

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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\* Heathlands Retirement Home, Manchester, 6 June 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Rachel Tarsky

\* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn

\* RT= Rachel Tarsky, NF= Nat Frieling, OP= Other Person, VB= Valentina Bold,

\* Notes: First solo interview of one with Rachel Tarsky; Rachel Tarsky also took part in a group interview with other Heathlands residents (HR-95-047) on 4 May 1996; Sound Quality: Fair.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[discussion going on in background]

**RT:** Now look. Now look. You ask what you want to know. If I know I'll tell you. If I don't know it I can't tell you. Now, mhm.

**VB:** Right. Well I really wanted to ask you a bit more about what we were talking about the last time.

**RT:** Well I don't remember. Tell me what.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** You don't expect me to remember do you?

**VB:** [laughs]

**RT:** I've talked a lot more since then!

**VB:** Oh sure.

**RT:** [laughs]

**VB:** I mean one of the things I wanted to ask you about was some of the stars that you mentioned to me. People like Jeanette MacDonald and eh--

RT: Oh yes!

**VB: Nelson Eddy. You were saying that you liked.**

RT: Well MacDonald. She was a beautiful singer and a beautiful actress. And she had Norma [Medi?] I think. And then there was another nice young man too. And the one, the best one was that song. [pause 2 seconds]. The donkey [referring to 'Donkey Serenade' in *The Firefly*]. That song. And then there was another one. A French, a French... [pause 2 seconds]

**VB: Oh Maurice Chevalier?**

RT: A singing play, a lovely one. [pause 2 seconds]. And then there was 'Marietta'. 'Marietta' [referring to *Naughty Marietta*].

**VB: I just saw *Maytime* yesterday. Do you remember *Maytime*?**

[pause 2 seconds]

**VB: With Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald. *Maytime*. The one where...**

RT: I've never met them.

**VB: Right. No a film. *May, Maytime*.**

RT: I've seen them.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: But it's about eh, oh gosh! Before I was married! Been married for sixty-three. S'about seventy years ago, easily.

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: Easily seventy. Maybe more.

**VB: What was it that you liked about Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy?**

RT: They were Lovely to watch. Lovely to admire. You loved them all the time!

**VB: Did you like their singing very much? [pause 2 seconds] Did you enjoy them as singers?**

RT: I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed watching them.

**VB: Yeah. I mean I've brought along a couple of these books. One that Nat [Frieling] took away that I thought you might like to have a look at.**

**RT:** No well I can't see very well.

**VB:** Ah, I see.

**RT:** My sight is not very good. I'm just trying to do some close reading and I'm having a job to do it.

**VB:** Ah right.

**RT:** Errol Flynn oh! I just watched him this week!

**VB:** Ah!

**RT:** There was a very good one on. So handsome. So lovely. [laughs]

**VB:** Was he a star you liked very much? Was he one of your favourite stars?

**RT:** I like a lot of handsome men. My own husband were very handsome. Very handsome. Tall. Dark. Curly hair. Singing like a bird.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Very handsome man, my husband. And I've got two of them sing it. My son and one of my daughters. Singing. And another daughter singing. [pause 2 seconds; looking at book] Bette Davis. I never liked her.

**VB:** Oh.

**RT:** Because many times she looked really ugly in my eyes. The way she's done up. At times she looked ugly. [pause 2 seconds] Oh I liked her. Oh! She did that one. [pause 2 seconds] Oh there's a lovely song with that one.

**VB:** Loretta Young.

**RT:** Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] I think it went that Eskimo, something like that [possibly referring to *Call of the Wild*]. [pause 10 seconds] [laughs] Aw. [name inaudible]. Yeah. I like all the handsome fellas.

**VB:** [laughs]. Was that something you liked?

**RT:** Aw yeah.

**VB:** Did you like seeing handsome men in the films? Was that...

[pause 4 seconds]

**RT:** Gary Cooper. [pause 2 seconds] Aw smashing in *Gone With The Wind*. The only one I can remember!

**VB:** Was that? Was that?

**RT:** Is that the right one? Was he with. [pause 3 seconds] Was that *Gone With The Wind*?

**VB:** Erm...

**RT:** No, it's a different name I'm thinking of.

**VB:** Yes. Cary erm, Clark Gable. Clark Gable. And Leslie Howard.

**RT:** *Gone With The Wind*?

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Who was the man?

**VB:** Clark Gable. Leslie Howard? Was it Clark Gable or Leslie Howard?

**RT:** I read that book in two nights--

**VB:** [gasps]

**RT:** And two days. On Saturday night, [inaudible] and Sunday. That was the end. Eighty--odd pages. Eighty, eight hundred-odd pages, 'Gone With The Wind'. I couldn't take out of my hands.

