

Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1994 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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- \* Transcribed by Annie Nissen/ Standardised by Richard Rushton
- \* TP= Tony Paterson/VB =Valentina Bold
- \* Notes: First of one interview with Tony Paterson; Sound Quality: Good.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[tape introduction by Valentina Bold]

**TP:** If it's of use to you and then--

**VB:** That's right. But as I say, it's very, very good of you to talk with us. I'll just put this beside you.

[rustling]

**TP:** Not at all. If you need any help.

**VB:** The other thing that I would like to ask erm if you don't mind--

**TP:** Yes, yes, just go ahead.

**VB:** Is erm a few details about yourself--

**TP:** Uhuh, uhuh.

**VB:** Just so that we have that sort of information, erm, is your full name Tony Paterson or...?

**TP:** It's Anthony actually.

**VB: Anthony.**

**TP:** With an 'h'.

**VB: Right. And when were you born?**

**TP:** Erm, [date redacted].

**VB: [date redacted]. Was it Glasgow you were born or...?**

**TP:** Erm, no, actually, well I've lived in Glasgow nearly almost all my life. I was actually born in Newport, Fife.

**VB: Ah. I was brought up in Markinch, so [laughs]...**

**TP:** [laughs] Markinch, I always think of erm, I worked for Pitlochry Festival, on the administrative side for them for some years--

**VB: Ah, I see**

**TP:** And the printers came from Markinch.

**VB: Yes, it's quite-- was that from the Tullis Russell?**

**TP:** Gosh, I trying to think what the name was. It was erm [pause 3 seconds] it wasn't that, I know it may have been taken over by another firm by this time or--

**VB: Yes. That's interesting. Of course it's changed a lot over the recent years, erm, especially since the Haig's whisky has stopped producing there.**

**TP:** Ah, of course, yes, yes, hmm.

**VB: You know all the changes.**

**TP:** Mhm, mhm.

**VB: Yes. Can I ask what your father's occupation was?**

TP: He was erm a Lloyd's ship surveyor.

**VB: Right. And did your mother work?**

TP: No, she didn't, no.

**VB: Right.**

TP: Not when she was married anyway.

**VB: Right, of course. Did she work before she was married then?**

TP: She did erm she was with, did office work for an organ builders firm actually in Edinburgh.

**VB: Really?**

TP: In Edinburgh, on that side of the family.

**VB: And how many sisters and brothers did you have?**

TP: I had one brother.

**VB: One brother. And can I ask about your educational background as well?**

TP: Yes, I was at school at Glasgow Academy here.

**VB: Yes. Umm when did you leave Glasgow Academy?**

TP: Oh, '36 about.

**VB: Right. [pause 3 seconds] And then?**

TP: And then at Glasgow University, I did the Honours English there. [pause] And erm, erm, I've done in the course of my-- later on, I've done two postgraduate degrees, I've done an MLitt and a PhD.

**VB: And were they from Glasgow as well?**

**TP:** The MLitt was Glasgow, the PhD Strathclyde.

**VB: Right. That's interesting. Obviously theatre is erm was that the area that you worked in?**

**TP:** Umm well, I mean I taught English in schools for a long time and erm then fairly late on, I got the chance of becoming literary adviser at Glasgow Citizens [probably referring to Glasgow Citizens Theatre]. So I did that for three years [pause 5 seconds] I did five years as assistant to the festival director at the Pitlochry.

**VB: That's interesting, a diverse background.**

**TP:** Yeah, yeah, then I thought it's time to get my pension in order [VB laughs] so I came back to teaching and got, you know, slightly early retirement and then I was able to indulge in various things that I was interested in. I did quite a lot of reviewing for the theatre review for the Glasgow Herald, that area and various other things. I still do a lot of adjudicating for erm, drama festivals.

**VB: So hardly a retirement stage for you [laughs]**

**TP:** No, it's a busy retirement. [laughs]

**VB: Umm, can I ask, have you got any strong political beliefs or?**

**TP:** Ah... [pause 3 seconds]

**VB: Have you ever been a member of a--**

**TP:** I've never been active in politics, no. I've never been active in politics. No, nothing sort of vital, nothing fiery anyway. [laughs]

**VB: And how about your religious beliefs? Were you--**

**TP:** Yes, yes, I still go to erm Broomhill Trinity Congregational Church. Indeed, I take the odd service there.

**VB: Ah, I see [pause 4 seconds] And--**

**TP: [inaudible] [laughs]**

**VB: It's interesting. I mean have you-- did you live in Pitlochry when you were working there?**

**TP: Yeah, I kept this flat, but erm I had a cottage there, I lived there all the year round actually.**

**VB: Right.**

**TP: I let this out and lived in Pitlochry, cottage just near the theatre.**

**VB: Hmm. It's a lovely place, isn't it?**

**TP: Oh yeah, lovely. I still keep in close contact with it.**

**VB: And erm are you married or?**

**TP: No, never been, no.**

**VB: Right. Erm, that's that side of things**

**TP: That's it. [laughs]**

**VB: The other thing that I'd like to ask is--**

**TP: Aha**

**VB: because I'm taping this interview—**

**TP: Yeah.**

**VB: these tapes will be kept in the University.**

**TP: Sure, yeah**

**VB: And, if you had, I was wondering, if you had any objections to maybe some other scholars looking at them in the future at all?**

**TP: No, not at all.**

**VB: Umm, well, if that's the case, could I ask you to sign this statement to that effect?**

**TP: Yeah, right.**

**VB: Umm, it's just one of these legal things.**

**TP: I know.**

**VB: That's very kind, thanks very much.**

[rustling; 10 seconds]

**VB: Anyone who would want to consult this material would obviously have to go through erm the director anyway, so erm that would put on some security as well I think.**

**TP: Yeah.**

[writing and tape noises; 24 seconds]

**VB: Thank you so much. Better to get things straight. Thanks very much. [pause 5 seconds] I mean I was very interested, 'cause I looked through erm the questionnaire that you completed for Annette and there are a lot of things that I'd like to ask you about.**

**TP: Yeah, anything you like.**

**VB: Umm, I mean, you mentioned, for instance, that you went to your first movie when you were about five, or the first one that you remembered. Is that right?**

**TP: Yeah, hmm. Yes, my erm mother was fond of the movies, and she thought, well, might keep me quiet if I liked them, you see, so she-- and of course I took to them right away [laughs] no bother.**

**VB: Was she a keen cinema-goer herself then?**

TP: She was, mhm, yes.

**VB: What-- can you remember what that first movie was or...?**

TP: Can't remember what that first one was. But the two-- there were two movies stick in my mind, the two, obviously they were silent films then, at that time. One was erm the first version *The Sea Hawk*, with a then popular actor called Milton Sills. And erm the other one I remember was a Cecil B. DeMille film, called *The Road to Yesterday*. Those were the things that stick out in my mind from then.

**VB: That's interesting. Were these adventure movies then?**

TP: *Sea Hawk* was, that was a, you know, sort of-- there was a later version there of. And erm *Road to Yesterday* it was a sort of eh DeMille in those days was making sort of spectacular morality films. It was about four people travelling in a train who have all sorts of emotional problems and so on, and the train, the train gets wrecked and in the sort of eh they have a sort of vision in which they go back into former incarnations.

**VB: Ah, it sounds familiar actually, now that you describe it.**

TP: Well, yeah. It's never been revived [doorbell ringing] oh, excuse me.

[TP goes to answer door, background talking; returns at 0:11:12]

TP: I'm afraid that was a friend who, he spends half the year in Spain and erm on television he has the oddest films there, so he said-- last time I saw him, he said erm I got the most extraordinary film, *Peg o' My Heart*. And I said, you mean the Marion Davies version? He said, no, Laurette Taylor, who was a legendary-- you know, in the-- it must be one of the very, very early film. She made a great comeback as an old lady in *The Glass Menagerie*, the original stage production. But she's on the stage—the, the dialogue, you know, the silent is in Spanish, but it's all perfect.

**VB: That's interesting. [laughs] So that's obviously the place to go for unusual films.**

**TP:** Well, yes, he gets very surprising things you see, he sees all sorts of people, you know films, people he's never-- I don't know if the name Ruth Chatterton means anything to you?

**VB: Umm I've heard the name, but I can't--**

**TP:** He had never-- he had never seen or heard of her actually, and he was terribly struck by this. Yeah, sorry, when--

**VB: Mhm, erm yeah, I think we were just talking about your early cinema experiences**

**TP:** Umm, yes, *The Road to Yesterday* and so on, yeah mhm... [pause 6 seconds] As I say that sort of vision of the past and that solves all their problems. Oddly enough, one of the stars in it was William Boyd, who later became 'Hop-a-Long Cassidy'.

**VB: Really? [both laugh] Umm**

**TP:** Another actor who came into fi-- continuing films a long time was Joseph Schildkraut, he was the other male lead. It's funny that the two men have survived and that the two women, an exotic actress called Jetta Goudal, and Vera Reynolds was the other one. I mean their movie careers sunk without a trace almost.

**VB: Yeah, that is funny. What was the-- what were the first cinemas that you went to?**

**TP:** Well, erm, it'll be mainly the two here, the erm Grosvenor as it was before, when it was on Byers Road, you see, formerly, from where the pub is now there.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** I mean it's back-- what they're using now is the back of what used to be the Grosvenor. And that was the Bonhams, that was the front of it, you see. I think some of it is still used, you know, for sort of join on and, also the Salon, unfortunately. [laughs] I don't know what's going to happen to that. I mean it's been dragging on so long and they keep promising that something's going to happen and nothing does.

**VB: Yes, disgraceful.**



**TP:** It was a disgrace that, the way it happened, yes. Those were the two I sort of presumably I originally went to. But, of course, there were so many in town.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** In all the cinemas in town over the course of, my favourite initially being what was then the Regal, that's the MGM one now. And, of course, later the big excitement was when it opened as the Paramount before it became the Odeon.

