marks & Spencer's. She was actually there for twenty-five years and got a big sort of retirement party and all the rest of it. And they would go away on holiday and all of the rest of it. And we kind of drifted apart. This time I had Tom and there were two wee boys and [pause 3 seconds] I had the feeling that my sister's husband didn't like children. He didn't take to them anyway. And... they came to us a bit, not much, but a bit. But we were really never invited. I think they felt the boys were a nuisance, brazen. So we drifted apart. But my sister was fifty/forty-nine and her husband died very suddenly. He'd had a breakdown. See this thing we talked about earlier, the Gulf War syndrome. Well he was away, and he was missing, and then he was... it was after Monte Cassino in Italy. Mind you, my own Tom was away in Burma in India, in all over. Tom had a bad war too. I think in a way Tom had a worse war than... Tom was always in the jungle and that was dreadful, 'cause you never knew where anyone was. And disease. However, different natures, my sister's husband, who was also Tom, but was called Tommy. Tommy never really recovered from the war and had a breakdown. They had a [inaudible] That was the first of his three times. And then the slightest noise, it could be the clock ticking. And once a tile fell off the fireplace and that was enough to set him off. And it would just be, you know, that the stucco or whatever it was had dried and it hit the fire, and it was a coal fire. But that was... twice or three times, they took him away and gave him electric shock

treatment. And my sister kept all this to herself. My mum didn't even know. We didn't know he was in for any sort treatment. I think she... well my mother never really wanted them to get married. I think she though the war was on and she knew how she'd been left braving it and... I think this is why she never told my mother, so she obviously never told me. [inaudible] Land Army, I was better off. I was getting tired of staying at home. Really tired of staying at home. So that my sister and I kind of never lost touch with each other, but hadn't much in common. And then her husband died. I was in my forties then. And we were better placed: Tom had a good job, we had a car, we had a nice house, we were in Bishopbriggs. We got a telephone message. My mother never had a phone, neither did my sister until much, much later, after Tommy died. I think it was our neighbour or somebody told us the news, on the phone. And I felt so sad for her. Sad for my mother too, 'cause my father had died in 1962. And, that was terrible, that was I think, the first and the worst. More or less the beginning of St Valentine's Day 1970, Tom died. My mother was so sad, my sister was so sad. They were in my sister's house in Dennistoun. Magda was so cut up that she relied on Tom, she really did. I thought then if she'd had children, you know. I know you don't have children just for your old age, but you know what I mean.

VB: Yes, yes.

NM: You need support. So that my sister and I were close then, and remained close until she died 'cause [inaudible] had Alzheimer's disease [pause 6 seconds] Well, of course, my sister had no [whispers inaudible words] It got that he didn't know us. He didn't know her either [whispers inaudible words] It wasn't just that, I mean, the boys were away by this time. I couldn't move, I couldn't get out the house, 'cause I'd had a stroke.

VB: Mhm.

NM: But I recovered quite well. But I couldn't move or talk, kept to the house. My sister would come or we still had the car. I know this was taking a chance, but Tom could still drive. Of course I had to tell him where we were going and that's a red light, you know, things like that. Tom drove until two years before his death, he shouldn't really have been driving. He once went up a dual carriageway the wrong way and that was enough, that was the end. And I took it... I sold it back to the garage we bought it from. It had only done about 2000 miles. Anyway, and then my sister died, two years later than Tom. Gordon was abroad, the other one was married. But Gordon came home and I said... the younger one too was great, he was great, 'cause I couldn't get hold of Gordon for a minute. Gordon had been married and divorced, moved about a bit. He left the house when he was nineteen and that broke my heart. But erm he never lost touch, never ever lost touch. Went to Aberdeen, married

an Aberdeen girl, he was with Shell for fifteen years, it meant that he just came down the odd time. He and his father never got on, which is why he left the house in the first place. I remember he'd come for a week and even after he went to Amsterdam, he'd come for a few days, but never for long. This time [inaudible] I tried to tell him. It's har... he looked alright. It's hard to tell. And erm he couldn't take it. [Inaudible] When he did come to visit [inaudible] and then he had to go back. Six months later he came back and thought he could walk into a job. Which you can't. Then he applied to Glasgow University, applied to Strathclyde too, got answers from the two of them and he chose Glasgow. He's doing a joint Honours degree, Classics and...History.

VB: Right.

NM: [inaudible] I don't see much of him, but the way things have turned out, there is somebody coming in.

