

**Interview Respondent: 0808****Date: 4/8/2015****Location: University College London****Interviewer: Emma Pett**

Respondent: ... At that age you got a half-price ... you were supposed to pay adult fares but you got a pass so you could child's fare and this supposedly ... so Garrety would break into the assistant headmaster's office every term and steal a handful of these things and then sell them for nine pence for some reason. And you put your name on it, so if you were quizzed or questioned you'd say, "I can prove it, I have an officially authorised thing from my school."

Interviewer: I haven't heard of anyone doing this before in the Sixties. Cause usually, when I talk to people about trying to get into X-certificates or As or whatever, they would just basically try and persuade the person at the box office...

Respondent: There was that but as I said, this was another thing.

Interviewer: But you also had this, it's quite interesting.

Respondent: Maybe it depended on ...

Interviewer: Which cinemas you went you, yeah ...

Respondent: It was also to do with ... people who went to nearby schools maybe they didn't think about getting bus passes and things like that. We just filled in our own name and date of birth. Just added a few years on. And of course there was wearing long trousers ...

Interviewer: ... indicator ...

Respondent: Indicator of getting in and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: It's quite funny, I find it interesting just thinking about the Seventies and Eighties when I was growing up how I can remember having ID to show as a child not an adult, cause I was tall for my age and I didn't want to pay adult fares. Which now just seems really quite a peculiar thing but I don't know if it still goes on but it all seems to kind of flip the other way of proving that you're an adult.

Respondent: Well, I didn't have any problems with that because I was quite tall for a child. I've been this high since I was twelve.

Interviewer: Which can have its uses.

Respondent: It did. And the other thing was, sometimes, I can remember being turned away from a box office and hanging about outside till the cashiers changed and then trying a different one.

Interviewer: Can you remember what the film was?

Respondent: I can remember one of the occasions I did that. I did it on a number of occasions but two occasions I can think of offhand. One was going to see a double bill of Attack of the Crab Monsters and The Pit and the Pendulum at the Essoldo Stepney. And the other one was going to see a double bill of, it was a film called Goliath and the Vampires and the other one might have been called Swords of Blood, it was a Jean-Paul Belmondo and Claudia Cardinale swashbuckling thing. And ...

Interviewer: Where they both Xs?

Respondent: They were both X, yeah. And the problem with the Goliath and the Vampires was, my mother was a bus conductress, so I got a free bus ride from where I lived more or less to Hammersmith where it was showing, there used to be a cinema on the roundabout at Hammersmith. A little cinema, not the Apollo, which was the Odeon, it was a little repertory-type cinema. And, went there and had this business of being turned away originally and then having to come back and try someone else. Cause we'd arranged to get picked up, on mum's bus back. So we got in and unfortunately I didn't see all of the swashbuckler, although I'd really gone to see the Vampire film but I actually remember the swashbuckler of which I got a chance to see again. That would be about '64, I think.

Interviewer: What's useful for the transcript and the recording is if you could just say – and I know you got this on your questionnaire – where you lived throughout the decade and kind of roughly what age you were.

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: Just to put everything into context.

Respondent: Basically, to put things in context, my parents were from Glasgow and you may be aware that it was a strong cinema-going culture in Glasgow which they continued when they moved to England. We moved into a place called Chadworth House which is at Lever Street, which is sort of between Old Street and City Road, that area. And we'd go to the cinema quite often and I'd go with them. But I can remember going to the cinema from the kind of mid-Fifties. So sometimes it's a bit difficult to sort of remember the segue of the decades, as it were. And we lived there until 1969, so more or less the same era. And the local cinemas were the Angel Cinema, which is now a Starbucks, the Blue Hall Cinema, which has been demolished, which is in front of the ... I can't remember, some sort of conference centre at the Angel, next to Islington Green. A bit further on there was the Rex which is now the Screen on the Green which is the only cinema from my era that's still operating. And then a bit further up the road was the Odeon Upper Street and then round the corner from that there was a cinema we called the Carlton which was an ABC cinema, which is a bit more luxurious than the other cinemas. Cleaner seats. I think it was slightly more expensive but I can't exactly remember. And round the corner from that there was another cinema which has only recently been demolished but hasn't been a cinema for many years, which I can't remember

the name of. In North Road, just round the corner from the Carlton. And then there was the Empire which was opposite the Angel Cinema which is an old music hall that had been turned over which was demolished some years ago. Further down the road towards Rosebery Avenue, there was another cinema called the Rio which was one of the two flea pits. The Rex and the Rio were considered flea pits. And the Rio tended to show things like Tarzan which we used to go to as kids. The Rex used to show three double bills a week, usually. So there'd be Monday to Wednesday, Thursday to Saturday and then Sunday. The Sunday films tended to be more adult, you know, sort of horror films or, I suppose, sex films, we didn't really go and see those, they were considered sex films at the time. There'd [be] Room at the Top, things like that.

Interviewer: Things with a bit of nudity or sex and things like that.

Respondent: Adult themes, as they'd warn you about. They were the kind of normal ones but my mother went to work on the buses, she was a bus conductress, and she worked in Dalston garage which was a bit further east. And I don't know if you know about the clock system?

Interviewer: Oh, the way the pattern ... yeah.

Respondent: It used to go to one area and then the next.

Interviewer: Were there four in London?

Respondent: Yeah. So sometimes, if for some reason we missed a film one week in our area we'd go to Hackney which was the next station on the block as it were. So we'd go to, I can't remember the name of it, there was an Odeon cinema that was opposite the Hackney Empire, we used to go to. And there were a few others. But we went there less often. And also occasionally we went to this one in Hammersmith because it was on my mother's bus route and she would say, "such and such is on". Cause, one of the things was knowing what was on, right? And ...

Interviewer: Was it mainly through newspapers?

Respondent: Well, mainly through actually just going to the pictures ...

Interviewer: ... and knowing what was coming up next?

Respondent: Yeah, knowing what was coming up. And also, not so much when I was younger, but when I went to secondary school, which was in the early Sixties, the bus route took me past most of the cinemas. It took me past the Angel and the Empire, the Blue Hall, the Ritz and the Odeon although that closed down. That's now a garage. It was next to a police station. And I remember seeing double bills. I think they must have had an RKO licence or something in those days cause I remember seeing The Treasure of Pancho Villa and The Legend of Tom Dooley and The Last of the Fast Guns, a lot of Westerns there for some reason. And so that used to take me up Holloway Road past cinemas more or less showing the same thing. And I think there was three cinemas in Holloway Road at one time. And now it's just the Odeon left, although it's multi-screen. And then there was ... One of the cinemas I went past was the Odeon Highgate which I think was one of the last to be built and the first to be demolished, which doesn't exist anymore, it's kind of a site of a block of flats

now. But I remember, not going to see it, but I remember *The Agony and the Ecstasy* being on there, being a film I did go and see elsewhere. And of course there were occasional visits to the West End. I don't know quite what occasion apart from ...