**VB:** Did you read it before or after you saw the film?

**RT:** Oh, he was nice.

**VB:** Mhm. Tyrone Power. Yeah.

[pause 8 seconds]

**RT:** Don't remember this one. Not much.

**VB:** Luise Rainer. Yeah.

**RT:** Oh. Aw-w-w! He played a wonderful play this one. [pause 2 seconds] But it's too long ago. Sixty years, sixty years ago, easily.

**VB:** Yeah. Did you like...

RT: A wonderful actor. A wonderful actor.

**VB: Spencer Tracy?**

RT: A wonderful actor.

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: I can't remember what he was in. But he was wonderful.

RT: And I can't remember.

**VB: He made a lot, didn't he?**

RT: I read, now we didn't go to the pictures often. Once a week. Very seldom twice. Very seldom. Generally once. But reading, I never stopped reading. Never! Night and day. Feeding the baby. Feed the baby and read with the other hand!

**VB: [smiles]**

RT: [Beginning inaudible]. Which was a terrible thing to do but that's what I did.

**VB: [laughs] What sort of, what sort of books do you enjoy?**

RT: Eh. [pause 2 seconds] I like a book like 'Gone With The Wind'. I like that Irish one, that [inaudible]. With a zed in it. One word.

**VB: I don't know.**

RT: Oh yes you do. Everybody read that. Everybody read that book. It's about twenty, thirty years ago. And it was on the film.

**VB: Oh! Erm I think I know the one you mean. Doctor Zhivago.**

RT: There's a zed in it.

**VB: Is it Doctor Zhivago?**

RT: That's it! That's him! That's him!

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: I've read that one. Now 'Gone With The Wind', that's not--

**VB: Clark...**

**RT:** Peace and-- 'War and Peace'!

**VB:** Right. [laughs] Right.

**RT:** Of course it's over a thousand pages. Well I got to hundred and then I had to stop. Only four hundred. Now when I started the other one, you know 'Exodus', I read that one night. I had an operation that day. The Friday and I read all that, right through. Right through Friday night. Read and cried, right through it. And I finished it. Now he wrote another play after that. But in that book he [wrote?] there and back. There and back. Well that tires me. So I dropped that halfway.

**VB:** Mhm.

[pause 4 seconds]

**VB:** Did you, did you...

**RT:** And yet she was a very nice girl.

**VB:** Yeah. Barbara Stanwyck.

**RT:** She was really nice in the Western plays. In the Western plays.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Don't know this one.

**VB:** Mhm.

**RT:** Oh Loretta Young!

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Tch! Oh-h-h!

[Someone asks question; interrupts conversation. 'Are ye goin on [inaudible] at all? [Repeats question].

**RT:** What?

**OP:** 'Cause I've been ill.

**RT:** No. We go to Prestwich today.

**OP:** Are you going?

**RT:** Yeah.

**OP:** Will you get me, you know those what you got me the last time? Well I've lost them. Since I've moved here.

**RT:** What? For your hair?

**OP:** Yeah. And somebody's taken one.

**RT:** Oh dear!

**OP:** Would you get them me for, for me. I'll take my purse.

**RT:** Okay.

**OP:** Just a minute.

**RT:** Eh, Loretta Young.

**OP:** S'all right. Carry on.

**RT:** Yeah. She was...

**OP:** I've been ill. I've not been out you see.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Talking in the middle, you see.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** She was supposed to be a gypsy. And eh, [pause 2 seconds] and a [filmer?] took sorry for her. Took her in. And she bewitched her. She bewitched him. And took away. 'The Gypsy Charmer' [probably referring to *The Squall*]. Oh [name?] could sing that although she's 102! [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** [sings] "Oh the gypsy charmer". She sang that one. Oh God. How many years ago?

**VB: Aye.**

**RT:** Oh, she was lovely.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She was supposed to be a gypsy. A wonderful film that was. Don't even know the name.

**OP:** I'm lost down here. Don't know where I am here.

**RT:** It's just the way she is.

**VB:** **'Cause I remember you sang me a bit of 'Rose-Marie' the last time I was here.**

**RT:** [sings] "Rose-Marie! I love you. And will be dreaming of you." Well I watched that film and I loved it so much, I came home and I says to my mother over my father. [pause 1 second] I tell you how long ago. It's just [pause 2 seconds] fifty, it's about fifty-eight years ago. Because I says to them, to my parents. I lived with them and I had my baby. And I says to them, "Oh mummy," I says. "Take daddy and go and see my *Rose-Marie*. You'll love it" It was only like from here to the end of here. Half a mile.

**OP:** How much have I to give you, love?

**RT:** I don't remember love. Give me two pound and I'll give you the change.

**OP:** Wait a minute.

**RT:** It was about one [pound] seventy [pence]. Something like that.

**VB:** **Yeah.**

**RT:** S'under two pound.

**VB:** **And did your parents go?**

**OP:** I've only got five pound.

**RT:** Well to the office,

**OP:** I've got change here. Just a minute. [pause 3 seconds] I've got some silver. Two pound you want?

**RT:** Yes love. [coins being put on table]

**VB:** **Did your parents go to see *Rose-Marie*?**

**RT:** Did I?

**VB:** **Did your parents to go to see *Rose-Marie*. Did your mother and father go to see it?**

**RT:** Oh yes!



**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Yes. They enjoyed it. They took my baby with them. She must've been about three, my little one.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Now she's going on for sixty-two, bless her! [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** My eldest daughter.