VB: Yes.

NM: But at the end of the day when he does get his degree, he'll maybe take off, which I wouldn't try to stop him, I really wouldn't want to stop him, 'cause I know there's not much opportunity you know. He was doing [inaudible] photography, commercial photography.

VB: Ah, I see, yeah.

NM: So he's talking about taking up photography again. I think he's thinking that the degree is just something that'll look nice on the CV, you know. It's not that he wants to teach, at least not in front of children. He has no patience and certainly doesn't want to go to Jordanhill and do a year's teacher training, and he wouldn't mind being a curator, [inaudible] or maybe researcher? [laughs]

VB: [laughs] He can't have my job.

NM: Yeah. But erm it's a different relationship we've got now, 'cause he left me a boy and came back a man, you know.

VB: I can imagine, yes.

NM: It was a long time. We're really very fond of one another [pause 8 seconds] I think I've come to the end of my thing on for any of that you know and this was before this stroke, when I was still able to get out. I mean the films weren't appealing to me anymore, they really weren't. And I had the money, I had the time, the time for pleasure and erm no, I'm afraid the pictures have lost their... but they're making one or two good ones. I see them on television.

VB: I was going to ask if you watched...

NM: Yes. Yes. Now funny thing, I don't watch the old films any longer.

VB: Ah, really?

NM: No. You know, it's quite often black and white, Saturday afternoon, old '30s films.

VB: Yeah.

NM: Mind you, if Robert Taylor was in it, I would.

VB: [laughs] Yes.

NM: But, no, I don't watch them. I switch it off, even if it's football or whatever, racing. I quite like football, I like rugby. Scotland have been [inaudible]

VB: That's right, yes.

NM: I quite like that. But erm when the boys played rugby at school, especially the young one, erm no, I think when I get back to the black and white ones and I see who it is, and, I don't know, the voices are so high and so... Especially in old British films, 'cause I never ever did like the British films. Never. No, no. I just liked... although, believe it or not, in the war time I used to go to the... what used to be called the Cosmo...

VB: Right.

NM: which I think Gordon calls GFT now. In that time, there used to be a Mr Cosmo, used to be a manager with his wee bowler hat. There really was a manager out to greet you. At least the films were in French, and German, although German... well, I think that was before the war, there wouldn't be having any German films.

VB: Mm, I bet.

NM: But I once saw Marlene Dietrich in a German film, that'd be before the war. And we used to see the odd French film. As I say, we thought we were very sophisticated. We used to go to the La Scala, now that was a film picture house. On one side, there was a picture house, which I think they just called The Picture House.

VB: Right.

NM: Emphasis on the 'The'. And right facing it was the La Scala. But in the La Scala, they had this, oh you won't remember, this like raised kind of wee balconies. Just maybe two steps up on each side, and a wee table, wee table and chairs, wee lamps, red lamps and you'd have your tea or your lunch, or a sandwich. I think you could even have a meal. I don't think I ever could afford a meal, but I often had my tea [laughs].

VB: Lovely.

NM: And you could still watch the pictures. We would do this mostly... this was mostly with girlfriends. We would do this maybe if we got a bit cold in the rotten seats. Oh, we hated sitting in a rotten seat. If you didn't take the seat, you'd be still standing out in the rain in the queue. So we'd take any seat and watch for a chance to nip into... did you know, that there were dearer seats. You see, people used to sit in them and watch the whole thing over again. Maybe it was... some days we had to take separate seats. You there, and me there, you know.

VB: Right.

NM: But in the La Scala, after we got into the rotten seats and sat in it for a minute until the man walked away, we'd go over to this, 'cause not very many people took their tea. And we would have one in six, I think it would be, a cup of tea and a scone or maybe a cake. And from there, we were raised up and oh, are you finished, there's two good seats [both laughing] And then of course, we'd missed half the picture, but it didn't matter, we'd see it all again. We'd come out at erm maybe not eleven, but after ten at night. Into the blackout.

VB: Oh dear.

NM: Into the blackout, and this time it would be a girl from the office that did the walk beside me. So we'd walk to a tram stop in Renfield Street, outside Paramount was the best for this, because the tram stop was just outside it and whoever's tram came first we took, sometimes she had to go and leave me standing in the blackout and sometimes I had to leave her standing. [inaudible] we had a torch [laughs].

VB: Oh well.

