

Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1995 and concerns memories of 1930s life; as such there may be opinions expressed or words used that do not meet today's norms and expectations.

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\* Cumbrae Court, Clydebank, 7 February 1994: Valentina Bold interviews Ruby Stewart

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\* RS=Ruby Stewart / VB=Valentina Bold

\* Notes: Only interview with Ruby Stewart; Sound Quality: Good.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[rustling; 7 seconds; VB tape introduction]

**RS:** Carry on. I get this voice-over up in Clyde Street

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** The water front building, oh what a lovely modern building, very, what a new, oh very latest equipment and everything, so it was a big thing about the [aeroplanes?].

**VB: Right, right. That's interesting 'cause erm I mean have you been in this area most of your life? I was going to ask if you--**

**RS:** Most--

**VB: If you'd mind putting this mic on? [rustling]**

**RS:** Yes, Why don't you bring it over and I'll be better.

[rustling 7 seconds]

**VB: It's one of these wee clip-on ones. I should erm--**

**RS:** Where would you suggest I put it?

**VB: Umm, probably round about there.**

**RS:** There?

**VB:** That'd be perfect actually, 'cause erm I can see the noise level on that and it looks about right erm

**RS:** Hmm. Take this first one quickly, take it [sound of eating].

**VB:** Mhm, that's lovely.

**RS:** It's been made for a wee while, but [pause] keeps alright in the tin. Sometimes I put it in to the oven for a minute or two, but I didn't do that today.

**VB:** Well it's very nice. [sound of eating; 4 seconds]

**RS:** Well before we start, I must tell you a lovely experience I had-- I had, better watch her-- at [Punrover?] at Milngavie and I talk about Burns early days and how his father was, eh grandfather, his father, grandfather lived in Aberdeenshire, and I was born there myself. I was eight only when my parents came here [cough] so, erm, then I finished the talk. What a great, really, it was some night, you know, just everything went fine. Lady who played the fiddle, pianist, the singer, and myself, you know and this lady came up and she said, you know, it was so interesting could I have your name and your phone number and I'll phone you and I said well you give me yours as well. And she said where in Aberdeenshire do you come from and I said Peterhead. And her eyes lit up, that's where her husband was born and educated, went to Aberdeen University, became a doctor and then owned a practice in the Midlands for 43 years. But her husband died, she stayed a while, but she was very much on her own, and being in her 80s now, people were dying that she knew, so her son suggested she come up and stay near them in Milngavie. So they got her a nice flat, oh it's a gorgeous flat, beautiful, very very, everything's good, everything's quality in it. Well you know I've been. So she phoned one day and said would you come and see me. I said I'm awful, awful busy through January. So just about the end of January, maybe the last day she phoned and I--, she says, I'm not rushing you, I'm just wanting to talk about Peterhead and all that. I said, well, you know, I'm not bad on a Saturday or a Sunday, so I was there a week past Saturday, but the snow came on the Friday. So I went over for the papers as I do, for money and myself every morning and eh the phone went and, no, I phoned her, and I said now I don't want you coming down to the station. She was coming to meet me. And she said, no I couldn't have come I'm a bit shaky. So she says, leave it till 10 o'clock and I'll phone you back. So I says I'm alright--

[doorbell ringing]

**RS:** Oh, that is just my magazine, it's okay.

[tape switched off and restarted]

**VB:** Erm, can I ask again then erm what picture halls were locally here in Clydebank?

**RS:** Well, we had quite a few picture halls in these days, in the early days, and the one I remembered most because it was near where we lived, and we went on a Saturday afternoon, that was the Kinema. Now this wasn't a great hall, but eh you went down a steep slope into it and it was underground and always had that sort of musty [tape cuts out] smell old buildings have and maybe being underground would make it worse [slight distortion to sound quality]. And then we had, we had the Bank Cinema, which at one time had been a theatre because the Gaiety was still up on the wall. The Gaiety was there on the wall, there behind it, but it was the Bank Picture Hall all the time I knew it. That was in the very east end of Clydebank. You come along a bit and you get the Empire, which was a very popular one and it was central. It was just about opposite John Brown's. Then you go down, right to the west and you get to Dalmuir, which was very popular with the people who lived down there. But I didn't go there much, if I was there twice that would be the very most. Then you come onto Kilbowie road, which is the main road up going north, and you had the Pavilion there, which used to do, so I've heard, eh variety turns and films, but as I knew it, it was just ah the films. And eh then further up, there was one called The Palace, which eh I don't remember going, maybe I'd been once or twice, but eh you never heard so much about The Palace for some reason, and it was gone long, many years ago. I would I don't know what year, the main one most people would remember the La Scala, because it's a big modern building and I know it was there in 1941, so possibly opened about erm in the thirties I would think, because it was needed and there's a big population up there. And it started as being just erm a picture hall, as the years progressed and not so many people were going to the pictures and Bingo became popular and they made the bottom part Bingo and the top part was still pictures for a while. Then it became, the top part became a snooker hall and I haven't been in either the bingo hall or the snooker hall, so I don't know what like they are. But usually when I'm waiting on a bus there at that stop, I see all the people going in and it seems to still, even to this day in '95, eh both seem to be popular. But never has been a thing I've gone to, so [pause] that's, that's all. Of course, now we have the advantage of a lovely modern ten unit eh film eh studio down in our shopping, right in the middle of the shopping precinct, which is handy for everyone. And if I'm late at night coming up with a look at all the cars there in the car park, it seems to be popular. I had a friend here from Canada once and she wanted to take me out for dinner and to eh the pictures, and she had booked a show round about 8 o'clock, so we went and had dinner first. Then we went to the show at 8 o'clock and to my amazement when we came out there, there was queues galore waiting to get in. And this would mean they were there after midnight, but it was for *Shirley Valentine*, you know, I'd forgotten about that until this moment, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I thought it was just wonderful, enjoyed that. And we came out and McDonalds is right across the road, so we went in and had a coffee in McDonalds. So, you know, eh Clydebank is really a bit up-to-date now. She was here from Vancouver, and she says, she said to me, I can't believe I'm in Clydebank. Well she was born and brought up in Clydebank, but eh went away, very, girl very keen to get on. And she's done very well, she's eh business type in Vancouver. So, that was one nice visit I had to the cinema, the new complex, but other than that I must say I only go when I've the grandchildren here. And the last one I saw was eh *Robin Hood* eh *Prince of Thieves*, that one with Kevin Costner. Though I don't go, I'm inclined to sort of read all about the actors and actresses, you know. But I don't think I missed out on any picture halls, that was--

