

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

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\* Lowestoft, Suffolk, 20 October 1995: Valentina Bold interviews William and Hazel Pickess

\* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn and Julia McDowell

\* WP=William Pickess, HP= Hazel Pickess, VB=Valentina Bold

\* Notes: First interview of two with William and Hazel Pickess; Sound Quality: Poor; this interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; the original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection - please contact Lancaster University Library for details.

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[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[VB tape introduction]

**VB: [crackling in background] I did yes, I had lunch in the Eastern Pavilion.**

**HP: Oh yes.**

**VB: And I thought I'd just walk up but I didn't realise quite how far it was. [laughs]**

**HP: You didn't come by car.**

**VB: I didn't, no. Well, I like a walk if the weather's all right.**

**WP: It's more healthy.**

**VB: It is, yes.**

**WP:** Exercise.

[recording temporarily cuts out]

**VB:** Ah! It's going now. Erm, I think it may be just a loose wire or something. In certain places it's all right and then.. I mean a loose wire or something like that... That seems to be okay. I mean this is very interesting.

**HP:** Well it is. We've got everything in there, you see.

**VB:** It's great. Yeah.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** I got that out of the 'Daily Mirror'--

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** When I was at school.

**VB:** Ah!

**WP:** That's few years ago.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB:** It's in very good condition for something you've had--

**WP:** Well it is. That's over sixty years, well it is sixty years old. The children had it, I mean they pulled it apart and one thing and another. It's amazing that that's still as it is. [laughs]

**HP:** Yes, yeah. [laughs]

**VB: That's wonderful. I mean I was wondering if before we start talking about cinema, if I could ask you one or two more questions about yourselves. I mean nothing too--**

**HP: Oh yes. That's all right.**

**VB: Overly personal. But it's just so I get an idea--**

**WP: That's all right.**

**HP: Yes.**

**VB: Eh, your background. Eh... [pause 5 seconds] Got a sort of erm, standard form here that we use. Were you both erm, born in Lowestoft?**

**HP: Yes.**

**VB: That's great. Erm, and can I ask you both erm what your fathers did for work?**

**HP: Both fishermen.**

**VB: Ah, I see. That's great. And did your mothers work at all?**

**HP: Well, not when they were married. When they were single. My mother did. She worked at Morton's or somewhere like that.**

**WP: What?**

**HP: Where did your mother work?**

**WP: When she was young she worked at Morton's.**

**HP: Yeah, Morton's factory.**

**VB: That's great.**

**HP:** Canning factory.

**WP:** Well everybody know Morton's, don't they? The canning factory. It was like [inaudible] then, weren't it?

**HP:** Yeah, that's right.

**VB: And can I ask how many sisters and brothers you both had?**

**HP:** I had a sister and a brother.

**WP:** I've got three brothers.

**VB: Right.**

**HP:** Three brothers, he got.

**VB: That's great. And can I ask what year you were married in?**

**HP:** 1940. January.

**WP:** [redacted].

**HP:** We had our Golden Wedding. We had the Emerald. Fifty-five years.

**VB: That's wonderful.**

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** The other extraordinary thing is, my mother and her two sisters married three brothers. Three brothers married three sisters.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** Yeah, so eh--

**VB:** It's very unusual that.

**HP:** It is, isn't it?

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Mhm. Do you have a family yourself?

**HP:** Yes. I've got two sons and a daughter.

**VB:** That's great. And can I ask erm, what religion you were raised in? Was it Church of England?

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** Yes.

**HP:** Church of England. Yes.

**VB:** That's great. And do you have any strong political views of any kind? Have you ever been in a party?

**HP:** No.

**WP:** We differ. [laughs]

Mrs: We differ. [laughs]

**VB:** I maybe shouldn't have asked that. [laughs]

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Ah. So...

**HP:** So you want to know which ones, do you?

**VB: Which is which?**

**WP:** Well she's red and I'm blue. [laughs]

**VB: Ah right!**

**HP:** [laughs] Well in-between I am really.

**VB: And yet you've still made it to your Emerald anniversary. [laughs]**

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Oh yeah. We have our ups and downs naturally. [laughs]

**VB: That's unusual again, isn't it? Well I mean that was all I really wanted to ask about yourselves. Erm, I mean the first thing really was erm, how often did you both go to the cinema?**

**HP:** Oh, about two or three times a week.

**WP:** Well I used to be in those days, they was Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays, weren't there? So three programmes in one cinema. I mean, in those days, how many cinemas was it? Five, was it? Four or five, or six.

**HP:** Grand, Palace, Hippodrome, Marina.

**WP:** The Marina. Cosy Corner.

**HP:** And old Cosy Corner. About five--

**VB: Oh. Did you have any--**

**HP:** At first. But then there's the Odeon opened up. But they demolished that since.

**WP:** Which is a crime really.

**HP:** Which was a lovely... That's a crime to do it.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** I was looking for pictures of local cinemas and I think it was only the Odeon that I found. Erm--

**HP:** Yes. That's a lovely place.

**VB:** That. [shows picture]

**HP:** Yes. That is. Yes.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** In the centre of the town that is.

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Unfortunately I've not got a picture of the inside. I mean, what it was like?

**HP:** Yeah. Really nice. Upstairs.

**WP:** Oh yes. Roy Fox played there. Several big bands came there.

**HP:** Even before. On a Sunday they used to have bands there as well, didn't they?

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Yeah. I mean they demolished that just to make that silly newspaper shop. Smiths.

**HP:** Yes. Everybody--

**WP:** During the war when Lowestoft was bombed they found Wrens on top of there. Lying on top of there.

**HP:** Yeah 'cause this was a patrol base, you know, for the Navy here.

**VB: Terrible.**

**HP:** We had a lot of bombing here.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** 'Cause we lived down the centre of the town then. 'Cause we've only lived up here thirteen years.

**VB: Ah I see.**

**HP:** We more or less retired up here, you see.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Nearly all elderly people.

**WP:** In today's paper, picture here of an old cinema.

**VB: Ah!**

**WP:** When we was at school, when the teachers were on strike, we used to go there in the afternoon. [flicks through newspaper]

**VB: Whereabouts was that?**

**HP:** That was called the Public Hall in those days. There we are. It's funny that.

**VB: Was the Odeon your favourite?**

**HP:** Yeah, really, and the Marina. Well all of them really. The whole lot. Palace... [tape cuts out]

**WP:** It used to be a theatre at first--



**VB: Mhm!**

**WP:** And they turned it into a cinema [probably referring to the Hippodrome].

**VB: Ah I see. And Gracie Fields, erm, did she do a show there then?**

**WP:** Pardon?

**VB: Did Gracie Fields do a show there?**

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB: Ah.**

**WP:** Oh yes.

**HP:** Used to be a lot of pantomimes.

**WP:** Mhm.

**VB: Mhm. Right, I think that's us--**

**WP:** [laughs]

**VB: [laughs] Sorted out now. But eh, lost the place I think. Erm, I wonder maybe, I'll try and get a copy of this anyway.**

**WP:** [inaudible]. Gene Kelly.

**VB: Right. Erm, I mean were there any of the cinemas locally that were less pleasant?**

**HP:** Well yes. The Cosy Corner was a bit of a [laughs] dump, really.

**WP:** Well they used to have fights up there in the afternoon. If you're up in the gallery it was what we called the beach boys what lived on the, what we called the beach. And the town boys get in there together. Well you try to get in first so you're up in the gallery.

**HP:** [laughs]

**WP:** And then you used to throw all the orange peel on the ones underneath. Oh it was terrible.

**HP:** Mhm. A bit of a dump.

**WP:** It was, the Cosy Corner. Used to call it a fleapit, yeah.

**HP:** It's not there now.

**WP:** But the Palace and the Hippodrome. Well the Hippodrome is still there. That's a bingo hall now, isn't it?

**HP:** Yes. And the Palace isn't there now, is it?

**WP:** No. Well they took all the cinemas away I think.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** There's just the Grand and the Marina now.

**VB:** 'Cause it sounded--

**HP:** They call it Hollywood up there, don't they? Hollywood.

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Oh, I passed that one.

**WP:** They used to call it the Playhouse [referring to the Hollywood Cinema]. That's had several names. That was the Playhouse.

