

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.

* Transcript ID: NW-95-036AT001

* CCINTB Transcript ID: 95-36-13a-at

* Tapes: NW-95-036OT001

* CCINTB Tapes ID: T95-70

* Length: 00:45:56

* Bolton, Greater Manchester, 16 May 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Norman Wild with Vee (Vera) Entwistle

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Jamie Terrill

* NW: Norman Wild/VE = Vee Entwistle/VB = Valentina Bold

* Notes: First of two interviews with Norman Wild and Vee Entwistle; Sound Quality: initially good but final few minutes of audio missing from recording; This interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; The original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection; please contact Lancaster University Library for more details.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

VB: Erm, it's a two-year project we're doing.

VE: Oh, two years. Mhm. Mhm.

VB: Yeah. Yeah. Actually, I work at the university so it's--

VE: Oh well! That's all right.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Is this in Scotland?

VB: Yes.

VE: Yeah.

VB: I'll just put that over beside you then. I'll just put this beside you so it picks up, erm, you down here. Okay.

[pause 6 seconds]

VE: Can you lip read?

NW: No, sit nearer. I'll sit nearer.

VE: Oh well, you better sit here and I'll sit there.

NW: I'll sit here.

VB: Oh right. Okay.

VE: Wait a minute. There we go. You sit here.

NW: Oh, I'm all right. I think.

VB: Are you okay there? Are you all right there?

NW: Yes. I can just about make out what you say.

VB: Right.

VE: Well, you'd do better if you sat here! You sit here and I'll sit there. Let's get it right.

VB: [laughs]

VE: I said, did you ask her if she was coming on the train. He went, "No." I said, "Oof! You're just as bad as them two." I said, "If she's coming round town she won't know where the hell she is." 'Cause it's like a maze up here.

VB: Well actually, I was a bit later than I thought because I got the train to Blackpool. That was going to Blackpool and it was a bit late.

NW: You'll have to speak louder, love.

VB: Right. Em, when I was coming just now--

NW: Yeah.

VB: --I got the train to Blackpool but it was late so I was a bit later.

NW: Yeah, but you were dead on eleven o'clock.

VB: Yeah, it wasn't bad.

NW: You've come by road?

VB: By bus.

NW: Have you walked it from [Bury?] Road?

VE: No.

VB: No.

VE: She's come by bus.

NW: Yeah, up here. Oh, I see.

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: So, did you find it all right?

VB: No problem.

NW: Did you look for the two doves up there?

VB: I looked for the two doves, [laughs], so I--

NW: [laughs]

VE: I said, "I bet she can't find out where she is."

VB: Eh, no, it was no problem at all.

VE: You've not switched on yet, have you?

VB: Yes. I'm just on just now. [laughs] So it's nice actually that you've come as well--

VE: Yes.

VB: --so you can, you know, join in. Erm, the first thing I was wanting to ask was, just to make sure I've got your background right. I've to ask a few questions about yourself.

NW: Few questions.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Ah right. Carry on.

VB: Erm, the first thing was to ask, what your father's work was. What did your father do?

NW: I'm sorry. What's that?

VE: What did your father do?

NW: My father?

VE: Yeah.

NW: He was in the forces at one time.

VB: Yeah.

NW: He came out, then worked on the railway. He came from there and he went eh, into the cotton industry, cotton trade.

VB: Right, that's great.

NW: So, you don't mind if you repeat what you say?

VB: Not at all. I think that's a good idea.

NW: Yes.

VB: Erm, that's a very good idea.

NW: My daughter-in-law speaks like you. Very low.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I can never tell what she says.

VB: I'll try and speak up a bit then.

NW: Very high, very high. [laughs]

VB: Very high. [laughs] Erm, what did your mother do?

NW: Me mother? Eh, she was in the cotton trade as well. Yes.

VB: What size of family did you come from?

NW: Son and daughter. Two.

VB: Right.

VE: No! You.

NW: What size of family?

VE: It's still two.

VB: Right.

VE: Him and his sister.

NW: Well, I've a son and daughter.

VE: I know, but she meant your family.

NW: Oh, I see.

VB: That's okay. Erm, how old were you when you left school?

NW: Fourteen.

VB: That's great. Do you have any strong religious views?

NW: Any?

VB: What religion were you brought up in?

NW: Religion?

VB: Yeah.

NW: Church of England.

VB: That's great. And have you got any strong political views?

NW: Not really.

VB: Have you been in a political party?

NW: No.

VB: That's great. What year were you married?

NW: Eh, I think, '55. '55.

VB: That's great.

NW: I think. Vera? Yeah.

VE: I don't know!

VB: [laughs]

NW: Yeah. '55.

VB: Did your wife work?

NW: She worked erm, [pause 3 seconds] she had various jobs. She worked once at the Croft Laundry. And then she went eh-- [pause 3 seconds]

VE: Didn't she go to be a draughtslady?

NW: Sorry?

VE: A draughtswoman.

NW: Eh, she wouldn't be draughtsman. She was eh, a photocopier actually. Of eh, drafts. Of eh, drawings, you know.

VB: That's great.

NW: Okay.

VB: Erm, the other thing that I'd like to ask. Because I'm taping this--

NW: Yeah.

VB: Just now. Erm, would you mind if this tape goes into Glasgow University?

NW: Goes into?

VB: Is kept in Glasgow University.

NW: No! Quite all right.

VB: And perhaps someone else might listen to it in the future.

NW: You can refer back to it, yeah.

VB: Is that okay?

VE: Yeah.

NW: That's okay, love.

VB: Right. Erm--

NW: Does it pick up well, that microphone?

VB: Very well, yeah. So, in that case, I wonder if I could ask you to sign this form, just to say it's okay for us to keep it?

