

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: PB-95-222AT002
- * CCINTB Transcript ID: 95-222-14a-aad, 95-222-15a-o
- * Tapes: PB-95-222OT003, PB-95-222OT004
- * CCINTB Tapes ID: T95-143, T95-144
- * Length: 1:15:56
- * Norwich, Norfolk 17 November 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Phyllis Bennett
- * Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- * PB=Phyllis Bennett, VB=Valentina Bold
- * Notes: Second interview of two with Phyllis Bennett; Sound Quality: Fair; this interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; the original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection - please contact Lancaster University Library for details.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

VB: Oh wow!

PB: There's so many. [looking for album] Just an album what I made.

VB: Oh-h! Oh I'd love to see that.

PB: I did that when I was at work one day. [laughs]

VB: Oh-h.

PB: Yeah.

VB: [pause 4 seconds] Goodness! This is going back, isn't it?

PB: It's eh--

VB: Robert Taylor and Norma Shearer.

PB: Yeah.

VB: How old were you when you made this?

PB: Eh, I was, what was I? Erm, well I was out to work then.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Erm, let me see I was, [pause 3 seconds] it must've been, I suppose I was what? [pause 2 seconds] Must've been about, [pause 4 seconds] let's see, I got married when I was thirty. It must've been before that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: 'Cause I was in the printing when I first went out to work. And then I was moved up into bookbinding--

VB: Yeah.

PB: Where I made that.

VB: Oh, I see! So you bound it yourself as well.

PB: Oh no. I had it bound.

VB: Ah, I see. [laughs]

PB: Do you know where Davey Place is?

VB: Erm, I don't. No.

PB: On Castle Meadow.

VB: Right. I know where that is.

PB: Yeah. Well you know that big building opposite?

VB: Yes.

PB: As you get off the buses.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Well that's where I worked.

VB: Oh, I see.

PB: It used to be Fletcher's Printing Works.

VB: Right. I see.

PB: Years ago, see. And that was where I worked. At the time I was doing all the, [inaudible] all the big ledgers up.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I made that in between--

VB: Ah, it's lovely.

PB: So one of the girls said, "How you gonna get that out?" So I say, "I'll get it out."

VB: [laughs]

PB: So I went in the binding room where they do all the big...

VB: Mhm.

PB: And I say to one of the men there, I say, "You gonna do me a favour?" So, he say, "What?" I say, "Bind that for me, will you? I'll put a...". So he done it for me. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] It's lovely.

PB: It's years old.

VB: Yes. I never thought it was, you know, a personally done one. That's great.

PB: Yes well, he said, "They'll give me the sack." I said, "Never mind about that." I say, "If you get it, I'll get it." [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: And then he, you know. So that was how that come about.

VB: Oh-h. Were Robert Taylor and Norma Shearer, were they favourites of yours?

PB: Oh, yeah. Well, Norma Shearer was.

VB: Naturally.

PB: But erm, [pause 2 seconds] you know, they were all really good, weren't they?

VB: Yeah.

PB: A little while ago on Pebble Mill they had Charlton Heston.

VB: I saw that.

PB: Did you see that?

VB: Yes. It was wonderful.

PB: Yeah. It was great, weren't it?

VB: It really was. Yeah.

PB: I watch all them on there.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Erm, the other day they had Shirley MacLaine on.

VB: Ah!

PB: And of course, she's a dancer, isn't she? And they had, erm, what was her name? Ann Miller on.

VB: Mhm.

PB: The other day. Doing, you know, some of her clips and that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: 'Course she's, I mean, she's fairly old now. But she still looked pretty good for her age.

VB: Ah, it's great to see people like that.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Isn't it? Were you always interested in the lives of the stars?

PB: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I think it's interesting to see how they erm, act and all that. Now the other week I got Grace Kelly. I'm reading her autobiography.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And everyone thought she was so-so, didn't they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: But my stars, that book opened your eyes.

VB: Really?

PB: That really did.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean that wasn't what you'd call a really good marriage.

VB: Mhm.

PB: You see, all that was pumped up.

VB: You'd never have known, would you?

PB: No, see. I mean she was a... She had all the men she wanted.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah. See, so I mean you, you don't know. You think they're so perfect.

VB: Yeah.

PB: But they're not.

VB: 'Cause certainly. Well, I don't know if that would apply to Norma Shearer. She--

PB: Erm, no, I don't think so. 'Cause she was married to the, for nine years and then of course he died suddenly.

VB: Yes. I remember you telling me about that.

PB: Yes.

VB: Yes.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh, this is great. And Clark Gable and Hedy Lamarr.

PB: He's on tomorrow--

VB: Is he?

PB: In a picture. Yeah. So I shall be watching that.

VB: Oh, well I will too then. Specially if it's a day like this.

PB: Yeah. It's on at one o'clock.

VB: Right.

PB: It's called *Command Decision* That was one of his good films.

VB: Ah yes.

PB: That's eh, to do with [all the war?]. Not, you know.

VB: Yeah.

PB: That was a good film that was.

VB: These are great. And Charles Boyer as well.

PB: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy.

PB: Oh, Nelson Eddy, yeah.

VB: Were these stars that you liked?

PB: Yeah, I liked them all. You know. I used to go and see all of them.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean they were good together. All their musicals and that, you know.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I was wondering actually. I mean you mentioned so many different stars--

PB: Yeah. And there's so many to think about, you know.

VB: Yeah. Do you think there were certain qualities that drew you to a star? Were there certain things you liked?

PB: Well, yes. You know, I mean, you get some of them, you think to yourself, no, I don't like him.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Or I don't like her.

VB: Mhm.

PB: See there are film stars what you can't take to.

VB: Yeah.

PB: The same as what there is in ordinary life, isn't there?

VB: That's interesting. So do you think it was something to do with the sort of people they appeared as?

PB: Yes, I think so. Yeah. And if you like, say two stars, you know like I did, I think you pay more attention to them than what you do the other film stars.

VB: Yes.

PB: I mean although some of them were very good actors and actresses.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean you get Errol Flynn, I mean, I liked him! [laughs] I think he was great!

VB: What was it about Errol Flynn, do you think?

PB: Well, he was a, you know he was, he didn't care, did he? What he got up to or what he done! I mean for him that was nothing. [laughs] I mean they're all [laughing] very. Well, I they love him, the women they had, they can't be [inaudible], can they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean they're acting all day with the same woman, aren't they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Doing all these love scenes and that. But now, 'course, that's different, isn't it? That's, I think the films of today are not nice. I mean there's too much foul language. Like that *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I never saw it because that don't appeal to me that sort of film. But they tried to get some of it cut out. But they wouldn't. I mean, it's not nice, is it? I mean, I'm not a prude. I mean I'm very broad minded. But I don't like that sort of language. S'not nice.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I don't think it is.

VB: D'you think the films then were quite different then from the films...?

PB: Oh well, they were, weren't they? I mean, goodness, I mean they, in films in them days, I mean, they weren't allowed hardly to hold one another sometimes, were they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean now, [laughs] it's different. Isn't it?

VB: Yeah.

PB: I mean, you know yourself.

VB: Well I mean, looking at a thing like erm, *Maytime*. I mean I saw that not long ago.

PB: Oh yeah, yeah. And eh, *Rose Marie*--

VB: Yeah.

PB: And *Girl of the Golden West*, 'Blue Horizon' [possibly referring to the song 'Beyond the Blue Horizon'].

VB: Yeah.

PB: All the musicals.

VB: What d'you think made a film like that so good?

PB: I don't know. I think the costumes were lovely. And eh, you know, like Charlton Heston was saying on there. And that Alan Titchmarsh, he says why don't they make the films as they did when he was... He said, they cost too much.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And erm, they mentioned erm, eh Alan, watsisname? Alan [Name?] or something like that. And eh, he was saying, well of course they were different altogether.

VB: Yes.

PB: To what he was.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I mean he made some very good films.

VB: Oh yes, I remember that bit, yes.

PB: I mean *Ben-Hur* and erm, [pause 2 seconds] *El Cid*. [pause 2 seconds] 'Gordon of Khartoum' [referring to *Khartoum*].

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean, they were good, they were good films but he said they don't make them now because they cost too much money.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Which they did. I mean, and the erm, the eh what do you call it? One he made to do with the circus [referring to *The Greatest Show on Earth*]. Erm--

VB: Oh yes.