**VB: Yeah.**

[coins being put on table by **OP**]

**VB: Did your mother and father go to...**

**RT:** Oh they loved the pictures. Oh yes!

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** But they never went very... [pause 1 second] It wasn't that. What they used to like was a Jewish play--

**VB: Ah.**

**RT:** On the theatre.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** But it was [inaudible] in Jewish.

**VB: Really!**

**RT:** Well she never missed anything. She used to close the shop.

**OP:** Oh dear.

**RT:** The minute they were closed, off they went. And she was working all day.

**VB: That's interesting.**

**RT:** She loved the theatre.

**VB: Where was that?**

**RT:** They loved, oh gosh! Eh, eighty years ago. Eighty.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Well...

**OP:** [counting out money] One pound fifty.

**RT:** Well, oh, you don't know Manchester well. It's about five miles from here. It was eh, one theatre. That's where they showed mostly all the Jewish plays. And we were about a mile from them. Used to close the shop, take me by the hand, must've been about eight, nine. Off we went. And I saw very serious ones there. Oh. And they used to sing a song. 'I'm only an orphan. Please help me.' Eighty years ago.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** I remember a little bit from it. And then there was another on. I can remember we were supposed to [marry?] somebody and came back and just missed it on the same day. She just got married when he came back. And there was another one. They called the [Iron Robin?]. That's a Jewish play.

**VB: Yeah.**

**OP:** Can you get a cup of tea here?

**RT:** After tea. Not now.

**OP:** Not now.

**RT:** Not now.

**OP:** Here you are. I've found it. I'll give you one pound fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety. Fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety. Two pound.

**RT:** Okay love.

**OP:** Can you get me the erm...

**RT:** Yes. I'll get it. For your hair? For your hair.

**OP:** Eh, yes. I've lost the box.

**RT:** Okay.

**OP:** And my hair's terrible. Eh, eh, I forget the name of it.

**RT:** Oh don't, it's okay. I'll get it. I know what you mean.

**OP:** And a box of eh, what d'you call it? That eh powder. The erm, the what d'you call it?

**RT:** It's not powder, it's cream. Tell her it's cream for your hair.

**VB: Cream.**

**OP:** No. It's says eh, oh, I forget the name.

**RT:** It's cream for your hair! You put it on your hair!

**OP:** Yeah. Eh, my head's gone. My head's gone.

**RT:** D'you know, it's a wonderful shop. Selling grocery, fish and everything. There's a big shop on the front of the--

**OP:** My memory's gone.

**RT:** On the front of the hill.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Wonderful.

**OP:** My memory's gone.

**RT:** I know. I can see. I can see.

**OP:** Eh, oh wait a minute. Got it on the tip of my tongue, erm, Vitapoint!

**RT:** Yeah.

**OP:** A box of Vitapoint.

**RT:** Yeah. I know it love.

**OP:** And a box of eh, eh, eh, Noah wanted the eh, talc, eh, not talcum powder. In the block, block. The powder. Face powder in the block.

**RT:** Bit of paper love.

**VB: Right. Is it okay if I just...**

**RT:** Yeah!

**OP:** Can you manage?

**RT:** Well it's Vitapoint.

**VB: Right.**

**OP:** Vitapoint.

**RT:** Vitapoint for your hair.

**OP:** And I want a box of eh powder for the face.

**RT:** Oh well that's about two to three pound.

**OP:** Two pound is it?

**RT:** It's over two pound.

**OP:** Well you've got two pound there. And I'll give you the rest. I haven't got no change.

**RT:** Well give me the five pound. What colour d'you want? What colour?

**OP:** Eh just the off-white. Not white. Not white. Too, too, too bright.

**RT:** Yes. Okay. I know which one.

**OP:** A medium one. Medium.

**RT:** Yes I know.

**OP:** Medium. You know what I mean.

**RT:** I know. D'you want eh. [pause 3 seconds] [Inaudible]

**OP:** [laughs] I'm laughing, honestly. [laughing] Laughing at myself.

**RT:** Where's the five pound note? Where's the five pound?

**OP:** Wait a minute now. I'll have to change it to the five pound.

**RT:** No, give me the five.

**OP:** Yes I am going to. That's silver.

**RT:** No. No. Give me the five and I'll give you change.

[pause 3 seconds]

**RT:** Powder's gone very dear now.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Can you pass it?

**VB: Yeah, sure.**

**OP:** I've got a bad hand. I've been ill. I've not been out you know, for a fortnight now. Take the five.

**RT:** Yes. I've got the five.

**OP:** So you want eh...

**RT:** You put powder on didn't you?

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** You put powder on. Okay love.