**HP:** I'm talking about the Grand one.

**WP:** Oh, I thought you, the lady was talking about the Hollywood, the Hollywood.

**HP:** I thought that was the Grand.

**WP:** No. Next to the church. Playhouse [referring to Hollywood Cinema]. The Grand was further up.

**HP:** Oh. The Arcadia [referring to the Hollywood Cinema] it used to be called.

**WP:** Mhm?

**HP:** The Arcadia.

**WP:** Yeah. Well it had several names really.

**HP:** Yes, yes.

**WP:** This is an old one. That's not there now.

**VB:** **That's great. Thanks. A-ah! This is London Road North.**

**WP:** That caught fire and eh...

**VB:** **Mhm. It's quite erm, grand looking on the outside, isn't it?**

**HP:** Mhm.

**WP:** Mhm.

**HP:** I never went there 'cause he's older than me.

**WP:** But that's been demolished now. Eh, if you notice the [Lowestoft] Journal office is next, the little old office next door to it, it's got two flags in the window there.

**VB:** **Mhm.**

**WP:** But eh, when we was at school, as I said, when the teachers were on strike we came out with our local teachers. They brought what they called the blacklegs, didn't they? They came in. Well, we came out with our own teachers. We never had a school. So we used to find different buildings to

continue your lessons in. Well in the afternoons, they used to take us to this old cinema there and eh, show us a film, every afternoon. Rather than walk the streets sort of thing. 'Course in the end, when it was all over, we went back to our schools again.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** I was only small then, really.

**VB: Was that erm, normal films you were seeing? Or was it educational films?**

**WP:** Well, as I said, the only one I can remember is one called 'Bill, Bob and Rags' [referring to one of a series of short films made in the 1920s featuring Bill Bradbury and Bob Steele as trappers with their dog, Rags].

**HP:** [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** And Rags was the dog. [laughs] I can't tell you who was in it though. [laughs]

**HP:** [inaudible; I suppose?].

**WP:** Mind you we were a bit rough and ready there. We used to get on the stage, jumping up and down, dancing. Somebody would perhaps get on the piano sort of thing. 'Cause it was an empty cinema. It weren't really in that circulation. But they opened it up again just to put the children from different schools in. [laughs] Aw dear! Yeah we went all different places for our schools, you know. And eh, we used to like that because erm, teachers didn't mind. There was one of our old teachers used to go into a pub and leave us on our own, sort of. Play about on the denes, what we called the denes. Play around on our own. A woman teacher she was, she went to have a pint of best. [laughs].Aw dear.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** But eh, had some good times really. Schooldays in them days.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Mhm. I never went there though. I went to different schools. You see he was up this end and I was that end.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Oh we met when we was almost fourteen.

**HP:** We was courting since we was fourteen years old. Yeah. Got married at twenty-one. But we started at fourteen, I was, and he was sixteen.

**WP:** We used to go the pictures, ninepence then, weren't it?

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** In the night times.

**HP:** Used to sit in the front row. And we used to keep looking at one another.

**WP:** When we was courting like. When they used to queue up 'cause they used to say, "Two one and nines. Two one and sixes."

**HP:** Sixes.

**WP:** And we used to walk away. That's too much.

**HP:** Too much.

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** You know, old money. Old money. One shilling and sixpence. We used to walk away, too much.

**HP:** We used to go in the shilling [they was half-price?] See, 'cause that was too dear for us, wasn't it? Yeah. Two shillings we used to go in. That was what we used to mostly pay. But when we first went that used to be in the front row, mostly we'd be. [laughs]

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Didn't we? And was it sevenpence or ninepence?

**WP:** Ninepence.

**HP:** Ninepence.

**WP:** Nine old pennies. Yeah.

**HP:** Yes.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** But now, you couldn't afford to go to the pictures now, could you? Not twice a week like we used to. [laughs] I mean you used to go, the first matinee Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. See all them pictures. Then we'd go Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

**HP:** [inaudible; overtalking].

**WP:** That'd be one cinema. Well then 'course another cinema would have a different, [laughs] so you'd go to that one as well.

**VB: Ah.**

**WP:** Well I mean the whole lot would've come to about three shillings a week then, to go to the pictures.

**HP:** And if I was down the dumps my mother just used to give me the money, say, "Go to the pictures."

**WP:** Get rid of you.

**HP:** Yes. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** And then at the Grand Cinema they used to have a hospital day. If you took two eggs. Two eggs and you got in the cinema just for two eggs, you see. [laughs]

**HP:** I can always remember the first talking picture here was Al Jolson in *The Singing Fool*. That was the first talking picture in Lowestoft. And I weren't very old 'cause my mother and father took us. Yeah. Yeah.

**WP:** It's a funny thing, Al Jolson, he was on dinner time.

**HP:** And then they had a competition for Baby Peggy and my mother put me in there. Baby Peggy. 'Cause I use to have a fringe, you know. And my hair done like this. 'Cause that's what she was like, you see. But I didn't win.

**VB: Aw.**

**HP:** No. Got bar of chocolate. I was about five.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** This is when she came up in the world. [shows photo]

**VB: Oh-h!**

**HP:** That's when I was young, that was.

**VB: That's a beauty.**

**HP:** That was only a paper copy that one?

**VB: Was that in the paper?**

**HP:** Was it in the paper?

**VB: I was wondering if it was when you say it was a paper copy.**

**HP:** No, my daughter had a copy. Because I've got another photo of it. And she got a copy.

**WP:** She was in a dance troupe.

**VB:** Ah, I see.

**WP:** She worked at Eastern Counties [bus company]

**HP:** For seven years I worked at the Eastern Counties. I used to do all the upholstery of the seats. All this sort of thing. Yeah.

**WP:** [inaudible].

**VB:** That explains. 'Cause you were telling me about how much you liked Ginger Rogers. I mean that explains...

**HP:** [I used to copy them?].

**WP:** Oh yeah.

**HP:** I used to draw them and take them to the dressmaker's and she used to copy them. Yeah. Yes we had some lovely things then, didn't we?

**WP:** Mhm.

**VB:** Did you do your hair?

**HP:** My hair was more, I always had a fringe. Always had a fringe. But I used to do the style where you sort of rolled it up and that come up here like this and like this. And like this. And I remember having it like that. [inaudible].

**WP:** Then she went in for Miss Lowestoft.

**HP:** I was second in Miss Lowestoft. That was 1936. I was seventeen then, I think. Yeah. [inaudible].  
[laughs]

**VB:** Ah. It's a beautiful photo that.



**HP:** Yeah. 1936.

**VB:** It really is lovely. I mean, was that--

**HP:** We've had a lovely life really, when we were single, didn't we?

[3 minute extract removed at the request of HP regarding ongoing health issues]

**VB:** Yeah. Happier, happier subject.

**HP:** Yeah. A happy subject. Yeah.

**VB:** Yeah. I mean it's, erm, it sounds from what you're saying as if it was quite a big part of your lives in the thirties.

**HP:** Oh yes. Yes. Yeah. We thoroughly enjoyed it, you know. And now we never go at all.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** 'Cause you see them all on here now, don't you, on the television.

**WP:** Mhm.

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** But Dick Powell. He was my favourite. In, you know, all the, anything like that dancing and singing.

**HP:** Oh music, he was a rare one for that. I tell you, tell you what was an early one was *Broadway Melody*.

**WP:** All those ones.

**HP:** That was Bessie Love and Anita Page in that, weren't it? That was a lovely film. We used to see all them, didn't we?

**VB: Mhm.**

HP: Yeah.

**VB: Was it musicals that you particularly liked?**

HP: Oh we did like them. *Top Hat* and all that.

**VB: Oh. I've brought along one or two erm, stills and things from the pictures. One of them was the advert for *Top Hat*.**

HP: Ooh, *Top Hat*. Yeah. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Yes. We saw that.

WP: Jessie Matthews. My glasses are here somewhere.

**VB: Was Fred Astaire another of your favourites then?**

HP: Yes. Yes. At the dancing and all that. And Ginger Rogers. Used to like her, didn't we?

**VB: Mhm.**

HP: Well she's eighty-odd now, isn't she?

**VB: Mhm.**

HP: Well didn't she die? She did, didn't she?

**VB: She did, actually. Yes.**

HP: A month ago.

WP: Went right fat, didn't she?

HP: She went all bloatery, didn't she?