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** the ones then and now. What we have now covers all of them of course, because of diverse programmes, there's something to suit everyone who wants to go there.

**VB:** When you were mentioning, I mean, it was probably maybe about five six cinemas when you came here

**RS:** Yes, yeah.

**VB:** Erm, were there differences in the sort of programme that they showed? Or, were some of them--

**RS:** Well, I think there would need to have been, but, that is a thing, I-- I don't remember too much. There was always one film that would be very, very eh popular and everybody went to. Eh then of course we came to the later era, that would be the La Scala with *The Sound of Music*, you know. I must say I saw that, but I saw it in Glasgow. [pause] And eh after my husband retired there were quite good advantages in Glasgow in the cinema, really good. I mean I think I'm talking about eh a shilling or that. He retired in '71, which was the year of the decimal. So, we're probably thinking before that a little, because he was free during the week, being an insurance agent. His day off was a Thursday and we possibly went up and took advantage of the afternoon cheap prices and I remember seeing the *Gandhi* film and the one about Eric Liddell [sound slightly mumbled through movement] Eh, that was a wonderful show, that one, but the--

**VB:** *Chariots of Fire* [quietly].

**RS:** *Chariots of Fire*, that was it. I'd forgotten the name, tsh I shouldn't forget that, *Chariots of Fire*. That's, that time we did that. Just went when we saw anything we thought looked really good. The *Gandhi* film was a very interesting one too, it was really amazing that. Particularly the start on the train, when he was thrown off the train. And yet, he was, I think he was a lawyer or something, but he was thrown off that train. Wee things stick in your mind like that, you know, but that's a long time ago now. But erm--

**VB:** You know I was very interested erm in your letter when you were talking about your memories of the early cinema and--

**RS:** Yeah

**VB:** And people like Pearl White?

**RS:** That's right. When we went on a Saturday they always stopped the film at a very exciting bit, you know. The heroine was lying on the railway track, bound, and the train coming, so you were bound to come back the next week or they were on a cliff top, going to fall over or something. Pearl White is a name I remember, that made you come back too. I did miss a little hall, that would, it was never well known as a big picture hall. They called it the Co-operative Hall, it belonged to the Co-operative Society, but I know we did go there because I have memories of walking, because my young sister was next to me, just a year between us. Eh the five of us there's not much between us. But I would have had her hand going down there because we were never allowed too far away at any time, you

know, you didn't allow to go too far at that age and I do remember going to that Co-operative Hall. But what was-- oh yes, I do remember. It was Clara Bow at the time, the It-girl. So you see that was going back before the eh '30s time, that you were really interested in. And she was the It-girl and I realised that was the wrong era, you know. But I do remember her quite well, I know she was very glamorous and lovely.