Interviewer: One of the big films like *Lawrence of Arabia* and things like that were on. That played a long time ...

Respondent: There was those but the things I really remember are, what are now known to be the Samuel Bronston epics. They were kind of *El Cid*, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, that sort of thing. Big Cinerama type presentations.

Interviewer: Did you go to Leicester Square?

Respondent: To the Dominion Theatre, that was the cinema of the time and also the place across the road was the Astoria, which is now gone, thanks to British Rail or whatever. We used to go to both of those. And as you say, there were certain films that were on forever that you went to see eventually if you fancied them. One of the first ones I remember being on for years was *South Pacific*. It seemed to live in the Dominion. It was replaced by *The Sound of Music* or something like that.

Interviewer: Kind of mid-Sixties. They were more like, the way that some theatre, some plays run in the West End now. So you, I mean, it sounds like you had your local cinemas but you also went to quite a big range of cinemas across London throughout your teens?

Respondent: It was two things, one was, I was interested and the other thing was, you know, it wasn't till I was about sixteen ... oh, not quite that ... when I went to secondary school ... I was ... discovered *What's On in London*. That was the other thing. That told me what was on. And I used to look through it for mainly horror films to be honest at the time. Although I got interested in other things quite quickly after that. I used to go all over the place and one of the things I used to do is take days off school to aid with the whole business of being older, right? So I'd put on my long trousers, take the day off school and go to places like ... I can remember going to, I think it's the Odeon in Woolwich, to see *Brides of Dracula*. When I was about twelve or fourteen, that sort of age. And that was quite a journey. And I remember, one night travelling from Old Street to High Barnet, there used to be a Classic Chain?

Interviewer: Yeah, they showed the older films.

Respondent: They did, and usually in double bills which was a good thing. And I went there to see a double bill of Boris Karloff *Frankenstein* and *The Birds*.

Interviewer: Oh really, you can remember quite a lot of detail about what you saw where?

Respondent: I think it's kind of mark of people of my generation. I've got a friend who is actually much more detailed in his memory in these sorts of things. He could probably tell you who wrote the music for these films and who was the assistant director, that kind of thing. But where you saw the film was as much part of the experience as anything else.

Interviewer: Why was that, do you think?

- Respondent: Well, you got an ... there were certain ... obviously, if you were trying to get into films that were kind of too old for you, you got to know the ones where you could, right?
- Interviewer: The cinemas where you would be able to get in? So you would travel. Is that why you went to High Barnet because there was a cinema there where you knew you'd get in?
- Respondent: Well, not so much that as it was on the Tube line from Old Street, I could go straight on. And then of course there's the kind of comedy of sort of being half-price on the Tube and full-price when you go to the cinema, that kind of thing. But the Classics, I went to most of the Classics. I remember going to the Classic Tooting.
- Interviewer: There was one at Waterloo as well, wasn't there?
- Respondent: There was one at Waterloo, it was a Classic at the times. I went there a few times. That was a terrible cinema!
- Interviewer: Was it?
- Respondent: Yeah, it was ...
- Interviewer: The idea of there being cinemas in stations ...
- Respondent: There used to be cinemas at lots of stations. There used to be news theatres. But I can't remember seeing proper films. In fact, one of the films I saw at Waterloo was *The Pit and the Pendulum* again because the thing about double bills is that they weren't always paired with the same film so I went to see *Attack of the Crab Monsters* and *The Pit and the Pendulum* at the ... Essoldo Stepney because I hadn't seen either of them. And I went to see *The Pit and the Pendulum* again at the Classic because it was on with a different film I hadn't seen. I think it was *The Fall of the House of Usher*. But they'd make up different double bills so sometimes they overlapped. A bit like anthology books. That kind of thing. But the cinema at Waterloo was terrible in terms of presentation because it was quite small and the projection box was sort of up in the ceiling about halfway along the auditorium and projected down and had a very steep projection. The image was keystone. It was kind of distorted. Maybe that was kind of particularly noticeable because it was in Cinemascope those two films. But you know, it was just very poor. I mean, presentation was another thing. To some extent you couldn't choose which cinema ... you know, if you decided on a film you wanted to see you had to go where it was, sort of thing. So you didn't choose the cinema in that way. But what would make you choice, if you were going to the pictures on Saturday, what you went to see, if there was two or three things on that you might want to see, is which cinema it was on. Because the ABC Carlton was my favourite cinema. I'd go there and see a film.
- Interviewer: Was that just because it was a chain that was a bit more comfortable?
- Respondent: It was big, it had a big screen. That sort of thing. Although the screen at the Angel was quite good as well, cause I remember seeing, this is before the Sixties, I saw *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, which must have been the Fifties, I remember big queues getting into that and finding myself in the front row watching this and being dazzled by it.

Interviewer: Because it was so close?

Respondent: Yeah. One of the things I miss about the Sixties generally is that cinema screens were bigger and rock bands played louder. I went along to see a film a few years ago, one of the Star Trek movies at a multiplex near where I live, the one in Finchley Lido, that area. And I was kind of outraged when the main feature came on they masked the screen down to Cinemascope instead of opening it out because they couldn't make the screen any wider than it was for the adverts, as it were. And I thought that was the sort of thing that went out in the ...

Interviewer: I haven't seen that happen for a while. This is really fascinating and particularly there's lots of things that you said that interest me. One is about the Classic Chain, I'm quite fascinated by the Classic Chain, this idea that there was a chain that showed sort of vintage films in the Sixties, films from the Thirties and Forties. Can you remember very much about what the audiences were like at the Classic Chains? Did they attract older people that remembered the films coming out? Were people kind of revisiting them from their youth?

Respondent: Well, my mother did. As I said, I used to ... one of the ways I got into films ... I remember once trying to get in to see a film called Mysterious Island and Blood River Pirates, I think it's called. And I'm not sure it was an X but it might have been an A and they said we weren't old enough or it was an X and they wouldn't let us in. And I went round to see my mother cause we'd gone to see it at an ABC for some reason. Maybe it was this clock thing, maybe we'd missed it and they wouldn't let us in. So I walked down to Dalston garage which wasn't that far away and when she was finishing her shift and she came along and she came in to see the film with us and said to the attendant, you know, "I know how old they are, they're old enough to see this film." And we got in to see it, which was ... Having ... you know, liberal-minded parents was quite useful.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was going to say. She was a film-goer herself ...

Respondent: Both my parents were.

Interviewer: So they were both quite happy for you to go and see things that were kind of, theoretically, too old for you?

Respondent: They would never balk at taking me to see an A film which was adult supervision type of thing. By the time I was twelve, thirteen I was going to see X films quite regularly.

Interviewer: And you were quite a big horror fan? Do you think those two things were at all connected? You know, the fact that your parents were quite liberal about what you went to see meant you developed a taste for that kind of genre?