NM: [laughs] But erm I think, at the time, it was mainly all American films. It was all to boost the morale.

VB: I'm sure, yeah.

NM: It was all to boost the morale of the people. And erm all this was when I was in the market building, I had left the Hotpoint, which as I say I loved, but I'd left it over a dispute. I think, if with what I know now, if I'd been strong enough when I was young, I think I would have made a good shop steward, because I kept seeing things that I thought were unfair.

VB: Mhm.

NM: Weren't quite right and it wasn't always for me, and I'd say, no, that's not right, no. So in this Hotpoint place, where I was only a junior typist, and quite happy at that. There was a lady, a married lady, did... Hotpoint see, this was only a branch in Glasgow, head office in Manchester.

VB: Ah, I see.

NM: So every weekend, an indent had to be done, that's the whole week's business, that's all the sales, and all the expenses, and all the bit, all the mileages, all the repairs, everything had to be done. Each department had to hand in their bit as it were.

VB: Right, I see.

NM: And it had all to be put together as a work for everyone and erm, you had to balance at the end of the day, you had to balance the indent. And time and again, this lady, her name was Agnes. I didn't care her name was. Right from my very first office, the minute I entered that job [inaudible] I called myself Nancie. Actually my last year at school, I was calling myself Nancie. And this Elaine girl and I went away and got cards printed, now that must've been Christmas money or birthday money or something. We went away and got cards printed. I don't know what we thought we were going to get up to [laughs] Gilt edged on lovely copper plate, I've got one left. After that, I always had cards printed. Yes, so that started it. So although I was Agnes in the books, I was Nancie, so I was always Nancie, but this lady was Agnes. And time and again, on a Friday, she was sitting crying and it was unfortunate she wasn't... when I say she wasn't nice looking, she was really [sighs] really awfully not nice looking [laughs] not so much ugly, as terribly, terribly, plain, with her hair scraped back and big glasses. I wore glasses too, but I don't know. Agnes' nose was always red, I think 'cause she was crying such a lot, not noisily, just kind of into her hankie. And I had gone over from my typists thing, I'd seen her [inaudible] she had a typewriter, 'cause she had to type up, she had to sort of co-ordinate, that's what I'm looking for, she had to co-ordinate the whole thing and type the covering thing that was sent to Manchester. And I went over to her this time and she couldn't get it to balance and I had finished what I was doing, so I pulled a chair up and we sat side by side running over everything. And we found it was [inaudible].

VB: Oh dear.

NM: And away it went to the post and she was happy as could be. But she got to kind of rely on me when she couldn't get it. She'd say Nancie, have you got a minute to run your eye over it. I was getting a wee bit fed up, but I did it. And then Agnes was expecting a baby, and then she was full on, and she couldn't manage it. And then the officer manager, who is a woman, said to me, you know something about that? And then do you want to have a go at it? I said, no, not really. She said, but on a Friday you don't have to take letters, 'cause it was her that gave me the letters. She said you could take the Friday to do that and you know what's needed now. So I said alright, I would, so I did. I think maybe for a month or more. And there was never any complaints. But I thought I was getting something like twenty-five shillings, but Agnes was getting something in the region of four pound. Alright she was older, but I thought, well, that's quite a difference. So I went in to the cashier and I said, who wasn't the big boss, Mr Breckenridge, nice wee man, he was a wee bit daft. I went in to him and I said to him, look, I've been doing this for a month, if you want me to keep on doing it, 'cause obviously Agnes wasn't... in fact, she never ever came back, I said, it doesn't look as though Agnes will be back for a while, if you want me to keep on doing it, well, I really would need to get a rise. I didn't ask for four pound... [inaudible] And he said, well, Nancie, that erm I'll have to wait for Mr Bullen, who came from Manchester once or twice a week. I'll need to wait to see Mr Bullen, so when he came [inaudible] Mr Breckenridge had told him. And I must have been obvious, 'cause Mr Bullen called me into his office, and... he was a bluff kind of man, he was a pompous man, I didn't like him. He was having an affair with the office manager, this person who's done...

VB: Oh dear.

NM: He had actually had a baby [inaudible] I was so stupid, I believed it. Of course all the typists all knew. She couldn't get by the desk. She couldn't get by my desk, she was mad at me, sort of you've moved it. No, I've never moved the desk. The desk had a wee... "we hadn't... you shouldn't have..." I didn't, and I didn't even know she was expecting, and I must have been eighteen. Anyway, [inaudible] That's what it was, he wasn't going to give me a rise. Oh well, I said, in that case, I'm leaving, I'll give you a week's notice. Oh no, don't do anything like that, no, no, we'll have another think about it, blah, blah, blah. But I don't know, I just put it to bed. No, no [inaudible] and the war was on.