**OP:** Right. So you've got five.

**RT:** Yes okay.

**OP:** I'll take this back again then.

**RT:** Yeah. Is that mine?

**VB: I think so. Yeah.**

**OP:** Somebody's taken mine, you know. From my room. Upstairs. Vitapoint and powder--

**RT:** Okay.

**OP:** Compact.

**RT:** Yes. Max Factor. Max Factor.

**OP:** Well it's not Max Factor now anyway. Anyway. Right. Thank you very much.

**RT:** You're very welcome.

**OP:** She goes my errands. She's very good.

**VB: Mhm.**

**OP:** I've nobody to go you see. And I've not been well. I've not been outside the door.

**RT:** Now what were we talking about now? [pause 3 seconds]

**OP:** Is it raining?

**RT:** [looks at book] Never knew Kay Francis. Never knew her. Oh the very first one.

**OP:** I think I'll have a rest.

**RT:** She was the siren. Theda Bara.

**OP:** I remember Theda Bara.

**RT:** Oh gosh! Eighty-odd years ago! Theda Bara.

**OP:** Yeah.

**RT:** She tempted everybody. Have you heard of that one?

**VB: I haven't. No. Could you tell me more about her?**

**RT:** Yeah. I can't tell you much. She was a siren. Theda Bara. And I remember seeing her as a young baby. Maybe five, six. Oh gosh! I never even thought of er for ages.

**VB: Was she--**

**RT:** Theda Bara.

**VB: Was she on the stage or...**

**RT:** No, film.

**OP:** Film.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** The first, the first films.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** With Charlie Chaplin. He did the one with the little boy who threw the eh, who broke the windows and he went round repairing them [referring to *The Kid*]. [Inaudible]. Oh, wonderful film. And before me, I don't remember that one, eh impersonating, they thought he was the Kaiser [referring to *Shoulder Arms*]. The first Kaiser in 1914. And my sister saw that. That was one of the very first films. With Charlie Chaplin. And it was one of those wonderful films. He looked something like the Kaiser. They thought he was. And they treated him like the Kaiser!

**VB: [Laughs].**

**RT:** From the very thirties.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** It'll be about eh...

[**OP** interrupts; asks when going out for errands; talks about being mixed up].

**RT:** [laughs] I feel sorry for all these people remember seeing a play. I must've been about fourteen. And my older sister, she must've been eighteen. And we went to the Theatre Royal and we saw 'The Yellow Ticket'. And I says to my sister, what is the yellow ticket? So if you were in Russia you had a can of yellow [passports?]. It was like a prostitute. And if you had a yellow ticket you could go from place to place and be a prostitute. And I saw this play with Gladys Cooper. In the Theatre Royal in Peter Street.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Eh seventy-odd years ago.

**OP:** Bye bye!

**RT:** Bye bye love.

**VB: Bye bye.**

**OP:** I'll see you.

**RT:** Yes love. About seventy-odd years ago. Gladys Cooper.

**VB: Did you go to the theatre much?**

**RT:** Oh not often.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Occasionally. We once went from school to see eh... [pause 3 seconds] The comedy one. [pause 2 seconds] We saw the comedy one. That was in the Gaiety Theatre--

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Facing the Royal. They was three in Peter Street. [pause 2 seconds] The Gaiety. The one lower down and the Royal. [pause 2 seconds] Then there was the Hippodrome in Oxford Street. Or, 'course you don't know Manchester! [laughs]

[pause 3 seconds]

**VB: It must've been quite different then in the centre of the town.**

**RT:** I lived in the centre.

**VB: Yes. Yes.**

**RT:** We used to walk into Market Street from home. Used to walk. [pause 2 seconds] And we used to go, oh well, tuppence for a cup of tea and tuppence for a nice cake. Fourpence. That was on Saturday afternoon. You'd entertain yourself with fourpence. Get a nice little beetroot for tuppence.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** [bursts out laughing]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** Well when my father came from Russia, [pause 1 second] and then my father came later. Came here with three children. My father, well my father used to get thirteen [shillings] and six[pence] a week. They lived in one room in my mother's sister's house. And they bought a little house for half a crown a week. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** Yes. I thought my father couldn't live like that, my mother. She couldn't write. She couldn't read. But she opened a shop. And did well. Oh, she had three shops eventually. She couldn't write or read but her brain was like a computer.

**VB: She must've been very determined.**

**RT:** Like a computer.

**VB: Yeah.**



RT: Computer.

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: Each thing was in her brain. A computer brain she had. [pause 3 seconds] Anyway, we're not wanting all these, well, you ask me then I can tell you.

**VB: Right. Well I mean maybe some of these might be easier to see, 'cause I brought some stills from pictures as well.**

RT: I saw her occasionally but she never hit me.