Respondent: I don't know. I quite liked fantasy because I used to read a lot of science fiction and I read the book Dracula as well as tried to see the film. But the audiences at the Classics ... it would depend on when I went. I remember there was one occasion I went to the Classic Praed Street which is near Paddington, and I went during the week and it was 2 shillings to get in during the week and it was a double bill and it was Son of Dracula and House of

Dracula, I think, Universals, 'cause it must have been a re-issue of all the Universal films. I actually managed to see virtually all of the Universal horror cycle.

Interviewer: In cinemas?

Respondent: In cinemas.

Interviewer: Maybe they had deals with particular chains, didn't they?

Respondent: Yeah, in the Classics I saw them in double bills. The first one was the one in Tooting where I went to see ... I know it was Frankenstein, I can't remember what the other thing on the bill was. But you know ... it was a long way away. And then I saw Frankenstein again at High Barnet. But ... when I went during the week pretending to be sixteen ... there wouldn't necessarily be that many in, because I'd go to the first showing that was on and ... usually kind of older people, you know, not that many of them but older people rather than younger people. And usually at weekend ....

Interviewer: Thirties or forties? I suppose it's difficult to tell when you're that young.

Respondent: They were certainly ... trying to think how old my parents were at that time, you know, no one's older than your parents. It's a kind of psychological thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, they're old ...

Respondent: So, I'd say, probably thirties upwards. And you'd get obviously people who were kind of retired ... probably saw them first time round.

Interviewer: Was there ... with the horror films particularly the Hammer double bills, which fascinates me, that you could see two films like that together at the cinema ... Did they attract an older audience as well?

Respondent: No, not necessarily. The Hammer films were kind of new so I think the audience for those was younger. The kind of Classic films attracted an older audience. That's just a kind of feeling.

Interviewer: You're not entirely sure. Obviously one of the things about this project is that everyone we're interviewing is kind of under a particular age in the Sixties so we're capturing this incredible data about people who were children in the Sixties, teenagers, twenties and thirties and then there's this kind of, the older generation that's kind of out of focus. It's difficult to know how much they were going and obviously cinema-going dropped off and generally cinema-going attracts younger audiences anyway. I'm kind of curious about that generational difference which other people have talked about being quite marked in the Sixties because you had the war generation, people who talked a lot about the war and young people felt that they were quite distinct and different from that generation. Did you, can you remember?

Respondent: Yeah, there was an element of that. But as I say ...

Interviewer: Your parents were quite liberal anyway ...

Respondent: There was that but I was going to say that my kind of experience of going through the Sixties starts with me quite often going with my parents. And my

parents would take me to see films I could see, they wouldn't take me to X films in the beginning of the Sixties, I was quite young then. When I went to sort of secondary school my mother started treating me more like an adult. And also because I was big enough and I went on my own anyway, there was that. They were obviously the war-time generation and maybe ... I mean, it's in retrospect that I've discovered Glasgow being a big cinema culture, that they just went to the pictures. And well, I would go twice a week and my parents would often go more often because they would go and see the X films that I couldn't go and see and my mother being a bus conductress would often have the opportunity during the day because she was either not working in the middle of the week or she had a shift that started late, that sort of thing. She could go to the pictures as well. Which used to make me quite jealous to be honest. I remember her picking me up from primary school and telling me that she'd been to see the Christopher Lee Dracula which must have been the first release, probably, at the Blue Hall. Because I remember seeing, we'd gone to see something else and I'd seen the trailer for it and thought, "Oh, I want to see that, that's in colour, I like that". But it wasn't just horror films. The thing about ... States people wouldn't be talking about this, going to the pictures in the Sixties, is that there seemed much more reason to go in those days. I liked Jerry Lewis and I liked Norman Wisdom and I liked the Disney films which meant, just those three, they all produced about two films a year so there were six occasions when you kind of had to go to the cinema.

Interviewer: To see the latest.

Respondent: To see the latest version of that. And then you might go and see it again. I remember ... the Magnificent Seven being a kind of, in a kind of minor way a bit like what Rocky Horror became. It was one of those things that we all went to see whenever it was on.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: You had the first release and then it was re-issued and then it would turn up at the Rex sometimes in the summer holidays. And all the kids who were ... not quite the same generation but, you know, within five or six years of each other, from our yard would go en masse. We'd walk up ...

Interviewer: In a gang and would watch it?

Respondent: Yeah ...

Interviewer: Every time it came on?

Respondent: Every time it came on. Cause it wasn't ...

Interviewer: So you saw it in the cinema quite a few times?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's quite an unusual experience from the selection of people that we've talked to, obviously that's not representative in any way but, seeing something twice at the cinema wasn't as common then because films didn't stay as long.

Respondent: They didn't ...

Interviewer: But they would come round in different cycles. So you actually remember the Magnificent Seven was kind of like a cult film. The social element to it?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely. And you know, there was ... Coming home with kids acting out various bits of it. They all kind of had their favourite character they wanted to be.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: My mate Jacky Smith really fancied himself as Steve McQueen.

Interviewer: So he would act out bits from the film, remember bits of dialogue?

Respondent: I can remember very distinctly walking home from the Rex, walking down the Angel and down City Road to ... there was ... must have been at least somewhere between eight and twelve of us, I can't remember exactly who was there but you know, there were three or four different people acting and sometimes you'd be instructed "you be a Mexican and I'll shoot you".

Interviewer: So you kind of extend the narrative and play it out and take parts in a way?

Respondent: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Respondent: Must've been twelve, that sort of age, round about? Eleven to thirteen. But that went on for a few years because ...

Interviewer: It kept being screened.

Respondent: And, you know, that kind of thing used to happen quite a bit amongst us, that if someone had seen a film there'd always be this conversation, "there's this bit in it where" ... and then they'd act out a bit of the movie, "and then he gets shot and he goes like this" ... People used to take it quite to heart. I'll tell you what used to amuse me, something's popped into my mind. Our parents' generation, I can remember that my friends' dad, two of my friends' dads and my dad would all, they'd go and see Robert Mitchum and James Cagney films, right? And whenever they went they'd wear a trench coat and a hat.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah!

Interviewer: So kind of dressing up a bit?

Respondent: I didn't think of it ... they were just ... In retrospect I can see that they were kind of projecting themselves into the role in some way but they were just going out in those days. They wore it to the pub as well, it wasn't like a fancy dress costume you'd never seen them in before. But it was one of those things, I can remember going to a performance where they were all at it and they'd take the mates with them. It was probably Shake Hands with the Devil or something with Jimmy Cagney which disappeared because it was too sympathetic to the IRA. But you could see there was that. And parents would have serious discussions. My father wasn't that keen on war films. And he said that they were too unrealistic. They always sounded like fake guns and

that sort of thing because he'd been in action somewhere and he said it was much worse than that. Whatever they seemed to show he seemed to think it was a bit trivial.

Interviewer: But he quite liked gangster films and stuff like that?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Which is sort of more fantasy in a way. But I suppose if you haven't lived it then you ...

Respondent: Oh, I don't know, I can't analyse it myself.

Interviewer: What about your mum? Did your mum ever copy any ... Can you remember your mum copying any styles from?