VE: Put your name in there.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Just there.

NW: Do you have the date on?

VB: Yeah, that's great.

NW: Fifteenth. My son-in-law's birthday today.

VB: Aw right. [laughs] That's how you know it so easily. [laughs]

NW: The fifth month eh, '95.

VB: That's great. And I'll just sign it as well.

NW: Ah. When I went in the Army, my ears were perfect. When I came out, I was on heavy guns. Heavy gunfire.

VE: They didn't get any earplugs and it just perforated his ears.

VB: That's terrible.

NW: I get a pension for it--

VB: Yeah.

NW: --but eh, to me, that's nothing. Very embarrassing.

VB: It must be a real nuisance. It must be a terrible nuisance for you.

NW: I'm sorry?

VB: It must be a terrible nuisance for you.

VE: More embarrassing than anything.

VB: Yeah.

VE: You know, if he goes anywhere. They think he's, you know. And he's not!

VB: That's right. Yeah. Oh well it was a good idea to invite--

NW: Vera.

VB: Vera along to--

VE: Yeah.

VB: To interpret. [laughs] That's great. Thanks a lot. And thanks a lot for letting me come to speak-

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NW: Sorry?

VB: Thanks a lot for letting me come to speak to you today. I appreciate that.

NW: Quite all right. It's open house this. All the kids come in here, don't they?

VB: Right. [laughs] Erm, I was very interested by your letter--

NW: Yeah.

VB: And the cinemas that you mentioned.

NW: Yeah. When we were youngsters there were all these picture houses open. Cinemas, you know. If that's interesting to you? Is it?

VB: Very much so. Yeah. I mean, did you have any favourites in this?

NW: Have any what?

VB: Any favourites.

NW: Royal [referring to the Royal Super Cinema]. Eh, Empire. And the Regal. Regal. They were all close by, you know.

VB: Ah right. What was the Royal like?

NW: Sorry?

VB: What was the Royal like?

NW: What was it like? It was erm [pause 2 seconds] [not nice, not nice?]

VE: A bit tatty and your feet wouldn't touch the floor when you sat on them. [laughs] Your feet were dangling.

NW: And erm, [pause 3 seconds] intimate, you know. Like, small. Was there, was there any top tier at Royal?

VE: No, I don't think so. No.

NW: No, there weren't, no.

VE: No.

NW: Just an ordinary cinema, you know.

VE: No balcony.

VB: Yeah.

NW: All the eh, local kids used to go there. Saturday afternoons.

VB: Like for the matinees?

VE: Yeah. But they were all more or less cowboys and things like that, you know. Cowboy films.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I know, you were saying that, that you liked the cowboy films particularly.

NW: Yeah. Mhm.

VE: He did, mhmm.

NW: On the back there, where the eh, turn it over.

VB: Yeah.

NW: These are the stuff I liked.

VB: Ah!

NW: Eh, also, when I came out the Army, if anybody was showing subtitled pictures, I used to go. Because I couldn't hear dialogue.

VB: Yeah.

NW: You see.

VB: Yeah. Did you go to quite a few of the foreign films then?

NW: Sorry? Yeah!

VB: Did you go to the foreign films?

NW: Erm, the Theatre Royal used to show Italian pictures.

VE: Yeah. Yeah.

NW: With subtitles.

VE: Yeah.

NW: And the Empire used to show various eh, films from different countries with subtitles, you know. So, I used to go to them.

VB: So you probably, were seeing a lot of the more interesting films because of that.

NW: Yeah.

VE: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Aye, that's interesting. Erm, can I go back and ask you a bit about these other--

NW: I'm sorry?

VB: Can I ask a bit more about the other cinemas?

NW: Of course. Yeah.

VB: Erm, 'cause you said that the Regal, you liked the Regal as well.

NW: Yeah. Now that was a massive place. Everybody in Bolton used to go there. And when the lights went up, all the lads used to swap seats, then go to sit next to girlfriend, you know. [laughs] I remember that.

VB: [laughs] So, it was a bit of a place to take your girlfriend then?

NW: Yeah.

VE: I remember mainly the Regal. As I told you, used to go in, by a curtain. And if you let any light in, they all used to start, "Close those curtains."

VB: [laughs]

VE: You sort of, were like this [demonstrates] you know, until you found an opening, in the curtain.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Then you went in. You paid at a kiosk. And then of course, you took your ticket. And there used to be a doorman, inside, where the curtains were, you see. But you were like... [demonstrates]

VB: [laughs]

VE: Until you found the opening, you see.

NW: I can't hear but I know what she said. About the [inaudible]

VB: Yeah.

VE: Yeah, the curtains.

NW: That's right.

VB: Yeah. And the other one you mentioned as well. You liked the Rialto.

NW: Pardon?

VB: The Rialto.

NW: Yeah, that's eh, Rialto. Oh, I tell you, Al Jolson, we used to go see. Al Jolson.

VE: *The Singing Fool*.

NW: Like *The* eh, *Jazz Singer* and stuff like--

VE: [The] *Jazz Singer*.

NW: Yeah.

VE: They were one of the very first talkies.

VB: Right.

NW: Erm, Queen's. I went to Queen's quite a lot. There's some places I've not been to. Like the eh.
[pause 2 seconds] I never went to eh, Windsor. I never went to Windsor, Deane Road.

VE: Oh, I went there.

NW: And then I never went to eh, the Tivoli.

VE: Oh, I went there. Yes, I went there.

NW: But they were still in Bolton, you know. Yeah.

VB: Yeah. So, it was mainly the ones round about where you stayed?

NW: Yeah.

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

VE: The Tivoli was nearer to me.