**VB: Mhm. She's lovely in that, isn't she?**

**HP:** Yes. Slim.

**WP:** But he had several partners though, didn't he? I mean eh, Fred Astaire did, didn't he? Dancing partners.

**HP:** Oh yes, yes. Cyd Charisse.

**WP:** Cyd Charisse. And eh, Eleanor Powell was in one, weren't she?

**HP:** Yeah, she was. Oh and Rita Hayworth.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Now she went eh, pop, didn't she? She was a druggie, not a druggie! Alcoholic.

**WP:** Alcoholic.

**VB: Really.**

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** She married the Aga Khan, didn't she?

**HP:** She got put away like.

**WP:** She married the Aga Khan, didn't she? The racehorse bloke.

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

**WP:** Mhm.

**VB: 'Cause I mean you were telling me about erm, was the life of the stars something that interested you in the thirties? 'Cause you were telling me about how you used to get the 'Picturegoer'.**

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** Yes. Oh yes. When it first started.

**HP:** When we first met more or less. He used to have 'Picturegoer'. And I used to have 'Picture Show'.

**WP:** 'Film Weekly', weren't there?

**HP:** Well it used to every week, you know. And they used to change them, didn't they? I used to meet him up the top of the school, where I used to work. And eh, we used to part-exchange these. That's how we really started off.

**WP:** 'Picturegoer' and 'Film Weeklies', you know.

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** 'Course that used to give you in there, all the films what were going to be released and the whole cast, you know, what was in it, you know. So you knew exactly who was going to be in it and all that.

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** But there's nothing like that now, is there?

**HP:** They don't seem to do them now. 'Picturegoer'. Well there's people got tellies.

**WP:** Well it is so. But I mean all the old films do come occasionally on that, don't they?

**HP:** Ye-es. They do on Sky mostly, don't they?

**VB: Mhm. Did you ever save any of the pictures? 'Cause I know some people used to cut out the photographs and make albums themselves. Did you ever do anything like that?**

**HP:** Not really. No.

**WP:** No. All I used to tape all of Dick Powell, well I got a record of him there now. I taped all his songs.

**HP:** Yeah. He's got '42nd Street' and all that.

**VB: Aw.**

**WP:** 'Are the Stars Out Tonight?' and all that business. [laughs]

**HP:** [And the times I hear that?].

**WP:** Ruby Keeler.

**HP:** Where they're singing in this *42nd Street*.

**VB: Did you enjoy the music then as well as the dancing?**

**HP:** Yes. Yeah.

**WP:** Yes. Yes, I used to tape, oh, I've got one on.

**HP:** You've got one on there now.

**VB: What was it about musicals that made you enjoy them so much, do you think?**

**HP:** Well we used to go dancing a lot, you see. As well. Besides the pictures. We used to go dancing.

**WP:** Pictures. When we had a free night from the pictures we used to go to dances. Threepenny hops.

**HP:** Threepenny hops or sixpenny hops. We used to go.

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** We used to go. They used to be all over the place. Like the Conservative Club, the Railway Club. Oh we used to go to the Grand Hotel which is now the fisheries. That used to be lovely up there.

**WP:** You would get the music from the films of the day. Well, 'course you were singing away when you were dancing 'cause you knew all the tunes.

**HP:** Knew all the tunes, you see.

**WP:** I mean once you went to the cinema and saw them, you'd come out whistling them after the show. But you couldn't today, could you? Not when you see all this twangy stuff.

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** You wouldn't, [laughs]--

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** You wouldn't remember the next, you wouldn't remember a week afterwards what you've heard. But I mean in those days the music used to go into your mind. If you were a bit musically the music went into your mind and just remained there and you--

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** You knew the words from start to finish.

**HP:** Well this is a, well you can tell how musical--

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** We got that, we got that. And besides we got that other, there's two there, isn't there?

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** And it's every day music. Yeah.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Love it.

**VB:** As you say, I mean the tunes from the thirties films are just wonderful. The words and Irving Berlin.

**HP:** I think so. You can't beat it.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** No, on the telly at dinner time there was erm, what's his name? Brian Conley. And he was doing Al Jolson's...

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** You know, the show's up at London at the moment. In the centre. He was doing...

**HP:** What was it he sung now?

**WP:** Well 'Mammy' and--

**HP:** 'Mammy'. And what was that one with, supposed to be Ruby Keeler who was his partner.

**WP:** His partner is in the show up in London. [inaudible] Ruby Keeler, I think. She come on--

**HP:** And they done a dance routine like, you know--

**WP:** He done all Al Jolson.

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** It was good on 'Pebble Mill' today.

**VB:** Ah.

**HP:** I think a lot of them songs'll come back.

**VB:** Mhm. I'm sure they will.

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** Well apparently the big bands--

**HP:** You can't beat them really, I don't think.

**WP:** No. But they're sorry that all the cinemas are, well, because they are, I think they are sort of getting back again now, aren't they? They're going to buy a lot of cinemas up. The MGM. All them people.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** But when they took the Odeon down, not so much the other ones 'cause they were a bit, [pause 2 seconds] getting a bit dilapidated. But the Odeon was really a posh place.

**VB: I mean were the cinemas really busy round here in the thirties?**

**HP:** Oh yes.

**VB: 'Cause you mentioned there'd only be a couple of seats left in.**

**HP:** Yes. The used to get packed. We used to queue.

**WP:** You used to have to queue up. And as I said, when they--

**HP:** They call out, see they were so limited the seats, they used to say, "Two one-and-sixes!" like that.

**WP:** See somebody--

**HP:** [inaudible] back there was only--

**WP:** See, why the queues started because when the people went in for the first house, they'd come round and wait and see the second house as well. So they'd seen one programme they were seeing it all over again. Well, [laughs] because you had to wait 'til they got fed up with looking at it before there was another seat vacant.

**VB: Mhm.**



**WP:** Well then they used to shout out, “Two one-and-nines!”

**HP:** Two shillings.

**WP:** Oh dear. If that was two ninepennies we'd go in but if that was two one-and-sixes we used to walk away. [chuckles]

**HP:** When we were courting, as we got older we used to go in the shillings then.

**WP:** Oh yeah. [laughs]

**HP:** But we wouldn't pay one-and-six. No.

**VB: Did you ever go to see a film more than once?**

**WP:** Oh yes. If they were, if they were very good, you know. You used to get A pictures and the B pictures, didn't you?

**HP:** Yes. And I remember when I was only about fourteen, eh, it was A picture you couldn't get in, you see. So I used to stand there with my friend and eh, wait for someone come along and they said they would take us in. Because we can't get in on our own. And they used to take us in. [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** It would be a bit dangerous today to do a thing like that, wouldn't it?

**HP:** You wouldn't do it today.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** But I'd wait for a woman to come. Not a man. Yeah.

**WP:** Used to be good. I mean when we were boys used to go to the Hippodrome there used to be a bit rough and shouting--

**HP:** Yeah, the kids used to shout “Go ahead!”, you know.

**WP:** And the man used to say, "If you don't keep quiet I'll cut the picture out!"

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** 'Course they kept quiet then a little bit.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** But I know, [laughs] they was good days at the cinema.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** I always think the one we used to like best was 'To be continued next week', you know, when this poor somebody lying on the railway line and the train was coming tearing along, you know.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** And then it shut right off to the quick, 'To be continued next week'. [laughs] You had to go the next week to see if the train went over him or not. [laughs]

**HP:** Yeah [inaudible; overtalking].

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** But I think the best thing was when the cowboys, you know, coming up behind somebody and all the boys used to shout out, "Look behind! Look behind!" I mean... [laughs]

**VB: [laughs]**

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

**VB: The cowboys and the...**

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Yeah, the cowboys. And as I said when Tom Mix, eh, he be standing there and he'd be handing somebody up, you know. "Put your hands up." Well somebody would be coming behind him so you'd shout, "Look behind you!" [laughs heartily]

**VB:** [laughs]

**HP:** [laughs]

**WP:** Oh it sounds silly but--

**HP:** That was like Roy Rogers too on his horse, used to be.

**WP:** Aw yeah. Didn't used to like cowboys much, did you?

**HP:** No I didn't, no.

**VB:** **What about the gangster films? Did you like them?**

**HP:** Yes. Edward G. Robinson. We used to, didn't we? Yeah, and what's his name, erm? Tch! Oh!

**WP:** Married erm, Lauren Bacall.

**HP:** Oh yeah. What was his name?

**VB:** **Oh. Humphrey Bogart.**

**HP:** Humphrey Bogart.

**WP:** Humphrey Bogart. He was good.

**HP:** And what's the other one, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*?

**WP:** Oh eh, yeah. Can't think of his name now.

**VB:** **Not James Cagney?**

**HP:** Yes, James Cagney.

**WP:** James Cagney. Now he was an extraordinary fella. I mean he could be a gangster and yet he could tap dance and sing and all that. I mean I got it on tape now when he was tap dancing.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Yeah. And eh, as I say, he was sort of good at anything really.