Respondent: No, my mum liked musicals and she liked singing. So she'd sing the songs from the movies.

Interviewer: Did she ever buy the records?

Respondent: We didn't have a record player.

Interviewer: Oh, ok.

Respondent: That was one of the things I was going to say. We had a radio and that was it.

Interviewer: You didn't have TV?

Respondent: We didn't have TV, we didn't have a record player.

Interviewer: Throughout the whole of the Sixties you didn't have a TV?

Respondent: Not into, coming into the mid-Sixties.

Interviewer: And even then, I mean, films weren't shown on television. There was a big window between when they came out in the cinema and when they came on to TV so you couldn't see anything current anyway.

Respondent: No, there was that. But we used to listen to ... There was a radio programme, also, that told you what films were on. Was it Carousel? Movie Carousel, something?

Interviewer: There were a few. There were some TV programmes as well in the late Sixties. There was one called World Cinema, some people remember watching it.

Respondent: I don't remember that.

Interviewer: No. And then there were youth programmes. They would talk about films as well. There was a couple of places where you could follow what was coming out.

Respondent: I'll tell you one of the other ways I used to know what was going to come on in the cinema: My bus route home from school, which is after I went to

secondary school, passed this place which is at the Angel, just across the road and a bit up towards Highbury and Islington, where they used to paint the hoardings that went up outside West End cinemas. As I was coming along on the bus going home there was a bus stop there and it would stop and you could look in and they'd be painting these big posters on hardboard that they used to tack up in the cinema.

Interviewer: You mean with glue, pushing them up?

Respondent: No, no, they were actually, it was kind of like with theatrical plays, they would actually hand paint these things.

Interviewer: Oh, really? Was there quite a lot of cinemas that still did that in the Sixties?

Respondent: I think it was the mainly in the West End cinemas.

Interviewer: The big ones.

Respondent: Which is why I kind of used to use it as a kind of early warning radar because what it meant was if that was going to be in a cinema it meant it would be in the cinema in a week or two because they were painting it.

Interviewer: So it would take a few weeks for them to do it and then ...

Respondent: And then it would be on in the West End for a few weeks and then eventually it would turn up. That's how I kind of knew when new Jerry Lewis's ....

Interviewer: I was going to say, can you remember which films they did that for?

Respondent: I remember there was also, I think it might have been Gorgo or Godzilla or some kind of big monster thing when they were painting the big monster. But these things were huge and sometimes you had to wait a couple of days as you went past to piece together what the film was because it didn't have the title on.

Interviewer: There'd be a bit each day and you'd look to see what they'd added?

Respondent: Yeah. That's one of my kind of strong memories of the Sixties. The campaign for The Birds. Which was like ... Where I walked, there was a swimming pool I walked to and it had a row of those things that used to go on the wall that had posters in them. And I was walking past one day and there was this poster and it was just yellow with a little black squiggle on it. And I thought "oh, I wonder what that is". And next week there was the same yellow but it had a few more black squiggles on it. Right?

Interviewer: You could work out what it was?

Respondent: And then next week it had a few black squiggles and the words "The Birds is coming", and I thought "that's bad grammar". And eventually "The Birds is coming" and then eventually it was "The Birds is here". Which I remember being quite ...

Interviewer: As that unrolled you developed an anticipation?

Respondent: Although, I didn't quite work out what it was at the time. But ... The other ways I saw films. I don't know this is of interest to you. There was obviously, apart from the kind of proper cinema, there was Saturday morning pictures.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was going to ask about that. The beginning of the Sixties you would've been quite young. You talked about Tarzan and that kind of thing?

Respondent: Yeah. But the thing I liked about the Saturday morning pictures was usually the serial. That would be the determining factor whether you went to ... Cause they all did Saturday morning pictures. And the one you went to depended on which serial you preferred.

Interviewer: So, which was the one you were particularly into?

Respondent: I liked the Flash Gordon ones and all the Science-Fictiony ones and the Batman one I quite enjoyed.

Interviewer: What was the atmosphere like at those?

Respondent: Hysterical.

Interviewer: Rowdy?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: A bit of shouting at the screen ... Did people run round?

Respondent: Not always. But you might get some people who did that. One of the things I remember is going to the Blue Hall ... I remember this cause I found a DVD in a charity shop of a film called Three Hundred Spartans, and ... I can't remember whether it was on the Saturday morning pictures or just a Saturday afternoon thing that a load of kids went to ... It was mainly ... cause the Blue Hall used to show of the later Tarzan films as well, Gordon Scott and Jock Mahoney. But they were showing the Three Hundred Spartans, which is a ... do you know it?

Interviewer: I know of it but I haven't seen it.

Respondent: Oh right. Well it's basically a kind of ... I can't remember what it's about, it's about the Spartan bridge, the common epic type film of the day. And at some point there was a shot of someone blowing a trumpet and someone shouted out in the cinema, "oh, look, he's got the horn!" which you know, precipitated a great deal of merriment, but not to me, cause I didn't know what it meant at the time. I had to be told. That's one of the things about ...

Interviewer: So people would shout, make jokes and stuff?

Respondent: You'd get that kind of thing.

Interviewer: How old were you when you went to the matinees? What was the age range like? Was it sort of kids?

Respondent: Oh, I think that would be eight to sixteen.

Interviewer: Oh, up to sixteen? So quite old?

- Respondent: The thing is, I think that the older generation, that slightly older generation, was still part of the kind of cinema-going culture, you know.
- Interviewer: Yeah, which changed. I mean, this is what's interesting about looking at cinema-going in the Sixties, is that cultural shift. At the beginning at the Sixties it's still quite like the Fifties in terms of Saturday matinees and quite a lot of people going a couple of times a week. It was like a primary form of entertainment. And then it gradually ... lots of cinemas started closing throughout the late Sixties and then into the Seventies. So, the culture kind of shifts throughout the decade, so you're of the generation where you'd have been young enough at the beginning of the Sixties to remember that kind of crossover.
- Respondent: I can remember there was a kind of big change ... I remember going to the cinemas being really crowded. And I can remember ...
- Interviewer: When you were younger?
- Respondent: Yeah, when I was younger. And I can remember going to the cinemas when there was like me and some of my mates and a few similar groups. But you know they were, instead of being pressed up against each other in the cinema there were just groups everywhere. And I can remember by the end of the Sixties going to the pictures virtually on my own. And ... although you know ... there was .... Usually some people in there.
- Interviewer: But not anything like the beginning of the decade? I mean, a lot of screens closed throughout the late Sixties.
- Respondent: They did. I think the first one I remember closing was probably ... I can't remember, near Old Street there was a cinema which has become a meat warehouse, or it was last time I went past it, Pitman Street. And we generally used to go there during the summer holidays because they used to do cartoon shows. Like news theatre things where you'd go see two or three hours worth of cartoons and that used to be something I'd go to ...
- Interviewer: A chain of theatres where they would just ...
- Respondent: There were that. But this was a normal cinema which during the summer used to have kids' programmes.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent: And that would be about the only thing I can remember seeing there, those things. Because all the other, like real things I went elsewhere. And ... But I mean, by kind of the mid-Sixties I developed quite a range of interest in cinema apart from the horror films. I was going to see Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut.
- Interviewer: You got into some of that, kind of European cinema?
- Respondent: Yeah. I got into it by reading What's On and various other things. I got interested in this and I think we may have had a television then which gave some indication of some of these films. Although there were ... I remember seeing ... It's a bit difficult to determine whether it was Fifties or Sixties ...