VB: Ah, I see.

VE: You know.

NW: Now, there's one remaining cinema now. That's that one.

VB: The Embassy.

NW: [inaudible] a few cinemas inside.

VE: The Lido. About four.

NW: Is it four?

VE: Yeah. I think it's called the Cannon now.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Were there any of these cinemas that had a reputation for being a bit less--

NW: Pardon?

VB: Were any of these cinemas a bit less erm, I don't know. You mentioned one or two--

VE: Bit tatty.

VB: That were a bit tatty.

NW: Oh, a bit, yeah. The Lido.

VB: Right.

NW: And the Odeon. They were quite nice cinemas these, you know.

VE: They were the best.

NW: This Odeon's still stood near the bus station. But it's a bingo hall now.

VB: I think I saw that. Yeah.

NW: Bingo.

VE: That's the Odeon.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Yeah, this were nice. Now Palladium was a very, bit of a fleapit. Weren't it?

VE: Yeah.

NW: A fleapit.

VE: Oh Yeah. Yes.

NW: Erm. [pause 4 seconds] But the Theatre Royal wasn't bad. And the Hippodrome.

VB: Uhuh. Uhuh.

NW: These turned into eh, theatres after, like plays, you know.

VB: Yeah. But you say the Lido and the Odeon were,

NW: Pardon?

VE: They were the posh ones.

VB: They were the posh ones.

VE: Yes. They were the posh ones.

NW: Yeah.

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Did they open during the thirties?

NW: Sorry?

VB: Did--

VE: No, no.

VB: No.

VE: Would be the forties when the Lido and the Odeon opened, wasn't it?

NW: Oh, forties, yeah.

VE: Yeah.

VE: Yeah. I would say the forties, Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Ah, so that's interesting. Thanks for listing these--

NW: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause it's good to see how many there were.

NW: Is it something, are you going to college on this subject?

VB: Well, what it is is, I work at Glasgow University.

NW: I see.

VB: In the Department of Film.

NW: Is that Oxford Road?

VB: No, in Glasgow. In Scotland.

NW: Oh in Glasgow! Oh.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Sorry, I thought you meant Manchester. Yeah.

VB: And we're doing this project. It's a two-year--

NW: I see.

VB: Project.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Erm, talking to people in Manchester, Bolton. Also in Glasgow--

NW: I see. Yeah.

VB: South-east of England. And in London. And the idea is to build up a picture of what it was like to go to the cinema in the thirties.

VE: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Using these different places to--

NW: Yeah.

VB: To compare and see if there any differences. So--

NW: I've quite a few cinema books. Erm--

VB: Ah!

NW: You know eh, Les Halliwell?

VB: Right.

NW: I've got a new book of his.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And I've got the 'Time Out' book.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And I've got erm, what did I look at last night, love?

VE: The video, video films.

NW: Video films, yeah.

VB: Yeah, yeah.

NW: Video films, you know.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I was hearing that Leslie Halliwell was from Bolton.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: It's in there, love. Can you see it out?

VE: Where? In this box?

NW: They're good references books, you know.

VB: Very much so, yeah. So, how often did you go to the cinema in the thirties?

NW: Aw, [pause 2 seconds] twice a week average, you know.

VB: Twice a week. Yeah.

NW: That's the one.

VE: That's the one.

VB: Oh right. Oh, this is the new one. Yeah. I better not start--

NW: He's dead now him, you know.

VB: Yeah. I was going to say I'd better not start looking at this or I won't stop. [laughs]

VE: See you next week.

NW: He was born in Bolton.

VB: Right.

NW: Did you know that?

VB: I'd heard that, yes.

NW: Les Halliwell.

VB: Yes. Yes.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Someone was telling me he used to write for the 'Bolton Evening News'.

VE: Yes, he did!

NW: Yes, he did, yes.

VE: Yes, he did.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And then he went to, I think he went to, to [Hollywood?], I think. And took up this profession, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: A reviewer of films, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Then he wrote his books.

VE: A good writer too.

VB: Did you read his reviews?

NW: Sorry?

VB: Did you used to read his pieces in the 'Evening News'?

VE: Oh yes! Yeah.

NW: What love?

VE: We used to read his pieces in the 'Evening News', didn't we?

NW: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Les Halliwell, yeah.

VE: He was quite a good writer, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: 'Course, it's going back years that, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Yeah.

VB: That's what I was thinking.

VE: Well, we are going back years. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

NW: I was in my twenties then.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Twenties and thirties then.

VB: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'm interested to see this list of your films as well. Erm, *Tarzan*, was that Johnny--

NW: Oh, I liked *Tarzan*, yeah.

VB: Johnny Weissmuller.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Johnny Weissmuller. Yeah.

VB: Yeah. And *The Jungle Book*.

NW: *Jungle Book*. Eh, what was that dark lad in *Jungle Book*? He died very young.

VE: Sabu.

NW: Was he called Sabu?

VE: Mhm. Sabu.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Hopalong Cassidy, William Boyd, Buck Jones. Now, Vera, she's never heard of Tom Tyler.

VE: I can't remember Tom Tyler.

NW: Have you not?

VB: I haven't, no.

NW: Well he was--

VE: She's only a baby!

VB: [laughs]

NW: Yeah, well, I mean--

VE: Well, how would she have heard of Tom Tyler?

NW: Out of her research, she might've heard of him.

VE: Oh, I doubt it.

NW: But he was a cowboy him, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Karloff. You know Karloff.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Boris.

NW: Abbott and Costello. I used to like them. Eh, Three Stooges. Have you heard of them? Used to like them. Tom Mix, have you heard of him?

VB: Yes, I have.

VE: No.