**VB: I see.**

**TP:** That was the-- you know, Paramount after the company, after the film company. They owned the cinema and then they were eventually translated into Odeons.

**VB: When you say it was a big excitement, was there a lot of publicity or...?**

**TP:** Mhm, it's a beautiful cinema and it also erm had facilities for stage shows.

**VB: Ah.**

**TP:** You know, big bands and musicals, artists of various kinds.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** But it was a real-- it was one-- it was probably the most beautiful cinema at that time.

**VB: What was it like inside?**

**TP:** Very, very large, of course, and beautifully designed. Not too baroque, you know, 'cause that would be about sort of... 1936 or thereabouts. And it was, you know, very tastefully, erm the architect was very tasteful with it. You know, it really was. It wasn't-- it was purpose built, it wasn't erm hacked out of any other existing building or anything like that. And, so as I say, you sometimes got-- quite possibly you could get two films and a stage show in the same programme.

**VB: Really? So you would see the picture and the show?**

TP: Mhm, mhm, oh yes.

**VB: That's interesting, that's--**

TP: That was, erm, not uncommon really at that time.

**VB: Really?**

TP: I mean here it was. But, I mean, you had quite a lot of the-- quite a lot of the London cinemas did that. They called it erm, I remember one called 'cine-variety'.

**VB: Right.**

TP: You know, they had a film and a full scale stage show with some star artist.

**VB: So it was big, big names then?**

TP: Oh, yes. I mean, not so much, they didn't have them so much here. But they erm you know, they had sort of songs from the show type of-- they had people like Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon and things like that would come to the Paramount. Eventually the stage bit was used for what then erm... when the Odeon took it over, it became Odeon 3 and used to be able to enter from the side street, you know.

**VB: Right.**

TP: There's still an entrance there, but that used to be the entrance to Odeon 3, which like so many of those small cinemas was supposed to be intended for specialised films.

**VB: Right.**

TP: They all started like that and then, you know, of course they didn't pay very well and they... I mean they only played specialised films of course, would always be the venues what's the GFT [referring to Glasgow Film Theatre] and former Cosmo. People liked going, that had that, but anywhere else try foreign films anywhere else, they didn't go so well.

**VB: Ah, right. I didn't realise that they tried these out in the cinemas.**

**TP:** They did. I don't say foreign film, but it was a small, intimate cinema, Cinema 3. And you would get, you know, less big commercial films like that, you see.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** One or two places tried that. I mean they erm specialised films like at the foot of Renfield Street, what used to be Cranston's. You know that large white building?

**VB: Oh yes.**

**TP:** You know it?

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** It's just been re-opened after the-- that, that was what they called Cranston's Cinema.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** It was a marvellous place, because they had erm it was a great complex that really, because they had... they had a big cinema, it wasn't... it didn't usually... they tried it for various things. I mean it wasn't... sometimes they tried it for specialised films. There was a time they tried it for half-- a film and an hour of news.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Aha. And erm I mean they had a café downstairs, they had a full restaurant upstairs, a smoke room up top, you could spend a whole Saturday afternoon there, looking at the papers, you know.

**VB: That's amazing, 'cause I'd heard of the tearoom, but I didn't realise there was a cinema and all these other--**

**TP:** Oh, yes, yes. A cinema. You went upstairs to the cinema.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** Have a cake or biscuit, or anything. Would you like some more coffee?

**VB: Erm, that would be lovely actually, yes. If you don't mind.**

**TP: Okay.**

**VB: I didn't realise cinemas were so, [inaudible] diverse entertainment—**

[rustling; TP making coffee]

**TP: Oh, it was incredible really. I mean, as I say, probably you know, you'd get it even more in London, but Glasgow as well actually was well off for that and erm you know they'd get-- a cinema like Cranston's which wasn't a first run cinema, you know, a lot of them erm-- are you warm enough by the way?**

**VB: Yes, yes, I'm fine.**

**TP: Otherwise I can put the fire on. Umm, they... both Cranston's and the Regent further up, which is still called the Regent Building, they took sort of second runs, you know, just a few weeks after the main cinemas. And like Cranston's kept sort of, you know, trying different things to give it a special identity.**

**VB: That's interesting, it really is.**

[rustling; noise of tape whirring up to 0:22:02]

**VB: Thanks very much.**

[rustling; 5 seconds]

**TP: Just give it a stir. [spoon clinking]**

**VB: Thanks.**

**TP: There we are.**

**VB: I mean it sounds from what you're saying as if some of these cinemas in times were really quite erm it must have been quite an event to--**

**TP:** Oh, it was, it was. I mean it was a whole, a whole night out, you know, a complete night out.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** Yeah, it wasn't as if we were going to see, you know, pick a film like now, you go and see something and that's it really. But I mean even at the Salon here, you'd got the most amazing programme. You'd get a double feature, and a 'Laurel and Hardy', and the news. About three and a half hours you were in for... [laughs] And into the bargain, for the Salon, you could buy books of coupons.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Which meant that you could get it slightly cheaper if you bought a book of six coupons. [both laugh] Oh, it was really something to look forward to.

**VB: You mentioned in the questionnaire that the Salon was one of your favourite cinemas. What was it about the Salon that--**

**TP:** Ah, it had a special... special atmosphere of its own really. Of course it was all sorts of beautiful, you know, beautiful carvings and things. It is a beautiful place inside and erm it got specially, it got all sorts of films. I mean the Grosvenor, it was a sort of... it took them from... it was a member of the ABC chain and usually the things from the Regal would come there. But the erm Salon you just got everything, you see. It was erm... it was just nice, there was a very small balcony at the back, not a very good balcony actually. But you had it all really on one floor in a way. You just had this, you know, you felt you could really get to grips with the films better there. [laughs]

**VB: Yeah, it is a beautiful cinema. It's getting restored as well.**

**TP:** Oh, lovely, yes.

**VB: It's a lovely cinema to go to. I believe that there were some erm more eh less glamorous cinemas, people mentioned things like the Gem. I don't know if you remember--**

**TP:** The Gem. No, I don't think I was ever actually in it. I remember where it was.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** But I don't think I was actually ever in it. That was near St George's Cross.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Yes erm of course the whole string, a whole string down in Partick, but I wasn't allowed to go down there as far as that.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** [laughs] Well, the erm you could pick up quite a few bugs there you know. But eh they were all straight along Dumbarton Road, Partick, and the Kelvin, even one I believe further along, the Avenue and the Premier, incredible lot and there was the Tivoli, that was a slightly newer one, it's a Bingo Hall still up on Crow Road.

**VB: Oh yes.**

**TP:** That belonged to the ehh the Gaumont-British Chain. You know, that had the Gaumont in town and the New Savoy and so on, and they went on until they came out of the Tivoli.

**VB: Yeah. So that was a more-- a grander cinema then?**

**TP:** Well, it was newer and it was-- it was erm bigger than either the Grosvenor or certainly than the Salon.

**VB: Right. Did you go mainly to the local cinemas like the Salon?**

**TP:** No, I went to everywhere [laughs] erm, we usually went to the-- you know into town on Saturdays to one of the cinemas there. Regal was the favourite, I think, before the Paramount and Odeon came along. But the first one I really remember-- the Regal, of course, was a sort of, it was a newer cinema. The one that I always remember being there was La Scala.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** That's-- you know where that was? It's on the erm corner of Wellington Street, I think it is. It's erm they had those erm opposite, almost opposite, Marks & Spencer's.

**VB: Yes, I know where you are.**

**TP:** And, of course, the Gaumont was directly opposite that, which is erm... a ghastly market thing now.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** That was the Gaumont, you see. That was, I think probably, that was the first big one in Glasgow, [before?] my time, in Glasgow. I think that was really the first big one in Glasgow.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** It was just known as the Picture House.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Which indicates it was one of the first. Ah there again, before I knew it, it had in the-- I believe, it had also an elaborate forecourt with fountains playing and things like that.

**VB: Really.**

**TP:** Aha... and round the corner from that was the New Savoy, in Hope Street. And the odd thing was, that the-- they just went-- the films they played at the Gaumont, they went round to the corner to the New Savoy for the next week.

**VB: Right, I see. I didn't realise that, I thought films were sort of going between cinemas.**

**TP:** Yes, they were. They had a week at each, you see, usually at that time. And, yeah the whole chain, of course, the Green's Playhouse which was the biggest of all. Then you came down to the Regent, second run places, good places, but second, Regent and Cranston's, and then the more scruffy Grand Central down on Jamaica Street.

**VB: Right. I mean what were these like inside? I heard that the Green's Playhouse had a dance hall as well?**

**TP:** That was up, it belonged to the same people, but it was on the top floor.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** You got all the famous Big Bands of the day playing there. Joe Loss came and erm people like that. And...erm... in fact I've got a friend in London, her husband was a band leader, Lew Stone, and she was considerably younger than he was, he's been dead some time. She, during the war, she used to come up here, they used to stay up here you see, when Louis would do his seasons at the Green's Playhouse, which was a very fashionable dance hall. All the best bands. It had the [laughs] it was a huge-- oh it was a barn of a place, you sort of groped your way about in the dark, you'd get lost in there it was so big and they had seats which they called the 'Golden Divans'.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Yes, that was supposed to be the height of luxury.

**VB: Was that these...?**

**TP:** Not chummy seats, no.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** I don't think they had chummy seats there. Some of the Partick cinemas had chummy seats [laughs] but the-- we couldn't afford the Golden Divans. [laughs]

**VB: What would they be like?**

**TP:** I don't know, just specially comfortable and all this.

**VB: I see.**

**TP:** But you know, placed just the right distance from the screen and you know.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Overlooking the rest of the common herd down.



**VB: You mentioned that the Gaumont was not quite as grand as you remember it from the days when it had fountains outside.**

**TP:** It became the-- oh, I remember my mother was very distressed, you know, when they altered it. It was sort of streamlined and you know.