**HP:** Uhuh.

**WP:** Which you wouldn't think when you're seeing him as a gangster.

**HP:** Yeah, he's pretty versatile, weren't he?

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** But eh, Fred Astaire, he never kissed Ginger Rogers.

**HP:** Never kissed Ginger Rogers.

**WP:** Never kissed her.

**HP:** That was said of Fred.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** They think that was either his sister or his wife didn't like it.

**WP:** They used to argue a lot too, didn't they? And he used to get fed up when he was dancing with her when all that fluff used to come off her dresses, you know.

**VB:** [laughs]

**HP:** Yeah, it used to get in his face or his eyes.

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** There's that one in *Top Hat* where she's got the sort of feather dress.

**HP:** Oh the feathers, yeah. Yes, they said about that on the television.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** Said that used to get in his eyes--

**VB:** [laughs]

**HP:** When they were dancing. [laughs]

**VB:** You'd never know it, would you?

**HP:** No.

**WP:** Think we'll make this lady a cup of tea.

**HP:** I would but I didn't know if she actually wanted tea.

**VB:** Oh well. That would be lovely, yes.

**HP:** Yes, fine. Yes.

**VB:** If that's all right.

**HP:** Do you take sugar?

**VB:** No, just as it comes.

**HP:** Right.

**VB:** No milk or anything.

**HP:** And a biscuit, d'you want?

**VB:** That would be lovely. Thanks.

**HP:** Oh!

**WP:** You warmed up a little bit now?

**VB:** I am. Yes. Much better.

**WP:** [inaudible].

**VB:** It really is chilly outside though.

**WP:** Ah it is really. Yeah you can feel it, can't you?

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** Where you staying?

**VB:** E-erm, I'm staying in a guesthouse on Pakefield Road.

**WP:** Oh yeah. Pakefield, yeah.

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** Mhm. I thought perhaps you were at the, what d'you call it eh, Foxburgh since you came up that way.

**VB:** Ah right. No, I walked into the town--

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** And came up. So...

**WP:** What d'you think of Lowestoft?

**VB: Oh it's great.**

**WP: What part of Scotland are you from?**

**VB: E-erm, well I live in Glasgow obviously but eh, I was brought up in Fife on the east coast.**

**WP: Oh yeah.**

**VB: So erm, actually it doesn't, where I lived was about fifteen miles from the coast. But the coast looks a lot like this. It's just, [laughs] a lot further up but the same. Eh, with white beaches. So I think it's great.**

**WP: Mhm.**

**VB: I'm thoroughly enjoying being here.**

**WP: The last time I heard Scotch was when the Scots girls used to come here gutting the herrings, you know.**

**VB: Ah, I was hearing about that.**

**WP: Yeah.**

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP: Yes there used to be ooh, hundreds of [inaudible] Scots girls through the town. And the boats, the Scots boats--**

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP: They used to come down from Fraserburgh and Banff and all those places. Peterhead. Yeah. So I worked, worked down the fish market. Not as a fisherman but I was in charge of a grocery store. I was the manager of a grocery store down there and we used to supply all the ships when they came here. You know, all the trawlers and that. I was there from the time I left school till I retired!**

**VB: Ah.**

**WP:** Except for six years in the Army. [pause 2 seconds] Yeah.

**VB:** They must've changed a lot actually. 'Cause I can imagine when the meat was coming down. Erm, it must've been really busy.

**WP:** Ye-ah. But they used to... [pause 2 seconds] You know, all the people that used to take 'em in, used to take six girls in at a time. But I mean how them girls used to do that work, I mean, honestly it's...

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** I've got a tape there of them when they're gutting the herring, you know. And packing them in the barrels. Well I say how they used to do it--

**VB:** Mhm. Hard work.

**WP:** Well it's summertime now, in comparison to what it was when they were here. I mean in the winter, in October and September and November it was snow on the ground and they used to work six o'clock in the mornings--

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** And you could hear them going 'plonk, plonk, plonk' past the house, you know. 'Cause they wore all their overalls and their rubber boots and that. And eh, six o'clock in the morning, perhaps they might be there till eight o'clock at night. If they had a lot a herring for that day they'd be gutting away. Gutting away like that. Surely they must go to sleep, gutting like that.

**VB:** Yes.

**WP:** And then well, I mean the barrels are that high and they'd gut, every [everything done?] inside the barrel to start the first layer, packing them.

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** How them girls done, I mean they didn't get the money what they got for doing it.



**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** How they used to do it I'll never know. You wouldn't get them to do it today, would you?

**VB: No. Don't think so.**

**WP:** Well they couldn't do it anyway. But, even if they tried.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** S'marvellous really, how they got through it. I mean just imagine thousands and thousands and thousands of herring just staring at them all the time. Picking one up at a time. Take the gut out like this with a gutting knife, you know. Marvellous girls, really.

**VB: Aye.**

**WP:** But there was never any trouble. I mean the Scotsmen used to come out, sometimes they'd come up to the house where the girls were lodging. But I mean they were no trouble. Nothing like that. They just come there for someone to talk to and all that.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** That all finished. That's all finished now. None of that now. Yeah. I got two friends what live up in Scotland. They've moved to eh, Lossiemouth.

**VB: Ah.**

**WP:** They were Lowestoft fishermen and then they married Scots girls while they were here and then they moved up to Scotland and they live there now.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** Well they're like me. They're getting on. [laughs]

**VB: Ah. [laughs]**

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB:** It must've been very busy in the summer. Were there a lot of day trippers and holidaymakers as well?

**WP:** Eh, ye-es. Erm, apparently now Lowestoft is more or less getting in the forefront for holidaymakers though.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Because since the beach, you know the beaches have all been sort of classified as clean or whatever. Now Yarmouth which you would think was, they think they're next to Blackpool.

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** Their beaches are terrible.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** And I mean it's been on the television how the sewage and all that at Yarmouth. Whereas Lowestoft has been clean.

**VB:** It certainly looks, the water looks lovely and clean and the sands.

**WP:** Yeah. And I mean they've got the blue flags two or three times at Lowestoft here.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** And that's been a big boost, you know, for holidaymakers really. But apart from that, I will say if you want a good time, if you're young, you want a good time, you go to Yarmouth.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Because anything, [laughs] goes at Yarmouth. But I mean here, if you want a quiet holiday which is a holiday, you come to Lowestoft.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** And eh, and then again see, Yarmouth I always say, the people what are there they just come for the [coughs] pardon me. They just come for the season. They get your money and gone.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** Whereas here, Lowestoft has only hotels and sort of guesthouses, whereas they're open all the year round.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Can you bring the tray?

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** Never thought I'd be like this.

**VB: Oh well I hope--**

**HP:** But as I say, it's age, isn't it?

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** What can you expect?

**WP:** Which is what then?

**HP:** The one with the spoon is the young lady's.

**VB: That's great.**

**HP:** With the spoon.

**WP:** With the spoon. Not the wooden spoon. Here y'are. Take that.

**HP:** And help yourself to a biscuit.

**VB:** **That's great. Thanks a lot.**

**WP:** It's too hot. [cups and saucers being set out] Need some fresh air in here.

[pause 6 seconds; background noise]

**WP:** Aw. I was telling the young lady about the Scots girls.

**HP:** About the Scotch girls. Oh yes.

**WP:** And the fishing.

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

**HP:** Is it all on there?

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

**HP:** 'Cause you don't want to hear that, do you?

**VB:** **Well it's, actually it's interesting to hear a bit about erm--**

**HP:** Oh is it?

**VB:** **You know, what life was like.**

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** **At that time as well. Eh, cause it all sounds very different to me. Erm, going to the cinema so much and the...**

**HP:** What part of Scotland do you come from?

**VB:** Erm, well I live in Glasgow but I was brought up on the east coast in Fife. Erm, north of Edinburgh so...

**HP:** Oh yes.

**WP:** That's me when I was a little boy.

**VB:** A-ah! It's lovely.

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** [laughs]

**VB:** Isn't that lovely?

**HP:** Did you show her the photo of our Golden Wedding? That's that one up there, look.

**WP:** Mhm.

**HP:** And that's my granddaughter up there.

**VB:** A-ah.

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** Oh that's a beautiful one.