Interviewer: A lot of these things were at the cusp of that.

Respondent: I remember my parents, I remember going with my dad to see a film called An Eye for an Eye which is a German film with Curt Jürgens. And I remember going to see ... These were all at the Angel cinema, we went see things ... I'm trying to remember what it was called ... Something like Bicycle Thieves. Something to do with a bloke being a matador but it was black and white and Italian or Spanish, I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Yeah, Realist kind of, late Fifties ... You mentioned in your questionnaire that you went to a Gothic film society as well which sounds quite intriguing ...

Respondent: That's still going!

Interviewer: So, that started in the Sixties?

Respondent: Yeah, it's having its fiftieth anniversary this year.

Interviewer: How did you find out about that? Can you remember?

Respondent: Yes, I can. I joined the National Film Theatre when I was about eleven. I pretended to be seventeen.

Interviewer: How did you do that with the National Film Theatre, did you just have to fill in a form?

Respondent: No, they just said, "are you old enough?". "Yes", I said. And the story being ...

Interviewer: That was a film club then as well?

Respondent: That is a film club, yeah. But what happened there was, I've forgotten to say that I'd acquired, before I got a television I got an 8 mm projector and there used to be a chemist's shop at the Angel that used to have a library of 8 mm films that I hired. And I had to put a deposit down before I could hire films. And I remember that I saw on television that the National Film Theatre ... They'd been out of the theatre for some reason and they were moving back and they had a season called Home Again. And one of the films they showed was King Kong. Which is one of the classic horrors I'd never caught up with. I had to redeem my deposit from the film hire library to pay my subscription to the National Film Theatre to become an associate member and go to see King Kong, which I did twice. Although it then turned up at the Classic cinemas so I managed to see it again at the Classics. But that was my introduction to ...

Interviewer: So you joined the NFT when you were really young then?

Respondent: Yeah. And I used to cycle there from Old Street sometimes to see films like, I remember seeing ... I used to like the Humphrey Bogart/Howard Hawks film as they turned out, although I wasn't quite aware of that at the time. I used to like The Big Sleep and To Have and Have Not. And they showed those and they also showed The Thing from Another World which I liked a lot. But, the point of the story being, because I used to go to the NFT there was a little notice board that the chap who'd started, Robin James started the Gothique. And he put that up and that appealed to me very strongly. And that was quite a cheap way of seeing films. Although you had to pay, I can't remember what

it was, the subscription at the time, but they showed ten double bills a year at the ... Holborn Library. Cause the Holborn Library used to have a cinema at the top where they showed films apart from the Gothique.

Interviewer: And you used to get people like Christopher Lee sometimes?

Respondent: Christopher Lee I remember seeing there and Terence Fisher came along and ...

Interviewer: Did they do a little talk?

Respondent: Yeah. They did

Interviewer: And did you ask questions afterwards and chat with them?

Respondent: It was quite chatty. Basically it was a library hall, it was quite a good cinema. I think they've turned into offices or something now but it had a projection booth above the audience and a little stage at one end with a screen and built-in speakers. It was quite profession. The curtains opened and closed, that kind thing. I went to some other ... There were various other, they used to show 16 mm films at school occasionally. For a school party, the film show, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: There are old projectors from the war time circulating.

Respondent: That used to happen. And I'm trying to think what else was at the Gothique. There was a chap called William K. Everson who was a kind of film historian who used to turn up once a year and do a bit. And there was a chap there who I think was some sort of theatrical agent and who had connections with various actors so odd actors would turn up. I can remember Jenny Agutter turning up on one occasion and various other people. Adrienne Corri, I remember on another occasion. But you know, various people like that.

Interviewer: How many people used to go in the Sixties? Was it ...

Respondent: Oh, quite a bit.

Interviewer: Was it popular?

Respondent: At the Gothique we used to get ... It's still quite popular. The last time I went, I kind of stopped going to the Gothique because they got moved out of the library and now have their shows in Conway Hall in a room there and they everything from DVD which doesn't really ... I can't get myself involved in taking a bus trip to watch a DVD which I can download off the internet and watch at the drop of the hat, sort of thing. I mean ... it was quite good, it showed me a lot of films that weren't amongst the ones that got circulated. I had a huge list at the time of films I wanted to see from reading magazines and books about films. Discovering to say Frankenstein or Dracula, the Universal things. There were various sequels made over the years. There were a lot of those ... And it took me quite a while to catch up with.

Interviewer: What were the film magazines that you read most? Can you remember which ones?

- Respondent: Well, I suppose front line would be... there was two things, one called Show Time which was given away, originally was given away free at the Odeons and then they started charging for it. It used to come out in a kind of small format.
- Interviewer: Yeah, I've seen a couple of copies.
- Respondent: And then it came out as a larger.
- Interviewer: More like an A4 thing.
- Respondent: And when it was A4 you had to pay for it. I used to buy that and I used to get ABC Film Review. When I went to the Carlton. There was those and ... the Film Review particularly used to have things, I remember they had a series of articles on old horror films.
- Interviewer: They were quite good for freebie magazines then?
- Respondent: Yeah.
- Interviewer: I mean, they were quite detailed?
- Respondent: Yeah. And then there was Famous Monsters of Film Land which was quite interesting except that they were kind of ... I don't know, there'd be years out of date, because when I first saw them. The first issue I saw, the first couple of issues ... five or six years after they'd been published when they turned up in England ... They weren't properly distributed. You know they came across as bulk cargo sort of thing. So ... picking those up. But I mean, looking at them now, they're pretty silly because they didn't have much content except there was one called Castle of Frankenstein which was a bit more serious. That kind of thing. And then What's On used to be an indicator of ... what's hip, as it were, that kind of thing ... And then there was, you know, odd cinema clubs you'd go to cause they were showing something you wanted to see. I'm trying to remember how I found out about those. Maybe that was at the NTF as well, you'd see odd things ...
- Interviewer: Yeah, and they would do special kind of ... they did ... someone was telling me they did a Hammer all-nighter at the National Film Theatre as well and they'd get some of the actors in. Somebody I interviewed was the projectionist at the National Film Theatre for a while and he used to say that they used to come up and sit in the projectionist's box to watch people's reaction to the films.
- Respondent: Yeah, that'd be good, yeah.
- Interviewer: I was interested that you said you had ... did you say, a 12 mm projector?
- Respondent: 8 mm.
- Interviewer: That you used to get films from a local shop.
- Respondent: It was a chemist's shop but they had a stack of 8 mm films which they hired out. A bit like people used to do in the early days of video you'd have a tobacconist ...