**VB: Yeah, yeah.**

**TP:** You know, the sort of erm typical thirties architecture inside. It became, you know, just functional and streamlined.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** The glamour was gone. [laughs]

**VB: Really.**

**TP:** Not inside, no. The cinema was a beautiful cinema inside, big sort of arches and things like that at the side. Almost like boxes, they didn't use them as boxes but that sort of--

**VB: Right, I see.**

**TP:** Architecture at the sides there. New Savoy round the corner, it, I believe, was built as a music hall and which didn't take off and it became a cinema fairly speedily. It was a draughty cinema [both laugh]. No, but one was never quite at home there. The Regal was gorgeous when it-- it was only the one ori-- for a long time it was only the one, and erm it had, before the war, they had to get rid of-- they had a glass roof in which artificial grapes were growing all over it, yes. And at the side, there were like three boxes and they were all sort of erm seasonal constructions in each of the box. Not pictures, I mean you know, more sort of built-in models of different seasons at each side of the screen.

**VB: Is that-- I mean, I'm trying try to visualise it, I mean when you say models, what-- ?**

**TP:** Well, erm sort of almost tableaux, you know, with artificial flowers, and fruits, and trees and things, you know.

**VB: It sounds interesting.**

**TP:** But it was like sort of in boxes, in theatre, I'm talking about theatre boxes...

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**TP:** Scene of a Spanish thing, you know, balconies with shawls draped over them and things like that. That was a, you know, fairly small one.

**VB: Yes**

**TP:** It was constructed in that way.

**VB: Amazing, really is. You mentioned La Scala as well, what was that like inside?**

**TP:** Well that was where you could have a cup of tea when you were watching the cinema.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Yes. At the side, I mean, I suppose this was the screen here, over there, that side, there was a whole, a complete tea room. It was a, you know

**VB: That sounds wonderful.**

**TP:** You had... you sat, as you would in a café, you sat at your table and you could watch the cinema film at the same time.

**VB: And did they actually bring things to you?**

**TP:** Oh, they had waitresses, waitress service [both laugh] 'cause originally you see, it, the noise, didn't matter. There was probably, I don't know whether they-- I can't remember whether they got rid of that when the talkies came, but with silent films of course that didn't matter. Any clattering of dishes didn't matter.

**VB: Yes. I see what you mean, yes... I mean did--**

**TP:** And of course they had erm I mean at that time, they had little orchestras in the town cinemas and erm that was before the, you know, the cinema organ became popular.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** I mean the erm well certainly, the Gaumont had an orchestra originally. I can remember one there and there were other places like the Salon, of course, they had a pianist thumping away.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Mood music for the films, you know, creepy music and romantic music. And I mean some silent films they went through a time when they composed songs to go with the films. I mean, for instance, there was one erm film *Seventh Heaven*, Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell originally, and they had a beautiful theme song, 'Diane' for that, which is still played now actually. This was great for the... I mean the, all sheet music would have the photographs of the stars and the film.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Songs tacked on, even though they were silent films and the erm pianist, or little orchestra or whatever would, or the company would play that particular theme for that film.

**VB: I see. So, I mean, that... did you actually, I mean, did people go out and buy the sheet music after seeing--?**

**TP:** Oh yes. Oh my goodness, yes. 'Cause I mean there were shops, you see, it's hard to credit now, I mean, like at the corner of Renfield Street, there was a big shop called Frank Simpson's, which sold nothing but sheet music.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Of all kinds.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** You see. I mean everything, I mean that was what they made the popular songs, you know the 'Tin Pan Alley' people who made their money out of the sheet music. You'd see it in films very often, in period films you got someone--

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** Who is a piano player in the story.

**VB: Yes. I mean that must have worked almost like an advert for the song I suppose as well?**

**TP:** Oh yes, yes, yes, yes. Some of them really, I mean it was a fairly rare thing actually to have songs attached to films, but erm several of them did and the you know, the film was popular, the song became popular. A lot of early Irving Berlin songs would be played erm you know along with films.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** Particularly attached to films, accidentally or otherwise.

**VB: This is really interesting. The other thing I was wanting to ask you about as well--**

**TP:** Yeah.

**VB: If you remembered turns at the cinema, 'cause I heard some of the cinemas had competitions and things for--?**

**TP:** Umm... I never came in contact with those, so I don't know whether they ever did or not I'm not sure, but erm I really have no experience of that at all. I know it happened, but erm not here, nor indeed can I remember them in the centre of the city.

**VB: Right. I mean I've only heard it from one or two people, so maybe it was quite an uncommon thing.**

**TP:** I mean it's erm I've no doubt they go to all sorts-- have certain evenings perhaps, local talent or something like that, but I haven't really any personal experience of that.

**VB: Right, right. I mean you mentioned you had memories of the silent films, what was it like when sound came, do you--?**

**TP:** Oh, it was great. I mean of course it was very exciting. First cinema-- one actually, a big cinema in town, I was only in it once in my life, that was the Coliseum, the other side of-- the Coliseum and the Bedford on the other side of the river. I never really went to the Coliseum because they always shared films with the Regal you see.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** And living this side. The only time I ever went to the Coliseum was quite late in its life when *My Fair Lady* was on. It didn't show anywhere else.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** But erm it, I think, was the first to have talkies, 'cause I remember my brother going to erm he was older than I was, and he went to see a film called *In Old Arizona*, which was one of the first films about the Cisco Kid. Umm Warner Baxter and Edmund Lowe, I think. And his big excitement there was not the voices or anything, but to hear the bacon crackling as it was being cooked, you know. And, of course, they had a lot of erm... first one I ever saw was a part-talkie called *The Barker* at La Scala. That had the same Milton Sills, who was in *The Sea Hawk* as it happens, and erm the young juvenile man was Douglas Fairbanks Jr., and that was a part-talkie, and sometimes they were a bit rough and ready the sound machines at that time. But a lot of films of course they suddenly, you know, they were caught short in the middle of making it and they would add a talkie bit on.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** But I liked that *The Barker* sort of jumped backwards and forwards between the two. And erm... I remember, very exciting, the first talkie at the Salon here. It was a film of a farce *Rookery Nook*, Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn, that was the first talkie there. [laughs]

**VB: What was that like?**

**TP:** Oh it was great! [laughs] I mean some of them turn up on the box, see, and they're still funny, they still work well.

**VB: That was quite a popular movie wasn't it, *Rookery Nook*?**

**TP:** Oh yes, *Rookery Nook*, yes. And it's still done on the stage a lot. That particular gang of people, Robertson Hare, people like that, who you know, they always worked together.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** They had, you know, plays specially written to suit them.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** And when they ran out of plays, they did them especially for the screen.

**VB: I didn't realise that actually, that it had been a play before--**

**TP:** Oh very much so, yes. And as I say, it's done a lot still, revived quite often. Oh, nearly all those Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, all the earlier ones, were plays originally and adapted for the screen, as I say. Eventually, they ran out and ended up with the same author Ben Travers wrote the original screenplays for them later on.

**VB: Ah, I see. So, I didn't realise there was, you know, a sequence of these. I mean were they all--?**

**TP:** Oh yes, they were known-- they were done originally at the Aldwych theatre in London and they are usually called the 'Aldwych farces', because of that, because they were always at that particular place.

**VB: Right. Was that something-- I mean, did you like that type of movie or?**

**TP:** I liked them, yes, erm [pause 3 seconds] not that I like all farces-- they were marvellous though, they were quite, you know, touch of genius there.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** And it worked very well, they were very popular. I mean, of course, in British films they erm were very dependent originally on the stage favourites. A lot of them, you know musical or comedy

people on the stage were Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge, people like that. Jessie Matthews later on, they were all translated into films see.

**VB: Did you like erm Jack Hulbert and Jessie Matthews?**

**TP:** Yes, Jessie Matthews, oh yes, I was devoted to Jessie Matthews.

**VB: Is it *Evergreen*, was one of her--?**

**TP:** Uhuh. That was her big film, but she was really quite a stunner and very, very clever. I know erm Andrew Lloyd Webber is planning a show, something about her anyway, 'cause the idea was that his-- Sarah Brightman, who is rather like her, would play her. And he ran through all her films and he said, he was absolutely staggered, sort of blazing genius, he hadn't realised you see. And of course, she-- her British films were popular in America as well... she had personal problems, which cut her career short you know, as a big star.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** Anyway, I think, she was always having nervous breakdowns, she had a rather unhappy, complicated life, with the result that her career ended long before it should have done. 'Cause I mean the real tragedy was, she was nearly erm she nearly went to be with Fred Astaire in Hollywood, and erm her husband at the time I think didn't want to, she was crazy about this man, so didn't go, he persuaded her not to go. He wanted to direct her, Sonnie Hale, in films here, and so she passed up that chance. Ah, I mean they would have been a wonder. I think it was *Damsel in Distress*, the idea was that she would do that with him.

**VB: Yes, I mean it would have changed the way--**

**TP:** Oh, hmm, with the result she never did make a Hollywood movie as it happens.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** But erm some of her films, they really come over extremely well on television now. *Evergreen* is the best, but there are other good ones as well. Her personality is tremendous.

**VB: Yeah, I mean she seemed very talented and--**

**TP:** Oh, in every way, yes, absolutely, yes. Quite stunningly good.

**VB:** You mentioned a number of other stars that you do like, like Ronald Colman.

**TP:** Oh yes, yes, yes. He was one of course he remained a star all his life. Some of them when they're, when they get on in their career-- oh, I always remember Deborah Kerr saying she'd rather retire than appear in cameo roles and disaster movies.

**VB:** Right [both laugh]

**TP:** But Ronald Colman remained, you know, even in one of his last films, he last won an Oscar, the one erm the Othello, the one, what's it called, 'His Double Life' [referring to *A Double Life*] or something like that?