**VB: Was she someone you particularly liked?**

**RS:** Yes, aha. I think so, because she was so nice and attractive and vivacious and everything. And I think that's all that I can remember about that. But you do, I wrote in my letter about the coincidence of the day, the actual day of the Blitz, 13<sup>th</sup> March. And a friend who had been called up for the Air Force, eh had, he and his wife had always visited us quite a lot. And, he said now, you're coming out with us on Thursday and we'll go out-- He'd worked at Lewis's, the big shop, Lewis's Polytechnic, and he said we'll go to Lewis's and have our dinner and then we'll go to the pictures. So it was wonderful him, all the staff he met, and everyone over speaking to him. He'd been in the Air Force for a short time then, and then we went, and I remember, and I'm positive of this, it was *The Mark of Zorro* and eh we thoroughly enjoyed it. And we come out and they wanted me to go to Ruchill with them, but I said no, no it'll be too late for me getting back, but besides that I had to, I had an appointment with this ARP training we were doing. And that was the night we had to go through the the big eh gas thing, you know, with the gas mask on. It was just like a big bus, and you walked in one end and out the other. I never got to do it incidentally. So I got home, sort of put off my good coat and put on an ordin-- every day one, went away down to the meeting. About nine o'clock the sirens went, well, most of us weren't inclined to pay much attention to the sirens. But one man said if you don't mind I'd rather go home, my wife's very nervous. So that was the finish, the the man who was instructing us in this said, well we'll just all go home, just all do that. So another lady, whom I'd really never known, we walked up the hill together chatting and casually nice, beautiful moonlight, och, the evening was beautiful for March, it was just a lovely night. And we went half-way up when all the commotion started, the guns and the bombs and everything. So I managed to get home, to find that all the people in our close, as you all lived up closes. They were all saying, come on, come on, into the shelter. Now the shelter wasn't quite finished, but it was better than none. So we went in there, all the neighbours there of our close, who were all saved. But one o'clock in the morning, a huge landmine hit the building dead in the centre, and over seventy people were killed with that one mine that that night. And the shelter right facing them was demolished, which meant these great arcs of concrete come down on top of them. And they started carrying the people, err the bodies, and people into ours and asked us if we would all go and make our way to the High Park best way we could. Which was a big, wide-open space, thought we'd be safer there, which we did. And we were instructed if we felt anything coming very near, lie down, get down flat, and we made sel-- our way there. Well my husband had been working late in the Ordinance at that time, and err I never saw him for quite a while. We didn't know what happened to one another. He had got, he was an ARP, an actual, in the ARP and had to go and work in his area. So he came right from his work and went to the area that he was sent to. But we met in the morning, eh it was very, very cold out in the open. All night. I had a little girl in my arms, and somebody gave us a blanket, for the people were grabbing the things of the beds. And err, it was this woman had a little twin, only ten days old, the other twin had died and there was this wee weak baby and she had a little girl with an awful bad foot. And she asked me if I would carry her. I hadn't any children then and I felt she

was really a ton weight [laughter]. And then she took her from me, and she gave me this little twin, who, I--, about ten days old, I think. But it was too much for the baby and we went to the High School and sitting there, they come round. Not so much doctors, but all the nurses came. And this one came and brought a doctor to me and he said is it your child? I said, no it's this lady's here. Well, he says, would you mind just staying for a wee while, till we can arrange something. But I knew the baby was gone, it was [cost?], you know. So the strange thing is, I never saw that lady ever, never saw her again. Well we were all scattered, to all over, so I never saw her again. This is getting away from the pictures, but that was what happened that very night, after I'd had such a lovely day at the, at the what picture hall. Umm, the Odeon, was it the Odeon then, the Paramount then, Paramount it was called at that time. It's the Odeon now. So it was really from a lovely day to a nightmare at night. But we survived, and were away for about a year out in Lanarkshire for a time. I had to look after my husband's parents. My parents were younger and able to fend for themselves, and they get housed back quite much sooner, you know. Because my father was one of the sort of key men in the yard and he had to get home. But that was at--, so after that, err we stayed with my mother for about six years, no houses to go to. But they were starting to build and I used to get-- an odd time, Mother would say to my sister and I, why don't you go down to the Empire. The Empire was usually the favourite one. I remember seeing one with Dirk Bogarde, the something Heart, *The Hasty Heart* maybe.

**VB: Hmm [quietly]**

**RS:** Oh long, this is long long ago, this would've been just at the beginning of the 40s, you know.

**VB: Hmm [quietly]**

**RS:** Err, I remember seeing *The Hasty Heart* there, and being quite impressed [laughing]. I don't know why I didn't go to the pictures often, I always seemed to have such a lot [of] other interests. And now, I, I don't think I could, just-- [laughing] manage, unless it was something really special.

**VB: Yes. [quietly]**

**RS:** But a lot of my friends go and they say I saw a really good film, and I say I must go, I must go, but I don't go [laughs].

**VB: I mean you say, when you were a child you used to go on a Saturday?**

**RS:** Saturday afternoon were the only times, erm, yeah.

**VB: And did you go with your husband at all, when you were first seeing him or?**

**RS:** Well, not an awful lot, do you know. Not a lot at all. No, we were all-- it was really bad times, money wise, really bad, bad times. And we didn't go out a lot like they do now. They're almost together all the time. I had the Guides, I was always in the Guides and I was always in other things. And we would go out, maybe on a Thursday night, and we'd go out on a Saturday. Oh, I know, what we used to do, seems crazy now when I think on it. We used to go to a little whist drive and I'd still

go to whist drives yet. But we would go to the pictures maybe--, oh no, I'll tell you what we were keen on and we used to go to the Glasgow Empire, that was regular. I think Noël Coward's things and Ivor Novello's *Dancing Years*, and I've seen erm, Grace, er Gracie --, the Yorkshire sin--, Gracie Fields there.

**VB: Gracie Fields really?**

**RS:** Cab Calloway came from America. Oh we got some wonderful, wonderful shows there. And it didn't cost much.

**VB: What was Gracie Fields like? When, when did you see her?**

**RS:** I would see her likely around about the 40s.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** I would think about the '40s. Oh wonderful, great voice.

**VB: Did you like her in films?**

**RS:** Aye, I did like her. But I did-- The records will show when she was there. I couldn't say exactly, but I do know when *The Dancing Years* were on, because it was when eh we were still at Mother's that I saw it, so it was somewhere between 1940 and '46. Of course, my husband was away a good bit at that time, he would come home likely about '45, I think. But it was with girls that I knew, that we went, to the, to *The Dancing Years*, a few of us decided to go, it was really good. And, but with my husband, he was always keen on all the bands, he played a bit himself.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**RS:** He was in a wee dance band, nothing great, but he played the banjo and the clarinet. That was his two instruments. So we did rather incline to go to Variety more than the pictures, you know.