**VB: Jane Withers. Yeah.**

RT: Very nice girl.

**VB: Well, talking of these child stars we mentioned erm...**

RT: The very old ones.

**VB: Shirley, Shirley Temple.**

RT: Aw-w! Shirley Temple! Aw she was lovely! And about fifty people all called Shirley! [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

RT: I've got three Shirleys in my family. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

RT: Well I can't remember each one. She was lovely. Each one she was in was lovely. Everybody enjoyed her. Whatever she played in was lovely. But I can't remember anything specially.

**VB: Uhuh.**

RT: But everything she done was lovely to watch.

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: You enjoyed it. Whatever she was in.

**VB: Yeah. 'Cause another person that was mentioned the other time was George Formby.**

RT: Aw! He was lovely. [laughs] He was aw-w! Formby was lovely. I loved him. 'When you're sitting on the corner waiting for the lady come by.' Oh yeah!

**VB: [chuckles]**

**RT:** He was very very very pleasant to listen to. Very pleasant indeed. You never fell in love with him. You just liked him very much. Not like these handsome men. But you liked him a very much. He appealed to you. Made you feel happy. A happy man. [pause 2 seconds]

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Oh yes! They had a house in Blackpool.

**VB: Ah!**

**RT:** We passed his house. They had a big row about the [f?] when he died.

**VB: Is that right?**

**RT:** Oh yes. The sister and the girlfriend over what was left.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** You don't remember that do you? It was about twenty years ago I should imagine.

**VB: Yeah. Goodness me. Someone else we talked about was Gracie Fields. I think that's from *Sing As We Go!***

**RT:** What these two?

**VB: Gracie Fields. I'm not sure who the other one is.**

**RT:** Aw I've watched Gracie Fields.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** But I didn't see her very often.

**VB: Yeah. Did you not like her so much?**

**RT:** Oh I seen her in one film. She was in a march. And singing and marching [possibly referring to *Sing As We Go!*]. But I can't. I remember seeing it.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** But I don't remember it very much.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She had a wonderful voice. A wonderful voice. I went, I went down to where she lived in eh, went to Italy. And then there's a little island just. And we went where she was. She married an Italian.

**VB: Ah I see!**

**RT:** Do you know about Gracie Fields?

**VB: Not very much. No.**

**RT:** Well, she fell in love with a young man. An Italian man. What happened I don't know but they went to live just outside Italy. And I think they had a hotel or something. And eh, we visited oh, we visited that place. Just outside Italy.

**VB: Right!**

**RT:** A little island.

**VB: Yes. So she left.**

**RT:** Oh yes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She had a wonderful voice. Right up in the, right up high. [pause 2 seconds] She had a strong voice. Strong voice. Yeah. They were brought up near a chip shop. In Rochdale. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs] Oh. And then another...**

**RT:** Oh yeah. Wonderful dancers. Wonderful dancers.

**VB: Did you see *Top Hat*?**

**RT:** Oh I've seen them.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** But I can't remember them. Just very nice dancers. Nothing much to it. But the dancing was lovely. Not much of an opera or anything in it, but the dancing was lovely. Tell you not very much about this couple.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** I saw them dancing, two or three films. I never rushed to see them. I used to see others. I would to every time I could. But this one, if it's him, it didn't matter.

**VB:** Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] I don't think I have any of them. Laurel and Hardy.

**RT:** Aw-w. [laughing] Oh! They were very, very good comedians. Very, very good. Well, so's Harold Lloyd. [pause 2 seconds] Was on the end of a big clock outside a huge eh, a huge tower. And he was to [inaudible]. And the thing eh, the thing of a clock. Blowing away. Oh was very good that. Very good comedian that one. I remember seeing Fatty Arbuckle. I don't like that. I only saw. Big fat, I don't like that.

**VB:** Mhm.

[pause 5 seconds]

**VB:** Aw. Was that the Gracie Fields one you were mentioning?

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**VB:** I think, was that when Robert Donat was opening one of the cinemas? The Gaumont, I think.

[pause 5 seconds]

**RT:** Who's this one?

**VB:** Robert Donat.

**RT:** Was Marvellous! Oh gosh. *A Tale of Two Cities!* Oh gosh! What a wonderful drama that was! You cry your eyes out!

**VB:** [smiles]

**RT:** You cry your eyes out watching that.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** How long ago I can't tell you. Wonderful actor. And he did what? He went oh, what fifty years ago. Tried to save the children from, from Germany [possibly referring to *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*]. It was a whole load of children. Somehow or other. Away from Germany. A wonderful drama that was. [pause 2 seconds] *A Tale of Two Cities*. Oh yes! There was another one! Eh, when they were very young, in the film of course, they used to take a child and make him always laughing.