**VB:** Really.

**TP:** It's one of those films about-- a theme that's been used several times, about an actor playing Othello on the stage who nearly does strangle his wife eventually, it's happened in several different forms of that. But that was very late in his career.

**VB:** I didn't know that, that he'd won--

**TP:** He actually got an Oscar for that, yes.

**VB:** What was is that you particularly liked about Ronald Colman?

**TP:** Oh very debonair. You know, lashings of charm, good actor. He made a marvellous, marvellous Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities* for instance. He could carry that sort of thing, a real touch of class about him.

**VB:** Hmm... yes, I agree with that, yes. And, erm, yes...

**TP:** You would have thought, you know, you would have said before, early on, you know, terrific, but limited.

**VB:** Yes.



**TP:** Oh, this is of course the thing that always erm I mean the difference between a great screen actor and a great screen star, in both sexes. I mean, you know the, you can say so-and-so is probably the greatest star that's been, but he or she wasn't the greatest actress.

**VB: Hmm, can you--?**

**TP:** Yeah, erm well, I would say the greatest male star that's ever been was Clark Gable, but I mean he wasn't a-- he was doing variations of his own personality erm, whereas if you get a great actor like erm I would say, Henry Fonda, Spencer Tracy, you know. Same with women, erm... you get your great personalities like oh, Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, people like that, and you get your great actresses like Garbo, Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, I would think. You see the difference I'm making?

**VB: Yes... Do you think that the ability to cover a range of roles is important in that?**

**TP:** Well, it's erm... it's the difference I think between being a great star and technically a great actor or actress. I mean I'm not saying that the one thing is better to be than the other. I mean you had those tremendous erm people who the camera loved them, you know. And erm they all seemed-- of course, I'm a great believer in the erm, in some ways, in the studio system. I know it had its evils in many ways, but it erm it gave a tremendous discipline and a tremendous training, and the-- I mean at that time, there was no sort of easy road to stardom. You had to erm... you know, work your way up. I remember in a company like MGM, which was the biggest company, I mean there was terrific to-do, I mean so-and-so has been appointed a star, his or her name is above the title now. People like Myrna Loy, for instance, who had a long, long apprenticeship in supporting parts and the great occasion was when she became the 19<sup>th</sup> MGM official star or something like that.

**VB: I mean that's interesting what you're saying, do you think that there was difference between the way erm say the stars in Britain and the stars in Hollywood or...?**

**TP:** Umm, Britain... later, I mean certain British setups adopted-- like I mean the greatest British setup was the Alexander Korda regime and I mean he treated his-- he ran it like a Hollywood studio really. I mean he signed people up on long personal contract and erm... I mean in the Hollywood studios of course, I think they had people in to-- I mean let's say people like Joan Crawford who came of very humble origins. They had erm you know, famous elderly actresses in to coach them how to speak, with the result that they had beautiful voices. I don't know whether it's-- it all seems

to me they spoke infinitely better than the bulk of the American movie actresses today, who don't have that sort of training. I mean it was-- they were built so carefully and one of the great pleasures of going to the cinema in the thirties was the-- I mean you could walk into a cinema and you knew at once what studio had made that film. Because I mean now it could be anything, there's no sort of stamp, studio stamp really on any films now. I don't know whether you'd agree there, like that's a Columbia TriStar or something like that. It could be anything as far as-- whereas at Warner Brothers they had this whole wonderful gang of people erm supporting players. You know, Joan Blondell, Glenda Farrell, Frank McHugh, Allen Jenkins, the lot and you could tell they hadn't just the stars under contract, they had this whole galaxy of support, so you went to see oh that's a Warner show, once you saw the-- the people on screen. And that's what they were saying about-- there was a film erm Jane Fonda made a few years ago with erm Gregory Peck making a comeback, I've forgotten the name of it now. She, I think she put her money into it and she said that it has the same sort of appeal that *Gone with the Wind* had, you see. And it did nothing, the poll... they were saying that that had, the Jane Fonda film, had two or three stars in it. But *Gone with the Wind* apart from its stars, they had this whole galaxy of wonderful supporting players, that they don't have now. Time and time again, you see names in films appear for the first time, you know, and hardly ever appear again, or just last two or three films. Whereas erm I mean in the studio system, you were in bad luck if you didn't get ten years out of it, you know, as a star.

**VB: Yes. I mean I was interested when you were saying that about Myrna Loy and it was almost like an apprenticeship.**

**TP:** Well she was very unusual actually, because she played for years in supporting oriental vamp roles and she, erm she turns up in the oddest films with little bits. I would say she must have worked a good ten years in that sort of thing. And then she arrived at MGM and they started you know giving her-- I mean MGM did very good B-pictures. I mean you probably noticed things you've seen on the box, some of the B films were extremely good, inexpensive but tremendously well worth looking at. Well she would start off in that and then she got bigger parts. And then of course, she hit the jackpot when she made... began a partnership with William Powell.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** You see from then on, she was above the title.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** She had this remarkable gift, you know, for high comedy, which was discovered... which, you know, you either have it or you haven't.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** I mean people try-- I mean they frequently try to evoke that style now and they all say, oh gosh, you know that doesn't come off 'cause they just haven't got the-- it's like you're born with that style really. If you haven't got it, you can't be taught it.

**VB: Yeah. I was very interested about that, I didn't realise that Myrna Loy had done all these other roles because I hadn't associated her with that.**

**TP:** Oh yes. She was almost a sort of-- she was in that early film of the musical *The Desert Song* in which she was Azuri the... and her classic line, which I always remember was [with an accent] 'Where is Pierre?' She was a real caricature, she did all sorts of things like that and various other supporting parts as well. That was unusual too, for someone to be around so long in supporting parts and then suddenly hit the big time. 'Cause she wasn't really originally attached, I think she went all over the place, all the different studios as a freelance.

[pause 4 seconds]

**VB: What about the early colour films as well?**

**TP:** Well erm they of course were-- *Desert Song*, I mean was one of them. They were particularly rather garish type of colour film. Warner did a lot of erm musicals, which they translated with people from the stage. I remember one for instance called *Viennese Nights*, which was very popular with a stage actress Vivienne Segal and erm Walter Pidgeon oddly enough was in a lot of them as a singer. Ah a lot of as I say-- the other thing that the studios did at that time, they had a sort of review style thing in which all their stars were on show. *Paramount on Parade*, Warner Brothers did *The Show of Shows*, MGM did what they called *The Hollywood Revue*, and they all had their own-- and some of them were erm *Paramount on Parade*, for instance, the big name there was Maurice Chevalier and it would sort of burst out into colour for the big finale. I mean it was quite, quite usual for films to be part black and white part colour. I mean the first big musical success, the original *Broadway Melody* [coughs] it burst into colour for one scene, 'The Wedding of the Painted Doll', you see the rest of it was black and white. Oddly enough, another film I have a video of is called *The Cat and the Fiddle*.

Jeanette MacDonald and Ramon Novarro were the stars and some-- a friend in London gave me a copy of this. He said erm have you got the bit where it goes into colour, the copy where it goes into colour at the end. I said, yes. Well some of them don't.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** I think when it was originally shown in the cinema, it was all black and white, but this copy I have goes into a sort of garish colour at the end. But of course eventually they got to a point where they erm there were only a certain number of colours used in those earlier films, *Gold Diggers of Broadway* and things like that. But the first film in which colour was subtly used, I'm not sure how many they used there, was a version of *Vanity Fair* called *Becky Sharp* with Miriam Hopkins. And that was the first sort of really where colour was used the way as an artist would use it.

**VB: And what did it feel like seeing these first colour films, for instance you mentioned--**

**TP:** Well, as I say, those early ones, you know at a young age, you just took them as nice, you know. [laughs]

**VB: Not too impressed then. [laughs]**

**TP:** Well, yeah, they were alright. Eh I wasn't particularly, you know, I didn't really enjoy them any better than I enjoyed black and white films. As you know, I mean there are certain films that would always look better in black and white than they would have done. Black and white suits them.

**VB: Hmm.**

**TP:** Whereas colour wouldn't have done. It's just very often it is-- I mean something like *The Maltese Falcon*, *Casablanca*, they are made for black and white, aren't they really. Nobody wants them tinted up or anything like that.

**VB: It's hard to imagine something like that opening shot in *Maltese Falcon* in colour--**

**TP:** Well of course, of course. Yes, black and white just suits them perfectly, as I say. But you did eventually, you got the better types of colour.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** Coming in. But it wasn't just [inaudible] I mean that particular type of colour that they used for Van-- eh *Becky Sharp*, oddly enough it was perfected by RKO Radio, which was not really one of the biggest companies.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** And they erm experimented-- they did a short film *La Cucaracha*, which featured the song for the first time, with an actress called Steffi Duna and then they did another one later on, a full-length one called *The Dancing Pirate*, which she was in as well and that led up to *Becky Sharp*, with this new type of colour that they were using.

**VB: So there was quite a difference between the early--**

**TP:** Oh very much. It was a difference almost between, it was a sort of pastel shades really in the later ones, you know.

**VB: Right, yeah.**

**TP:** Whereas in the original ones, you just used one or two primary colours, which gave a fairly garish effect.

[pause 3 seconds]

**VB: I mean, do you think that there were... were there other changes between black and white and colour, I mean apart from the colour. Do you think that film changed a lot?**

**TP:** Well they got to, you see later-- those early colour films were nearly all musicals.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** It was all-- I think practically, just about the first big scale straight film, there may have been some before, but the first one I remember, big scale straight film was the original version of *A Star is Born* with Janet Gaynor and Fredric March. That blazed the trail for non-musicals to be made in colour, that was followed up by Carole Lombard in *Nothing Sacred*.

**VB: I see.**

**TP:** You see, so that was the big change really. Up to then, they had been purely decorative, now they were being used for dramatic effect as well.