VB: [laughs] He was one of the cowboys too.

NW: What?

VB: He was a cowboy.

NW: Yes.

VE: A big white hat. Big white Stetson.

NW: Dead End Kids. Yeah. Mickey Rooney. Have you seen his photo in the paper today?

VE: Who?

NW: Mickey Rooney.

VE: No.

NW: Donald O'Connor. Do you--

VE: Yes. Very good dancer.

NW: I saw him on there last night. And they had subtitled pictures.

VB: Yeah. Aye. Did you, 'cause you were saying that you liked the sort of adventure--

NW: Sorry?

VB: You liked the sort of adventure, cowboy types.

NW: Oh, I liked cowboys.

VB: What was it that you liked about the cowboys?

NW: I don't know, the horses. I used to like horses and stuff like er, erm, general. Just general film altogether, you know. Like erm, the scenery. Stuff like er, so erm, wherever they was showing, we went, you know. Didn't we? [laughs]

VE: Oh yes. We did, Yeah.

VB: [laughs]

VE: I used to go to the Majestic.

NW: I think, how much, Vee? Tuppence. Two pence.

VE: Of course.

NW: Tuppence.

VB: Yeah.

VE: One pee [pence] today.

NW: And in the best seats of any, was the one [shilling] and nine [pence] one.

VE: One and nine.

NW: That would be eh, nine pence.

VE: Nine pee.

NW: In today's money.

VB: Yeah. That must've been a treat though, if you were going to--

NW: Sorry?

VB: That must've been a bit of a treat to go to the--

NW: Yeah.

VB: The best seats.

VE: Oh, in the best seats. Yes.

NW: Like money was tight, you know. If we had a tanner [sixpence] in our pocket that was rich, weren't it?

VE: Oh yes.

VB: Yes.

NW: That's sixpence that. Two and half old pence.

VB: Aye. And did you like the horror films then as well?

NW: Yeah. But the first type I saw were them. Eh, I think I told you, Vera. I was up Palladium on my own.

VE: Yeah.

NW: And eh, when this face came on with bolts in neck, I was [shaking?].

VE: *Frankenstein*.

NW: I was [shaking?]

VE: *Frankenstein*. It was Boris Karloff.

NW: So, you got used to it as you went along, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: But the first sight of him with this screwed head, and bolts through his neck. Do you remember it?

VE: Yes, of course. I saw them all. It was a stimulant to me. "Wooh!" I used to think, "Oooh!. What would I do if I met him?" [laughs]

VB: [laughs] It must've seemed very real then.

NW: Sorry?

VB: It must've seemed very real?

VE: It did. It did.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. And what about Bela Lugosi?

NW: Eh, this chap, he was in like eh, vampires. [referring to *Dracula* (1931)]

VE: Vampires.

NW: Vampire bats.

VE: Vampires, Yeah.

NW: Yeah. I can't remember the women that were in films. Can you? Course we didn't go for the women then. Lads. Did we?

VE: I don't know!

VB: [laughs]

NW: I can't remember any women that were in pictures. At that time.

VE: Oh, there was Fay Wray.

NW: Yes.

VE: She was in *King Kong*.

NW: I couldn't place them, you know.

VB: Ah, that's interesting. So, you weren't so much interested in the women then?

NW: Not really.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Vera knows that.

VE: Yeah.

NW: I mean, I had to... I had to [inaudible].

VE: Well, you still liked the excitement. He liked the excitement of the, erm, cowboys.

NW: When I came out the Army, about [age] twenty-one, twenty-two, I went with lads. We didn't go with women, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: 'Course, times have changed today, love, haven't they? They get married at fourteen today.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Aren't they?

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I was interested. In your letter you were saying you enjoyed things like going roller skating and--

NW: Roller skating, oh yeah. I used to go roller skating. And, this place, the Regal [pause 3 seconds] that changed over to roller skating from a cinema.

VB: Ah.

NW: And then it got burned down, didn't it, Vera?

VE: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Mhm.

NW: It got burned down this place. And what is it now exactly?

VE: Nothing. There's nothing there. Nothing.

NW: Is it nothing? Is it demolished?

VE: It's a shame. There's nothing. Nothing.

VB: Mhm.

NW: Aw. So erm--

VE: They have talked about rebuilding it.

NW: Yeah, used to go roller skating, yeah.

VB: Yeah. So, you went around with, did you go around with a group of lads the same sort of age then.

VE: With a group of lads.

NW: Eh, there used to be about erm [lists names of friends] about five or six lads, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Most of them are dead now.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Died off young, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: So eh, yeah, about five or six of us.

VB: Yeah.

NW: You know.

VB: So, did you do a lot of things together like, go to the pictures?

NW: Yeah! We used to go dancing sometime together. And they would go into pub, at half time. Eh, and that would be nightly, finish up in the pub, but I'd stay back dancing.

VE: Didn't drink.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I don't drink. Ah, I drink!

VB: Yeah.

NW: But I didn't make a habit of it, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I like eh, I don't like beer.

VB: Beer.

NW: Eh, whisky or that or nice glass of wine.

VB: Yeah.

NW: But beer, no. So, they used to go into pub.

VB: Did you like sports at all when you were growing up? Did you like football?

NW: Football.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Every week. Bolton Wanderers.

VB: Right. [laughs]

NW: Have you heard of Nat Lofthouse? [footballer for Bolton Wanderers between 1946 and '60]

VB: I'm afraid I haven't, no.

NW: No, no. When Nat Lofthouse was playing, I was there every week. And I used to go all over the country watching him, you know. We've been to eh, Liverpool, Newcastle, Coventry, Tottenham, Huddersfield. All up and down the country, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: So, I had to go with my dad, watching Wanderers.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And then we used to go watching wrestling. Eh, every Monday night. All-in wrestling. So it were quite a varied life, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Mhm!