So the child was always laughing. And they'd put him on the circus. But I can't remember much about him. It was about seventy, eighty years ago.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** [pause 3 seconds] Oh I've never thought of these things for many, many, many years! My sister remembers that one. This made her always laughing. [pause 2 seconds]. Oh what a marvellous film that was. [pause 2 seconds] Don't remember what it was called either.

**VB: Mhm. It's funny that how. I'm like that as well. Scenes from the films you remember. Not always the whole film but you remember bits.**

**RT:** I remember the actual, the actual result.

**VB: No, not at all. [To who has asked something].**

[NF comes back with book]

**NF:** Great book this. All the pictures in it. [Inaudible] If you can see it. *Mr Deeds Goes To Town*.

**VB: Ah!**

**NF:** Have you seen it?

**VB: I have. Yes.**

**NF:** What d'you think?

**VB: Oh It's wonderful. Oh it's great. With Robert erm, Robert Donat was in it.**

**NF:** Yes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**NF:** Great film.

**VB: Yeah.**

**NF:** Thank you very much indeed.

**VB: Not at all.**

**NF:** Was it worth your journey here?

**VB: Very much so. Yes.**

**NF:** [to RT] I'm sure you've been very helpful.

**RT:** I don't know. We'll have to ask her!

**NF:** Mhm. D'you know we're getting paid on the hour? Did you know that?

**VB:** [laughs] Oh dear.

**RT:** You and your money! You and your money!

**VB:** [laughs]

**NF:** Yeah well it's been very pleasant meeting you.

**VB:** Aw it's been great. Thanks very much.

**NF:** And eh, carry on with your endeavours. And I'm quite sure it'll be a success. Your project. Very sure. Every confidence. Have you...

**VB:** I think so. Yes. Yes. Well we...

**NF:** In our tiny little way, we've tried to help. In our tiny little way.

**VB:** Very much so. I mean I really appreciate your talking with me and...

**NF:** Okay. Right. You've enjoyed the effort.

**VB:** Very much so. Yeah.

**NF:** I'll congratulate you before you get the eh kind of results.

**VB:** Right. [laughs]

**RT:** [laughs]

**NF:** Okay. Cheerio.

**VB:** Thanks a lot. Bye.

**NF:** You're welcome.

**RT:** Aye. My own daughter has just finished her exams. And my daughter rang me up and I said, "How did you do?" And she just finished it. [Won't?] know till next week or two--

**VB:** Right.

**RT:** What she's done. She hopes to get an A.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Or else an A2 or 2A. Is it 1, 2 or 2A? I don't know which way you do it.

**VB: Erm...**

**RT:** You get a First.

**VB: Yes. They do a 2:1, and a Two...**

**RT:** Oh a 2:1.

**VB: Yeah. 2:2. Yeah.**

**RT:** And there's 2:2. Either a First.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She's hoping for a First.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She's hoping for a First. And if not she's get a, she's hoping for a 2:1.

**VB: A 2:1 I would think. Yeah.**

**RT:** That wouldn't be so bad.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She'd be happy with a 2:1.

**VB: Yeah. Oh well, I hope she...**

**RT:** She went there. It's her birthday. She's twenty-two. How old are you, love?

**VB: I'm thirty-one.**

**RT:** Thirty-one.

**VB: Yeah. Yeah.**

**RT:** Have you got one or are you studying for one?

**VB: No I have, I have a couple [laughs] actually. I have two. I have two degrees.**

RT: You've got two.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: What are you?

**VB: Erm, I'm an MA and a Masters.**

RT: Oh well. The Masters.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: Well I've got of them in, what d'you call it? They're Doctors in computers.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: Two of them. Oh so you are, you are a Masters.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: Oh very nice! I'm hoping for my daughter too.

**VB: Yes.**

RT: Now what are you trying to be? A doctorate now. Are you studying for a doctorate or what?

**VB: Erm, erm actually I'm almost finished my doctorate but this is erm, I work at Glasgow University as well. So this is part, this is my work. At the moment. [pause 3 seconds] Erm, which is great. It's good fun. [laughs]**

RT: Oh! [laughs]

**VB: It's enjoyable. [laughs]**

RT: Well, what else can I. If you ask me something else I can tell you what I can.

**VB: Erm...**

RT: Going back all these years. Charlie Chaplin.

**VB: Yeah. You were telling me as well that you liked the drama.**

RT: Oh yes.



**VB: The dramatic films. Films like the...**

**RT:** I'd rather watch drama than anything else.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** I enjoy comedy. Mind you a comic, that's right. [pause 2 seconds] Joe E. Brown. Well now and again I get one of these miserable feelings.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** What do you call them? Eh, depression.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Now and again. And at one time I was in one of these depressions and eh, couldn't get out of it. And there was a theatre like from here across the way. And [inaudible] one of the children across the way. And eh there was a film with Joe E. Brown. And he was supposed to be running in a team or something. And he ran the wrong way round. Instead of running this way, he run that way. And I started to laugh, and that saved me. That laughter.