**VB: Ah I see. Fredric March again, was he someone that you particularly liked?**

**TP:** Yes, I think he was a very considerable actor erm he had a slightly un-- something about his voice that wasn't quite entirely pleasing, but he was so good that, which spoiled a bit, 'cause they would cast him very often in rather glamorous costume parts like erm Vronsky in *Anna Karenina* with Garbo and Anthony Adverse. Erm one-- Robert Browning in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. But he was so good an actor, that he always-- I don't know, he had a timbre in his voice that wasn't quite pleasing, but it didn't matter, 'cause he was so good. You know, a very good character actor actually. I tell you, one of his later parts, a brilliant performance, a film with Joan Crawford erm the original title, it wasn't used in this country, was *Susan and God*. I think it was shown here as *The Gay Mrs Trexel* or something like that.

**VB: [laughs] Right.**

**TP:** He played the-- her, Joan Crawford's, drunken husband and she gets erm taken from a play, Gertrude Lawrence did it on Broadway originally, and Susan, becomes involved in a fashionable high-cult religion, you see. And erm she's estranged from her husband you see, and he erm he thinks it's erm something genuine, I mean he resolves to kick the habit and then of course he realises that it's a sham as far as he's concerned and back to the bottle again, until the end, where they cut their losses and they make the best of things. But it's one of those brilliant performances, it could have gone for nothing, but he just made it, you know something very special. Of course, he did the, well not the original, but the original talkie version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. And another fascinating film about the same period, *Death Takes a Holiday*. I don't know if you've ever heard of that one. It's taken from a play and erm Death takes the form of an Italian Count and, you know, very handsome, and girls fall for him immediately. And erm but as soon as they get to the clinch, something strikes them and they draw back, until eventually erm he encounters a girl who, she's literally in love with death, a death wish eventually, and he takes her eventually...

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

**TP:** But erm it was a Paramount Picture, it was a, you know, quite a classic in its way. It is taken-- it was a play originally, before that.

**VB:** I'd heard-- I'd love to see that, because I really enjoyed *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

**TP:** Yes, yes. I mean he did a tremendous lot, but as I say he got into the sort of cycle of costume films, which wasn't ideal for him, but he looked good and he erm... particularly as I say, he was a marvellous Robert Browning in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. He had this tremendous erm you know, vigour, you know, which brings life back to Elizabeth, which brings us on to another odd thing, the original *Barretts of Wimpole Street* with Norma Shearer was the Elizabeth, who was a big, big star of her time, who hasn't-- whose films haven't survived somehow. I mean the big three at MGM were Garbo, Shearer, and Joan Crawford. Now everybody knows Garbo, everybody knows Joan Crawford, but quite a lot of people don't know Norma Shearer at all. But, of course she was the boss's wife, Irving Thalberg, and erm it's a little bit erm he, I mean she had ability, but I don't think she would have been as big a star had it not-- like you know Anna Neagle and Herbert Wilcox, you know. But I mean in both cases, they worked damn hard you see, apart from anything else, and Norma Shearer, actually, if you look at her, somebody erm got hold of erm a friend in London -- he got hold of the original version of *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*, Frederick Lonsdale comedy with Norma Shearer. And he couldn't believe it, he said, you know, how good she was in comedy, because later on she was inclined to go into sort of big ambitious stuff. Which, eventually, she, I mean she was an extraordinary-- I was looking at this again recently, she was an extraordinary *Marie Antoinette*, for instance. But, originally, she had this style for erm comedy, what they used to call at that time 'sex-dramas'. She was very good at that, that sort of thing. And erm but I think her husband decided now was the time for her to go into something-- you know that was the period when the censors suddenly clamped down, the whole Hay period, the clamp-down on certain rules and they were much less permissive and so she went into, you know, things like *Smilin' Through* and so on, and actually got a bigger following as a result. But erm as I say, her-- I think if you saw one of her films, ah she was well known for a slight cast in her eye, which you can see, she was obviously photographed very carefully, but erm if you look at some of her films now, even those after her husband died that she made, without his influence, she had learnt her, her trade by that time.

**VB: That's interesting, so there's a difference in later--**

**TP:** Well, not as much as you would expect, but I mean she was able to stand on her own feet by that time shall we say. Whereas earlier, earlier on, obviously she would get all the best people to coach her, in every way I mean, 'cause somebody said, well I mean of course I got the part, 'cause she sleeps with the boss doesn't she? [laughs] But I mean she had, I think, quite a starry quality about her, 'cause you see her father was a very, a highly intelligent man. I mean that's all-- I mean MGM at this time, they bought all the big classics, they made films of the classics of that time, high-culture profile under his regime.

**VB: Yes. I mean you mentioned Anna Neagle as well**

**TP:** Yeah.

**VB: Was she someone that you liked as an actress or?**

**TP:** [sighs; pause] Again, I mean she had a quality about her. She's erm I mean, she wasn't nearly as good as another musical actress, Evelyn Laye, who didn't make very many films. I mean she was infinitely, infinitely better as an artist. Anna Neagle couldn't sing very well, also she couldn't dance very well, but she, again backed by her husband, she learnt her job and she had a certain quality which came and she was able to-- she worked so hard, she was able to eventually do sort of *Victoria the Great* and *Odette* and things like that later on. And erm... she was never a top favourite of mine, but I mean I admired her for what she did.

**VB: Hmm. I mean her Victoria was very successful, wasn't it?**

**TP:** Oh yes, tremendously, yes. They did *Victoria the Great* first of all and it was so successful they went into colour for the next one, *Sixty Glorious Years*, which was the follow-up, you know.

**VB: Ah.**

**TP:** And I think eventually they amalgamated them as a re-issue, sort of knocked them together [laughs]

**VB: I mean were they films that you enjoyed so much you went back to--?**



**TP:** Oh yes. I mean certain films I could see regularly. I mean I still, you know, if I video them, I can watch them over, you know. A film like erm, say, *The Little Foxes*, Bette Davis. I mean I have it on video. It was on one Sunday afternoon, so I thought I'd just turn it on and see wha-- you know, where they've got-- and I couldn't switch it off. Although, you know, different things one, you notice every time. Certain films like that you can see over and over again and you get something fresh each time.

**VB: Do you video a lot of erm films, I know you said--**

**TP:** A lot [both laugh] a lot, yes. Some of them I video, simply because, you know, they are in the middle of the night or something like that. But I mean others I video too because they are films I want to--

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** For one reason or another, to erm keep.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** Now I video all the-- I mean in the less exalted fields, I video all the Alice Faye films, musicals for instance.

**VB: Yes, yeah.**

**TP:** Which had a particular quality about them.

**VB: What is it that draws you to Alice Faye films?**

**TP:** Now I thought she was marvellous. She had a-- she's not the greatest singer ever, but she had this unique warmth and personality through erm who had a-- not a critics' favourite, but very much-- I mean I saw her at -- a few years back they did a erm I was in London at the time, it was erm what would have been Cole Porter's eightieth birthday, I think, and they had all sorts of-- it was an all-stars show or something like that and Alice Faye came over for it, you know. She was then in her early seventies and, you know, she took the place by storm. She did erm a duet with *Van Johnson* and she looked gorgeous, I mean, and erm she made no-- I mean she had a revea--, beautiful legs and she looked wonderful. She's always been a great favourite in this country. I know other people

that feel the same about her and they're very well made films too, perhaps not the greatest musicals, but marvellous songs in them and they are very, very efficiently made. And there again, they had a great little gang of people with her to duet. Jack Oakie, supporting people like that, John Payne, you see. Again, the colour there is slightly more garish than other studios at the time really, but chocolate-boxy, I should say really as far as colour, chocolate-boxy. And of course, later, she really gave way to Betty Grable, later on. That same type of film.

**VB: I mean are musicals are particular interest of yours?**

**TP:** Yes, oh yes. I'm very fond of musicals, very fond of stage musicals and I'm very fond of good cinema musicals as well... Again, with musical elements in it, another film I could see, it's not nearly as good a film as *The Little Foxes*, it's one I can see over and over again, is *San Francisco*. Have you ever seen that?

**VB: I haven't, no.**

**TP:** Oh it's a terrific film. It's a-- it culminates in a most marvellous staging of the earthquake of course. It has Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy and Jeanette MacDonald. And you know Jeanette MacDonald, she had all these rather strange mannerisms, but for that film, they used them to perfection and she fitted perfectly well into that, you know. They used all her little tricks and just the right director. And it was a singing part, you see, that was interpolated into it and of course you had erm Gable as the racketeer and Spencer Tracy as the priest, who'd been boyhood friends together. And you get the sort of the clash between them later on of course and the whole problem solved by the earthquake finally. [both laugh] But it's one of those immaculately made, you know, pure Hollywood at its best.

**VB: I mean there are-- I like these kinds of films where they have a sparking off each other--**

**TP:** Oh yes, absolutely. I mean the, it was-- very sentimental ending, but very erm... it works--

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** You can take it 'cause of the-- no, it's one of those. Certain directors knew how to, maybe not the greatest films, like W.S. Van Dyke erm but they knew just how to just mix the elements. You see there were so many very good sec-- erm you don't hear them mentioned in awe-struck terms like

Hitchcock or William Wyler or someone like that, but you get people as I say like W.S. Van Dyke and Henry Hathaway, people like that. That made wonderful second rate-- you could be guaranteed a good film from them, whatever they did really. They were thorough pros.

**VB: Did you enjoy the other types of movies like, for instance, erm sort of gangster movies?**

**TP:** Oh yes. I loved the-- particularly I mean when you get to Bogart and I mean they're absolutely... supreme as far as that. But Cagney and Edward G. Robinson. Yes, I loved them, yeah. I liked really any kind of film [laughs] to be honest.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** But there are some classics among them of course.