Interviewer: What sort of films did they have?

Respondent: Well, there was kind of mixture. The 8 mm would be either, we used to get these 200ft, which was about 8 minutes cut down to films, a company called Castle used to do a lot of the Abbot and Costello and also some of the horror films. But we used to get a lot of silent films. The thing I was most pleased about getting from that place was The Lost World. You know, the Willis O'Brien '23 one. And Charlie Chaplin films and other Slapstick comedy, that kind of thing. And I used to have little film shows in the front room of our flat in Chadworth House. And bits of horror film. A lot of the other kids were too young to see anything that was remotely horror film. I think there was a kind of forbidden fruit about it. It wasn't necessarily that they were particularly interested, they just didn't like the idea that it was a closed door. That kind of thing. The Lost World went down ... I showed that quite a few times when I had it.

Interviewer: And how much ... Was it expensive getting these films out?

Respondent: I'm trying remember exactly what it was. I think it was ... two shillings or something like that for a week to hire a film. And it was a pound to hire The Lost World because it was five reels, or something like that. And also, it wasn't his ... he had it on the shelf when I went in one day although it wasn't in his catalogue and apparently he'd hired it himself from somewhere else to let some customers have a look at so it was more expensive than his normal stuff.

Interviewer: So a lot of the distributors had catalogues that you could .... get 16 mm films from throughout the Sixties. I was aware of that because I've talked to people who had 16 mm projectors and they would show me the contracts they would fill out.

Respondent: Yeah, you had to ... I couldn't afford that. That was.

Interviewer: No, that was quite an expensive hobby and you had to have an affiliation to some kind of ...

Respondent: You might joined the Federation of Film societies or that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, or ...

Respondent: You had to say you were a certain distance away from the nearest cinema as well, which I'm not sure I could do. I'm not sure I was actually far enough away from a cinema to be considered. But I saw a lot of 16 mm films because there was a chap who was a kind of supervising caretaker. I lived in council flats and there were various other council flats around and they had porters. And there was a caretaker who was somehow in charge of that. And his name was Erington or Erdington or something like that. I think I was Erington or Elton ... and he used to sell raffle tickets for something, for a charity and used to make a certain amount of money and with the money he used to run a cine club, which was at a youth club, it was a hall in a place up the road in one of the blocks of flats up the road from where we lived. Where they had a cinema projector and he would run some sponsored films which could be quite entertaining. A serial and some, you know, short comedies or something. Two or three on a Wednesday night. I think you paid sixpence to get in or

something. That was another way I used to see films. I don't know if that counts as cinema-going ...

Interviewer: Yeah, it does. I mean ... different ways in which you watched films.

Respondent: There was also, I remember an exhibition at Finsbury Town Hall where they showed these kind of, they were Disney films with Donald Duck getting into scrapes but it was kind of like ... educative in the sense of don't get burnt with electricity or ...

Interviewer: Public information type of things.

Respondent: But they were quite ... and I remember seeing those. I think anything that a moving shadow on a wall would attract me at the time. Sadly still true ...

Interviewer: Did you ... it's in ... I thought it was interesting you talking about going as a gang with the people you lived with. Obviously you went when you were younger with them. As you got older throughout the Sixties did you ... and cinema-going was becoming less popular, did you start going to films on your own just because you wanted to see the film ... or do you remember doing that?

Respondent: There was that. I did that a lot. I kind of segued into that. I think a lot of my chums got televisions before I did and they kind of dropped off because they could watch things on TV and got interested in girls and football. And sort of various things like that and also people started moving into employment and sort of started going to the pub rather than going to the pictures, that sort of thing. Whereas I would kind of ... became singled out by going to a grammar school and then ...

Interviewer: Oh, ok.

Respondent: And then going to a college and all that which kind of ... separated me a bit from the experience of my contemporaries who were becoming apprentices when they were fifteen and that sort of thing. So leaving school early.

Interviewer: So your path kind of slightly ...

Respondent: ... Diverged, yeah. We would still during the summer holidays or something, catch up a bit then. But I made new friends at college and we used to go. I mean ... at one time I was sort of travelling up Holloway Road to get to college. And I used ... I moved my allegiance from the Carlton to the ABC Holloway Road and saw things there. I used to go on my own cause I'd go on the way home. I'd finish college and go straight into the pictures so I used to keep up like that. And the other thing I remember doing, slightly aside from all this is ... I went on, sometimes went on school holiday to Germany, during the summer holidays. And I remember before I went, going to the West End and .... The programmes used to start earlier and I remember going to see three films in a row, going from one cinema to another because I was going to Germany and I wouldn't be able to go to the pictures for a couple of weeks. I remember seeing Morecambe and Wise and one of the Our Man Flint pictures and something else.

Interviewer: It's like getting a fix before you ...

Respondent: Yeah, getting a fix! Because where we stayed in Germany there was a cinema, as it turned out, but it kind of showed, when we were there, the kind of things it tended to show were Walt Disney compilations and things like that. Which was ok, you know, in extremis. I can remember on the way home going into a news theatre in Cologne railway station just to see something. One of the things that amuse me about that is that they dubbed these cartoons but they didn't dub Donald Duck. So Donald Duck would be talking the way he did, in English or American and everyone else would be dubbed in German.

Interviewer: I wonder why that was? Maybe they couldn't understand him.

Respondent: They just thought you're not supposed to. It was quite a weird experience.

Interviewer: Did you look forward to coming back to London and kind of ... having the film culture that you were used to back on your doorstep.

Respondent: Yeah. I think, by the end of the Sixties it was much more diverse. Cause it started off very much going to the local cinemas and then to some extent the super-local cinemas in the sense of the next one round in the clock, that kind of thing. Places that were near to where my mother went or I went. That were slightly different programmes. Cause I mean... one of the things is that if you sort of stood still on Islington Green, all the films that were around would pass by at some point.

Interviewer: You'd catch most things locally if you wanted to?

Respondent: Yeah. There was very little ... because, what do you call it, the Rex would show double films of Continental films as well some of the time ... And that kind of thing.

Interviewer: When you went of college, is that when you started watching more, like, French films or did got you interested in those when you were younger?

Respondent: I'd already got interested but there was more opportunity. I ran a film society when I was at college and used to hire 16 mm films and did that for a bit and then decided that actually, given the cost of it, it was actually cheaper to take a group of people to the West End. So we used to go. I remember taking half a dozen people to see Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Which you can take ... paying for West End ticket prices of the day was cheaper than hiring High Noon from Contemporary or whatever it was.

Interviewer: That's interesting. I didn't realise it was that expensive to hire a film.

Respondent: It depended ... on the film and the company. I mean there was a film, there was a company called ... Whatso Films. And Whatso Films had been in business during the war and they'd developed this practice of doing three-day hires instead of one-day hires and ...

Interviewer: You could have it over the weekend or something?