VB: So, it sounds like you kept very busy anyway.

NW: Eh?

VB: Sounds like you were keeping very busy.

NW: Oh yeah.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds]. Another thing I was wanting to ask you about was people like Charlie Chaplin and--

NW: Charlie Chaplin.

VB: And the comedian.

NW: *Modern Times*. Do you remember that? Was it *Modern Times*?

VE: *Modern Times*.

NW: Where he gets that erm, corn on the cob, on his er, on the machine he had a corn on the cob, have you seen it? Yeah. And then he goes round--

VB: [laughs]

NW: Cogs.

VE: Goes all round the cogs. All through the machinery.

VB: Yeah. And that the bit where he's got the thing to do his teeth?

VE: [laughs] Yes.

VB: And then it all goes horribly [laughs] wrong.

VE: That's right. [laughs]

NW: They don't make pictures like that today, do they?

VB: No.

NW: Erm, it were all visual, you know, visual comedy.

VE: Like a visual thing, you know.

NW: Today it's all erm, ad lib and stuff like. It's all jokes and stuff like this.

VB: Yeah.

NW: But erm, I used to like Charlie Chaplin.

VB: Yeah, and The Three Stooges.

VE: Oh, they were funny.

NW: Three Stooges. Three Stooges. And them Marx Brothers.

VE: The Marx Brothers were very good.

NW: Marx Brothers. Pianist, harpist. Were there a singer?

VE: No.

NW: Oh no, they don't sing.

VE: No, they didn't sing.

NW: Nah.

VE: It was just comedy.

NW: I used to like Groucho Marx best.

VE: And the one who played the harp. [referring to Harpo Marx] They didn't write a part for him, a speaking part for him in the films. So, all through the films, he never spoke.

NW: No.

VE: He just used to sort of [mouths silent words] And they knew what he was saying. But he could speak, but there was no part written for him. So they just left it. But play the harp. He could play the harp.

VB: Mm.

NW: They were good weren't they?

VE: Very good.

NW: I mean if you get a laugh out of them.

VE: Oh yes.

VB: [laughs] Ah. You mentioned before Laurel and Hardy, that you liked Laurel and Hardy.

NW: Mentioned who?

VB: Laurel and Hardy.

NW: Oh yeah! I put them down. Hardy. [laughs]

VB: Oh. [laughs]

VE: Oh, you'll have to have it.

VB: That would be great. That would be great. What was it about Laurel and Hardy you liked?

NW: What, love?

VB: What was it about Laurel and Hardy that you liked?

NW: I don't know. You could always get a laugh out of them. Eh, who did I just mention before that?

VE: The Marx Brothers. Well with Laurel and Hardy they used to do simple things. Like sort of opening a window and it'd drop down again. Then they'd open it again. Drop down again. But they were simple things like, you know. He'd say erm, there was no window in. But yet, they were opening the window, "Open the window and let some fresh air in!"

VB: [laughs]

VE: And then they used to get, the little one used to get the big one in trouble. Like, he'd say, oh, he'd tell his wife what they'd been doing, you see. And then of course she'd give him one. And then he used to say, "That's another fine mess you've got me into, Stanley." And he used to lift his bowler hat up for him and... [demonstrates]

VB: [laughs]

VE: But they were like simple things. Like, erm, they were once in a film where they were driving their car and they worked in horn factory where they made horns for cars. And they were testing these horns, you know. And they went in this little car, and they're driving in, so nicely, they didn't see this saw. A big saw. And it sawed the car in half!

VB: [laughs]

VE: And one went one way an one went the other! So, they were like sort of simple things that you could see was happening or going to happen. And you thought, they don't realise, the cars going to come in half. There were two separate halves! But, they were really funny things, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Little things, you know. Little funny things.

VB: Yeah. Just when you were saying that as well. There was the Ritz Brothers as well.

VE: The Ritz Brothers.

NW: Yes.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Were they singers?

VE: Pardon?

NW: Were they singers?

VE: No. No. No, they were similar to the Marx Brothers. They were very similar.

VB: I don't know them myself, but I've heard people mention them.

VE: No. But they were very similar to the Marx Brothers. Very similar to the Marx Brothers.

NW: Ah. I don't remember them then.

VE: Oh yes. Yeah, I do. Not as good as the Marx Brothers.

VB: Yeah. Erm, I'm not sure if I showed you this when I met you the other day, but one of the things I came across was this--

VE: No, you didn't. No.

VB: I'm sure you'd like to see it too. Erm, I'll just--

VE: The Odeon?

VB: Yeah. A programme from the Odeon.

VE: Oh!

VB: Erm... Do you remember these stars?

[pause 6 seconds].

NW: Eh, the Lido and the Odeon.

VE: That's from our Odeon that, a programme.

NW: Yeah.

VE: From our Odeon.

NW: Used to have an organ.

VE: Yeah. I told you about it, didn't I? Used to come up.

NW: Half time, at the interval, used to come up, didn't it?

VE: Yeah. Oh, it was beautiful. It was all white.

NW: So, eh, I've not seen any of these I don't think.

VB: Yeah.

NW: *A Star is Born*, have you seen that?

VE: Yeah.

NW: *Stella Dallas*.

VE: Yeah.

NW: *Kid Galahad*.

VE: Yeah. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

NW: [*The Sky's the Limit?*] Is that George Formby?

VE: Yeah.

NW: It's not George Formby that, no. Jack Buchanan.

VE: Jack Buchanan. That's right, Yeah.

NW: And, what's this? *Gangway*. Jessie Matthews.