PB: Yeah that was another good one. Cecil DeMille, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Cecil B. De Mille. I mean he was a good director and, and films he made, I mean, they were terrific.

VB: I mean d'you think these films were better to look at then than the ones today?

PB: Yes, definitely.

VB: Yeah.

PB: To me they were.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I mean if today, they're for the youngsters and the teenagers.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Aren't they? All the space. I mean, you see the space coming and then they made all space films. But I mean, they're all farfetched-- [laughs]

VB: Yes. I see here you've got--

PB: Aren't they? You see. I mean Deanna Durbin, I mean she was lovely, weren't she? As a singer, wasn't she?

VB: Yeah. It's lovely this picture as well, with *One Hundred Men and a Girl*.

PB: Mhm. Yeah.

VB: What was it about her, do you think that?

PB: Well I think her voice, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean she was a very, a lovely singer, weren't she?

VB: Mhm.

PB: She's living in France now, don't she?

VB: I think that's right, yes.

PB: Yeah, yeah.

VB: These pictures are lovely, actually. Where, where, oh, I see this one's from the 'Picture Show'.

PB: Oh, yeah, they used to give them--

VB: 1937.

PB: Yeah. They used to give them, all them free, you see.

VB: Ah, I see.

PB: And so of course I used to keep them.

VB: In beautiful condition as well 'cause you've kept, aw this is lovely.

PB: Yeah. That's a nice one, isn't it?

VB: Who is that?

PB: Eh... [pause 6 seconds] That's Norma Shearer!

VB: Ah! So it is.

PB: Yeah.

VB: It's a beautiful one with the cat and the flowers, isn't it?

PB: Yeah.

VB: And Ginger Rogers!

PB: Oh, yeah. Fred Astaire.

VB: A-ah.

PB: Oh his, his dancing.

VB: Is this Norma Shearer again?

PB: Yeah. And that was erm, erm, *Marie Antoinette*.

VB: I was going to say.

PB: I should imagine.

VB: Tyrone Power.

PB: Yes. Yeah. Tyrone Power.

VB: Was he someone that you liked particularly?

PB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

VB: What d'you think it was about Tyrone Power that...?

PB: Oh, I don't know. I think he was, he was erm, debonair, wasn't he? And erm, [pause 2 seconds] you know, not eh... He didn't overact really, did he? To my own knowledge he didn't.

VB: Mhm.

PB: But that was, that was nice in that picture. I liked that. That was a very good picture.

VB: Mhm. Was that something--?

PB: 'Course that was, he made, she made that after her husband died.

VB: Ah. Yes.

PB: She made, what was it? Three films after he died and that was what he wanted. And then she retired, you see.

VB: Mhm.

PB: She retired in 1942 and she never went back to films.

VB: Mhm.

PB: A pity, really.

VB: It is, isn't it?

PB: 'Course, you see, [pause 2 seconds] she didn't get the films and the parts.

VB: Yeah.

PB: See, I mean, he sort of, I mean, well, naturally, he would, wouldn't he? I mean, picked them all out for her. So--

VB: Mhm. I mean, I was interested there when you said about Tyrone Power as well, that he didn't overact. Was that something that you liked in film stars?

PB: Ye-es. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, some of them do, don't they? I mean I think some of them really do overact. And that's not real.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Is it? I like him in *Suez* too with erm, what was her name? [pause 3 seconds] Ooh, can't remember her, actress's name.

VB: Mhm.

PB: But she wasn't that well known when she first come out. I think that was one of the pictures she'd made with him.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds]. Ah, Norma Shearer again.

PB: Yeah.

VB: With her son.

PB: Yeah. That was eh, when he eh, when erm, they went to Europe for a year.

VB: A-ah.

PB: He took a year off work because he was ill. And that little boy was about two then.

VB: Mhm.

PB: 'Cause he was older there.

VB: Yeah. Ah, it's a lovely picture of a [fine-looking?] son, isn't it?

PB: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Who's that?

PB: Charles Boyer.

VB: Charles Boyer. Of course.

PB: Clark Gable and--

VB: Yeah.

PB: Carole Lombard.

VB: Yeah. That's a lovely picture, isn't it? Of them both.

PB: Yeah.

VB: And, Ingrid Bergman, is it?

PB: Erm... [pause 3 seconds] No.

VB: No.

PB: No. I don't think that's her. No, that's not Ingrid Bergman. Who is it?

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: No, I don't think. It looks a bit, whoops! Sorry. [pause 2 seconds] Was Charles Boyer one of your favourites?

PB: Yeah, I liked him as well. I liked him in eh, erm, with erm Marlene Dietrich in *The Garden of Allah*.

VB: Oh, ye-es!

PB: I thought that was nice, wasn't it? And with Irene Dunne in a picture. And he was nice in that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And with, what was the other one he was in? He was in 'Napoleon', weren't he [referring to *Conquest*]? He took the part of Napoleon. And then he was in one with Bette Davis where she was a governess to is children [referring to *All This, and Heaven Too*].

VB: Ah.

PB: And didn't he murder his wife, didn't he?

VB: I've not seen that one.

PB: No. Can't remember what that was called but I know he's, he erm, [pause 2 seconds] 'cause as I said, there was murder and that. But he does, he poisoned himself in the end.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And that Bette Davis was telling her school class and she told them that story. 'Cause they made fun of her, you see, as an old maid.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah.

VB: What do you think made him a good star?

PB: I think that was his accent what, what. How can I say? He had a sultry look about him, didn't he? Really.

VB: You can see that in that one.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Definitely. Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh! Frances Dee and Joel McCrea.

PB: Yeah. They was another two, weren't they? Yeah.

VB: Carole Lombard and Fred MacMurray.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Swing High, Swing Low*. Were these all, I see a few of these are 1937, so would that be about the time you were...?

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. What was it about this pair, do you think that... Joel McCrea.

PB: Eh, I liked Joel McCrea. He was eh, he was in several pictures, weren't he? What I saw.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And that. But erm. [pause 2 seconds] You know. I think some of them had a certain way with them when they were acting. 'Cause they were all different in acting.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean no two actors act alike, do they?

VB: No.

PB: I liked old Fred MacMurray too. He, he, [laughing] sometimes was in a comedy and he used to make you laugh, he did. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: I always remember one picture he made with erm, Barbara Stanwyck. And that was called 'Double Indem, Dem-, Demnity' [referring to *Double Indemnity*].

VB: Oh, yes, yes.

PB: Where he eh, didn't he murder somebody? Did he murder someone? Or did he? Oh, something, wasn't it?

VB: It's all sort of complicated, isn't it?

PB: Yeah, it was. That was a good picture, that was.

VB: Oh, yes.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: Norma Shearer again. Clark Gable.

PB: Yeah. That was when he was in the Army.

VB: Aw yes.

PB: In, when he joined up.

VB: And Jane Withers.

PB: Oh yeah, they were kiddies. They were young, weren't they, they were.

VB: Mhm. And Cary Grant as well.

PB: Oh, yeah. [laughs] I think sometimes he acted a bit silly. Cary Grant, didn't he? He wasn't, not one of my favourites.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Although I saw a lot of his pictures but erm, I wouldn't say that I really... [pause 2 seconds] liked him a lot.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] Madeleine Carroll.

PB: Oh, yes. She was a British actress, wasn't she?

VB: She was in *The 39 Steps*, wasn't she?

PB: Yeah. With Robert Donat, wasn't she?

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh, she was very good.

PB: 'Course they made that two or three times, didn't they?

VB: Yeah.

PB: And the last time I think that was on the telly, that was with Robert, Robert Powell in it.

VB: That's right.

PB: *The Thirty Nine Steps*.

VB: Yeah. How do you rate the Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat one?

PB: That was all right. I thought that was good when that was first made. But they alter them so much, don't they, when they remake them--

VB: Mhm.

PB: A lot, don't they?

VB: So d'you think the first one was erm...?

PB: Yeah. I think that was better.

VB: Right.

PB: That was more to the story.

VB: Yes. Yeah. What else was she? 'Cause she was in erm. Was she in *The Prisoner of Zenda* as well?

PB: With Ronald Colman.

VB: With Ronald Colman.

PB: Yeah, she was. Yeah. Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Oh erm, that's Jeanette MacDonald again.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

PB: George Raft.