**VB: I mean when you were going to the movies in that period, did you go to more or less every film or did you make a conscious choice to--?**

**TP:** [sighs; pause] A very wide range of-- a very wide range of films I went to, because, you know, principally-- I mean, you get a film, for instance, which a film called *The Dark Angel*, which had erm Fredric March again, Herbert Marshall and Merle Oberon, which, you know, is pure slush in some ways, you see. But, with those stars and I forget who the director was, but absolute magic. I'd go to see that because of the people in it.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** You see. It was a very, very powerful, powerful film, those people, just to look at them. They leap off the screen at you and they could make things that could be quite trite and rubbishy, they would make, you know, a considerable experience. It was like, with those stars, it was like spending an evening with friends to a certain extent. You know. As I say, not just the stars, but the supporting people as well. People like Joan Blondell, the tough girl with a heart of gold, you know, that sort of and wonderful supporting comedienne like Eve Arden. Do you know her? Have you ever seen her?

**VB: I don't, no.**

**TP:** You watch out for her. But she is the last word in the sort of laid-back, friend of the heroine type, you know.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** She is absolutely-- you will see. You will see her if she crops up in films on the box quite a lot and she is absolutely second to none in that sort of thing. But there, see, you had those supporting players who made a career out of particular parts. It wasn't that they weren't perhaps good enough to do anything else, but they did that to perfection you see, and were constantly in demand. Like, you know, Edward Everett Horton in the Astaire/Rogers films, you know, the fluttery man you know, who was a supporting--

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** And I mean, again, he was marvellous at that sort of thing.

**VB: Yes. I must say I have a very soft spot for Nigel Bruce.**

**TP:** Oh yes, yes.

**VB: You know when you were saying that, I was thinking of him. You know, he's always the sort of erm you know, the supporting roles.**

**TP:** Yes. He actually came from British films, he made some British films before he went to erm... you always wonder with an actor like that, you think, you know, when he began, could you expect him to become wor-- you know, no looks or anything like that, you know. And yet, you remember him better than you remember some of the big romantic stars.

**VB: Very much so.**

**TP:** 'Cause, you know, you wonder-- he was in the *Becky Sharp* I was talking about. Wonderful part, wonderful part in that, he's the sort of stupid brother that's, you know, constantly gulled by Becky Sharp, who eventually ends up lumbered with her at the end. And he did all those wonderful 'Sherlock Holmes' ones with Basil Rathbone. Those were the-- this is what we miss now, we don't-- 'cause the type of B-picture that was made then, has become a television series now. That's what you don't get in the cinema anymore, like the Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce series. Oh, there were lots of series like that, like, they were on just recently, the Ann Sothern films about 'Maisie'.

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

**TP:** They are worth a look at, because they are very well... erm a friend I was talking to recently, hadn't-- he knew Ann Sothorn was a musical actress, but he'd never seen, he hadn't bothered about them, but suddenly he latched on, they were showing a whole string of 'Maisie' films and thought they were great, you see. Oddly enough they used erm... you know how some films are recycled again and again, well the one, it was originally called *Red Dust* with Clark Gable and Jean Harlow and erm there was a later version with Gable again, called *Mogambo* in which he played with Ava Gardner. But in-between there was one called *Congo Maisie*, which was the same story used as a 'Maisie'. Which talking about *Red Dust*, it's erm Jean Harlow to me is the erm greatest of that particular-- I think far better than Marilyn Monroe ever was. If you look at her, there was a film on with Jean Harlow on television recently, called *Suzy*. Oh, a real piece of hokum, but she was absolutely terrific. And she was not only sexy, but she was terribly likeable.

**VB: Mhm.**

**TP:** Which I think is erm... I mean she died, she was only in her twenties when she died. But *Red Dust* is an amazing film. It's erm... I mean, you get all the, I mean currently, you get all the writhing and reeling and sex films, but *Red Dust* had nothing of that and it was far sexier. I mean, another remarkable actress was in it, Mary Astor, and there's a scene where Clark Gable and she are caught in a rainstorm in the jungle and he carries her in with a wet dress, and that's one of the sexiest things I have ever seen in a movie. [laughs] 'Cause she had, Mary Astor, she is another one who had a remarkable career, you know, ups and downs some time. I mean *Maltese Falcon* is one of the high spots, but I mean by the time she hit that, she was too old to become a big star regularly. You know what I mean, she was nearly due for mother roles by that time. And she did another one with Bette Davis, *The Great Lie*, in which she played a concert pianist and I think she got the best award, Supporting Award at the Oscar for that, for that film. I mean she dates all the way back to silent films, but she had this terrific erm quality about her.

**VB: I was just looking at a piece about her quite recently and I know, I think it was maybe a 'Picturegoer' or a 'Film Weekly' or something, saying she had quite a tragic life, I think she was widowed quite early and re-married something like that and--**

**TP:** Yes, there was a terrible scandal. I think it was a purple diary that got brought out at her divorce.

**VB: Really?**

**TP:** I think one of her husbands died and then there was the divorce and they brought out this purple diary.

**VB:** That must have been before her divorce actually--

**TP:** They brought out what was known as her 'purple diary', which apparently made the hair curl, you see.

**VB:** Really?

**TP:** And it really, nearly finished her career.

**VB:** I can imagine because--

**TP:** At that time.

**VB:** Yes.

**TP:** You know when everything like that was swept under the carpet, but I mean again, she was-- I think she had a drink problem later on but despite all this, she kept coming back and the quality was still there.

**VB:** That's so interesting, because, I mean as I say, the thing I was looking at--

**TP:** Put that down there, to save you worrying. Let's put it under this--

**VB:** It must have been before the purple diary erm because--

**TP:** Yes, I think erm listen up, I don't know if it'll tell me in this – have you come across Ephraim Katz's erm *Encyclopaedia*?

**VB:** No, I haven't. I haven't, no.

**TP:** It's the best of any. This... there's a new version just been brought out now, it's only just been published. This one is not quite as erm up-to-date, this one I have, but it's great. You can get the new version hardback for a mere thirty pounds. But that's erm...

**VB: Thanks very much.**

**TP:** And it deals with directors, producers and everyone, you see.

**VB: I mean that's, yes, it looks very-- I'm just looking at Mary Astor.**

**TP:** Yes, that's what I got it for, seeing what it says there. It really very often just mentions the marriages if there were--

**VB: Yes, I see it says here, she had off-screen adventures, including stormy love affairs with John Barrymore, four marriages, alcoholism, attempted suicide erm... [laughs] and that's right, her first husband Kenneth Hawks, brother of Howard Hawks--**

**TP:** Ah yes.

**VB: Died in a 1930 plane crash.**

**TP:** Ah, that's it, yes, yes.

**VB: And then she had a custody battle over her daughter in divorcing her second husband and, as you say, in 1936 her personal diary was produced in court, listing her indiscretions, including a secret love affair with playwright George Kaufman, is it, Kaufman?**

**TP:** Yes.

**VB: Yes. And she won an Academy Award in *The Great Lie*.**

**TP:** Yes, that was *The Great Lie*, that was the Tchaikovsky piano concerto [hums] da-da-da 'cause they all-- I mean it became-- it was added in the sheet music after that.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** People used to joke about it, 'the concerto' they called it, because Mary Astor made it popular by appearing to play it in the film.

**VB: Ah, I see.**

**TP:** That's great, you see, there are all sorts of eh you know, people you wondered what happened, with so-and-so, she became a beauty consultant and very wealthy and became a--

**VB: Yes, yeah.**

**TP:** It's got everything. It's erm everything in there, most obscure supporting people. As I say, the new one will-- Katz, I think is dead now, someone else has brought it up to date.

**VB: Right.**

**TP:** And erm the new one will deal with people that aren't there.

**VB: Yes. I mean 'cause you mentioned as well that you read a lot of the film magazines.**

**TP:** Oh, yes, yes, yes. The best one ever, the best weekly that died with the outbreak of war was 'Film Weekly'.

**VB: Mmmh.**

**TP:** It was a sort of-- it wasn't a gossip magazine, well, it wasn't too high-brow, but it was a very, it dealt critically with films. There was that and 'Picturegoer Weekly', which survived it, and 'Film Pictorial' and the original one, the 'Picture Show', it was called.

**VB: Did you use these as a guide to films?**

**TP:** Oh, I was... yes, and you know, also, sort of films in the making. And of course, one of the great interests there, was the shifting of people from studio to studio. Umm you know, there was considerable excitement about like a studio like Warner Brothers raided Paramount and took away three of their best actors. And erm I mean, as I say, the character of a film was dictated by its studio. It was a matter of considerable interest if somebody moved from MGM to Warner's, which you find hard to imagine now, because there was such a monolithic structure here. You found out all about that and you found out about films that they were making and so on. I mean there was a great 'Film Weekly', a great one every year, in which they had a sort of special supplement with all the new films for the coming winter.

**VB: Ah, I see.**



**TP:** Which was great.

**VB:** I mean did you go to the pictures more at certain times of year or--?

**TP:** No. Always erm... I went on an average twice a week. Occasionally, three times. Twice a week was, because you must remember, at the suburban cinemas it changed mid-week. You see, at the Salon, the Grosvenor, the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, Friday, Saturday, were the two different films, unless there was something very, very special. In which case, they'd keep it on for a whole week.

**VB:** Was there any time in your life that you stopped going to the pictures or...? [pause 3 seconds]  
Or times that you went more or?

**TP:** Erm... I think I became less... regular after say the [pause 3 seconds] sixties, seventies.

**VB:** Yes.

**TP:** Because erm I was going more to the theatre, I was more interes-- I took that up as a study you see. Consequently, I was inclined to go to the theatre probably more than the, more than the cinema from then.

**VB:** Ah, I see.

**TP:** From then on. Nowadays I really just go to the GFT, you know. I'd like to go there more often than I do, I just don't find time. But erm, I'm more inclined to go there, I'm not so inclined to go to the town cinemas.

**VB:** Mhm.

**TP:** Umm what I miss of course, is the fact that at one time you could wander in in the middle of a film and see it round again. I find it a nuisance being tied to certain times. I mean you used to go again and see it round again if you wanted to, if you enjoyed it. I find it's never sort of really the right time. The GFT, that's different. The Grosvenor, I'm not going to on principle at the moment.