VE: That's right.

NW: Have you seen that?

VE: Yeah.

NW: I've not seen any of them.

VB: Ah.

VE: Yeah.

NW: I don't think they were my, like--

VE: *Stella Dallas* was Barbara Stanwyck.

NW: Ah that's right, yeah. And John Bowles.

VE: John Bowles.

VB: I'm just keeping an eye on this 'cause I think I'll need to turn it in a minute.

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

VE: *A Star Is Born*. Judy Garland made the second version of it. [referring to 1954 version]

VB: Right. The Judy Garland one's the one I remember. I don't think I've seen the other one.

VE: Yeah. But I've seen this one, yeah. That one's the better of the two really, for acting.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Yeah.

VB: I was wondering if you could see the organ in that picture, but I don't--

NW: Pardon?

VB: I was wondering if you could see the organ in the picture but--

NW: Oh yeah, yeah.

VB: But--

VE: No, you can't, no.

VB: Yeah.

VE: No the organ used to come up about here.

VB: Ah right.

VE: 'Bout here it used to come up. About here.

VB: So, where did you usually sit?

NW: Yeah. That's right, yeah.

VB: In the stalls bit?

VE: Well, you could sit in the stalls or on the balcony round here.

VB: Right. Yeah.

VE: You know.

VB: Was it more expensive than the balcony?

VE: Oh, course. Ooh!

VB: [laughs] It looks lovely, the inside bit.

NW: Yeah.

VE: It was. It was beautiful when it was built. I could weep when I go in there.

VB: Mhm.

VE: And see it, you know. 'Cause it's--

VB: Yeah.

VE: [pause 3 seconds] That was where you used to go in.

NW: That's the foyer that, yeah.

VE: Yeah. That's the foyer. Was lovely.

NW: Oh yeah. They had a balcony at the Odeon hadn't they?

VE: Yes, they did.

NW: Yes. It's probably been re-modernised now. I don't know.

VE: Oh, it is. There's no balcony, is just all, well it's flat. I went to see 'The Bachelor' there.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] So these sort of films didn't really interest you?

NW: Sorry?

VB: Did these sort of films not interest you very much? At the time.

VE: Well, they were women's films.

NW: Not really. Not in them, no.

VE: A lot of them.

VB: Yeah.

NW: No. I liked them cowboys, me. Stuff like that, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Gangsters and things like that.

VB: Yeah, yeah. That reminds me actually, did--

NW: Is this eh--

VE: Just hang on a minute.

NW: I'm sorry.

VB: No. I was just going to say, did you like the gangster films? The James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson and--

NW: James Cagney. Yeah. Yeah.

VE: Yeah. Edward G.

NW: Eh, is this the Odeon where you live, in Glasgow?

VB: No, it's, it's the one in--

VE: It's yours. It's ours.

NW: Oh is it?

VE: Where did you get the copy of that?

VB: From the library.

VE: Oh!

VB: [laughs]

VE: Takes me back that.

VB: So, you liked, you were saying you liked the gangster films as well.

NW: No, no.

VB: Not really.

NW: No. I never went to them.

VB: No.

VE: No, but you liked James Cagney.

NW: Oh, I liked James Cagney. Aye, he were a gangster, weren't he?

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: But these dancing pictures we never went to.

VB: Yeah.

NW: No. That were for the women that.

VB: Were they for the women? [laughs]

VE: He thought you said dancing.

VB: Yeah, I know.

VE: It was gangster. He did, he did like.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Edward G. [Robinson]

VB: Yeah. Did you have any favourites in the gangsters eh--

NW: In the what, love?

VB: In the gangster movies.

VE: In the gangster movies.

NW: Dancing movies?

VE: Gangster!

NW: Oh yes. Gangsters.

VE: What was your favourite?

NW: Eh--

VE: What was a good one that you remember?

NW: [pause 5 seconds] Can't remember any really. I just remember the actors, me.

VE: Yeah.

NW: I remember Cagney a lot. James Cagney. Eh, and Edward G. Robinson.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Edward G.

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

VE: But eh, a lot of the films I can't remember erm. You know, love.

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

NW: Like I say, whatever they was showing, we went.

VB: Yeah.

NW: You know.

VB: They were great stars these, as you say.

NW: Pardon?

VB: They were great stars. People like Cagney and Edward G. and--

NW: Yeah.

VE: Oh, they were. Yeah, they were.

VB: Yeah.

VE: He was very versatile though eh, James Cagney. He was a very good dancer as well. Tap dancer, you know.

VB: Uhuh.

VE: *Yankee Doodle Dandy. Yankee Doodle Dandy.* But it wasn't erm, wasn't a gangster.

VB: Yeah.

VE: That was James Cagney.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Did you ever read the film magazines? Things like the 'Picturegoer'?

NW: No.

VB: No.

NW: 'Picturegoer' and stuff like that? No, I just saw front cover. I didn't read them much, you know.

VB: Mhm.

NW: 'Picturegoer' and eh, 'Movie Maker', something like that.

VE: That's right. But as I told you, they used to have a glass case outside with all scenes from the films, you know. So that you could picture what was coming on, eh, forthcoming attractions, and it would show you stills of different scenes. You know, what the picture was called.

VB: Yeah.

VE: And then you could imagine whether you liked it or not, you know?

VB: Yeah.

VE: "Oh, no, I don't fancy that."

VB: Yeah.

VE: But those were mainly outside. I think it was mainly women that collected the 'Picturegoers' and, you know, the 'Film Fan' [Monthly] and things like that. But the men didn't bother.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Whatever was on, they used to go. [laughs]

VB: Yeah. Is that right? Were the magazines more for women do you think?

NW: Sorry?