Respondent: The idea was, they did it to get stuff, to keep the stuff off the premises because Coventry was being bombed a lot and they were based in Coventry. And they had a 9.5, 16, sound and silent libraries. So they had all these things. And they were relatively inexpensive. I mean, I remember, spending about a pound, which was probably two tickets to the West End at the time

and getting a box full of 8 mm films showing *The General*, *Safety Last*, you know, a two-reel cut-down of *Nosferatu*, you know, various things like that.

Interviewer: Where there any films that you went to see that you feel where somehow quintessentially Sixties experiences? I've had people talking about things like *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider* and films that somehow have come to being seen as somehow representing the decade. Can you remember seeing any of these?

Respondent: I remember *Easy Rider* being ... I mean one of the things that was kind of ... problematic about films in those days from the youth point of view was that obviously everyone was getting interested in music as well. And it was very poorly represented in films. They didn't use ... apart from the Beatles films where they had the actual Beatles playing actual Beatles tracks, that was kind of fairly unusual. I mean I know now that there was a number of kind of fairly low-budget things but I just remember it all being a bit ... maybe to do with the nature of film production at the time. They would kind of guess who was going to be popular and they'd be out of date by the time it came through. I mean, *Easy Rider* seemed a breakthrough because it was kind of ... the kind of music we wanted to listen to in the kind of film we wanted to see and it was quite different on all sorts of levels. I'm trying to think what other things ... I remember going to see, I think *2001* was one of the films that I kind of remember as being one of those things. I went to see it in Cinerama when it first came out and was completely blown away by it. Although I'm not a big Kubrick fan today. But I just remember the whole six-track stereophonic sound, gigantic screen, that sort of thing. And that was another film, that was probably one of the last films people I knew went as a group to see it.

Interviewer: It was like an event film, everyone was talking about it.

Respondent: Yeah, there was that. But there was also the presentation. I remember seeing it three or four times in Cinerama and, you know, experimenting with drugs to do so, that kind of thing. But then I remember going to see it when it was issued to the cinemas in 35 mm and it just looked really pale and flat, it didn't seem to have anything going for it at all. I kind of lost interest in it all together then. But I remember *Easy Rider*, going to see that in the West End. I can't remember ... as I say, we're now talking about near where I get a bit confused with the Seventies.

Interviewer: ... blurred... trying to kind of... a decade... and bookend it is always difficult. Cause it ... the cultures change kind of gradually over time. But towards the end of the Sixties there were films that were capturing more that counterculture sort of feeling and ... obviously there was anti-Vietnam marches in London and stuff like that. Can you remember that feeling in the cinema, that sort of sense of things changing and ... different, a kind of different era being ushered in?

Respondent: I do, but I'm not sure I feel that more from the Seventies, to be honest. Because I remember, I was never a big fan of British films, I have to admit.

Interviewer: By British films, do you mean, Hammer was British, do you mean, like these.

Respondent: I didn't know they were British, they were in colour! There was that.

Interviewer: Do you mean the sort of gritty, realist-type films?

Respondent: I remember seeing Life at the Top, I can't remember much about it ... that sort of thing. I think Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner I kind related to a bit more ... that sort of thing.

Interviewer: But they didn't really ... kind of grab you? You were quite young when they came out when they came out those films.

Respondent: Yeah, but I think that in that sense I was seeing films like Breathless, although it was in the Fifties, I saw in the Sixties which seemed to me to be a lot more modern than those films.

Interviewer: Well, it's stylistically ... it's more experimental, isn't it?

Respondent: Those kind of things. I was seeing films that ... had that kind of edge to them but they weren't necessarily English films ... don't know ... I remember seeing films that deliberately attempted to be that. There was a film called The Strawberry Statement, which I can't remember much anything much else about. Which was about students, that sort of thing ... And I suppose, things like ... Soldier Blue, I remember that being supposedly something important, although I can't remember why.

Interviewer: Do you remember other things changing? When people stopped standing up for the national anthem and that kind of ... ?

Respondent: I remember even from the early days there was a kind of rush for the exit when the anthem came on. I used to quite like it but I wasn't often there. It played at the end of the day. I wasn't always there at that time. But I remember standing up for it but I also remember ... in later years people making a rush for the exit. I wasn't one of those, not out of patriotism or any sense of loyalty but I liked sitting in the movies.

Interviewer: Yeah, you weren't in any rush to leave.

Respondent: No. I used to quite like the anthem and all that and the Technicolor pictures. That kind of thing. I used to like .... When I ... the cinema that was round the corner from the Carlton which I can't remember the name of for some reason was a cinema that showed The Forbidden Planet. I remember going to see that everyday for a week and sitting through it three times.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah, I was so taken with it.

Interviewer: Yeah, you just wanted to keep going back and seeing it again.

Respondent: I didn't do that often. I did that at the Praed Street when I remember going to see a double bill of horror films during the week and then going again at the weekend.

Interviewer: What was it about Forbidden Planet that was ... ?

Respondent: I mean, that's late Fifties, I suppose, or mid-Fifties, but I think it just looked more modern. I liked Science Fiction and that kind of thing. But before Star Wars the special effect was like the production number. There wasn't much of

it. It came and went rather rapidly. But Forbidden Planet seemed to be all special effect, it was all ... so it kind of ...

Interviewer: It sort of fascinated you.

Respondent: It was a kind of luxury in a sense. Maybe a bit like the Hammer films because they were in costume and that sort of thing. You had a sense of being displaced, as it were. Trying to remember ... I used to like, I hate to say it, Joseph Losey films. I remember them seeming to be different and modern at the time. Not so much ...

Interviewer: Well ... I'm just looking at stars that you were particularly into ... John Wayne ... so you liked quite a lot of old school...

Respondent: John Wayne was kind of ... partly because everyone liked him. When Jacky Smith wasn't being Steve McQueen he was being John Wayne. And we'd have discussions how you wouldn't mess with John Wayne. He appeared in the kind of films that were kind of, you know, attractive to us. I can remember seeing, and also, coincidentally, Howard Hawks films, I seem to remember them. Films like Hatari was very popular with us. And El Dorado and The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance. I remember those all being kind ... I think John Wayne was, Humphrey Bogart, Jimmy Cagney, Robert Mitchum were kind of like, men to respect, as it were. Very much had that in common with our parents. Although none of them fought in the war, I seem to remember.

Interviewer: But they were almost like role models?

Respondent: Yeah. I think the thing that stopped that was James Bond, of course. He was kind of, Scottish, I'm proud to say. He-Man role. There'd been some others who attempted it but I can't really get excited about John Mills or Anthony Steel, someone like that.

Interviewer: Can you remember going to see the early Bond films?

Respondent: I can remember ... I saw the first, Dr. No I saw at the Odeon opposite the Hackney Empire with my mother and we went to see it a couple of times. We missed it when it was on in our local I went the next week for some reason. And I think that must have been an A cause I think that's why I went with my mother. And she was ... we followed them assiduously, we went to see all of them. And in fact, we went to, another cinema I used to go to was the Finsbury Park Astoria which used to be a kind of provincial West End-run type of thing. They used to get films there before they went on the clock circuit.