**VB: Yes, yes.**

**RS:** With some friends [pause] so--

**VB: 'Cause I-- Sorry, I'm sorry--**

**RS:** That's alright.

**VB: I was, I'm sorry to interrupt--**

**RS:** No, you didn't, no.

**VB:** I was going to say that I brought along some erm photos [rustling] photos of erm I think I maybe brought this along when I was in Clydebanks before of one of the Vogues.

**RS:** Oh, the Vogue.

**VB:** I think that's the Govan one?

**RS:** Oh, it's the Govan one, is it. Well do you know, it's very like the Anniesland one. Have they built the very same?

**VB:** I think, I think that's probably right, yes.

**RS:** The entrance looks the very same as, as the one at Anniesland Cross. Do you know it?

**VB:** I've been past it, yes. Umm

**RS:** W.C. Fields and Martha Raye in *The Big Broadcast*-- Well, I know these people. I don't remember that film. But William Boyd, of course, is in a Cowboy one here. And here's the difference from the old days to the newer days. We would get two films and a Pathé Gazette which you don't get nowadays [laughs]. You lucky you get your big film and adverts and that's just about it. That and your popcorn and whatever [laughs]. That's it.

**VB:** Was it--

**RS:** I'm nearly sure that's-- unless the building was all the same. What does that say in that wee corner?

**VB:** Here's one of the Anniesland one as well -- the Ascot [rustling] I don't know if you remember that one?

**RS:** That's the same one, isn't it? [pause] No, this couldn't be--

**VB:** I think they did build most of them practically the same.

**RS:** I don't remember that. Do you know that? Maryhill, I don't know, the Embassy, I don't know, their story, I don't know. I'm afraid I'm pretty much a country bumpkin where these things are concerned. The Roxy is well known. We've heard a lot about the Roxy. I was trying to see the name that was on that shop F-A-L-L-something. Well I suppose it'll make me take more attention the next time I go past, because it's still there, but it's a Bingo Hall.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RS:** Isn't it. I know because if ever you're on the bus, there always seem to be a lot of people who get off there, at that stop.

**VB:** Yeah.



**RS:** So-- [rustling] it must be a Bingo Hall quite a long time now, I would think. Don't you feel sad that this has happened?

**VB:** I do. I do indeed. Especially when you think of what some of these cinemas were like inside.

**RS:** Yeah, beautiful inside. Beautiful.

**VB:** Did you go to the ones in town at all?

**RS:** Yes, we did. That's where we saw, the eh on the right side of Sauchiehall Street, going from our end and it had started doing the two levels, there was a different film in one part of it. Even then, when we saw *Gandhi* and also when we saw the *Chariots of Fire* [pause] So--

**VB:** Coz I was wondering if you'd been to any of the places like the Green's Playhouse? And?

**RS:** I, well, everybody went to the Green's Playhouse for the one film eh eh *Gone With the Wind*. We always went for that, you know.

**VB:** Yeah. So it was for the big--

**RS:** Yeah, for the big special one. Only for the special one.

**VB:** Yeah

**RS:** It was huge. Huge. But there was noth-- I don't-- my impression there was nothing very glamorous about it, it was very basic. Just what you needed.

**VB:** Ah, I see

**RS:** It's okay. Can you put it off a minute, just till I--

**VB:** Sure.

**RS:** Have a wee pause. You haven't started it, have you?

**VB:** As I say, I was going to ask you about.

**RS:** Wait, I have to have a look at this one.

**VB:** Erm, because you mentioned that you liked Deanna Durbin?

**RS:** Yes, lovely. Oh, she's lovely. But I, I did like her, but the one who just went everywhere she was, was my husband's father. Who, if we weren't great filmgoers, he made up for us. And [pause] he saw the, *The Desert Song* must have been made into a film, because I'm sure he wasn't going to theatre, he must have been going to film and saw *The Desert Song* more oftener than anybody else.

And, after he retired, or even before he retired, he worked down at the Baths in Clydebank. Well he also had time maybe during the week, his days off, will be more likely during the week, and we had a little bus that went into Glasgow and he always went to the pictures. He was a fanatical [laughs] cinema-goer.

**VB: That's interesting.**

**RS:** So he sort of made up. And this was Deanna Durbin, and he never always said that Deanna right, it was always Dana. But eh he was an old man at this time when he loved going to the films. He really was very keen. But erm, his one favourite was *The Desert Song*, that's for sure.

**VB: It's interesting that--**

**RS:** What, what films would be eh remarkable of eh Deanna Durbin's?

**VB: Umm, well there was that the *Three Smart Girls* series and--**

**RS:** Ah, that's right, that's one. Yeah, yeah--

**VB: What was it--**

**RS:** My goodness, she looks like a wee girl there, doesn't she. Lovely singer, of course. It was her singing [rustling], I don't remember much about the acting, but she was a lovely singer. [pause 3 seconds] Oh yeah, I do remember her. Anyone else that you'd heard?

**VB: I just brought along a few pictures [rustling] I mean, here's one of erm Janet Gaynor, I don't know if she's someone that you--**

**RS:** Oh yeah. Yes, very much so. I must have gone oftener than I thought, because I do remember Janet Gaynor very well. [rustling] What-- I don't remember what films, but I can remember she was a great favourite. Thought she was lovely, really always nice.