VB: Do you think the 'Picturegoer' things like that, were more for the women?

NW: Yeah. Everybody used to, all the crowd of lads.

VE: I think they were more for the women more, the books, the 'Picturegoer'.

NW: Oh, them books! Oh the books.

VE: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

NW: Oh Yeah. I didn't read them.

VE: No, that's what I mean. We'll get it right, love.

VB: Yeah. Mhm.

NW: Not got your [inaudible] on today?

VE: No, my chain's gone.

VB: I probably didn't show this one as well--

VE: No, you didn't.

VB: But maybe I came across these after I'd seen you. These are, that's another Bolton one. Do you remember--

NW: That, is the Embassy that.

VB: Right.

NW: It was called, [inaudible] it was called the Imperial.

VE: It was on the opposite corner to Woolworths.

NW: That's right, Woolworths is here.

VE: That was the one I was talking to you about and Kath said, "Ooh! No, it was [inaudible]."

VB: [laughs]

VE: But it was homely, if you know what I mean, everybody knew everybody else so well.

NW: What stands here now, love? Is it Boots chemist?

VE: Boots chemist.

NW: Boots chemist stands there now.

VE: Do you know where Woolworths is?

VB: Ah right.

NW: Marks and Spencer where we are.

VB: I was finding problems.

NW: Marks and Spencer and this is Boots Chemist.

VB: Right. So it's completely gone.

VE: It's gone. Altogether, Yeah.

NW: That's and old eh, photo.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Can I look at that one? [pause 3 seconds] Oh! *The Mystery Man*. James J. Corbett. [possibly referring to *The Midnight Man* (1919)]

VB: [laughs]

NW: Do you remember it?

VE: Yeah, of course I do.

NW: And then they had eh, there was a cinema in Bolton. I don't know [inaudible] or not. They used to call it 'Floating Palace'. Because water used to go, I think it was that, the River Croal went underneath [possibly referring to Princess Picture Palace].

VE: Was built on the top of the River Croal.

NW: Yeah.

VE: This is the water floating underneath.

VB: Huh! Right.

NW: Course, that was before, bit before my time.

VE: This was before our time.

NW: I remember that.

VE: I remember my dad used to tell me about these. You know, and going to see that. My father and my mother.

VB: 'The Floating Palace'. I like that, yeah. That looks like the sort of picture you'd probably have liked. [laughs]

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I don't remember that picture really. [inaudible]

VE: That's what I said to you. You know, they used to give you a little inkling.

NW: And outside of most of these cinemas, used to have a glass case--

VE: I've told you!

NW: With two photographs.

VE: I've just told her that!

NW: Oh have you?

VE: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Two pictures of the eh, scenes of the pictures, you know. Yeah, do you not remember that?

VB: No.

NW: You don't remember them?

VB: No.

NW: And, as you came up Bury Road, you probably come up there now. There used to be big hoardings of cinema adverts--

VE: All adverts and--

NW: The way they advertise cars now. That was advertising cinema. For eh, what they were showing over the week, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: You got posters of eh, different cinemas, you know.

VB: So, did that make, did you decide what to go to through looking at these--

NW: Eh?

VB: Did you use the posters to decide what film to go to?

NW: Sorry?

VE: You know when you used to see the posters?

NW: Yeah.

VE: Did it make you decide which picture you were going to see?

NW: Oh yeah, yeah. And eh, most of these cinemas, they had eh Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, a show. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, a show. Closed Sunday.

VB: Yeah.

NW: So they had like, two main pictures every week.

VB: So quite a lot to choose from.

NW: Yes.

VE: Oh yes.

NW: And we used to go like, eh, possibly eh, Monday. And eh, Saturday afternoons then, you know.

VE: And if you liked the picture, you could sit right through, to the second house, you know. Nobody used to turf you out.

VB: Ah.

VE: If you liked it you could, oh, stay until such a part. And, "that was a good part, we'll stay until then."

VB: Yeah.

VE: Then you used to be legging it home.

VB: [laughs]

VE: 'Cause you'd be late in.

VB: Yeah. [laughs] Did you ever go with your parents? With the family? Did you go with your--

NW: I used to go with my dad sometimes.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Not often but, now and again, you know.

VB: Yeah.

NW: He'd say, "Come on, Norman. We'll go and see Buck Jones" at eh Royal, something like that, you know.

VE: I used to go sometimes with my dad.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I'd be about nine or ten years old then, you know. Then as you grew up, you'd go with your mates then, don't you?

VE: I saw *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the first one, with my dad. And he used to keep nudging me and saying, "See. That's how it was. That's how it was!" He was in the 1914 war, you see, and he'd say, "See! That's how it was." *All Quiet on the Western Front*, it never was! [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

NW: I tell you another chap who used to be on here, Eddie Cantor.

VE: Yes. Yes.

NW: Eddie Cantor, do you remember him?

VB: Yeah.

VE: Yeah. Big eyes.

VB: He was good. I saw one of his pictures quite recently. I think it was erm, 'Making Whoopee'. [referring to *Whoopee!* (1930)]

NW: Aw that's right.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And he made one called *Roman Scandals*.

VE: *Roman Scandals*. That was very good.

NW: Eh. [pause 3 seconds] He made quite a few pictures him.

VE: Yeah.

NW: Eddie Cantor, didn't he?

VE: In *Roman Scandals* he went like, from now, he went back to the eh, Roman days. You know, found himself in the middle of Rome with a thing on. Tie round is waist, you know. Of course he got into everything that was going on the Roman days, you know.

VB: Yes.

VE: All the scandals that were going on.

VB: Oh he was good.

VE: It was very good was that.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Because when he came back, he realised. You know, "I've been to Rome!" And all the things that went on in Rome them, you know.