VB: Oh yes. Did you like him?

PB: He was all right. As a, well, he was more of the gangster-style, weren't he?

VB: Mhm. 'Cause I've heard quite a few men saying they really liked George Raft and I wondered--

PB: Yeah. He's good dancer.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: Clark Gable again. Spencer Tracy.

PB: That was when he was in eh, *Test Pilot*.

VB: Ah.

PB: That film. I liked Spencer Tracy too. He was a good actor.

VB: Mhm. Was that what you liked about him? His skill as an actor?

PB: Yeah, yeah. He was a very good actor.

VB: Right.

PB: But he never seemed to... [pause 3 seconds] To get the recognition as what he should have done, I think. In some of his pictures.

VB: Mhm.

PB: No. I like Humphrey Bogart too. [laughs]

VB: Oh, yes.

PB: I liked him. [laughs] I liked *The African Queen*.

VB: Oh-h, yes.

PB: Oh, when he was... [laughs] Oh, made me laugh in that.

VB: And Katharine Hepburn.

PB: Yeah. Oh, she was very good, wasn't she, as an actress? Yeah.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And of course, her and Spencer Tracy were very together, weren't they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Although he never left his wife. But they were, they were together. Lived together sometimes.

VB: Mhm. And Norma Shearer.

PB: 'Course, she's getting on now. Katharine Hepburn.

VB: She must be.

PB: She must be in her seventies.

VB: Aw, easily.

PB: Easily that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Lauren Bacall.

VB: Yes.

PB: I liked her too.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause she's sort of coming up a bit now again, isn't she?

PB: Well, yeah. She do a lot, don't she? In the theatre and that, too. She's still going strong.

VB: Yeah. There's Norma Shearer again. Philip Dorn.

PB: Yeah. I can't. Well I put him in but I mean I couldn't really. I don't think he made that many films.

VB: Yeah. He was someone that appealed to you at the time.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh, Vivien Leigh.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Waterloo Bridge*.

PB: Bridge, yeah. I saw, yeah, that was good picture.

VB: Uhuh.

PB: Yeah.

VB: And Robert Taylor.

PB: Taylor. I think that was made in England, that was.

VB: A-ah!

PB: Yeah. 'Cause the Metro Goldwyn had a studio in England, hadn't they? At that time, anyway.

VB: Did you like Robert Taylor?

PB: Yeah.

VB: Right.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Clark Gable. Getting married to--

PB: That was Lady Sylvia Ashley, weren't it?

VB: Ah, that's right. Yes.

PB: Yeah. But that didn't work out.

VB: Yeah. So that must've been a while after Carole Lombard.

PB: Yeah. He erm... [pause 2 seconds] He was, I think he, he always liked a blonde didn't he? He never went for a person with dark hair. He didn't like people with black hair.

VB: Mhm.

PB: So it said in one piece I was reading.

VB: Mhm.

PB: He thought they were, weren't very clean.

VB: Mhm?

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Oh well. [laughs]

PB: But that only lasted about. It didn't a couple of years before he divorced her and then 'course he married the last one he was married to.

VB: Mhm. Ah, I see this is 1949.

PB: Yeah.

VB: So you must've kept this book for a few years then.

PB: Oh, yes.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I must've been. What now, I suppose I was about twenty-eight when I had that made.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I must have been.

VB: Yeah. Oh, Norma Shearer.

PB: Or thirty. Yeah.

VB: Oh. And Greta Garbo.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Was she someone that you...?

PB: Yes. I think she made some very good films. I liked her in erm, *Queen Christina*.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I thought she was very good with that. And she acted with Clark Gable in one. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] oh, that was called 'The Rise of Helga' in that [referring to *Susan Lenox (Her Fall and Rise)*]. That was good film. Yeah.

VB: Was it her that was *The Garden of Allah*?

PB: No.

VB: It was erm--

PB: Marlene Dietrich.

VB: Marlene Dietrich.

PB: Yeah.

VB: That's right. 'Cause that was a... That must've been one of the first colour films, wasn't it?

PB: No. I don't think so, was it? No, *The Jazz Singer*. That was coloured, weren't it?

VB: Erm. I'm not sure.

PB: No.

VB: I mean I'm thinking of it 'cause I remember the colour in it's very sort of bright and--

PB: Ye-es. I don't know whether that was the first coloured.

VB: Mhm. Mhm. Maybe not the first but one of the others, it must've been.

PB: No. One of the, yeah. I should imagine so, yeah.

VB: Was that something that you found exciting when colour came out?

PB: Oh, yeah. They were lovely. I mean you'd see all the lovely colours of the dresses.

VB: Ah.

PB: And all that, couldn't you. I mean you'd get *The Great Ziegfeld*. That was all in black and white but the magnificent dresses they had. You know, wouldn't that have been lovely to see that in coloured?

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean them dresses were marvellous. And then you know, you think, ooh, them pictures were. Well they were, they were really pictures, films--

VB: Mhm.

PB: That you could see and go and see over again.

VB: Yeah. Did you find yourself daydreaming about them at all or did you think about them, talk about them?

PB: Yeah, I did. I mean, I used to talk to eh. Well, when I married and that and we used to go to films, Eric and I, and that sort of thing. I always remember when I was carrying a baby. I was about seven months and *Gone with the Wind* came down again. [laughs] And Eric had never seen it, you see, 'cause he was in the Army. It was after the war. So, I said, "Come on," I said. "We'll go." 'Course we had to stand, you know. I thought, oh, I'm getting weary, you know. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: He say, "Are you all right?" I say, "Well", I said, "My back is beginning to ache." [laughs] But we did get in. I thought to myself, ooh, thank goodness for that. To sit down. But he, he enjoyed it.

VB: Mhm.

PB: He thought that was a very good film. And of course it's been on the telly, what? Three times, isn't it?

VB: Yeah.

PB: Three. Good three or four. Christmas time they generally bring that out.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And every time, I say, I'm going to see it again. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: That was a film what you can miss something in.

VB: Yeah. That's right.

PB: Yeah. There's so much in it, weren't there?

VB: Yeah. Here's eh, Simone Simone.

PB: Yeah.

VB: And James Stewart.

PB: And James Stewart. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: 'Course he's eh, he's about eighty-five now, isn't he? James Stewart.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Was he someone that you particularly liked?

PB: He was all right but, you know, he was a bit on the slow side, weren't he? [laughs] You know.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I liked old William Powell though. I thought he was good.

VB: Ah.

PB: In these *Thin Man*--

VB: Oh, yeah.

PB: Series, and that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah. With the little white dog, Asta, that was called.

VB: Oh, yes.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Do you think they went well together, Myrna Loy and...?

PB: Oh, yeah. I think so. Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I think they had to [dwell?] together in them 'cause they made several pictures of 'The Thin Men', 'Man', didn't they?

VB: I see this one's after *The Thin Man*.

PB: Yeah. What was that called?

VB: *After The Thin Man*.

PB: 'After'. Yeah, I think it was. I don't know whether it was the last one they made.

VB: Mhm. Again it's 1937.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 6 seconds]

VB: That's eh, *Boomtown*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Clark Gable.

PB: Hedy Lamarr.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Cesar Romero.

VB: Ah.

PB: Yeah. I liked him too.

VB: What was it about him, do you think?

PB: Well, I don't know. I suppose it was his looks and that. And the way he used to act. He was, he was a lovely dancer when he used to be dancing in pictures. Yeah.

VB: Charles Boyer again.

PB: Yeah.

VB: George Sanders.

PB: George Sanders.

VB: Ah.

PB: I liked him too. [pause 2 seconds] John Boles. He was another one in the thirties.

VB: Mhm.

PB: See him in the erm, *Desert Song*.

VB: Oh, yes.

PB: Oh, that was nice.

VB: Yeah. George Sanders looks quite different in these two--

PB: Yeah. Don't he?

VB: Pictures, doesn't he?

PB: 'Cause I think he's got a moustache in this one, isn't he?

VB: Ah right. And his hair's quite different as well.

PB: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause he always seemed to play similar parts, didn't he?

PB: Well he sort of played erm, well, sort of villain parts, really, don't he?

VB: Mhm. I can't think of anything I've seen him in but I can think of him in films.

PB: Yeah, he, he used to eh, see, eh be in erm, whatever film was that? Eh... [pause 3 seconds]

VB: As you say, I can think of him as a sort of, the villain.