**VB: And then on the other side of one of these I've got George Formby.**

**RS:** Oh, yes, now

**VB: I don't know if he is someone that--**

**RS:** Oh I will [laughs] my husband played the banjo.

**VB: I was going to say, yes.**

**RS:** He used to do a lot of his wee things eh on the banjo. He lost his banjo in the Blitz right enough, but erm [rustling] that's a good one too. Hmm. Yeah, but, however, shortly after friends were visiting and they said to him, do you miss playing. And Allan said, well I've never had much time to

miss it so far, you know, with everything in-between. And eh he said I've one up in the loft and you're welcome to it. So he got that. So, he still had that one and gave it back to this man's son eventually, because he was playing and he was in a, in a concert party.

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** And they were going to be playing down in the South Coast of England. And erm, he asked Allan if he could have the banjo just to use as a spare if his strings broke [laughs]. And Allan says I'm so delighted you did ask and you just keep it. So that boy still has it and it was quite a good one. So that was why it worked erm why maybe we liked-- We always liked musicals things right enough.

**VB: Did you like people like Jeannette McDonald?**

**RS:** Aye, Nelson Eddy, aye. Well I did like them. Of course, you always think and what *Rose-Marie*. Is it *Rose-Marie* you call it? Aha, their song, 'Rose-Marie, I love you', but--

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** I thought maybe the film had another name, but I believe it was *Rose-Marie*.

**VB: I think it is *Rose-Marie*.**

**RS:** Aha, aha. Also saw it in Scarborough, outdoor as a musical.

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** Yeah, it was lovely. That went on for a few years, I saw some good shows there and then I think the weather beat that. So they don't have the Open Air Shows now. Plenty of shows down in Scarborough anyway. That's where my son is, in Scarborough, you see.

**VB: I see. I see.**

**RS:** Hmh, he plays all over the place, everywhere. In fact that snowy night he didn't get out to [pause] the place he was going to. It's a very well-known place in Yorkshire, where he goes often at the weekend, you know. Umm

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**RS:** They are so different, you wouldn't believe. Allan in Canada. Well, the oldest one is Douglas and [redacted], and he got to high school and he served his time to be an engineer. But no music at all, absolutely almost tone deaf, so he doesn't think he is. But eh Douglas was even in a wee choir when he was six years old when he was in school, you see. And then of course, fourteen it was the guitar and he's still playing the guitar yet. And he's had one for about 30 years, the same one.

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** And eh now he has a band, six piece. Not a big, big deal, but they do quite well, play a lot all round the area. He can be playing with two of them, it can be keyboard and himself, but he does the singing. And it can be three, four, five, whatever of them he wants. But six of them is a big dance. So-

**VB: Has music always been a big interest in the family? 'Cause you were saying--**

**RS:** Aye, father too. He did too, aye, aye. I've always been interested. But I'm nothing great, but [laughs] I've been going for over forty years out entertaining. I dropped the singing now, but I was out yesterday and sang, but that was just because one of our ladies didn't turn up, you know. I'm alright in the choir, you can get away with it in the choir, you know.

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** But I prefer not to sing. When you're my age, it's not the thing to do.

**VB: Oh, I'm sure that's not true. [laughs]**

**RS:** But I've a good memory, so I do a lot of readings.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** Some really good ones, really good ones, I had this year particularly. Have been exceptionally good. One just picked up in the Trossachs. A friend had been in the Trossachs Inn, and a man had written this poem and eh, they were selling them for charity and she got me one. So, I really got my mileage out of it. All about the English wanting to take our water down there, you know.

**VB: Ah, I see [laughs].**

**RS:** T'soor Watter, it's called. T-S-O-O-R Watter [laughs].

**VB: [laughs] Very good.**

**RS:** The lines are fantastic, I mean, I can read them to good effect. But I don't think I could ever compose them.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** I think anybody who does that is wonderful. Of course I'm a Burns fanatic--

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** Which you probably know. And I can memorise them, so ah, I had a little break away this year. I did eh address to The Unco Guid, you know, which is wonderful words and is just as applicable today, as to these days two hundred years ago. When you get down to it and read it carefully, you see all the message in it, you know. Warning against the dangers of drinking, and [pause], erm, starting, you know. And then how it becomes a habit.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** And all the things that happen after that. Warning against envy in your neighbours, speaking of your neighbours. But then in the middle you have the lovely lines: *"Then gently scan your brother man, Still gentler sister woman; Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang, To step aside is human."* That's right in the middle of it. [rustling] So words that are well-known, but the rest of it is very good also. So that was a wee change this year. So-- [pause] I--I'm so sorry, I don't know more about the films. I wonder if they keep records of that eh way back. As far back as the Paramount and these days, but I don't think they will. It'll be interesting to know if that was the picture. As your memory could-- Of course, my memory wouldn't have taken me back to that, if it hadn't been for the events of the day later in the night

**VB: Yes, yes.**

**RS:** You know. The dates always there in your mind, as I say. Everybody in Clydebank. Fortunately we don't speak a lot about it, you know, nobody goes on about it, which is a good thing. It's not a thing you dwell on. But if you do say, oh when was it. Oh, it must have been before the Blitz, because we were staying so-and-so, you know. You know there's that divide in the time year. And it'll always be, as long as any of us are alive. Mhm.