**WP:** What this one?

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** Oh yeah that's the granddaughter.

**VB:** That's a lovely one.

**HP:** Yeah. She's thirty now.

**VB: She's like you actually.**

HP: Well I can see the features.

**VB: Yes.**

HP: When I look at my daughter and her I can see all the features. Very much alike.

**VB: Especially your nose I think.**

HP: Think so? Yeah.

**VB: It's lovely.**

WP: She don't want no children, she say.

HP: She's thirty but she isn't bothered about children.

**VB: Yeah.**

HP: She enjoy her life, she say.

WP: There we are again.

**VB: Aw. That's a lovely one.**

HP: Yeah that was the Golden Wedding.

**VB: Ah, a beautiful bouquet that.**

HP: Yes. We had lovely do up the Hatfield--

**VB: Mhm.**

HP: Up the front there.

**VB: That's lovely.**

**WP:** You didn't come to see photographs, did you? [laughs]

**VB: A-ah. I like your models actually, the boats.**

**HP:** He made them.

**VB: Ah really?**

**HP:** 'Cause that's his hobby. All to do fishing and that, you know.

**VB: Yeah. They're real beauties. I was admiring them when I came in. They're just lovely.**

**WP:** I do something to pass the time.

**HP:** He's retired, you know.

**VB: Are any of these based on family boats that you're--**

**HP:** I don't know. Are they?

**WP:** What?

**HP:** Are they based on your father's boat at all?

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB: Ah. 'Cause they look very, you know the detail's all very...**

**HP:** Yes. Well he used to work on the market, you see. Used to supply all the ships with grocery and all that sort of thing. So that's why he's interested.

**WP:** A fella rung me up one afternoon. He talked proper broad Suffolk language. He say, "Mr Pickess?" I said, "Yes." So he said, "Can you do us a favour?" He was blind fella. I said, "What's the matter. What d'you want?" He say, "You used to work on the fish market and you used to supply the

ships.” He say, “Would you be prepared to do a cassette, a recording of your work?” This was before the war. “For ‘Sound East’,” which is for the blind people. Which I did. So he came up here.

**HP:** Yeah. We had him come up, didn't we?

**WP:** He come up. One of the--

**HP:** [inaudible; overtalking] sort of thing--

**WP :** Fellas with a recorder and recorded on a cassette for, you know, for ‘Sound East’, for the blind people.

**VB: Great idea.**

**WP:** A talking newspaper.

**HP:** See ‘cause they can't see, but they can hear.

**WP:** They can hear. So they have different things what helps.

**HP:** With their hands that is that they do this.

**WP:** Yeah.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** But eh, Anglia at War videos. Anglia at War. Norwich and Lowestoft when that was bombed like, during the war.

**HP:** They had that on the telly quite a bit.

**WP:** I was talking about visitors coming. As I say Lowestoft is now sort of getting itself on the map really, isn't it?

**HP:** Yes, yeah. We used to always have a lot a visitors coming here during the, before the war, didn't we?



**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** 'Cause my mother used to take in visitors and that. Yeah.

**WP:** But as I say there's nothing here for them to do, really. But as we say if you're having a holiday you come for a holiday. Whereas if you--

**HP:** It's a nice place Lowestoft. It's ever so clean, you know. And eh, got lovely beach. Have you seen the beach?

**VB:** Yeah it's beautiful. Well I've been there every day. [laughs] I'm not far from the beach.

**HP:** There's a pavilion. My grandson had his birthday there Friday, Monday--

**VB:** A-ah.

**HP:** At the Pavilion, didn't he? He was five.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** That's our great-grandson. [laughs]

**VB:** O-ah!

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Five years old.

**VB:** Did you spend a lot of time on the beach when you were teenagers?

**WP:** Yes.

**HP:** Yes.

**WP:** You used to go through them night times, didn't you?

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB: A-ah.**

**HP:** And we used to go every Sunday up Corton beach, which is just way up from here. And we used to take our dinner.

**WP:** Be there all day.

**HP:** Be there all day--

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** When we're courting. And then we used to come home, change and go on the same pier. And there used to be dancing on the pier deck. And bands. It used to be lovely.

**VB: Aw. Wonderful.**

**HP:** There's nothing like it now, is there?

**WP:** Nothing here now. Nothing like it now, no.

**HP:** We used to enjoy it. Every summer. And the pier used to get packed.

**WP:** Specially at the end of the pier. That was the confetti fight.

**VB: Ah. What was that?**

**HP:** Well they used to have confetti fights.

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** The boys used to get hold of the girls and keep putting confetti down their necks and all that, you know.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** The mothers used to know what they'd been up to when they got home. It was all on the bedroom floor.

**HP:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** You know, what they call the confetti fight, you know.

**HP:** And they used to have fireworks and all that.

**VB:** Oh lovely.

**HP:** That was lovely them days. Nothing like it now. 'Course they've got Pleasurewood Hill up here but eh, it's more for children. Yeah, but they've got [inaudible].

**WP:** It's up for sale, yeah.

**HP:** It's up for sale.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** Do you like Lowestoft?

**VB:** I do. Very much. I was just saying it's eh...

**HP:** Where, do you put up somewhere?

**VB:** Yeah. Erm, I'm staying in a guesthouse on Pakefield Road.

**HP:** Oh yes. Yeah.

**VB:** Erm, just at the sort of beach end off it.

**HP:** Yes. That's quite nice up there.

**VB: It is nice. Yeah.**

**HP:** Yeah. We don't go up there much now, but we used to. But my grandson--

**WP:** There used to be a, there used to be a little dance hall up there somewhere, didn't there?  
Pakefield Road. On the end towards cliff, towards the sea.

**HP:** Yeah. Tearooms. We used to go there. Yeah.

**VB: Oh.**

**WP:** Got a photograph there somewhere, haven't we?

**WP:** We had a good time there.

**HP:** When we was courting and that and--

**WP:** Fall out. We used to fall out.

**HP:** Always falling out.

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP:** Yes. The night she was doing the Miss Lowestoft thing, I was, we was, we was with our brother, over at what they called eh, [inaudible], where all the charabancs used to go late night for a night out dancing and that sort of thing. Only kids then like but. And eh, you rang up, didn't you? And said you'd come second, didn't you? You used to [go around?] a lot, didn't you?

**HP:** Mhm. Got three pounds for that which is like a week's wages to some people now.

**VB: Ah.**

**HP:** Well, was years ago, I'm talking about.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Three pounds, wasn't it? My father got three pound when he went to sea. For a week's fishing, didn't he?

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** That's what I got for my prize.

**VB:** Mhm.

**WP:** Fur coat. And you can't wear it now. [laughs]

**HP:** I got a fur coat for that. I mean you wouldn't get one now. That was five pounds. I paid five pound for the fur coat and I always remember [inaudible] up London.

**WP:** You wouldn't wear one now, would you? You wouldn't be allowed to.

**HP:** Well you wouldn't wear them now. 'Cause people don't like it. Yeah.

**VB:** Yeah. So I mean I don't know very much about the fishing. Were they going out on a daily basis or were they away for a week at a time?

**WP:** Well the herring drifters--

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** They used to go out. And if they were lucky they used to go out, say, nine o'clock in the morning--

**VB:** Yeah.

**WP:** If they were lucky at night they'd be back again for selling again the next day. And eh, as I said eh, but the trawlers, the trawlers for the plaice and the whiting and all that business, that's different fishing altogether.

**VB:** Ah I see.

**WP:** They'd be fourteen days or twelve days at sea.

**HP:** Ye-ah. My father used to go trawling a lot, didn't he?

**WP:** Yeah. And my father was a herring drifter.

**HP:** He was a drifter. Yes.

**VB: Must've been quite hard on the women left behind.**

**HP:** Well there was no life for them 'cause they used to be always at sea.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** And then they used to go way round Milford Haven.