**VB: Yeah. Yeah.**

**RT:** 'Cause I laughed spontaneously. And that was it. And that was Joe E. Brown.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** A very good comedian. Joe E. Brown.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Now how long ago? Eh. [pause 2 seconds] I've been there fifty, about forty years ago, maybe more.

**VB: Mhm. Yeah.**

**RT:** Maybe more.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Joe E. Brown. Very good comedian.

**VB: Sounds great.**

**RT:** Joe E. Brown. [laughs] Oh that was a film, that was on the eh the stage. [pause 2 seconds] *Desert Song!* Ah-h. Smashing! Lovely to watch. All those lovely songs.

**VB: Ah.**

**RT:** [pause 3 seconds] Lovely songs. That was one thing. I was always singing. For a minute you forget it. [pause 7 seconds] Brings back. I remember when I was about eighteen and my sister was fourteen. And she had another girl in the family. There was about six kids. We all went to watch Jack and the Beanstalk. And the most beautiful colourings. They were lovely. Gosh, about seventy years ago.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** I still remember the lovely... 'Course it was the first time when all these things come. When you're between ten and twenty. All these new things. And they leave an impression. I should think so! There's many years gone by and I can't remember anything! Many years.

**VB: Mhm.**

[pause 3 seconds]

**RT:** Oh gosh! If you watch the TV and you watch [When War Broke Out?]. Him and her, Bobby something and another one. I remember war broke out and when [inaudible] it was marvellous. You laughed your head off!

**VB: Ah.**

**RT:** Ah. That's fifty years ago.

**VB: Yeah. Did you ever go dancing? Did you enjoy dancing?**

**RT:** Oh yes we used to go. Oh yeah.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Oh once a week. Sometimes once two weeks.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** I wasn't dancing mad. But I like dancing. But not dancing made like some of them.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Some used to go there nearly every night, when they could.

**VB: Really? Where did you go?**

**RT:** Oh well I was near everything. When we lived in the centre of the town, you were close, more or less. Or tuppence on the bus.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** Yeah. Once upon a time.

**VB: Did you have any favourite places to go dancing?**

**RT:** Oh we always found somebody. [laughs]

**VB: Yes.**

**RT:** Well I went out with one fellow [next few words inaudible]. And I don't want to. I don't have to make my mind up. When I met my husband that was it. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** Are you married?

**VB: I am. Yes.**

**RT:** Yeah.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** That was it. I was married for nearly sixty years!

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Short of three weeks.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Nearly three years since he died.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** The first of August. Anyway. Anyway. What else shall we talk about?

**VB: I think we've covered a lot actually.**

**RT:** Well what do they say? Snails and... [pause 1 second] What do they say? The thing you talk about. Slugs and...

**VB:** Oh erm, slugs and snails and...

**RT:** No that's what little boys were made of.

**VB:** [laughs] That's right.

**RT:** That's a different one!

**VB:** [laughs]

**RT:** Well you talk about... [pause 1 second] Ah. Lost the word.

**VB:** I haven't heard that one.

**RT:** Oh yes! Another, another rhyme. Things when you talk about. From one thing to a different thing entirely.

**VB:** Oh yeah.

**RT:** You go about saying four different things altogether.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Well I was talking about the theatre and the theatre.

**VB:** That's right. Yes. Yes.

**RT:** Yeah.

**VB:** It's interesting for me to get an idea of other...

**RT:** Oh yes! Yes about everything. Yes.

**VB:** Everything. Yeah. Yeah.

**RT:** I think the theatres were very, very popular. Theatres.

**VB:** Yeah.

**RT:** Used to go the pictures too. Eh two shillings and fourpence for the medium one--

**VB:** Uhuh.

**RT:** In the town. Oh sixpence dear buy.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Sixpence. Threepence sometimes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** At the very front. Threepence.

**VB: What was your local cinema? The one you went to most.**

**RT:** Used to go for a penny!

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** A penny. You had tuppence. A penny for the cinema and a penny for sweets and chocolate.

**VB: Right. Which...**

**RT:** We were very lucky. My friend only got a ha'penny. My friend lives here. [Inaudible]. She only got a ha'penny. I got a penny or tuppence.

**VB: What cinema did you go to most often then?**

**RT:** The one nearest to us. Now let me think now. There was the Temp-, no, not the Temple. The 'Banjo' [possibly referring to the Bijou] and the 'Star'. Now one is up and one is down. Very seldom we went down. Because facing us was the prison. Strangeways prison. [pause 2 seconds] And the Assizes Courts.

**VB: Right.**

**RT:** That was next door. The prison and the Assizes Court were next door to each other. And the Temple were facing it. The eh, the 'Star'. [pause 2 seconds] And eh they, they both come down. Well the Assizes were bombed down. And the prison was halfway. Do you remember a few weeks, a few years ago.