**VB: I was very interested when you said that before, when you had the tape on, about dating things from--**

**RS:** Aye, from certain things, aha.

**VB: From the buildings being before and after.**

**RS:** That's right 'cause this place was just demolished, you know. Right here, where you are now, there was a long tenement here, right along, then some little terraced villas, and only one of them was left along there, right almost where the Police Station is [rustling] Of course there was no Police Station then. It's all entirely different, the whole thing.

**VB: Yes, yes.**

**RS:** Across from here, there's still some of the original houses, but then you get big gaps in-between, where they've build in-between. Kilbowie Hill gone, all the tenements, there was nothing left there, it's all new homes. So big, big changes here. [rustling] Oh I've done and talked on, well I did on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but we never thought of taping anything, you know, which is maybe a pity, you know.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RS:** Ah, because eh it's things were maybe, well you were thinking about the things then. And erm I had been so much right in the middle of it, right there. And that's what I did a bit eh for TV erm Forbes McFall came here and he said, did you actually live in that building and were you there that night? You know, because they couldn't get anyone. Well, there was nobody left, you see. I said, well I was there and I was there that night. I'd lived in it for four years – we'd been four years married at that time. So erm it was um on the quarter to seven news on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and then after this there's to be nothing, nothing more, about it, you know. The memories are always there for the people who lost families. Whole families, who'll always have the memories, but eh none of the organised eh memorial services that we had. We had a big one on the 50<sup>th</sup> in the Town Hall, the big Town Hall here and eh it was quite impressive. But that's it. So you just have your own memories after that, which is maybe just as well, it can go on too long. So [pause 4 seconds] I should have been thinking more about the pictures you know, when I knew you were coming, but I really been [laughs] it's really been a hectic week or two. But erm I must say I enjoyed the pictures, well mind you, no, we were inclined to go to dancing too. That was another thing. We used to sometimes go to dancing. It was a done thing. Clydebank was a wonderful place for dancing, just as Glasgow was. We had all the teachers here, the most famous being the Todds family. Todds Dancing was in the Masonic Hall and they had classes and all sorts. We always did that also. So too bad we didn't go more to films, go to see films. But we did do some right enough. But then there were people who went two, three times a week, but it was pricey you know to do that too.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** And that was really, really hard times in the late '20s and early '30s. Work was scarce everywhere, you know.

**VB: I mean you mentioned as well--**

**RS:** Did I mention something. [quietly]

**VB: People like Charlie Chaplin as well. I was thinking of that**

**RS:** Oh, I of course. I didn't remember I mentioned *Hard Times* [probably referring to *Modern Times*, 1936]. Charlie Chaplin was always an attraction, I'm sure we always went to see him. And eh even then, long way back now, my boys are 52 and 50 now – but, we had a cousin, still a cousin, who was always interested in the wee cinematograph thing and he had them of Charlie Chaplin and would show them in the house, you know. And I would always say: bring yer thing, bring yer thing with ye, when yer coming. And he would take pictures at the Sunday school trip and boys were always in them. Charlie Chaplin was a great favourite that he had. I don't know if he still does that, but I wouldn't be surprised. He was always interested in that kind of thing. Forgotten about that too.

**VB: Do you like the comedies? 'Cause we were talking about--**

**RS:** Oh yes. Aye, aye, the comedies. The other two erm Laurel and Hardy, very, very popular, indeed. In fact, I think they still are. When they put them on, people still like them when you see them on television. You still laugh, which is quite something, after all this time. But the modern films are wonderful too right enough erm the wonderful erm what would you call it, the art that they have in making films must be far far exceeding what was done long ago, they're very modern, the techniques, I mean, the techniques of the filmmaking, marvellous.

**VB: Do you remember when colour came in? Was that something that impressed you?**

**RS:** Umm, I did tell you I remembered going to see the first one with the sound.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** In the south side of Glasgow, and then shortly after that there was a right weepie, because I had a big silk scarf and it was right wet with the tears, you know. I don't know what that one was, but it was a very, must have been a very moving one anyway. When we went away there to see it, I would maybe be sixteen seventeen at this time, I'm talking about, I reckon. I'm not up to the dates when, was it *The Jazz Singer* or *The Singing Fool*. The one-- *Jazz Singer* was the first, I think, with the talkies.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** It could have been *The Singing Fool*, mind you.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** That was the weepie one. Singing: 'Climb upon my knee, Sonny boy', and eh I remember that very much. But for the colour, I don't know. When do you reckon the colour came in? It would just came in gradually, we would just--

**VB: Well, I think one of the earliest ones that came to Glasgow was *Snow White* in '38.**

**RS:** Ah, yes, I see, that would be the beginning, yeah.

**VB: Though I think there were films before that, that had a bit of colour.**

**RS:** A bit of colour. They showed *Snow White* up here--

**VB: Right**

**RS:** in the La Scala then. I think it was shown everywhere. Do you mean that was the one, the cartoon type?

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** Aye, yes, of course. A Disney. Aye, I remember that one alright, aha. And we used to get erm magazines with eh films stars and you read about them and all about their lives. But I never had them very much. Probably got them from somebody when they were finished with them. Maybe somebody older would give you them when they were finished reading. Got passed around.

**VB:** Ah, I see, so they got passed around.

**RS:** Oh aye, they got passed around quite a bit.

**VB:** Did you like-- did you like the gangster films and Edward G. Robinson and?

**RS:** No, no. I'm not really all so keen about that. But they were popular, they really were. But I would never go purposely, you know, to see that, I don't think, no.