**WP:** And up to Scotland too, the drifters, weren't they? They drifted up to Scotland in the summer.

**HP:** Scotland a lot.

**WP:** I got about four hundred photographs of drifters here.

**VB: Really?**

**WF:** Lowestoft drifters and Scots drifters here. In them albums at the back there.

**HP:** He collects all that sort of thing.

**VB: I'd love to see one or two of them.**

**WP:** You can.

**VB: If that would be all right.**

**HP:** Yes. He collects all that sort of thing.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** He often had people phone up what numbers [rest inaudible].

**VB: Yes.**

**HP:** [And it's all for the army thing?]

**WP:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs] I'm getting a bit extra for my money today, I think. This is great. [pause 9 seconds]

**WP:** I got about four hundred here somehow, different.

**HP:** [inaudible].

**VB: Absolutely. I mean it must've been a very busy harbour--**

**HP:** It was.

**VB: In the thirties.**

**HP:** That's a shame, you know, the way they closed, didn't it?

**WP:** During the war all those drifters, like as for the Scots folks, they were all called up by the Admiralty.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** They all had a job to do during the war, minesweeping or whatever.

**HP:** Yes. Yeah my father went minesweeping.

**WP:** 'Cause there were very so many lost in that. Well, that's what I used to do. I used to find out where they'd got to and why, you know, why they didn't come back to Lowestoft and all that sort of business.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Get my book out. Hand it down.

**VB: They're big boats these as well.**

**HP:** Yes. My album. [pause 5 seconds]

**WP:** Is that the one?

**HP:** Yeah. See if there's anything that would interest

[pause 5 seconds]

**VB: These are really wonderful. I mean especially if you've got the knowledge to go with it.**

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** This is our wedding, look.

**VB: Oh-h!**

**HP:** Then this is eh, this is actually up the [inaudible] and that's fifty-five years ago.

**WP:** She likes cutting them into little pieces.

**HP:** I always cut mine. I don't know why.

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Silly thing to do. See there's all these. When I was young.

**VB: Ah.**

**HP:** There's my children. This is how I used to do my hair, look.



**VB: Ah I see. That's a beauty.**

**HP:** That's when they were young. Joyce, she's fifty-odd now, but she's only three there. And Keith is a year older. He's pushed fifty. And I got younger one. He'll be, I shouldn't be surprised if he won't be round this afternoon, he's forty-eight. This is her again when she was young. This is me when I was young. Bridesmaid. I've been bridesmaid about six times.

**WP:** Like me being best man several times.

**HP:** There you are. And this is when he retired. He got presented like.

**VB: Ah. That's a lovely one.**

**HP:** Then we went to Spain.

**VB: I can see Barcelona.**

**HP:** Yeah, that's Barcelona. Yeah. And eh, that was Spain. Oh this is Italy, this one. We went to eh, where was that in Italy? Cattolica.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** We went there, near Rimini. Got shorts on. Oh that's a bit out the paper, what we cut out, you know.

**VB: Ah.**

**HP:** This was one of the Miss Lowestofts. That tragic story of the beauty queens up there. And this was, they all died. Isn't that funny? She died at twenty-four. All of them, they all died. Even the one that I was with--

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Died. Young. It's queer that, isn't it?

**VB: Ah. It is.**

**HP:** Yes. Here, I got some cuttings here. Yeah this is what, another Miss Lowestoft. They phoned me up and said would erm, young Miss Lowestoft come up to see me. 'Cause I was seventy, you see.

**VB:** Oh.

**HP:** That's her. Yeah. Yes I thought that was tragic, that story.

**VB:** It's very strange.

**HP:** Yeah. Isn't it strange, yeah.

**WP:** Don't pay to be famous, does it?

**VB:** Mhm. 'Cause you would think that girls like that would be healthy and...

**HP:** I mean all in their twenties!

**VB:** Yeah. I'll take a look at your book actually as well.

**HP:** There's some ideas in there as well. You might be able to jot down something.

**WP:** As I say, if you look in the index at the back. That can tell you—

**HP:** What to look for, yeah.

**VB:** These are, Walter Houston yes. [turns pages] *Madame Butterfly*. *The Mummy*. Did you like erm, horror films?

**HP:** Yeah, yeah. What, Boris Karloff?

**WP:** Vincent Price.

**HP:** It wasn't just musicals, was it?

**WP:** No.

**HP:** You know, whatever was on.

**WP:** You had to see the B picture, didn't you?

**VB:** Yeah. I'm just looking through these. I mean the stars are just all so great here. Like Bette Davis and...

**HP:** Yes. She's good.

**VB:** Did you like her?

**HP:** Good actress. Very good, I thought.

**VB:** Right.

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** And Clark Gable.

**HP:** Clark Ga, oh, I used to like him. Clark Gable. He was one of my favourites. And Barbara Stanwyck. Eh, Lew Ayres.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** He was one of my favourites, wasn't he? Lew Ayres. I used to like him.

**WP:** Lew Ayres. *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Yeah. He's still alive too, isn't he?

**HP:** Yeah, he'd be in 'Doctor Kildare' [referring to nine films (1938-1942), beginning with *Young Dr Kildare*, in which Ayres played Kildare]. But he's very old now.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** You know, like us. Getting on, deteriorating.

**WP:** Sally Eilers was my girlfriend.

**HP:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** Madge Evans.

**HP:** He used to like Madge Evans.

**WP:** I was in Madge Evans Fan Club I was.

**HP:** [laughs] He used to get carried away.

**WP:** [laughs] Another one was [inaudible].

**VB:** **What about Ramon Novarro?**

**HP:** Oh yes.

**WP:** Ramon Novarro, yeah.

**HP:** And, another one, Buddy Rogers was nice. He married eh, Mary Pickford.

**VB:** **Oh.**

**HP:** Douglas Fairbank's wife. When he died.

**WP:** Buddy Rogers, he was in a dance band, wasn't he? Buddy Rogers.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** He had a band.

**HP:** He was lovely. He had dark wavy hair, didn't he? Yes.

**VB:** Oh Paul Muni.

**HP:** Yes. Paul Muni. Used to be in gangster ones.

**WP:** Gangster's moll.

**HP:** Anna May Wong.

**VB:** Ah.

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Claudette Colbert.

**HP:** Yes. Very nice, yeah. She used to be with Clark Gable quite a bit.

**VB:** Mhm.

[pause 3 seconds]

**VB:** And Gary Cooper.

**HP:** Gary Cooper. More sort of erm, cowboys, wasn't he?

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Oh here's Tom Mix. That's a good one.

**HP:** Yes, yeah

**WP:** [laughs].

**HP:** That's very early that is, Tom Mix, isn't it?

**VB:** Mhm. Leslie Howard.

**HP:** Yes. He died young, didn't he? Leslie Howard. Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

**VB:** They're beautiful photos. I like the pictures in these sort of books. Just give you the flavour of it.

**HP:** Yes. 'Spect it'd be a job to get a book like that now, don't you?

**VB:** Mhm. Not so many of them around, no.

**HP:** No. Do you sort of work for a company or anything like that?

**VB:** E-erm, no, just for the University.

**HP:** Oh I see. Oh.

**VB:** Yeah. So it's eh...

**HP:** So you're really a student, are you?

**VB:** Erm, no. I work in the Department so I'm a Research Fellow.

**HP:** Oh, got a good job.

**VB:** Yeah. Sounds good. Well it is good. The job's good.

**HP:** It's a good job.

**VB:** But as with anything, the money could be better.

**HP:** And then you can go around. If you've got to go anywhere else. Oh, you've been Norwich. You gotta go Ipswich.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Anywhere else?

**VB: Erm, I've been to Manchester already and North London.**

**HP:** Mhm.

**VB: Eh, so sort of picked places in, you know the west, south, east--**

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Mhm.