**VB: Yes I remember that. The riot. Yes.**

**RT:** Only two or three years ago.

**VB: Yes.**

**RT:** Along here. And the 'Banjo' [possibly referring to the Bijou] was near our home. Two or three streets, two or three doors away the 'Banjo'. I once went one Saturday afternoon to the 'Banjo'. Saturday afternoon. For tuppence. And on the way back they give you a little piece of paper to read. And on the way back I go to read it and I walk right into a lamppost! And...

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** Gosh! That must be about, [pause 2 seconds] about eighty years ago! Because we lived in Carnarvon Street.

**VB: Right.**

**RT:** So walking from the 'Banjo' [possibly referring to the Bijou] home was about a quarter of a mile, that's all. And eh but I came out reading it, right up to the lamppost.

**VB: What was the bit of paper? Do you remember?**

**RT:** [bursts out laughing]

**VB: [laughs] Was it about the films or, the paper?**

**RT:** Oh the usual. Usually what they were going to show.

**VB: Ah I see.**

**RT:** What was coming the next week. Yeah.

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** I once went, my brother was only just married, my oldest brother. And she came. On the Saturday. And she gave me some money. And I'm not sure if it was a threepenny piece or a sixpenny piece. Little silver ones. [pause 2 seconds] One was about as big as that nail. That's a threepenny one. And the silver one a little bit bigger. And she gave me one. And eh I go to the back for the threepence. Full up. And I go to the front. I thought it was sixpence. But I hoped it was only threepence 'cause I couldn't go in.

**VB: Aw.**

**RT:** And I came home crying.

**VB: Aw. [laughs]**

**RT:** What'd I be? I was eight. I must have been eight. I was six when my brother got married. So I must have been about eight.

**VB: Mhm. What a disappointment. Tch. Aw.**

**RT:** Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] Came round crying. With threepence in my hand. [bursts out laughing]

**VB: [laughs]**

**RT:** Must have been dead about twenty years, my brother.

**VB: Aw dear.**

**RT:** [laughs] He was very handsome, my brother was.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** And a very handsome wife. [pause 3 seconds]

**VB: Ah.**

**RT:** Now. [Paid three and six?] for the best seats. In town. They were the best pictures.

**VB: 'Cause there were a lot of cinemas in Oxford Road.**

**RT:** Oh yes! Yes. Yes.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Yes there was. The Gaumont. [pause 2 seconds]. The one opposite the road, the Oxford Street [possibly referring to the Oxford]. The one further down. Yeah. The Grosvenor. [pause 2 seconds] Straight down Oxford Street, straight on Oxford Road.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** All the way down. There was plenty over here in Cheetham. There was the 'Banjo' [possibly referring to the Bijou] when we started. Then they opener the Riviera. A beautiful, opened about [pause 1 second] sixty years ago. And the Riviera. Beautiful cinema. And then I don't know, it seemed to go down. Then there was the Temple higher up. Then there was the Premier. Then there's one facing the Premier. Then there was the Shakespeare. Then there was another one, just down the street.

**VB: Mhm.**

**RT:** [Beginning inaudible] since then. [laughs]

**VB: That's about seven or eight.**

RT: You start at the 'Banjo' [possibly referring to the Bijou].

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: You go to the Riviera. You go to the Temple. You go to the Premier. You go to the one facing that one. You go to the Shakespeare then to the one higher up. Seven. Within eh half a mile. [pause 2 seconds] Or a mile I should say. In a mile.

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: There was seven of them in a mile.

**VB: Yeah.**

**VB: It's amazing when you think now--**

RT: Ah.

**VB: There's ...[laughs]**

RT: [laughs]

**VB: Ah.**

RT: Are you seeing somebody else this morning?

**VB: Erm no. I'm going back into the town just now so...**

RT: You're going,

**VB: I'm going to go back into Manchester.**

RT: Back into town?

**VB: Yeah.**

RT: Give her my kind regards. [laughs]

**VB: I will. [laughs] I will. It was very good of you to talk to me again. I appreciate that.**

RT: Well, come any time you like. I'm very happy to meet you.

**VB: Well it's very kind.**

RT: Very happy.



**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** Did I tell you what happened to my daughter?

**VB: No.**

**RT:** To my granddaughter.

**VB: [laughs] Yes. Find out.**

[Person in background. 'Good afternoon. I assume these belong to you.]

**VB: Yes.**

[I just want to know. S'okay. Y'all right love. [To RT].]

**RT:** Hallo.

[Good].

**VB: Yeah. So I suppose I should really be going back now.**

**RT:** Yeah. Have you got a car with you?

**VB: No. Just the bus. Yeah.**

**RT:** My daughter's got a little blue one.

**VB: Does your family live locally?**

**RT:** Only one.

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** She lives round the corner in [Wyefield?].

**VB: Yeah.**

**RT:** About a mile.

**VB: Yeah.**

[End of Interview]