**VB:** No. I mean did you prefer the films that they made in Hollywood or the ones that were being made--

**RS:** I would fancy I like the Hollywood ones, even when you look back now they still maybe look a bit better, don't they. I always intend to watch a film, but they're either on terribly late or, not that I'm an early bedder, but eh they always never seem to fit in with the time. I look up and I'll say, I wonder if I could get a film to watch [laughs] even if it was an old one.

**VB:** [laughs] Yeah, they start at two in the morning.

**RS:** Ah, that's right, they start kind of late. That's it. But erm, that's all. But, it's good that they're still going on. Well they went into a bit of a decline in England, didn't they, for a long while erm where they make them there. But there seem to be quite a few coming back, don't they now.

**VB:** I think so. Especially over the last few years.

**RS:** Yeah, last few years, there seems to be a kind of resurgence there of. You'd hope so anyway. Get the work here [laughs] Of course, they always have our actors and actresses out in America, don't they. I do incline to read about them. I just read one this week. She's here just now, but she spends all her time, lives now in America [pause; 2 seconds] It wouldn't be Helen Mirren, would it?

**VB:** Oh, maybe, yes.

**RS:** Because she's in the news just now.

**VB:** Yes, I think she does live in America now.

**RS:** I think that was it. And I-- I mean, she's actually Scottish, isn't she? Ah, yeah, could have been. Um. And then, there's all the Brian Rix farces, we used to like them, 'cause it's the kind of slapstick things we used to like. I remember a holiday in Newquay, erm, I know the year it was, it was 1966, 'cause it was the big year that England won the the Football, the World Cup, and we were in a little hotel. And I love the football, I was always in watching all the games. But this lady says, my



husband's always watching that football, I would like to go see *My Fair Lady*, would you go with me. And I very graciously said, yes, I would go and it was really good, that was a good film. I remembered it from being there that time [laughs] And I gave up the football, to go and watch *My Fair Lady*.

**VB: [laughs] I think that's quite a good deal actually.**

**RS: [laughs] Aye, it was, it was a good deal.**

**VB: You got the better side of that bargain. [laughs]**

**RS:** That's right, you would say that. She was-- I didn't even know the people, they just happened to be in the hotel. And erm it was a smallish picture hall in Newquay, nothing great. It was not a great lot. They depended on their good weather and all that for their entertainment. But they did have their soul where we went, and I must say it was good. But erm I never go when I'm in Scarborough. Never go the pictures at all. I don't go when I-- I did go once in Canada with my son and his wife and we saw Dudley Moore. And [pause 4 seconds] What was it? Umm, the one with Bo Derek, I think. Was it 10?

**VB: Oh, erm 10.**

**RS: 10.** Yes, I did see that out there. They do go occasionally. But they again do go to musicals and things, yeah. They took me to the erm the Phantom when I was there for my birthday. Went for our dinner and then went to the Phantom, which was really something because the hall had all be done specially for it, they call in Pantages, this big hall, in right downtown Toronto. And it was quite an experience, which, I think, I appreciated more after maybe hearing the songs again, you know. These things, it grows on you on a bit, right.

**VB: Yes. So was--**

**RS:** Never made a film of that, have they? No. [laughs]

**VB. No. I was going to ask you, it sounds like, from what you're saying, that live entertainment is--**

**RS:** Aye, more live entertainment.

**VB: What you enjoy.**

**RS:** Live entertainment, yes. We used to-- och, the Glasgow Empire was quite a regular thing. Mostly when it was somebody that we liked. But, we went a lot there.

[sound cuts out]

**VB: I mean, can I ask you a bit more about the Gracie Fields visit? 'Cause I'm quite interested in that. [rustling] Do you remember--**

**RS:** No, not much, no. Other than that I enjoyed it. Aha, I don't whether you can find out. I don't suppose the records, it'll be difficult to find out when it was. And there's nothing about that particular time except all the crowds and all the adulation that I remember. Oh, the crowds that used to meet, you know, when they came. Of course, a lot of them had flops in the Empire too, as you probably heard. Eh, eh what do you call him erm who did the-- Bob Monkhouse talks about the dreadful experience in the Glasgow Empire [laughs] and they were so hard to please the audiences there, you know, but erm

**VB:** I heard there were a wee number of big stars coming through, not just Gracie Fields, but folk like erm Jessie Matthews, I think?

**RS:** Yes, Jessie Matthews, was there.

**VB:** Was she someone you liked?

**RS:** Ah, no, not particularly. Didn't like her voice, that thin--, a wee bit thin. She was a dancer too, of course. But, I don't think I would've gone to that somehow, no. All the big bands that came were wonderful, these really big bands came there, all the American ones.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RS:** I saw Jack Payne and I have seen Jack Hylton, but they weren't in the Empire. They were somewhere else, but both were liked these-- There was a Clydebank lad, who went away to play down in bands in London and there were several bands, but he finished, was with Roy Fox and Jack Payne. So we all went when he was there, you know, to see him. And erm then he was with eh Sid Millward and the Nitwits and he worked till he was quite a good age, you know. His home was in London, but they used to be six months in the Lido in Paris and six months in America somewhere. That's the way they worked. They'd be six months in a place at a time. He always visited us when he would come back, you know. He would play the banjo, you see. My husband got his place when he left here to go away down--

**VB:** Right.

**RS:** He went first up to Aberdeen, of course. And then went to [Dewbarriecafe?] and then went down to London after that. And I think the first one he was with, was Roy Fox. He became quite well known too through the television. And he always sang the theme song of the Cool Clear Water, he sang, that was one.