**VB: Trying to get a good spread.**

**HP:** Have you got a good bit of information?

**VB: Yeah. Yeah it's been, I mean people like yourselves, you know, have been very generous with giving time and eh...**

**HP:** I hope we've been some good, you know.

**VB: Very much so.**

**HP:** [laughs]

**WP:** [laughs]

**VB: Really. It's eh, I mean it just sounds so much fun, you know, when you're talking about the times and...**

**HP:** Oh yeah.

**VB: Quite jealous listening to you.**

**HP: Well to be honest, they were the best days, to be honest. I think so. Don't you?**

**WP: Yeah. We-ell...**

**HP: In one way.**

**WP: Well I mean you can't go out now, can you? Night times.**

**HP: I mean you could go out and you could go to dance. And you could come home on your own and you'd never be attacked.**

**WP: I mean we always used to be one o'clock...**

**HP: Yeah! One or two in the morning.**

**WP: Sometimes if we'd had a row I used to leave her and let her come home on her own.**

**VB: [laughs]**

**WP: [laughs]**

**HP: My mother used to worry and that. Yes.**

**WP: Do you know what she used to do?**

**HP: [laughs]**

**WP: We used to go to pictures. Ten o'clock, come out. We'd seen this programme. I used to take her home.**

**HP: [laughs]**

**WP: Leave her on the doorstep. And I used to come home. She's supposed to go to bed.**



**HP:** [laughs]

**WP:** But she didn't go to bed. She went out again. She went up to the Palais de Dance, dancing again.

**HP:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** Till one o'clock in the morning.

**HP:** I used to go on the pair dancing.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** [laughs]

**WP:** And I used to find her out. You know, what she'd been up to.

**HP:** We used to have arguments and that.

**WP:** And I went up there one time, the Grand Hotel. That same road where you are. There used to be the Grand Hotel there. It's still there, I think. I think the Ministry of Fish used to go in that. Used to be dancing in there, didn't they? And I used to up there and I used to see her waltzing round there.

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** So I went into the bar. And she's had a drink along with some, I don't know, some bloke.

**HP:** Someone worked up there where I worked.

**WP:** So I went in there, I went like this. [demonstrates] All the way along the bar.

**HP:** He did.

**WP:** And all the glasses, they flew everywhere. [laughs]

**HP:** Went flying. Yeah. Used to be ever so jealous. [laughs]

**WP:** [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**HP:** And I mean it was harmless and that. It's only someone that knew me through work.

**WP:** Yeah. I didn't like that though. [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

**VB:** 'Cause I mean the one that comes to mind is *The 39 Steps*.

**HP:** Oh yes. Robert Donat.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** Yes. That was a good film.

**WP:** 'Course in those days, if that was a British picture, you used to pooh-pooh it, you know. Aw-w! British, you know.

**HP:** It was American films mostly then.

**WP:** Yeah. Well if that was a British film, you know, you go to see it, you know. But I mean you didn't think they were as good as the Americans, did you?

**HP:** Yes. They were more advanced like.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** And the talking in those days for British was a bit [laughs] you know.

**HP:** La-di-da, sorta thing. You know. Yeah. Yes.

**VB: Ah. But as you say, Madeleine Carroll, she was--**

**HP:** She was lovely.

**VB: Yeah. What else was she in again?**

**HP:** I can't really remember what she was in really.

**WP:** It'll tell you in there.

**HP:** It's there at the bottom.

**VB: Ah right.**

**WP:** It'll tell you in there.

**VB: Eh, *Escape*.**

**HP:** That's right.

**VB: And *Atlantic*. Oh I see what you mean, yes. She married Captain Philip Astley.**

**HP:** Yeah. So she retired for a little while and then went back again.

**VB: Mhm. What was it about her that you liked?**

**HP:** I thought she was very ladylike, you know.

**WP:** Mhm.

**HP:** Very, [pause 3 seconds] yeah. Very ladylike.

**WP:** Well there weren't many British girls, stars. Were there not really?

**HP:** No. Not till later. Like Diana Dors and all them.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** Yeah. What was *The Wicked Lady*?

**HP:** Oh Margaret Lockwood. Margaret Lockwood. We saw her in a lot of pictures, didn't we?

**WP:** Mhm.

**HP:** *Wicked Lady* and eh... [pause 3 seconds] Yes. She had a beauty spot on there, didn't she?

**WP:** And that other one who went out with Profumo there.

**HP:** Oh erm, Valerie Hobson.

**WP:** Valerie Hobson. She was nice, weren't she? She was British.

**HP:** Yeah, yeah.

**WP:** Valerie Hobson. Yeah.

**HP:** Mhm.

[pause 4 seconds]

**WP:** But I think the most comical one's at the back there. Jackie Cooper.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** Jackie Cooper.

**HP:** Yes, when he was a little boy. Yes.

**WP:** Mickey Rooney. Mickey Rooney at the back there.

**HP:** Mickey Rooney. [phone rings] That might be my appointment that.

**VB: Ah I see at the back. Oh yes. All the different faces. Did you enjoy the comedies as well?**

**WP:** Oh yes! Oh yes. [Boss-eyed one there?]. Buster Keaton and all those ones, you know. Oh yeah. Still do, right enough. If they ever come on like, on here [referring to television]. Sometimes you get an odd one. I could, comedies, I laugh like anything over those.

**VB: Mhm.**

[HP talking on phone in background]

**WP:** Charlie Chaplin, all those ones. Old Charlie Chaplin, yeah. I think he was very good, Charlie Chaplin. [laughs] Oh of course Laurel and Hardy as well, weren't they? I mean they were pretty good.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** You don't get them like that now, do you? No.

**VB: Oh this is great. I'm really enjoying having a look through this. Oh George Raft.**

**WP:** George Raft. He was a good gangster, weren't he? 'Course he did come to London, didn't he? And eh, well they booed him out of London, didn't they?

**VB: Is that right?**

**WP:** Because he came to London to open up a nightclub. And eh, something went wrong and I think the London people they booted him out of England, you know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** In real life he were more or less a gangster, weren't he?

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** Like the Kray Boys. Kray Twins. He was good actor though, weren't he? I mean he was versatile. He'd dance as well, didn't he?

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

**WP:** What's that, oh. [pause 3 seconds] Oh I can't think what it was now. He used to dance, tap his feet, go round. Yeah.

[**HP:** talking on phone in background]

**WP:** Well you can't beat the Americans for making pictures, can you? Not really, I mean, they have got the knowhow or did have the knowhow, didn't they?

**VB: Yeah. I mean even the way they look I think is different from the--**

**WP:** Pardon?

**VB: Even the way they look is different from the British films, the American ones.**

**WP:** Mhm. But I think that'll revive again. I think, well that's got to come. I mean everything, I mean it's like all this music you get now, as I say this twanging music, that'll fall, that'll go.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** And then you'll get the big bands back again like they used to be. Even said so on the news on Pebble One, Pebble Mill today that eh, they say big bands are coming back and everybody'll be pleased which, you know, they will. That's proper dancing, isn't it?

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** The ballroom dancing. Better known as what I call jungle dancing. [laughs]

**VB:** [laughs]

**WP:** You know, you got to cater for all ages, haven't you, that's the thing and all times.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** You got a pen? I've got to take a number down.

**WP:** Oh yeah.

[WP gets pen]

**HP:** Quick.

**WP:** All right.

[looking for pen]

**WP:** Here you are.

[HP still on phone]

**WP:** Sorry about that, dear.

**VB:** That's okay. [pause 5 seconds] I do like your boats though. They're great.

**WP:** Yeah?

**VB:** Yeah. How long does it take you to make one? Say that big one there.

**WP:** Well. Well I had loads of time on my hands and eh, used to do a bit now and again...

**HP:** That was the appointment. [referring to health appointment]

**VB: Oh that's great.**

**HP:** November the 3rd. Yeah. At 10.30. I've now got to make arrangements with my GP to get me there. See if they can do something. Don't know for sure.

**VB: Yeah. Well I hope so.**

**HP:** Yes. Yeah. At least they've bothered.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** Keep lumbering you with all these things.

**VB: Not at all.**

**WP:**All the different ships had different funnels and they was--

**VB: A-ah!**

**WP:** They was the flags what they used to have in the funnels, you see. Well, what I did, you know old toilet rolls, the cardboard off toilet rolls? Well I used that as funnels, you see, and painted them all.

**VB: That's wonderful.**

**WP:** [laughs] All silly things like that I used to do.

**HP:** Mhm.

**VB: Not silly at all. These are beautiful.**

**WP:** See there's none of those ships there now. I mean they've all been scrapped and broken up and sold.

**VB: Yeah.**



**WP:** And finished.

**VB:** Aw I better not start actually [laughs], 'cause they're great these.

**WP:** [inaudible] ships, isn't it?

**VB:** They're wonderful.

**HP:** Can you just jot down so I don't forget, what she told me. Unthank Road, we've got to go to.

**WP:** Yeah. I was stationed there during the war.

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Yeah there's ships again.