PB: Yeah. Yeah. And detective stories he used to be in some of them.

VB: Yes. Oh, I know what he... Was he not in erm, *Rebecca*?

PB: Yeah.

VB: He was, wasn't he?

PB: He was, yeah. He was in *Rebecca*, yeah.

VB: He was the sort of nasty--

PB: And erm, ee was in that other picture. Eh, *All About Eve*.

VB: Yes.

PB: With eh, Ann Baxter.

VB: Yeah.

PB: That was a good film.

VB: That's right. Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] Ruth Hussey.

PB: Yeah.

VB: I don't know her.

PB: No eh, she eh, I don't think she was not in too many pictures.

VB: Yeah.

PB: No.

VB: Greer Garson.

PB: Greer Garson. I liked her too. She was nice.

VB: She's very pretty, isn't she?

PB: Yes. Yeah.

VB: George Brent.

PB: Yeah. I liked him.

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

PB: Well he... I liked him, he was a good actor with Bette Davis.

VB: Yeah.

PB: He worked with her a lot, did George Brent.

[pause 3 seconds]

VB: Jeanette MacDonald with Alan Jones.

PB: Alan Jones. He was a nice singer, weren't he?

VB: *The Firefly*.

PB: Yeah. That was good too.

VB: I see what you mean about the gowns and--

PB: Yeah.

VB: Mhm. Really beautiful. [pause 2 seconds] Leslie Howard.

PB: Yeah. I liked him too. He acted with Norma Shearer, two or three times.

VB: Did he?

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh.

PB: He was in *Smilin' Through* with her. Then he was in *Romeo and Juliet*. Erm, *A Free Soul*, he was in. With her.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And that was erm, Clark Gable's first big film, where he was acting with Norma Shearer in that, and he was a gangster in that.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And that picture made him.

VB: Mhm.

PB: From then on, he was on the up.

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

PB: [starts mid-conversation] Put me in mind of a dreamer. You know. He didn't want anything to interrupt his life.

VB: I think that's it. Because as you say, when you say he's like a dreamer and then when you see his picture.

PB: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, in *Gone with the Wind*, he didn't want anything to upset his life in Twelve Oaks. 'Cause the war started.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Didn't it?

VB: Yeah.

PB: See.

VB: Yeah.

PB: In that.

VB: 'Cause it's, I think you're absolutely right because when, thinking, erm, he was in that *Intermezzo*, wasn't he?

PB: Yes, and he--

VB: And he was somebody similar.

PB: With Ingrid Bergman. Mhm.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: [pause 2 seconds]. Basil Rathbone.

PB: Rathbone. Oh, yeah. I liked him too. Yeah.

VB: Sherlock Holmes. [laughs]

PB: He was a villain, he was. [laughs] They were, they were the very best Sherlock Holmes made.

VB: Mhm.

PB: With Basil Rathbone.

VB: It's hard to think of anyone else.

PB: Yeah.

VB: As Sherlock Holmes.

PB: Yeah. But he, he, that said, they were the best ones made.

VB: Mhm.

PB: With him.

VB: Did you like Nigel Bruce as well?

PB: Ye-ah! [laughs] He was a fumbler, wasn't he? [laughs heartily] I don't, crikey! I don't think I'd want him for a doctor, he wouldn't know what he was doing. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] 'Cause he was always like that as well, wasn't he?

PB: Yeah.

VB: In other things.

PB: You get [inaudible], you know you can, you think to yourself, "Tchoo!" Oh... [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Ah. Oh, here's Clark Gable again.

PB: Yeah. I liked, you know the erm, some of the comics too. I mean, they were great, weren't they?
[laughs]

VB: Mhm.

PB: Really get a laugh out of them.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Ah. There's *Drake of England*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Who were your favourite comedians?

PB: Eh, [pause 2 seconds]. Who was that? Oh-h. Eh, old Edward He, Everett Horton. Now, I thought he was... [laughs] he was funny, weren't he? He was a ditherer, wasn't he? In his pictures, he used to get everything wrong. And who was the other one? Eh, Ralph [Meeker?]. He was good. And eh, [Name?]. He used to always take the place of a butler of... [laughs] He was another comic, weren't he, you know. Laurel and Hardy. Oh, yeah! They were great, they were! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: Oh!

VB: Talk about a bumbler, I mean. [laughs]

PB: Yeah. I mean, you know, when you see their names, still get a good old laugh out of them, can't you?

VB: Very much so. Mhm. You can. [pause 2 seconds] Here's Gable at work.

PB: Yeah. That's the one. What's on tomorrow.

VB: Oh, *Command Decision*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Mhm. Oh, Walter Pidgeon's in it as well.

PB: Oh, there's a lot of... That's an all eh, male picture. There was no women in it--

VB: Yeah.

PB: Whatever. Because that's to do with the war, see.

VB: Ah. It's a good cast. Van Johnson as well.

PB: Yes. Yeah. Edward Ev, Edward Arnold was in it. Walter Pidgeon.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Several big stars were all in it.

VB: Ooh, I'll definitely need to have a look at that.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Sounds great. [pause 2 seconds] And here's erm, Clark Gable in *Parnell*.

PB: Yeah, that was erm, it wasn't a very good picture.

VB: Not very good.

PB: No, it wasn't one of his best.

VB: Mhm.

PB: No he didn't like eh, he didn't like acting in that picture anyway.

VB: Mhm. Mhm. What was it about it that wasn't so good?

PB: Well, it was, he was eh, that was to do with Ireland, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

PB: He was Irish, Irish, preem-, or president or what.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Whatever they call them over there.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Something to do with the politics and all that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: So that wasn't one of his best.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Well I don't think it was anyway.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Some people might. But I think--

VB: It's not the sort of part I would associate him with.

PB: No. No, he wasn't suited to that part.

VB: Yeah. *For King and Country*. Miriam Hopkins and Alan Mowbray.

PB: Yeah.

VB: What was that one about?

PB: Don't remember that one.

VB: Yeah. Must be historical. [laughs]

PB: She was, she was erm, I don't know. She seemed a peculiar actress to me. [laughs]

VB: Mhm. She is a bit sort of. She's not what you would describe as eh--

PB: Beautiful, was she? No.

VB: No.

PB: No. She acted with Bette Davis a lot, you know.

VB: A-ah.

PB: She did. Yeah. Mhm.

VB: And Shirley Temple. [laughs]

PB: [laughs] Yeah.

VB: That's lovely one. Mhm.

PB: She was, exception as a kiddie, weren't she? Really. Really exception.

VB: Very talented.

PB: Oh, yes.

VB: Very talented.

PB: Yes. For that age.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Ah. Clark Gable again.

PB: That was eh, 'Strange Interval', 'Interlude' [referring to *Strange Interlude*], that was.

VB: Ah. Yeah.

PB: That was where the actor and actresses, erm... [pause 2 seconds] Spoke their thoughts aloud.

VB: Mhm.

PB: You know. That was a very--

VB: Mmm!

PB: Strange eh, picture, that was.

VB: It sounds--

PB: That's where she's made up like older--

VB: Yeah.

PB: There.

VB: It sounds very interesting.

PB: Yeah. It was, yeah. It was an interesting picture.

VB: Mhm.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Robert Taylor.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Clark Gable again.

PB: [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Well, I can see who your favourites were! [laughs] Ah. What was it about Clark Gable, do you think, that made him so...?

PB: We-ell. In the beginning, eh, you know, when I first saw him. That was in *A Free Soul*. That was the first, really good picture he made before he come up. And I thought to myself, a-ah, I don't think I'm going to like you. You know. 'Cause he was a gangster in that.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And he really was. Heavy. And I thought to myself, well, if you're going to be an actor, you got to have some more polish on you before-- [laughs]

VB: Mhm.

PB: And of course, as he matured, as he got older, he got better. In his acting, and that sort of thing.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And I think that was, really, what I liked about him.

VB: Mhm. Ah, yeah. 'Cause he, he did seem to change a lot in the thirties, didn't he?

PB: Oh, yes. And I mean, he was very, what can I say? He was very... Well I mean, look at that picture at the top there.

VB: Oh, yes.

PB: You see. He, he's not, he wasn't what I call a very polished actor.

VB: Mhm. That's right.