**VB:** Because of the--

**TP:** Until they get this thing--

**VB:** Yes.

**TP:** I wouldn't have minded so much if they'd given the Salon a good send-off, but just to close it in the middle of the week and rip the seats out, I thought was disgraceful. They don't care for the patrons, or the cinema or anything else obviously.

**VB:** I mean I agree, it was disgraceful that, and when it had just been refurbished and everything.

**TP:** I know what you're saying--

**VB:** Scandalous.

**TP:** It was an absolute disgrace. I mean obviously, I think they must have just bought it, to sell it. I wonder why they bought it when they had the other two here. But obviously, in Alnwick they had a link-up with the Western Baths [referring to the historic building in Cranworth Street], an understanding that eventually if they-- and I noticed at the other side of the structure, presumably that's the Western Bath's building on the way waste space on the other side.

**VB:** Is it? Yes, I suppose so.

**TP:** You see scaffolding up now, just on the other side of the Western Baths sort of. So, I mean, 'cause they, of course, they don't want anyone else, you see they don't want a rival cinema there, that's why they've been fighting against it... But again, it's a-- something was, about six months ago, something said they were going to sell, someone was going to buy it any moment, that hasn't happened yet. I really thought why should I support this lot, you know, when they go and do a really disgraceful thing like that.

**VB:** Absolutely, yeah. [pause 4 seconds] I mean, you mentioning going to the GFT reminds me to ask you earlier on about going to the Cosmo, 'cause you mentioned that.

**TP:** It was marvellous, of course. The trouble with the GFT, I find erm, you know, the bitty programming that goes on. I find something's gone you know--

**VB:** Mhm.

**TP:** If I'm busy, I find something is going on before I've realised it, you know, I've missed it. Whereas the Cosmo ran for, you know, straight weeks and things like that. But the Cosmo, there again was another beautifully-- the main cinema at the GFT is a travesty of what the Cosmo was, because it was so beautifully proportioned. You had the beautiful sloping ceilings with a clock in the middle of it. You know of course the—that was when they sort of knocked it about, you see, the proportion got lost as it is now. The Cinema Two, is a little beauty, but if you look at the big one, it's got no sort of aesthetic proportions about it as a building at all, the inside of it now. But erm no, and everything, I mean I'd read about all those, you know, the French films were the great things when the Cosmo opened and erm they were just, they were burgeoning in London at that time. There was a cinema, the Academy cinema, which George Singleton who opened the Cosmo, he really learnt from. I think he got the same person to buy his films that bought films for the Academy. And things you read about, you know, suddenly they were available in Glasgow for the, for the first time. The opening film was a Julien Duvivier film, *Un Carnet de Bal*, it was an absolute, oh, a new world opened, you know, seeing that sort of thing. You know, seeing great French stars of that time like Jean Gabin and... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**TP:** French news film and specially selected short films, and you even got erm music for your pleasure, particularly, you know, recording of music, an interlude. I mean they're absolutely, the programmes were worked out to a tee. You know, they were works of arts in films.

**VB:** That's interesting. I didn't realise they had music as well at the Cosmo.

**TP:** Yes, a little recorded concert for about five minutes or something.

**VB:** Yes.

**TP:** They would, you know, get the details of who had composed it and who was playing it and all that sort of thing. And, of course, you got erm you got revivals as well of American and British films and occasional specialised films that wouldn't erm... I mean, there was an American film called erm, it was alternatively called *Tennessee Johnson* and *The Man on America's Conscience* with Van Heflin,

which never got, it didn't get a commercial showing hardly in this country at all. And the Cosmo eventually got hold of it you see.

**VB: So it was quite an exciting place to go to in that sense.**

**TP:** Oh, very. Very exciting. And then every year, they would have a sort of fortnight in which they brought back for perhaps two nights each all the most popular films of the last years. I mean it's something, you don't, there's not the same planning about it now. I mean you've only to look at the-  
- I always think the planning is a bit of a mess at the moment at the GFT if you look at the erm take the sort of evening, go through the end of the month--

**VB: I agree. I think I've got a catalogue either here or--**

**TP:** Don't you find--

**VB: It think it's quite difficult to follow what time when things are on [laughs]**

**TP:** And the price structure too!

**VB: Yes, it's very--**

**TP:** Crazy. I mean for a while there, they were on to a very good thing actually. I think it was Friday, a particular performance on a Friday for a pound, a matinee or something. And they were packing the place out. And now they've stopped that certain performance, you've got to go through it again if you want to get that pound [laughs] like a mathematical exercise.

**VB: Yes, yes. I mean did you, you know beyond your childhood, did you used to go to the pictures during the day say when you were studying or--?**

**TP:** Oh, yes, yes.

**VB: I expected you to say... [laughs]**

**TP:** [laughs] Oh yes, when I was at university, whenever, it was a regular thing, really.

**VB: Yes.**

TP: And you know, when I was in the army, you know, whenever there was a cinema showing, I went to it.

**VB: Did you ever-- I mean someone was telling me erm about being in the army and seeing films shown on sheets. They would put up a sort of surface and, I don't know if that's--?**

TP: Well we had erm, in the open air?

**VB: Yes.**

TP: Yes, oh yes. Yes, I've seen *The Strawberry Blonde* with James Cagney under those circumstances and Judy Garland in *Presenting Lily Mars*. It was fine, you know, in warm countries, it's great.

**VB: Were you overseas during the war?**

TP: Aha, aha, yeah.

**VB: I see.**

TP: And consequently, you know, you get the warm, dark nights in which you could enjoy the films in the open air.

**VB: Yes. Obviously, it's been an enduring interest, film, for you.**

TP: Oh, very much so, yes, very much.

**VB: I mean can I ask a bit about your other leisure interests?**

TP: Uhuh.

**VB: Obviously theatre has played a big part in your life. Did you go to the theatres in Glasgow when you were--?**

TP: Oh yes, yes. I mean that's what I've, my sort of-- both my postgraduate degrees are in theatre, you see.

**VB: Ah.**

**TP:** Connection with theatre. I made a... detailed study of that and, as I say, that's the sort of number one priority still, you know, to keep up with that. And erm as I say, although I keep up with what's happening in the film world, I don't have the same time to-- I mean I'd like to go more, but I don't have the time really to, to do so, but erm as I say, I keep up with it and erm as I say, I do a lot of videoing to catch up with some films in that way.

**VB: Do you enjoy going to the cinema now as much as you did then or--?**

**TP:** No, I don't actually. It just hasn't got the atmosphere for one thing. It hasn't erm it's a sort of more clinical thing now and erm [pause 5 seconds] it's always difficult to say if it's prejudiced or not, I don't think the films on the whole or the stars are anything like the magic that they had. Of course, I mean let's face it, I mean the average blockbuster is made for the not very demanding twenty to... erm fifteen to thirty-year-old, as long as you have a lot of crashes, broken windows, car crashes, car chases and so on, I mean, that's the thing, but not much interest. I mean I like films where I'm interested in the people. Whatever, you know, whatever the theme is, if the people in the plot are interesting. But, for instance, you get some like, I mean like *The Silence of the Lambs*, for instance, I mean apart from Hopkins, I cannot see it as a very good film. In fact, I mean when he's not on, the latter bit is ranked bad I think, you know when Jodie is doing all her business, I mean it's rubbish, you know, not particularly-- I don't mind rubbish if it's well done. But I don't think it is and what was the-- the one I saw recently was erm... Harrison Ford is one of the current actors that I like best actually. I think it was *The Patriot Games*, it was called, which I thought was erm really not very well made at all. Very expensive, but not very well made, you know. You see if you look as I say at some of those B-pictures on the box, they are beautifully crafted and they are probably made in three weeks or something like that. But they erm they had the touch and I find very often, I like sometimes to look at the credits to begin with you see, and erm if I'm not careful and I have nothing pressing to do, I get hooked in the first scene or two. That's what they... they had the knack of doing that, whereas now, I mean, you're sort of in and out of the titles for so long, that you don't really-- and they don't know how to just sort of grab you by the throat to begin with, which is their bread and butter, they knew how to do that. How to get your attention and-- it's very seldom [coughs] I put on a film of thirties, forties or anything like that on television and I don't at least wish I had the time to see it through... It's a question of-- they had it, you see, the heads of the Hollywood studios at that time, they had been the most crafty rascals you could find, but, generally speaking, they liked the money, but they loved the movies too and they knew exactly the right people to employ. I mean it wasn't

just a sort of-- just now it's a sort of erm, sometimes you could make a film by computer almost, you know. There are various ingredients. And you've got nobody at the top, you've got the certain directors I mean, you've got here, Spielberg, people, producers, directors and so on, Coppola and so on. Apart from them, the people at the top, well most people are sort of business amalgams that run the studios now anyway. You haven't got a giant figure at the top that's desperately keen to make great movies [pause 5 seconds] And I think that's terribly important, don't you? I mean to me, to do well in anything, you've got to love your craft I think. I think that's what's missing to a great extent. You know apart from the likes of eh Merchant-Ivory, and people like that, 'cause they're desperately keen [pause 5 seconds] Anything else you want to ask that we haven't covered?

**VB: Umm**

**TP: We could go on indefinitely I know.**

**VB: You've given me a lot to think about actually, I mean--**

**TP: Yeah [laughs]**

**VB: [laughs] erm [pause 3 seconds] I can't really think of anything just now.**

**TP: You can give me a buzz if anything crops up, you know.**

**VB: That would be great actually, 'cause I'm sure especially when I'm sitting--**

**TP: Yes, exactly, I mean, yes.**

**VB: Yes.**

**TP: 'Cause I know we talked about from one thing to the other.**

**VB: That's very kind of you, I'd very much like to do that.**

**TP: Hmm.**

**VB: It might be another few weeks before I get back to you.**

TP: Oh yes, yes.