**VB:** Oh this has been great. I've really enjoyed it.

**HP:** Well it's handy, isn't it?

**VB:** We were trying to think of a George Raft film where he dances.

**HP:** He dances in the eh...

**WP:** What was that in the...

**HP:** Oh. What was that called? The tango, not the tango. What was that called now?

**WP:** Not the rumba.

**HP:** Something like that.

**WP:** Oh-h.

**HP:** The rumba, was it called?

**WP:** No, no. Another name.

**HP:** I can't remember.

**WP:** He used to sort of stand up and stamp his feet,

**HP:** Yeah, you know, like the Spanish do.

**VB:** Oh yes.

**WP:** And walk, and go all round like. And turn round.

**HP:** He used to have that bit Spanish sort of hat on, didn't he?

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** That was George Raft.

**WP:** Sombrero, something.

**HP:** Sombrero, sombre. Oh *Bolero*.

**VB:** Ah.

**HP:** That what it's called.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** Yeah. Just write that down, will you. Unthank Road. [Colman?] Hospital. Got to see the doctor first.

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** And they put you to physiotherapist. And they try this bandaging. I got to go six times, she said. They arranged me to go six times to this hospital.

**WP:** [inaudible]

**HP:** Say if you don't feel well you got to let them know.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Sometimes I feel fine. I feel alright today 'cause I'm talking to people.

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** That take it off, don't it? Another day I'd be down as anything.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB: I'm not surprised.**

**HP:** With worrying. I thought I don't know if I'll be able to see that young woman. I don't feel like it. Terrible yesterday, weren't I?

**WP:** Mhm. She has a mixture of pills what she has.

**HP:** It's these pills they put me on, you see and well, it has side effects.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** I mean you certainly get them, I can tell you. Has put all the go out of me.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** See another thing what she used to do, she used to take a water pill and another pill. And then when we was out, she want to be coming home, in the street. And if we was talking to anybody--

**HP:** I used to all like this--

**WP:** She said she wanted to be going home.

**HP:** I used to go all dizzy.

**VB: Oh dear.**

**WP:** Well then, this one water pill was doing the selfsame job as what the two pills were, so she was getting double amount--

**HP:** I was getting double amount of pills. It was the doctor's fault. That's the pills what's making me go like this.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** I used to dread going on the bus.

**VB: Must've been very frightening that actually.**

**HP:** Well that was horrible. I went just up the road there to come back again, didn't I?

**WP:** Yeah.

**HP:** But I don't get that now 'cause he changed them. I said it must be them pills made me like this. Yeah.

**WP:** See one pill would have been enough.

**HP:** He gave me two.

**WP:** One for water and one for--

**HP:** Blood pressure.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** Blood pressure. You're getting two strengths! Where one would've done she was taking two.

**HP:** Keep laying on the bed and every morning I'd say "I got to lie down." I mean, that's horrible. See you can't rely on doctors, can you? But I don't get that now. No. But these new drugs what they put me on. It's certainly given me side effects.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** I ain't felt so good.

**VB: Mhm. Well I hope your hospital appointment--**

**HP:** Yeah. I hope that'll do something yes. But it's about the only place, I don't go out! I don't go out!

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** See. He has to do all the shopping now.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** 'Course we're getting older now. [laughs]

**WP:** Done well to get as far as we have really, haven't we?

[VB, HP talking; inaudible].

**HP:** Don't suppose you'll be very old.

**VB: Thirty-one.**

**HP:** Same age as my granddaughter

**VB: Ah.**

**HP:** She's thirty-one in November.

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** Yeah. She's good girl too, isn't she?

**HP:** Aw yes. And my daughter is too, isn't she? She's good.

**WP:** Oh yeah.

**HP:** Been doing my hair every week, you know. Colour it for me.

**WP:** We have good children that's one thing.

**HP:** Oh yeah. I mean there's nothing to worry about with them. That's one thing.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** Some people do, don't they?

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Your parents alive?

**VB: Yes.**

**HP:** Yeah. I suppose you move about a lot.

**VB: Erm, I have been this past few months, yeah.**

**HP:** Yeah. No boyfriend?

**VB: I'm married actually.**

**HP:** Ooh, are you?

**VB: Yeah.**

**WP:** Good for you.

**VB: Yeah.**

**HP:** No family though.

**VB: Not yet, no.**

**HP:** Michelle is like that. Lovely life she says. [Yet her brother's got two?].

**WP:** [inaudible; laughs].

**HP:** [laughs; inaudible].

**WP:** [inaudible] She's got a good job as well, hasn't she?

**HP:** Loves her job and you love your job. There's plenty time.

**VB: Mhm.**

**HP:** Yeah. [laughs]

**WP:** [laughs]

**VB: Well I mean it's certainly been very kind of you to allow me to come round. Especially if you're not feeling so well.**

**HP:** Oh I've enjoyed it. It's made me feel better.

**VB: Oh, I'm glad.**

**HP:** It's brightened me up. That's what I want. I don't get enough company, do I? I feel a lot better.

**VB: Mhm.**

**WP:** Did you see Jackie Cooper at the back there?

**VB:** I did, yes. It's wonderful.

**WP:** That's different what he looks now. Mickey Rooney.

**VB:** Yeah.

**HP:** How he's gone, Mickey Rooney! He had some wives, didn't he?

**VB:** I believe he did. [laughs]

**WP:** Yeah, five or six. Six or seven.

**HP:** Yes, he had several wives. He had--

**WP:** Ava Gardner.

**HP:** Ava Gardner, didn't he? Lana Turner.

**WP:** He had all the best.

**HP:** Yeah. He was sweet on Judy Garland though. He used to like her. 'Course she died young, didn't she?

**VB:** Mhm.

**HP:** Committed suicide, didn't she?

**VB:** I think so.

**HP:** Drugs.

**VB:** Sad. Mhm. Yeah the child stars were very interesting. Did you like Shirley Temple?

**HP:** Yes. Very much.



**WP:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**HP:** Saw all her films. She was very [nobby?].

**WP:** Shirley Black.

**HP:** She's a politician, isn't she, now?

**VB:** I think that's right. Yeah.

**HP:** Yeah. Shirley Temple is. That's her name now Shirley Black.

**WP:** Shirley Black Temple, yeah. [coughs]

**HP:** Yeah.

**WP:** Well she was an ambassadress. She went abroad. VIP of some sort, weren't she?

**VB:** It's a great book this. It's been a real pleasure to have a look through that as well.

**WP:** Yeah I got that for nothing out of the 'Daily Mirror', I used to get the 'Daily Mirror', and they used to put a little token, a little book token on the page. And you used to cut them out and get so many and send them up to an address and that's what I got back.

**VB:** Ah I see. Ah I wish they did that now.

**HP:** I've never seen another book like it. Not really.

**WP:** I bet you could do, if you wrote to the publishers they probably might have one in the archives.

**VB:** Mhm. It's possible. Yeah.

**WP:** See you don't like to part with it. Not after having it for all this time.

**VB:** No, course not, no.

**HP:** No.

**VB:** Well, I think I should maybe be heading back into the town.

**HP:** Yes, yeah.

**VB:** And leave you to get on with your afternoon. Erm, but it's been a real pleasure meeting you.

**HP:** Oh that's good.

**VB:** And really interesting as well.

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** So, thanks very much.

**HP:** That's all right. You're quite welcome.

**VB:** It's been great.

**WP:** When you come to Lowestoft again come and give us another call.

**VB:** Well, it's funny you should say that, [laughing] because erm, I am actually planning to come down in about a month or so.

**HP:** Oh yes, yeah.

**VB:** Second, third week of November so, I mean, if you don't mind I might just do that.

**WP:** Yes, come and see us.

**HP:** Yes. See how I've got on.

**VB:** That would be great. 'Cause the thing with these tapes is, what always happens is when you get back and you listen to them you think, oh, I should've asked about that and...

**WP:** [laughs]

**HP:** Yeah.

**VB:** Erm, wish I'd asked more.

**HP:** You can't think of anything else.

**VB:** I can't think of anything much. I think we've covered a lot actually.

**HP:** Oh.

**VB:** Erm, just now. But I mean, if I give you a ring beforehand and then see how you're keeping...

**HP:** Yes.

**VB:** Erm...

**HP:** Yeah. Just tell me when you're coming. [tape cuts out]

[End of Interview]