PB: And in fact, I mean, when they saw, they did give him a contract at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer erm, Irving Thalberg, Norma Shearer's husband, said, "No".

VB: Really?

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: A-ah.

PB: He didn't like him.

VB: Mhm.

PB: You see. He said he, his ears are too big. Well of course, he did have big ears.

VB: Yeah.

PB: 'Course they glue them back, don't they? When they. But erm, of course, eventually, of course, he did earn a lot of money.

VB: Yeah.

PB: In the end.

VB: I wonder if it's the moustache that's got something to with [rest drowned out].

PB: Yes, probably. Made him more, probably manly.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And like I say, I mean, eh, he needed a great deal of polish. And I mean when he first started, I mean, they said he had dreadful teeth and that. He had to have all his teeth out.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And he had false ones. Like most of them do, don't they? I mean you see some of them teeth, I mean, they're too even to be--

VB: Yeah.

PB: The real teeth.

VB: See in that. Yeah.

PB: Yeah. See.

VB: It's amazing seeing that. Just the way he changed--

PB: Yeah.

VB: In 1930.

PB: I mean, you see, you wouldn't really credit how he did change for the better really.

VB: Yeah.

PB: In his ways, in his make-up, in his clothes.

VB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] I didn't realise he'd made a film with Garbo as well. Susan Lenox [referring to *Susan Lenox (Her Fall and Rise)*].

PB: Oh yeah. That was the one.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah. Only they renamed it *The Rise of Helga*.

VB: Ah, I see.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] Did they, did they--

PB: That's the only picture they made together.

VB: Yeah. I mean, did they go well together as actors?

PB: Ye-ah. But erm, eh, not as well as other actresses.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I don't think.

VB: Yeah. [pause 4 seconds] *Rio Rita*.

PB: Oh, yeah.

VB: John Boles, Bebe Daniels.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Ah.

PB: Bebe Daniels. Yeah. Ye-ah. [laughs]

VB: That's a beautiful--

PB: Yes, that's nice, yes.

VB: Dress, isn't it? Did you like her? Or was she--

PB: Yeah. I didn't mind her. She didn't make a lot of films though, did she? Not really.

VB: Mhm. And Ramon Novarro.

PB: Oh, yeah. He was in the first *Ben-Hur*, weren't he? As a silent film.

VB: Mhm. How do you think he compares to Charlton Heston and [inaudible; overtalking].

PB: Aw, yeah, well. He's different altogether in looks, isn't he?

VB: Very much so. Yes.

PB: He begin to look old though, don't he?

VB: Charlton.

PB: Charlton Heston.

VB: Yeah. He does, yeah.

PB: Well I suppose, what? He must be in his... [pause 3 seconds] Well, he--

VB: He must be about eighty. Seventy.

PB: He must be in his seventies, mustn't he?

VB: Yeah.

PB: By now, I should imagine.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Can't keep young forever.

VB: No. Greta Garbo.

PB: Yeah.

VB: That's a beautiful photo.

PB: Yeah, that's nice, isn't it? Yeah.

VB: Yeah. Clark Gable.

PB: But when you think about it, half these stars are gone now, aren't they?

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] Norma Shearer. Oh, that's lovely as well.

PB: Yeah. That's a nice one.

VB: Oh yes.

PB: That's lovely.

VB: She's got a lovely smile.

PB: Yeah. Yeah. I think she was lovely herself.

VB: Mhm. Again er, eh--

PB: See they're different altogether.

VB: Yeah. Amazing. [pause 3 seconds] Irene Dunne.

PB: Yeah. I liked her too. She was nice.

VB: Conrad, is it Neagle?

PB: Neagle.

VB: Greta Garbo in *The Mysterious Lady*.

PB: I used to think that was a silent film, I used to think.

VB: A-ah. It must be 'cause I see it was presented 1930.

PB: Yeah. That was, yeah. Silent, weren't it?

VB: The, the gowns again are beautiful.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Barbara Stanwyck.

PB: Yeah. That was the only time he acted with her.

VB: Ah.

PB: That was a motor racing picture, I think [possibly referring to *To Please A Lady*].

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 3 seconds]

VB: Were they good together or...?

PB: Yeah. They weren't too bad.

VB: Yeah. Ah, *Gone with the Wind*. [laughs]

PB: Yeah.

VB: [pause 5 seconds] *Strange Cargo*.

PB: *Strange Cargo*. Oh, that was, that was a... Now, if you was to see him there, I mean, you wouldn't eh, think [inaudible] like him.

VB: Yeah.

PB: But ooh, that was a rough picture, that was. Really. They were all convicts, you see.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Escaped. [laughs] Who was that? Joan Crawford was in that, wasn't she?

VB: Ah, right. And Peter Lorre.

PB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, she, they picked her. 'Course all the men were fighting over her as usual.

VB: What did you make of Joan Crawford? Did you--

PB: I. To be honest, I didn't like her. Not as a woman.

VB: Mhm.

PB: As an actress, she was pretty good. But as a... I always thought she was rather a... She had a hard face, to me. You know. Very hard. And I think she would do anything to get where she wanted and she did.

VB: Mhm. I mean, compared to someone like Norma Shearer--

PB: Yes. Of course they didn't, they hated each other.

VB: Did they?

PB: Oh, yeah. She didn't like Norma Shearer because Norma Shearer got all the best pictures.

VB: Yeah.

PB: You see. And best parts and that.

VB: Mhm. Cut-throat business really.

PB: Oh, yeah.

VB: [laughs]

PB: And I can imagine her being like that.

VB: Mhm.

PB: 'Cause she adopted four children, you know. Joan Crawford did.

VB: A-ah.

PB: Yeah. And two of them she ill-treated very badly.

VB: Mhm. Ah, here's Norma Shearer again.

PB: Yeah. Because she was, she was voted Mother of the Year and I thought to myself, "My God, they don't know." 'Cause I mean, the, the oldest girl and the boy. Christine and Christopher their names were. She used to thrash that girl and the little boy she used to tie him down in bed. You know. And she was a fanatic about cleanness [sic]. And everywhere them children went, they had to wear white gloves. Oh, yeah, you ought to have seen them. 'Cause I got a book there what the girl wrote about her mother.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And she used to send her away to school if she done anything wrong. And she wouldn't have her home for holidays. You know. You see--

VB: Not quite Mother of the Year, I don't think.

PB: No. I don't know how they voted her Mother of the Year. I wouldn't have done.

VB: Yeah.

PB: So, you know they, they some of them are really, [pause 2 seconds] what they shouldn't be.

VB: Mhm. This is erm--

PB: Jessie Matthews, wasn't it?

VB: Jessie Matthews. Yes.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Was she someone that appealed to you?

PB: She was all right but eh, I wouldn't say eh, ooh, I've gotta go and see her.

VB: Mhm.

PB: She was good dancer though. In her pictures. She done dance, you know, all dancing pictures.

VB: What was it about her that made you a little, say, less keen than some of the other stars?

PB: Well, I don't know. I always thought Britain never, [pause 2 seconds] never really, groomed their actresses, actress, did they? And the actors, they... Not like America.

VB: Yeah. I think that's... I mean when you see her next to Norma Shearer, I mean. She's in the ball gown but Norma Shearer looks, somehow--

PB: Yeah.

VB: More--

PB: More, [pause 2 seconds] more sophisticated. [laughs]

VB: Yes. Sort of elegant and--

PB: Yeah. Elegant and that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: But erm. No, I think that's where Britain done wrong.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Well, perhaps they didn't have the money to do it.

VB: Yes.

PB: I think that was a lot to do with it.

VB: Yeah.

PB: So. But eh, I think erm, a lot of our actresses, they needed polishing.

VB: Yes.

PB: Really.

VB: Yes. Yeah.

PB: They were, they were ordinary, weren't they? You know. They were, didn't seem as if they, they had [laughs] anything to attract people to them.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know.

VB: I mean there's a certainly a big difference. As I say--

PB: Oh, yeah.

VB: Just looking at these two shots beside each other.

PB: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Erm, [pause 3 seconds] Yeah. Even the way they're standing.

PB: Yeah. Yeah.

VB: Norma Shearer. [pause 3 seconds] With John Gilbert.

PB: Yeah, that was in the silent film.

VB: A-ah.

PB: That must've been. John Gilbert. 'Cause she never acted with him in talkies.