VB: Yeah.

VE: It was a good film that.

VB: Yeah. What about George Formby? Did you like George Formby?

NW: George Formby. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: George Formby. Eh, he made quite a few pictures, didn't he?

VE: Quite a few, yeah.

NW: Can't remember name of pictures though. Can you?

VE: Erm, what was that flying one?

NW: What, TT Racing?

VE: *No Limit*.

NW: Who?

VE: *No Limit*, aye, TT Racing at Isle of Man. And then Gracie Fields made a film or two in Bolton. Do you remember Gracie Fields? She made some eh, like, in the cotton industry. Didn't she?

VE: *Sing As We Go!*

NW: *Sing As We Go*. In fact, Dorris, your mate was in that, weren't she?

VE: Yes.

NW: She was in that, Dorris.

VE: Yes.

NW: So eh, but times have changed now. It's all money today, isn't it? You know. Eh, I mean, it's costing thirty million quid, some pictures. Stuff like--

VB: **Yeah, easily. Yeah. Yeah.**

NW: These were all low budget stuff, you know.

VB: **Yeah.**

NW: But you could still enjoy it. They were still [pause 2 seconds] pictures for--

VE: Well they had to be 'cause we were on a low budget as well, you know? I mean pocket wise, money wise, we were on a low budget as well.

VB: Mhm.

VE: So they had to cater for, you know. Eh, I think it like, sort of improved as it went on. You know, like, anything improves.

NW: Will you be able to tell my dialect on that?

VB: Absolutely.

NW: Oh yeah. Do you use earphones?

VB: Yeah.

NW: For that.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I have one but eh, it operates when people speak.

VB: Oh yeah.

NW: And when it stops it cuts off. Automatic eh, movement, you know.

VB: Mhm. They're very good these.

NW: Very good.

VB: Wee ones.

NW: Very good.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Will you do tape tonight, when you get back?

VB: Erm, I probably will listen to it. Either tonight or maybe tomorrow.

NW: Are you gonna put some of these comments in, are you writing a book or what? Are you--

VB: There probably will be a book coming out of it.

NW: Yeah. Anything else you want to know?

VB: Erm. [pause 4 seconds] I don't know. [laughs] I brought a couple of things I thought you might-

-

NW: Sorry?

VB: I brought another couple of things I thought you might--

NW: Yeah.

VB: --like to see. I mean here's a copy of the 'Bolton--

VE: Tatler'!

NW: The 'Tatler'.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Oh!

NW: 'Tatler'?

VE: The 'Tatler'. 'Bolton Tatler'! Yeah.

NW: 'Tatler' cinema?

VE: [pause 6 seconds] Was a book--

NW: Oh I see.

VE: That used to tell you--

NW: Ah!

VE: --about--

NW: Theatre Royal and Hippodrome.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Oh a book was it? No, I didn't read that.

VB: Yeah.

NW: Did you?

VE: Yeah, sometimes. Yeah.

NW: And you've seen that one? Have you?

VB: *Lost Horizon*.

VE: Ronald Colman.

VB: [laughs]

VE: Aw, it was a lovely film that one. Not for men but erm, there was some very good acting in it.

NW: December '37.

VE: Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds]

NW: I don't remember that too much.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I don't remember that.

VB: Do you remember Ronald Colman?

NW: I remember the picture.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I've not seen it. I haven't seen it.

VB: Yeah.

VE: Well it's a [inaudible].

VB: [laughs] Deanna Durbin.

NW: Ah, I didn't go and see her. [pause 3 seconds] Vera liked her.

VE: I did.

NW: Vera liked that.

VE: Oh, I did. Yeah. Oh, yes! *Three Smart Girls*. [pause 6 seconds] *One Hundred Men and a Girl*. Oh, yes. They were lovely films them.

NW: And one of my favourite actors today, [tape speeds up] is Clint Eastwood.

VB: Mhm.

NW: I like Clint Eastwood.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And I used to like erm, Burt Lancaster. And erm, [pause 3 seconds] Burt Lancaster, Robert, Robert Mitchum. Robert Mitchum. [audio unavailable from this point]

VB: Yeah. So it's the--

NW: I like them. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: I like the style of pictures they're in. Style of films.

VB: Yeah.

NW: And Gary Cooper. *High Noon*. I've seen that about five times.

VB: Yeah, it's great.

NW: In the cinema and on here.

VE: Yeah, we did like that.

VB: Yeah.

NW: So, they're all kind of westerns lads, aren't they? You know.

VB: What about Errol Flynn?

NW: Eh?

VB: Did you like Errol Flynn? Errol Flynn?

NW: Eh, aye, but he were swashbuckler, weren't he?

VB: Yeah.

NW: He weren't in erm, cowboys, really.

VB: No.

VE: Oh no. No, no.

VB: No. I just wondered, 'cause it sounded like you liked the--

NW: Sorry?

VB: It sounds like you like the adventurous action men.

NW: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

NW: But I liked cowboy pictures.

VE: Errol Flynn was a ladies' man really, you know.

VB: Yeah, he was more a--

VE: All the women used to go and see him.

VB: I like Errol Flynn. Maybe that's why I'm mentioning it.

VE: But he went terrible, you know, when he got older.

VB: Mhm. Disappointment.

VE: Oh! He went awful.

VB: Yeah.

VE: I cried when I saw it.

VB: Yeah. Do you go to the pictures much now?

NW: Now?

VE: No. He can't hear. Can't hear, see. Not a lot of subtitles now really.

VB: Mhm.

VE: Only in the foreign ones.

NW: No, I don't go out a lot.

VB: Yeah.

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape]

[End of interview]