VB: Mhm.

NM: I think I'll take [me away to the war?]. He said erm, oh no, sorry the war wasn't on, but I was getting fed up with this running around. And he said, well, I'll be back next week, I'll think about it. But erm as usual I'm already looking for a job, which I got in the market, met Tom.

VB: Right.

NM: That was my [inaudible] I think I gave them a letter I put on the desk, for Mr Bullen, when he should come in, giving him a week's notice. So, he did finally come in and erm Mr Breckenridge had a car and Mr Breckenridge said he'd give me a lift home. [inaudible] I was kind of... a wee bit suspicious. He gave me a lift home and he said I'd really like to speak to your parents. Not to call them parents. I said well I don't know if my father is home, he said, well your mother will do. It was my mother he saw and my mother was... and he said sort of, so we're going to give Nancy a week's holiday with pay. This was the winter, about November. We're going to give Nancy a week's holiday with pay. Just to sort of settle her down and erm think things over.

VB: Yeah.

NM: And you'll do your best and you'll persuade her to come back, very good worker, really don't want to lose her. I remember my mother saying, well, the thing is, I don't know anything about it, but if she's made up her mind, she's made up her mind. But he said, oh take the week's holiday. I took the week's holiday and I knew fine well I wasn't going back. I already had another job to go to.

VB: Yeah.

NM: I took the week's holiday. I probably went in to say to somebody, Mr Breckenridge. The boss wouldn't be there. I'm sorry I've got another job. Although I loved that job. It's the first job, I could really say I loved. But I left it and went to the market and I stayed there. And of course the war came and from making children's clothing. It was a beautiful clothing company.

VB: Oh, I see, yeah.

NM: We were making children's clothing and we switched to khaki and then to hospital blue. It was wonderful. You see even then I didn't realise the significance of that.

VB: Mhm.

NM: So 'cause it was a reserved occupation.

VB: Right.

NM: So that by the time I turned twenty and they asked where I worked and my boss sent my letter of bond, there was no way they were going to accept the charges [inaudible]

VB: No.

NM: There was no way they were going to take that. So I stayed with them for four years [inaudible] Tom was away in the war. We went out together for about a year and two months.

VB: Right.

NM: Truly, by that time it would be the '40s.

VB: Yeah.

NM: I can still picture that. Although [inaudible] I must admit that [inaudible].

VB: Yeah.

NM: Of course every one of them. They didn't look like Robert Taylor mind.

VB: [laughs]

NM: There was one that looked like John Payne, who I also liked. [Inaudible] John Payne. I liked him a lot too [inaudible].

VB: Right.

NM: Yeah, Tom Payne was nice, John Payne was nice. And I once met an American. Oh, and he was so like John Payne. But erm, well I don't know, I just felt so disillusioned, first time I was doing something. I always liked the country. So… I never ever had a garden. And I thought, och, I could go to the Land Army. So I think there were forms in the paper or something.

VB: Right.

NM: Certainly before I'd gone, thing, oh an application thing back to fill in with all your stuff.

VB: Sure.

NM: So I filled it all in. It was a self-sealing thing. I was... no, I was under twenty. I didn't need no parents' permission anyway. I sealed it all up. And, I hadn't told my mother and then I finally told her that I'd got an envelope that I was sending away. Of course by this time I was getting four or five pound a week, good money.

VB: Right.

NM: I remember getting that and my mother didn't really want me to leave that job. This time my sister and her husband were away now, and I was back in the house. And I don't know, I just wanted away... I had two broken romances, I think that had something to do with it. Not with Americans, although I went out with them too.

VB: Mmh.

NM: But erm I don't know. [Inaudible] I thought, the Land Army would be good. So, I said, I've filled it up, I haven't sent it away. And she said, oh hold on dear. And it was in my bag. There was a young lad lived round the corner from me. He was an ARP warden and this boy, couple of years younger than me, I think he did English lit, anyway, he drove a van for Castlebank Laundry and nearly always...when I was going to my work, the van would be just sitting kind of handy--

VB: Right.

NM: and he would jump out and say something you know. And it was quite handy and he gave me...

[End of Interview]