VB: Mhm. And Ramon Novarro.

PB: Yeah. That was in them days, silent. [laughs] Yeah.

VB: And then, Clark Gable later.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Ah! This is the one you were talking about.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Strange Interval.*

PB: Yeah.

VB: Fredric March. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street.*

PB: Ooh, yeah. That was good, the Barretts of Wi... With Charles Laughton.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Huh! He was a real tyrant, weren't he? [laughs] In that.

VB: [laughs] Oh-h. Oh and Leslie Howard in *Romeo and Juliet*.

PB: Yeah. Yeah. That was in *Marie Antoinette* with John [pause 2 seconds] Barrymore, I should think.

VB: Ah, yes.

PB: Was it? Or was it the King?

VB: Erm--

PB: Robert Morley.

VB: Robert Morley. Yeah.

PB: Yeah. Robert Morley.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds]. That was in *Idiot's Delight*, that was.

VB: Aw.

PB: She had a blonde wig on then, she did.

VB: [laughs]

PB: Yeah. And that was in *A Free Soul*.

VB: Mhm. A-ah. She made a couple with Clark Gable then?

PB: She made, what was it? *A Free Soul*, didn't she?

VB: Right.

PB: *Free Soul*. Erm, [pause 2 seconds]. *Strange Interlude*. *Idiot's Delight*. Eh, what's the other one?
[pause 4 seconds] *Idiot's Delight*. [speaking quietly] [pause 4 seconds] Can't think.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Don't know that. [pause 4 seconds] That was the [inaudible] she made.

VB: This looks like a fun one, *Idiot's Delight*.

PB: *Idiot's Delight*, that was eh, erm, to do with, well the war coming. That in the end.

VB: Mhm.

PB: But that was to do with the theatre really, you know.

VB: Ah, I see.

PB: The music hall and that sort of thing. She, [laughs] she was supposed to be, when he first met her, she was supposed to be... a [flower?] and she eh. It was her teeth. Done with her teeth, you know, on the same thing.

VB: [laughs]

PB: So he took her out to, out to supper.

VB: Aw.

PB: And eh, you ought to have seen what she ate. He looked at her, he say, I suppose, he say, you have to eat a lot, he say. To do that up top. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: Swing on your teeth. [laughs] All he had was a cup of coffee and a doughnut. That was all he could afford but she-- [laughs]

VB: Ah-h. [pause 2 seconds] Oh, Clark Gable and Barbara Stanwyck. *To Please a Lady*.

PB: Yeah. Oh, that was when... I think he was in France or was it--

VB: Ah, that's right, yes. Yes. As a local Parisian.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. His pals. [laughs] Rhinoceroses.

PB: Oh that was when he was in, made *Mogambo*, in the jungle, wasn't it?

VB: Ah-h. Yeah.

PB: With Ava Gardner.

VB: Yeah.

PB: She was another one I liked.

VB: Mhm.

PB: She was, she was nice, weren't she?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 3 seconds]

VB: Elizabeth Taylor.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Gone with the Wind*.

PB: I should think that's a wonder she survived all these years, the men she's had.

VB: A-ah.

PB: Uh! Eight marriages, isn't it?

VB: Aw-w.

PB: Dear.

VB: That's amazing. Some of them the same person as well. [laughs]

PB: I mean, you look at the, what is it? Zsa Zsa Gabor, I mean, look how many, she's [laughs] had!

VB: [laughs]

PB: And yet they don't look no older, do they?

VB: No. No. It's amazing really. Ah. [pause 3 seconds] Ah. Still *Gone with the Wind*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Command Decision*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Clark Gable again.

[pause 5 seconds]

PB: Is that the last woman he married? What's her name?

VB: Michelle Phillippe.

PB: Oh, no. Don't think, no.

VB: See this is his long-time girlfriend. Virginia Grey.

PB: Oh, yes. He had plenty of them.

VB: Yeah. [laughs]

PB: Oh, yes. [pause 3 seconds] Makes you wonder. All the women they had, they never have any kids though, do they?

VB: No.

PB: The only one he had was the one he married last, last and he never lived to see it, did he?

VB: Mhm.

PB: See him. I suppose he must be in his thirties now, that boy.

VB: Oh yes.

PB: Must be.

VB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] Clark Gable with Gene Tierney.

PB: Gene Tierney, yeah. I liked him too, Alan Ladd.

VB: Ah, yes.

PB: He was nice, weren't he?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah.

VB: He certainly had a long career, didn't he?

PB: What Clark Gable?

VB: Clark Gable.

PB: Oh, yeah.

VB: *Mogambo*. Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 6 seconds]

PB: Every November they generally bring a couple of his pictures on the telly.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I think he's eh, practically the only one they ever do that with.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: I like the way you've put this together actually, with the--

PB: Yeah, well, I thought that was interesting, you know.

VB: Yeah. It's interesting to have all this--

PB: Yes, yes.

PB: Information about the stars as well as the pictures. [pause 4 seconds] Clark Gable again.

[laughs] With his dog.

PB: Yeah.

VB: His horse. [pause 3 seconds] *China Seas*.

PB: *China Seas*. Oh, with old--

VB: A-ah. [laughs]

PB: Wallace Beery and eh, Jean Harlow.

VB: Yes.

PB: And Rosalind Russell was in that, wasn't she? Yeah.

VB: What did you think of Jean Harlow?

PB: I liked her. I thought she was, she was [laughs] good, she was.

VB: [laughs]

PB: Yeah.

VB: She was quite something, wasn't she?

PB: Yeah, not half. Yeah.

VB: Mhm.

PB: She died, didn't she? Very young.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: That's an amazing--

PB: I think, I think she could have been saved if her mother had have got her to hospital, but she wouldn't.

VB: Ah.

PB: And someone, someone. Eh, two of the actors went round and eh, course that was too late. She died of septicaemia.

VB: Yeah. But she was--

PB: Blood poisoning.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

PB: And I think that's the last.

VB: Is it?

PB: Oh no. There's some more.

VB: Oh, Norma Shearer again.

PB: Yeah.

VB: *Marie Antoinette*.

PB: That's his, that's her husband.

VB: Ah-h.

PB: At the [fair?] with her.

VB: Yeah. Mhm.

PB: Oh *Lone Star*! That was a western picture, that was. That was good. That was to do with erm, the lone star of Texas. Something to do with the flag of Texas.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Did you like westerns?

PB: Yeah, I love westerns. I like, I like old John Wayne.

VB: Yeah.

PB: [laughs] Yeah. I like pictures with action in it. I don't like these silly love stories.

VB: 'Cause I was wanting to ask you that. I mean, what for you makes a good picture?

PB: A lovely western. I loved erm, *True Grit* with him in and eh, *Stagecoach* he was in, wasn't he? And all the westerns. I like eh, I like watching westerns.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Specially when the Indians come and... [laughs]

VB: Ah. How does it make you feel when you?

PB: Ye-eh-eh! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: You know. You think to yourself, "Cor, lovely."

VB: Yeah.

PB: I wish I was there with them.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: Here he is again. Clark Gable. *Soldier of Fortune*.

PB: Yeah, that was good. Ooh, that's on too, tomorrow.

VB: Is it?

PB: Yeah. After this one, after the other one.

VB: Oh, that's--

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I'll have a look, I'll soon tell you when it's going to be on.

VB: Oh, if it's a cold afternoon like this, that's the perfect thing, isn't it?

PB: E-erm. *Command Decision* is on at one, five past one.

VB: Mhm.

PB: And *Soldier of Fortune* is on at 2.50.

VB: Right. Is that--

PB: I've got to have my hair done at two, so-- [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: So I shall miss it.

VB: Aw.

PB: Or I'll miss a good bit of it.

VB: You'll miss a bit of it.

PB: But I have seen it, so.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] Ah, Clark Gable and Joan Crawford?

PB: Yeah. That was good too, *Riptide*.

VB: Ah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Norma Shearer and Robert Montgomery.

PB: When I see that. Yeah. That was a comic, you know, comedy film.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah. That was nice, that was.

VB: Garbo and Novarro.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Ronald Colman [inaudible].

PB: Colman.

VB: What did you think of Ronald Colman?

PB: I liked him too. Yeah, he was, he was nice, weren't he? He was, he was English but he was different to some of them in the English acting profession, weren't he?

VB: Mhm.