**VB:** Right.

**RS:** Nice voice he had and erm a good player, you know. But erm his career was in music. And we've seen him in the Glasgow Empire and my husband has been backstage. Who else was he backstage, seeing somebody up there that we knew. Another Clydebank lad. Eh, who was erm very well known here, but it was all so long ago. [Nat Lees?], he was a great player and he was with the accordion band. And they saw him after, you know, you could get in later on, go backstage to speak to them

after they came off. Of course they'd been close friends, of course. But erm I didn't join in that, that was just the men that did that.

**VB: Ah, I see. I see.**

**RS:** So, I think that's the best I know about the films. Umm, you've given me a new interest, I'll maybe start and look at the programme there even when I don't have the children here and go and see something [laughs] I like Robbie Coltrane, I think he's a fantastic actor, I think he's really good. Very, very clever. Eh Rab Nesbitt, I like him, my friends disgust-- they think I'm awful. I went along and I saw him along in the Singer Hall there, they made it a wee theatre. And I went on a lovely hot Saturday afternoon [laughs] it was dreadful, but it must appeal to my lower instincts, I think. [laughs]

**VB: It's very funny?**

**RS:** Oh, some parts, his dialogue can be really funny, you know. I think he'd been arrested and he didn't he have a blanket over his head. Oh I've never forgotten it. First time, I'd had a blanket over my head. But eh, I love his wisecracks, really, really good, you know. There's a bit rough bits in that, his shows as well. I know people who'd never, wouldn't watch him, they're disgusted [laughs]. Of course, I'm a David Miller follower as well, I listen to him [laughs]. I remember my brother-in-law said, I don't know how you can listen to him. And I think, he's very, very clever, you know. He knows his football.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** And he's got away with, well I know he's got away with people. [laughs] Maybe women in particular, but that's another subject again. But I always, I won't be in the next two Saturdays, but I always listen to him.

**VB: Yes.**

**RS:** I have a Ceilidh on Saturday in Ellensborough and then the Highlander's Dance that's the Ball Saturday, Dinner-Dance. That's two Saturdays, usually that's my home days.

**VB: Right.**

**RS:** I'm home on a Saturday. But [pause] I'm sure you're ready for something to eat, you must be starving.

**VB: Erm, that would be lovely. I mean, if that's okay.**

**RS:** Mhm. I just to put the soup on. I made it on Sunday and put it in the free--, not in the freezer, in the fridge. I had it last night as well, of course. And we'll have soup and a sandwich as they say.

**VB: That sounds lovely.**

**RS:** And erm tea or coffee, whatever you like.

**VB: That's very kind.**

**RS:** Ah, it's no bother. I always have, this is just-- One o'clock I usually stop and have something. So have you any other questions?

**VB: Erm, I think we've covered quite a lot actually. I mean, not just cinema, but--**

**RS:** Aye, other things have come in-between

**VB: Yeah, I mean it's very interesting. Especially when you know, you see most of the buildings that you've mentioned aren't around there--**

**RS:** That's true, that's right.

**VB: It's interesting to get that sort of information on it.**

**RS:** There's none there at all, none at all. And [Extremes?] have just started building now where the Kinema was, it went away, you can see, there's a big slope if you've seen it, it goes down off Kilbowie road. There was a billiard hall, just along a bit, and again, you went down steep stairs into the underground there and it was a 4-storey tenements up above there.

**VB: Right, right.**

**RS:** But they weren't away at the Blitz. They were still here for quite a while, they were all badly damaged and bits missing but eh I know people who lived in one for a tiny bit. They've been away quite a number of years now, you know. The whole face of the Kilbowie road's all changed, you know, completely.

**VB: I bet.**

**RS:** But it's lovely. And the business part of it, is really nice. I think, it's-- to me, everything is for the better. And all the people complain about the shopping centre. I think it's just fantastic. [laughs] It's great for me, just out the door and down there, it's so handy. I don't know why people complain so much about it. [Rustling] But they do. Because it's good to have everything here, you don't have to go on the bus or anything like that. And look at the variety of shops. I don't suppose you've been in it?

**VB: I haven't, I just passed it.**

**RS:** No, no. Maybe when you go, I can maybe put on my coat and take a walk down wherever. Which bus did you get dear?

**VB: Umm, I got an 11.**

**RS:** An 11. Oh, aye, good service, the 11. I use it myself. I did, but I now get a lift, every Wednesday. The 11 is the only one that goes down on the main road, all the rest cut away up the back.

**VB:** Ah, I see.

[rustling]

**RS:** So, if you-- I'll give you the paper--

**VB:** Okay.

[tape noise]

**RS:** If that wee bit paper is any use to you, you could have it

**VB:** Oh, that--, that would be great.

**RS:** It's nowt to me, you know. But Margaret says, remember I give you that bit out the paper. I say, yes Margaret--

**VB:** No, that would be very useful, 'cause it's erm

**RS:** Yeah, some facts and figures and--

**VB:** Yes. Well, thanks very much.

[rustling; 8 seconds]

[End of Interview]