Interviewer: That's the one that has the ...

Respondent: Sort of white marbleish ...

Interviewer: Yes, sort of decorative ...

Respondent: Did you ever go inside it?

Interviewer: No, but I just heard descriptions of it.

Respondent: It used to have a Rococo Moroccan village across the top. That used to be quite attractive. I also used to like the Odeon Holloway Road. That used to be

a massive cinema when it, before they trebled or twinned it or whatever they did. So James Bond films, we followed those assiduously.

Interviewer: You and your mum?

Respondent: Yeah. I mean, the first one we saw a week late, as it were. But I think all the others we saw, the second one we saw in our local cinema when it came on general release. But the others we saw either in the West End or at the Finsbury Park Astoria which was in advance of the general release. So we kind of got keen to see those.

Interviewer: As soon as they came out.

Respondent: Those ... that was quite ... they seemed different in terms of the atmosphere of the times. They didn't seem like British pictures.

Interviewer: No, they're quite glamorous.

Respondent: They could do violence properly, I think. In a kind of more analytical, post-historical way. I could never believe the fights in British films whenever they occurred, they were always a bit, pilly-wally. But ...

Interviewer: That's fascinating, thank you so much! Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you feel that you'd like to mention? Anything that was particularly important to you about cinema-going?

Respondent: ...

Interviewer: I mean, obviously it was very important to you. The main thing is that ... It was a big part of you cultural life.

Respondent: Yeah, I mean it was part ... it was a family thing. And ... you know, a kind of family tradition we kept up. And in fact, we kept it up till quite a lot after that. My mother re-married and the reason why we left Old Street in 1969 was my mother re-marrying and we moved to Hackney and where I lived was round the corner from the Odeon, literally closer than Euston station is from here. And so we used to go to pictures there quite often. I remember Diamonds Are Forever, we went to see there, that kind of era. The Godfather films, that kind of thing. So that kept up till then. But I used to like a lot of things like that. There was other places but ... has anyone talked to you about the Starlight Club?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: The Starlight Club was in the Mayfair Hotel, there used to be a preview theatre. In fact, it may still be there. If you went into the Mayfair Hotel and turned right and went down into the preview theatre, you turned left and turned into small theatre. And someone got the gig of programming the Starlight and they'd have a different double bill every night and it was quite expensive. But it was kind of choice programming. Kind of double bills I'd see there would be Rebecca and Notorious, that sort of thing.

Interviewer: They programmed round directors?

Respondent: No, stars I think, was mainly, I think that was why it was called Starlight. But you went in and it was very ... one of the things was you got sandwiches because of its club status supposedly. They gave you sandwiches. They weren't charging you for the cinema they were charging you for the sandwiches. This was some sort of ruse to allow them to do it. But they used to source very good prints. I remember seeing Wild River there in a kind of new 35 mm print when ... the NFT were showing it in a kind of 16 mm pan and scan copy if they showed it at all. That kind of thing. But it was kind of ubiquitous. There was a thing ... the thing about John Wayne and other stars is they were kind of in a sense currency. I liked everything. One of the things I find a bit odd talking to people today is that their kind of an idea of an old movie is Star Wars, right? Whereas, it didn't have a sense of an old movie. It was just movies. They might be black and white, they might be colour. But even silent films were of some interest. No one was that upset if they showed a two-reel Charlie Chaplin as part of the programme. That was one of the things we used to like, the full supporting programme. I quite liked all the other bits as well. Or at least it was part of the experience. It was like going in and settling down. You'd have your trailers, your cartoons, your stupid documentary, the newsreel and this that and the other. And ... that national anthem. But that ... I can't remember when they actually stopped doing it. I remember that it became exit music at some point. But when I first experienced it people would stand up. And that was when I was a kid. I can remember not quite knowing why we were standing up. I still don't know why, to be honest ... that all went away. I used to like ...

Interviewer: Those things were gradually phased out, there wasn't one particular moment in the whole country when it stopped but across the late Sixties and into the Seventies those things changed ... Things like the short film at the beginning carried on in a lot of cinemas for a while.

Respondent: I think Maggie Thatcher killed that, didn't she?

Interviewer: Yeah. The newsreels were phased out earlier.

Respondent: I think the thing is with those that they couldn't compete with television. It was almost historical by the time it got into the cinemas. Although ... you know ... quite interested in the way they used to produce them quite so quickly. In the course of my work I've actually had to look at a load of old newsreels as archive footage and I find them fascinating.

Interviewer: I find it just fascinating that people used to watch news in the cinema. I find that in itself quite an interesting thing, not having had that experience. I remember other things from the Seventies but not newsreels. It seems quite an alien culture to me the idea of everyone sat around watching the news.

Respondent: Well, I can understand it, there's certain things I can understand, some things I can't. I couldn't understand why they'd have the Grand National on it. Because everyone would know that it was old, it wasn't that news. By the time it got into the cinemas it was at least a week old. Other things, there were certain things that they used to put in which were more interest items than news, as it were. New inventions or exhibitions where actually seeing something moving. I remember watching newsreels about cars that you could drive into the river or Hovercraft and things like that. Just the fact of seeing them happen, as it were, was a novelty. The fact that it was a week or so old didn't really matter. I enjoyed that a lot. But ... yeah ... I mean ... I miss the

local cinema because I miss the kind of ... just the ease of it. I mean, for a time I live next to the Odeon Muswell Hill and I used to just, cause I was living there, I'd just walk in and watch whatever was on at a certain time. But I find that difficult now.

Interviewer: Do you really like these, just the regularity ...

Respondent: The fact that you always knew what was on. I mean another thing I did was I had my Truffaut moment, there used to be a shop in City Road/Lever Street junction that had the posters up outside for the ABCs and the Odeon every week, that was another way I used to see. On the walk to the bus stop I would know what was on in the two main cinemas. But I can remember on occasions, sitting at home one day and it started raining and I thought I wonder if that would come off now and the rain had softened the paste so I could peel the poster off and steal it.

Interviewer: And you did?

Respondent: Yeah, I did that a few times. But I mean, unfortunately I couldn't always get the ones I wanted but it required the weather. The other thing is, my mother managed to get me some, they used to put posters on buses as well and she got me a few of those and I got The Dirty Dozen and Point Blank and things like that, they were quite big, about that size. They used to stick them on the front of the double-deckers.

Interviewer: And you used to stick them up on your wall at home?

Respondent: Yeah. I have to say that I was the film guy ... people used to say to me, "what was that film we such where such and such happens?" and I'd say, "Oh, it's that one", and they'd say, "yeah, that's right". But you know, there was conviviality of it all. I think I was ... more struck than I should've been really in retrospect.

Interviewer: There are worse things.

Respondent: Indeed!

Interviewer: Thank you very much, it was really, really interesting!