PB: Yeah. 'Course he went to Hollywood in the end. They all go to there, don't they?

VB: What was it about him, do you think that?

PB: Well, I think he was debonair, wasn't he? He always [pause 2 seconds] acted gentlemanly, you know.

VB: Mhm. [laughs] Yeah. Ah. Oh *Gone with the Wind*.

PB: Yeah. Is that? I think that's the end.

VB: Ah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: That's great.

PB: I got some more to put in. Sometime.

VB: It's a wonderful album that.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Did you find, I mean, is it something that you've looked at a lot over the years?

PB: Oh, yeah. I look at them all, you know.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: 'Cause you've got so many books and things. It's just amazing.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Can I take a look--

PB: Yeah. 'Course you can.

VB: Look at these. Ah! 'Picture Show' annuals! Oh! I must have a look at that. 1936.

PB: Put them down on the floor.

VB: Och--

PB: Put them down on the floor.

VB: These are wonderful. 'Film Pictorial Annual' for 1937. 'Picture Show' for 37. 'Picture Show' for 38 and 'Film Pictorial' for 38! These are wonderful!

PB: Yeah.

VB: Oh-h! Don't know where to start. [laughs]

PB: No.

VB: This is great.

PB: [laughs]

VB: *Naughty Marietta*. Jeanette MacDonald. Grace Moore. Clark Gable. These are great. Were these something you got as gifts or did you buy them yourself?

PB: No. I buy--

VB: Yeah.

PB: I used to buy them. Yeah. I noticed in one of them the price that eh, in one of them. And that was two and six. [laughs]

VB: Two and six. Goodness me.

PB: Yeah. Two and six. [laughs]

VB: 'Cause that's eh--

PB: And I thought to myself, tew! You can get what for two and six now like that, would you?

VB: No, not. Far from it.

PB: [laughs]

VB: Oh aye. Even the, I mean, the way they look, on the front. It's all so. It's lovely and bright and... [pause 3 seconds] Well I can see why you know so much about films now. [laughs] Aw. Margaret Sullivan. These look like they've got a lot of information in them as well.

PB: There is, yeah. I mean there's a lot of reading in them and that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Claudette Colbert. [pause 4 seconds] And children in the films.

PB: Yeah. 'Course they all had to go to school, didn't they? At the Metro-Goldwyn, at the studios. They all had to go to school.

VB: Mhm.

PB: So many hours in the course of the day.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: There's *Clive of India*. With--

PB: Yeah, that was good, yeah.

VB: Ronald Colman.

PB: That was good film.

VB: Loretta Young.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Did you like these sort of historical films?

PB: Yeah, yeah. I liked, I like them, you know, eh, pictures to do with, like eh, erm, biblical pictures. And all them sort of pictures.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I think they're great. And I like eh, *Spartacus*. I mean that's a marvellous film, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

PB: With Kirk Douglas.

VB: Yeah.

PB: He was a slave in that. Jean Simmons was in that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And eh, I like them sort of pictures, really, really. 'Cause they're true, aren't they? I mean, it did happen in them days.

VB: Mhm. *Ruggles of Red Gap*.

PB: Oh, yeah. Old Charlie Ruggles! [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: He [laughing] was a comic, he was.

VB: A-ah.

PB: He was always getting into scrapes. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: Getting everything wrong. [laughs]

VB: With Charles Laughton in it.

PB: Yeah. Yes, he was in that.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Jack Buchanan.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Was he someone you liked?

PB: No, not a lot.

VB: What was it about him that?

PB: He was a dancer, weren't he?

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: I'm just going to get another tape 'cause I think that's going to run out over the next... [pause 8 seconds] These are really quite something. You've kept them in such good condition as well.

PB: Well I, I did see after my books.

VB: Yeah.

[End of Side B]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

PB: Do you have much information, you know, about, different. Have you interviewed many people?

VB: Erm, a few, yes. Erm--

PB: Mhm. Yeah.

VB: It's interesting because obviously everyone's got different tastes, you know.

PB: Yes, different way, eh, different things and that.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: But it's nice erm, you know, people, to talk to people from similar areas 'cause you remember the same--

PB: Yeah.

VB: Picture houses as well.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Erm. These are, these are wonderful. [pause 3 seconds] *Becky Sharp*.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: *Anna Karenina*.

PB: Yeah. That was with Robert Taylor, weren't it?

VB: Ah!

PB: Yeah.

VB: So that was 1936. 1937. Ginger Rogers!

PB: Yeah.

VB: I mean how did you actually feel when you were at the pictures?

PB: I, I, I used to lose myself in the pictures.

VB: Mhm.

PB: You know. I used to take my knitting and be looking up at the screen knitting away.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I did! The girl used to say, I used to say to her, "Put me in a, where there's a light, will you?"

VB: [laughs]

PB: She says, "Why?" I say, "'Cause I got my knitting to do." She says, "Knitting?" I say, "Oh, yes, I have to bring my knitting." [laughs] "And look at the screen at the same time." She says, "Well, how can you do that?" I says, "By feel!" [laughs]

VB: And how did you feel afterwards? Did it..?

PB: Ooh! I don't [inaudible] I see some more, 'cause I used to see some more. 'Cause that used to be continuous in them days.

VB: A-ah.

PB: You see. But now they're performances. You have to come out, don't you?

VB: Yeah.

PB: But then, I mean, you could sit in and see it three times round if you wanted.

VB: And was that still something that you--

PB: [laughs]

VB: That you did. [laughs]

PB: If that was a picture I liked, you know.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I'd say, oh, I'll see some more of that.

VB: Did you look forward to going then?

PB: Yeah, oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, my films were everything to me. Yeah.

[pause 3 seconds]

VB: Life with Norma Shearer.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

PB: Yeah that was good film. Yeah.

VB: Fred Astaire and Myrna Loy. [pause 4 seconds] Douglas Fairbanks.

PB: That was the Jr. one, wasn't it?

VB: Ah yes, I think so.

PB: Yeah. Jr., yes.

VB: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] Margaret Sullivan. [pause 6 seconds] Jean Harlow. Fashions.

PB: Yeah, see them fashions.

VB: [laughs]

PB: You know, then and now. [laughs]

VB: Yeah. [pause 9 seconds] Oh I could sit and look at these for hours, I could. they're just lovely.

PB: Yeah. 'Cause that'd take you a long time.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Won't it? To look at them properly.

VB: Oh, yes. I'll just have a quick erm, browse just now. But these are, these are really, really lovely. [pause 3 seconds] As I say, it's amazing that they're in such good condition when you've had them for--

PB: Mhm.

VB: And obviously used them--

PB: Oh yeah, yeah.

VB: As well.

PB: I always, I think "Oh, I'll have a look at my books again."

VB: Yeah.

PB: 'Cause there's always something you can see and read in them.

VB: Oh yes. Does it bring back the memories of films as well?

PB: Yeah. Yeah. You know, when you, you think "Ah." You see, you look through them and think to yourself, "Cor!" You know. He's gone, or she's gone. You know.

VB: Yeah.

PB: I mean 'cause there's not many of the old actors and actresses left now, is there?

VB: No.

PB: Not really.

VB: Mhm. Actually Olivia de Havilland doesn't look like I imagined her.

PB: No, not now. No.

VB: Eleanor Powell. [pause 5 seconds] Errol Flynn.

PB: Ye-ah. [laughs] [pause 3 seconds] He's in a picture tomorrow too.

VB: Is he?

PB: Yeah. On Channel Four.

VB: Oh.

PB: *Dive Bomber*, it's called.

VB: Mhm. Ah, I like Errol Flynn.

PB: He was a real [inaudible], weren't he? [laughs]

VB: Yeah.

PB: I liked him in eh, eh, with Bette Davis. In 'Queen Elizabeth' [referring to *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*].

VB: Ah right.

PB: Yeah. Where he eh, he got executed in the end, didn't he?

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah. But he was good in that.

VB: Aw.

PB: Yeah.

VB: And 'Robin Hood' [referring to *The Adventures of Robin Hood*] of course.

PB: 'Robin Hood', yeah. Yeah. And, he was in a pirate one, weren't he?

VB: That's right. Yes.

PB: Yeah.

VB: 'Cap...'. Not *Captain Blood*.