VB: **That would be great.**

TP: Any time you feel you want to know something, just let me know.

VB: **I mean as I say it's very kind of you to spare the time to talk--**

TP: Oh I don't mind talking to you.

VB: **It's very interesting for me.**

TP: If there's anything you think that you sort of erm you forget about until you mention the one thing and have moved on to another and so on

VB: **I'm sure.**

TP: As I say, I'm going down to London on next Monday. The friend I stay with there, he collects a sort of-- he gets friends from America to send them over. He's got the machinery to convert the one from the--

VB: **I see.**

TP: So we can see erm all sorts of out of the way, very old films. Not as old as *Peg O' My Heart*.

VB: **That sounds wonderful.**

TP: But erm there's always a friend in Washington that sends-- I used to be very fond of, you'll never have heard of them, *Wheeler & Woolsey comedies*.

VB: **Erm**

TP: They were a-- they came after Laurel & Hardy.

VB: **Yeah.**



**TP:** They haven't survived so well, but actually they're erm Robert Woolsey is nearer the Groucho Marx style. And at their best, they're extremely good. So this friend from America, he knows that I like them, he sends them over and-- trouble is, I can't see, I can only see them when I'm in London, you know when they can be scrambled into the British style to be seen, I couldn't play them on this.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** So I see all sorts of unusual things there.

**VB: I mean I was admiring while you were making the coffee, your erm collection of postcards of various--**

**TP:** Oh yes, yes, yeah. [laughs]

**VB: I can't even make out many of them, I think I can see a maybe Ingrid Bergman or--**

**TP:** Yes, and there's-- you'll find Vivien Leigh, which is a great favourite of mine, a great favourite of mine. They're erm [pause 3 seconds] the friend that sends a lot of them, some of them are quite sort of you know erm the Henry Fonda family having a happy family party over tragedy looming over. [laughs]

**VB: Yes, oh dear. [both laugh]**

**TP:** There's a lovely one from the erm the original film version of Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. And it's erm Nancy Carroll and Phillips Holmes who are in it, and they are just about to go upstairs and she says, I don't usually do this sort of thing. [both laugh] No, Sylvia Sidney, sorry, no.

**VB: Ah.**

**TP:** But there eh this chap that sends those ones here, he did a roundtrip on the QE2 recently and he brought me back a lot of postcards you know, people with the travel, including one of my great favourites, Ella Raines. You ever come across her?

**VB: I don't think I have.**

**TP:** Wonderful, wonderful supporting actr-- well, leading lady in B-pictures reasonably, mainly. But erm... one of those sort that appealed to me [pause 13 seconds] So, as I say, I've got all the, I've got all the erm those books and encyclopaedias for each studio.

**VB: Ah.**

**TP:** Have you seen them, the sort of MGM story and the Paramount?

**VB: I haven't actually.**

**TP:** Oh they're... [movement and rustling; 29 seconds] that's the one about musicals for instance.

**VB: Ah, so this is all the original musicals. Clive Hirschhorn [pause 7 seconds] Oh this looks wonderful actually.**

**TP:** You see they go right from the early ones.

**VB: Yeah.**

**[pages turning; 24 seconds]**

**VB: Joan Blondell.**

**TP:** Yeah.

[pause 11 seconds]

**VB: The costumes are quite spectacular in some of these, aren't they?**

**TP:** Oh yes. You see a lot of those will be the early, you see what's that erm--

**VB: *Wonder Bar*.**

**TP:** That was black and white oddly enough. They seemed to-- the earlier ones had this garish colour, which they seemed to have abandoned you see. And everything like *Wonder Bar* and *42<sup>nd</sup> Street* of

course, they were all black and white. The Astaire/Rogers were all black and white [pause 4 seconds]  
But it gives you a... you can, they've got the period look about them you see, the photographs.

**VB: Yes, very much so... And you can see how striking the black and white... [inaudible]**

TP: Oh yes, beautiful. Gorgeous, yes.

**VB: With the contrast.**

TP: Particularly now, when they've got sort of new prints of them, they look wonderful.

**VB: Yes.**

TP: The Buzby Berkley [inaudible]

**VB: Yes, that's amazing... Did you like erm Deanna Durbin?**

TP: I liked her very much.

**VB: Yes.**

TP: I think she made some of the happiest-- genuinely, happiest pictures that were made. Although I mean I think the greatest musical artist is Judy Garland. I mean she has that, oh, you know, genius about her.

**VB: Mhm [pause 3 seconds] Did you like *The Wizard of Oz* when it--**

TP: Oh yes, yes, mhm.

**VB: I must try and get this out the library actually.**

TP: Yes, you see they've got all the erm... that's that Warner who made the first talkie you see.

**VB: Ah I see.**

TP: I mean look at the-- they've got a lot of this, look at the silent film pictures.

**VB: Oh.**

**TP:** They're real--

**VB: The expressions and--**

**TP:** I know

**VB: It's amazing. Is this the Warner Brothers story then? Clive Hirschhorn, same person.**

**TP:** Yes. I mean there's the, I've got the MGM, United Artist, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Columbia, RKO, Universal, and Paramount, they all have them.

**VB: This is something I'll have to look at, definitely.**

**TP:** Oh yes. You'll find a lot of interest in those.

**VB: Yes.**

[pause 6 seconds]

[Inaudible, both laugh]

**VB: That's from *Wonder Bar*.**

**TP:** It's a real period photograph

**VB: It's amazing, isn't it.**

**TP:** The way it's erm

**VB: Is that Dick Powell there?**

**TP:** That's Dick Powell, yeah.

**VB: Yes.**

TP: Al Jolson.

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

TP: Ricardo Cortez.

**VB: Right.**

TP: He was in the earlier version of *The Maltese Falcon*.

**VB: Ah, right.**

TP: Dolores Del Rio and Kay Francis.

**VB: It's a wonderful scene, isn't it, you just want--**

TP: I know [shouts with enthusiasm], it's great! **[both laugh]**

**VB: That looks so much fun... And Cagney.**

TP: And Bette Davis.

**VB: Oh there [both laugh] [pause 7 seconds] Did you like the comedies of the period? I mean the Marx Brothers you mentioned and--**

TP: Marx Brothers, yes, very much, yes. [inaudible] films.

**VB: Yeah. John Halliday, no, Lyle Talbot.**

TP: Yeah. I mean I wasn't so crazy about the sort of Joe E. Brown type of films. Laurel & Hardy, wonderful always, yes.

**VB: What about Chaplin, did you--?**

**TP:** Erm not a rabid fan, not really. One or two I liked. *Modern Times* I liked very much. The erm but generally speaking I don't find him all that funny... eh I appreciate the quality of some of the films he made, but he was never a great favourite.

**VB: Do you think he appealed more to certain kinds of people or to...?**

**TP:** Well erm same-- Buster Keaton never appealed to me very much either. The sense of humour is different. I mean I'm inclined to prefer the sort of wise-cracking type of humour.

**VB: Yeah.**

**TP:** You know, rather than the clown type of humour. I'm not crazy about clowns, even good clowns, you know.

**VB: Yes... Well this is the sort of book you want to look at again, isn't it?**

**TP:** Oh, I mean, every time I open them I find something fresh. You know something I haven't noticed before.

**VB: Yes [pause 3 seconds] I like Pat O'Brien, I must say.**

**TP:** Yes. Oh yes, yes. He and Cagney were marvellous together.

**VB: Yes, I was thinking of them when you were talking about that other film--**

**TP:** *San Francisco?*

**VB: With people that spark each other up.**

**TP:** Yeah, right and very often you had the gangster and the priest there too, with those two.

**VB: Yes.**

**TP:** This is funny, *The Petrified Forest*, that's the one where Bogey really made his name as the gangster really. And I saw, they had a programme at the GFT, a special programme, a week actually,

and they had it, *The Maltese Falcon*, I think on the same programme. The funny thing was, Leslie Howard – have you ever seen his work at all?

**VB: Yes, yeah.**

**TP:** Umm a very strange sort of erm you would alm-- he wasn't actually, but he almost looked like the effeminate you see, but far from it. In... the night I was there it was predominately a young audience, when Bogey came on, they laughed at him. Because he-- you know, because he'd been caricat-- the things he'd been doing had been caricatured so much, and Leslie Howard there I thought wouldn't-- there was a tense silence. I mean they were all sort of, you felt they were regarding him almost as a saintly figure. Laughed at Bogey, but Leslie How—you know you heard a hush, an audible hush.

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

**TP:** Very strange.

**VB: Yeah. I mean was that a movie you enjoyed?**

**TP:** Oh, yes, a good film. It was in a way a bit of a photographed play, it was a play originally, but very, very good film. With those scenes they had. It was ever so interesting erm you know a group of people trapped in the Nevada desert with this gangster you see, and then Howard of course sacrifices himself eventually.

**VB: I must see that, that sounds--**

**TP:** Oh, it's one you would-- quite a classic of its time. And there's another marvellous one after that, a Claude Rains film.

**VB: Hmm. I remember seeing him quite recently in, is it *The Adventures of Robin Hood*?**

**TP:** Yeah. That is the definitive film of its kind. I mean it's absolutely-- no one would ever be able to cap that one, everyone is just perfect in it.

**VB: That must be quite an early colour film as well?**

**TP:** Erm sort of mid-period shall we say, yes.

**VB:** I mean he was so nasty in parts.

**TP:** Oh absolutely.

**VB:** A baddie [pause 17 seconds] As I say I must erm...

**TP:** Yes, if you're reading all of those

**VB:** At greater length.

**TP:** Sorry, I'll have to chase you out now, 'cause I've got to, something else to do now.

**VB:** As I say it's very good of you to--

**TP:** No, my pleasure, my pleasure.

**VB:** So much time and talk to me at this length.

**TP:** Not at all.

[End of interview]