PB: *Captain Blood*! He was in *Captain Blood*. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

PB: And eh, eh what was the other one he made a lot of films in. Erm... [pause 3 seconds] 'Robin Hood' he was in too. [pause 7 seconds] He wasn't in *Dark Victory*, was he?

VB: I don't think so.

PB: No. No George Brent was is in that and Paul Henreid, weren't they? Yeah. He weren't in that one.

VB: **Certainly got something, though.**

PB: Yeah, yeah. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: Haven't they all?

VB: **Yeah. Oh, here's Gracie Fields. That's someone we haven't mentioned.**

PB: Oh, yeah. [laughs]

VB: **Did you like her?**

PB: Yeah. We-ell, she's all right but... British films, I don't know, they always seemed to lack something to me. They didn't have that go in them.

VB: **Mhm.**

PB: They were all, [pause 3 seconds], well, very tame, weren't they? Really.

VB: **Mhm.**

PB: Not like the American films.

VB: **Mhm.**

PB: Give me American films, you know.

VB: **Yeah.**

PB: But I mean, that was only her singing. I mean what kept her on. I mean she couldn't really act, could she? Not really.

VB: Mhm.

PB: I mean, no more than Fred Astaire could act.

VB: Yes. That's true.

PB: Or sing. I mean, it was only his dancing what kept him on the screen really, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

PB: IA mean, he couldn't act 'cause he acted stupid sometimes. Didn't he?

VB: Mhm. It's true. I mean there's not really much of a story. [laughs]

PB: No. I mean, when you think about it. All the pictures they made together, him and Ginger Rogers, I mean they were all the same pictures.

VB: Mhm.

PB: Weren't they?

VB: Yeah.

PB: I mean he was always running around after her, wasn't he? And that and acting stupid over it.

VB: Yeah. That's right. She was having nothing of it but still dancing.

PB: Yeah, see. I mean that, it was only that what kept him on the screen.

VB: Yeah. But certainly when you see the picture of her, I mean it's nothing like the American stars.

PB: No, no.

VB: Charles Boyer. [pause 5 seconds] Elisabeth Bergner.

PB: Yeah. Don't know nothing about [inaudible]. Out of films now, I should think.

VB: Mhm. Robert Donat.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Aw. [pause 6 seconds] I see some of these have the stories of the film as well.

PB: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Did that, did that ever encourage you to go to see a film? Or was it mainly films you'd seen already?

PB: Oh I'd probably seen them already.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Which one is that?

VB: This one is *That Girl from Paris*.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Yeah. With Jack Oakie.

PB: Yeah, oh [laughs], yeah. He was another one, weren't he? [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

PB: And Guy, the big man. Guy Kibbee. He was another comic too.

VB: Aye. Ah. The world of dress. [pause 5 seconds] Feature on cosmetics as well.

PB: Yeah.

[pause 7 seconds]

VB: There was a lot of sort of advice on fashions and things as well.

PB: Oh, yeah. They had a lot in them books.

VB: Yeah.

PB: Yeah.

VB: Joan Blondell. [pause 5 seconds] Aw, these are just great. They really are. Charles Laughton again.

PB: Ooh, him in 'Henry the Eighth' [referring to *The Private Life of Henry VIII*] is it?

VB: Yeah. Yes it is.

PB: [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Ah.

PB: He was good in that, 'Henry the Eighth'.

VB: Mhm. He certainly looks the part.

PB: Yeah. Yeah.

[pause 5 seconds]

VB: Oh, Sonja Henie.

PB: Oh yes. Her films, they were all nice, weren't they? 'Cause they were all skating films-- weren't they?

VB: Mhm.

PB: But she died very young, you know.

VB: Did she?

PB: Oh yeah. She died when she was erm, [pause 2 seconds] [Forty-three?]. She didn't erm, she didn't last long.

VB: Mhm.

PB: No, she died very young. She was a lovely skater though, weren't she?

VB: Aw yes.

PB: And she won some, won some medals and that for her skating.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] *Scruffy the dog*. [laughs]

PB: Ye-ah. [laughs]

VB: *Storm in a Teacup*. [pause 2 seconds] Aw! These are wonderful. They really are. Just makes you want to go and. Well, if there's Clark Gable on tomorrow we can, eh--

PB: [laughs]

VB: It does though, it makes you want to go and see a film.

PB: When are you going home?

VB: Erm, I'm not going home for another week and a bit.

PB: Oh! Lovely.

VB: Eh, so, I'll be in Norwich until next Wednesday and then I'm going to London for a week.

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: To talk to people there.

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: And then back. So.

PB: Then back to Glasgow? Yeah.

VB: Yeah. So,

PB: Will anyone get mentioned in this book?

VB: Well I hope so, yes. Yes, I hope so.

PB: You know. You've been interviewed and then.

VB: Well actually, that reminds me. Erm, one of the things that I forgot to ask you when I was here before is erm. Because I'm tape recording this, the University asks us to get people to sign something which basically says erm, first that you know that you've been recorded. So that I didn't just slip a tape recorder on while we were talking. And erm, also that if you have no objection erm, that maybe other people who are interested in cinema or you know, research of this kind--

PB: Mhm.

VB: Might listen to this in the future.

PB: Yeah.

VB: And that they would be able to quote you.

PB: What? Get in touch with me and that? Or what?

VB: Erm, well say, if we did do a book about it--

PB: Yeah.

VB: They would maybe be able to quote what you said or, erm, one thing they might do is put a radio programme together or something like that. And it would be nice if they could quote you directly.

PB: Oh yes.

VB: I mean would you, would you have any objection to that?

PB: No, no.

VB: Can I ask you to sign the form? I'll let you have a look at it as well of course, erm. It's just got a bit for me to sign and a bit for you to sign. And then--

PB: How long is this going to take, all this?

VB: Erm, well the project's running until November '96.

PB: Mhm.

VB: So, there may be things coming out of it after that as well.

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: But eh... [pause 5 seconds]

PB: That says something about eh, use of items.

VB: That's right. Well what it means is that erm, this tape recording obviously--

PB: Yeah.

VB: And then, I don't think that really applies to you. But some people have maybe given us some-

-

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: Things that erm--

PB: Yeah.

VB: So it covers sort of everything that's to do with--

PB: Yeah.

VB: With having talked with people. Erm, things like actually the newspaper cuttings.

PB: Oh yeah.

VB: That you gave me just now. That would be included in that.

PB: Yeah. Oh well, I suppose I can't lose anything, can I?

VB: I mean, it's really just something to keep someone happy somewhere. [laughs] But I mean if you did decide later on that there were maybe things in it you weren't happy about other people hearing, then it would be possible to get another form. Goodness me. [pause 2 seconds] That's terrible weather. As I say if you decided, you know, a few weeks from now or a year from now or whatever that you'd rather not have other people hear it, then that can be arranged as well. So--

PB: Oh, well, I mean, it's only talking about the films there ain't nothing--

VB: Well that's right.

PB: Nothing erm, eh--

VB: Yeah.

PB: You know, worth--

VB: Nothing that's--

PB: You know.

VB: No.

PB: Ooh, look at the sky.

VB: It's amazing 'cause it's so bright and yet it's--

PB: I thought that was going to, that [inaudible], doesn't it?

VB: Yeah. I think we're going to have to pay for the lovely summer we had now.

PB: Well, eh, they say it's going to be cold for about three days--

VB: O-oh.

PB: And then it's going to be mild again, so, let's hope it is.

VB: Yeah. [pause 4 seconds] It's just... [pause 3 seconds] Definitely the weather to watch a film with Clark Gable in it.

PB: [laughs]

VB: Thanks very much.

PB: Is that all right?

VB: That's great, yeah. And I'll sign it as well just to--

PB: Here.

VB: Thanks. Thanks for doing that. [pause 6 seconds] As I say that'll now go back and go into a drawer--

PB: Yeah.

VB: And stay there! [laughs] Probably.

PB: Would you like a cup of coffee?

VB: That would be lovely, yes. Thanks very much. Can I give you a hand at all?

PB: No, it's all right.

VB: Are you sure?

PB: Yeah.

VB: I might have another look at these books. [laughs]

PB: That's right.

VB: They're great.

PB: D'you want the light on?

VB: Erm, actually, yes. It's quite kind of dark now, isn't it?

PB: Yeah, yeah.

VB: Really changeable.

PB: Won't be a minute.

VB: Right.

[End of Interview]