

Interview with Respondent 0280/0763

Date: 16/1/2014

Location: UCL

Interviewer: Matthew Jones

Interviewer: So we can start with getting a picture of your life in the 1960s, about where you lived and what you were doing at the time.

Respondent: Well, I lived in Willesden. I don't know if you know Willesden, north-western London, several different parts of it. I lived in Willesden near Harlesden, then Willesden right next to Willesden Green Station, and then Willesden down by Willesden High Road. So I lived in all those areas.

Interviewer: And what were you doing at the time? In terms of work or school or...?

Respondent: Well, umm...what do you mean? What school?

Interviewer: You were in school.

Respondent: Oh yeah, definitely. Yeah. I went to infant school, junior school, secondary school I went to.

Interviewer: And by the end of the 1960s were you still in school?

Respondent: No. I was married then.

Interviewer: What year were you married?

Respondent: 1967.

Interviewer: Fantastic. Where did you meet your husband?

Respondent: Where did I meet him? Oh! I met him when I was eleven and he lived beneath a girl that I met whose mother was German and her father was American. So I assumed they met during the war, these parents. And she was always on and on about this Marcel, which is my husband's name. "Come meet him come meet him! Marcel can do everything, he's so handsome..." and I didn't bother. One day I did go down to meet him and funnily enough where I met him was in some fields. And you might have heard about that, Dennis Nilsen who murdered a lot of homosexual chaps, and the field backed on to one of the houses where he put the bodies, down in Primrose Avenue...

Interviewer: Gosh!

Respondent: ...between Willesden and Cricklewood...we used to meet in this big field and that's where I met him. That was when I was ten. And then I was not allowed to see him until I was twelve because he climbed up on my balcony.

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Respondent: And it was a game, you know we were just children..."yeah, let's all go out at midnight" ...and he stuck to it and he would come up my balcony and say "Come get Harry!" ...and he'd go get Harry and I'd go to sleep...so i was not allowed to see him anymore. But then we met up again at fourteen....when I was fourteen. And that was that. That was how I met him.

Interviewer: Lovely. Umm, you say in your questionnaire that you went to the cinema most often on dates.

Respondent: With him.

Interviewer: I assume this was with him [laughs]. Why did you choose the cinema to go on a date to?

Respondent: We were both so into it. I mean I love music and the cinema, was it our life. Previous to that though, skating. Roller skating. Ahh, I adored it with such a passion. And I only had the skates that you buy with four wheels. I mean my passion was to...I used to watch them go around with the leather boots and they had the stoppers on the front. I used to have to stop mine by putting my foot behind the...you know. And then I was telling my friend that eventually after I was going out with Marcel, I didn't go skating anymore; although he used to go skating as well, and our favourite song was Paul Anka singing Diana, you know. Skating around to it was wonderful. And then what we used to do, was go on a Saturday morning when it was cheapest, and the expert skaters used to skate around backwards and give you flyers and say "if you come Monday night, you get someone in free", so I used to beg my friend to go on Monday night and I'd get in free, you see. So I used to go Monday nights as well; but anyway, after I'd finished skating, a friend turned up and wanted to sell me her skates with the boots. I think...I don't know whether it was five ball or ten ball, but ah, she was selling them and I had to have them. And I had them for two years and then she turned up and she wanted them back and gave me the... whatever equivalent I gave. So that stopped that, but the boots if I'd have had them. Ah, a life I would have had with my skating. I adored it. It was quicker with skating rink. And we used to walk from Willesden Green straight line right down to Cricklewood going and it was just wonderful. That was a passion of mine.

Interviewer: Lovely.

Respondent: Roller skating and ice skating.

Interviewer: Yeah. And so you'd...would you say you enjoyed skating more than cinema going?

Respondent: I was eleven when I started skating, so yes. I mean we used to pick up friends as we went down on this long road, and you know, all ready "come on we're going skating", and those that had boots, which was only about two of us, we used to have them on our shoulders and I used to hide the

skates down there and we used to sing out, you know, “two, four, six, eight, who do you appreciate”, all the way down the road, and we’d spell out Cricklewood skating rink.

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Respondent: So yeah, it was a great passion. But I didn’t go then, you know, when I was sort of caught with Marcel at fourteen. We was going to the pictures then.

Interviewer: Why would you choose the pictures then? What was it about the cinema that made it a good place for dating?

Respondent: For dating? Well we would stay. So the thing is, that was it: Friday night was picture’s night and of course we, the actors, we would go for what film was on...you know where we would go was what film was on, so we liked these particular people. And so that’s why I suppose we went.

Interviewer: Sure. Could you take me through then, a kind of typical visit to the cinema, what was it like?

Respondent: Ah, it was lovely. You’d buy the tickets, and we’d just go in and choose upstairs, and it was quite luxurious, with fitted carpets, and we used to go up, you know, seats either side...we used to like to seat at the edge, I don’t know why. I think he used to sit on the edge and, you know we’d just sit there and have a fag. And we used to get two films and Pathe News, and we used to watch that, and then the end of the first film and the lady used to come around, lights would go off, lady would come around with a little torch and you had to tap for an ice cream, and that was about all. I don’t think she sold sweet nuts. And you now, we’d get that and then that’s it, it’s over and every seat in front had an ashtray built into the seat, but I don’t...and I was just talking to my brother the other night about that. Where did all that smoke go? I think it went up, you know...I think they must have had...because we wasn’t in...I said in my answer, you know, “through the fog of smoke”, but I don’t think we were in a fog. So if we’d get out before the Queen’s thing, we would go, but if we couldn’t everybody stood.

Interviewer: For the National Anthem?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. If you'd get out before, you would. If you was at the doors when they started, you'd just be carrying on, you'd go out down the stairs and that, but you know, we had to stay, and I don't know why, we all stayed still. One thing I do remember, was after a film, on the way home it'd come up on the Pathe News that John Kennedy had been shot.

Interviewer: Gosh!

B: We was at the film. Come home, and while we were walking home, we saw people crying in the streets and all sorts of things you know. "Have you heard about John Kennedy", you know, everyone was shocked. But the thing is I can't remember what film we saw that night. That is completely gone out, but just you know, this...that's something that stays with me. We was on our way home from the pictures and...

Interviewer: Yeah. And you say they projected that news onto the screen?

Respondent: It came on Pathe News, yeah. You know, John Kennedy's been shot!

Interviewer: Gosh.

Respondent: And everybody was shocked in the cinema. I can't remember if it was at the end or...it couldn't have been, it must have been during the middle, you know, before the main film came on. But anyway, coming home, 'coz we walked home, we used to walk home, and you know, you'd just see people in the streets, crying. "ah have you heard?" and yeah.

Interviewer: That's fascinating. Really fascinating.

Respondent: Yeah, I just remembered that.

Interviewer: Yeah. You talk about a few cinemas that you went to during the 1960s in the questionnaire. You mention the Odeon, the Ritz, the Gaumont and the Grenada.

Respondent: See the Gaumont, now am I thinking...I think it's called the Gaumont now, but it used to be called the State in Kilburn. I don't know if you know it.

Interviewer: I don't.

Respondent: Kilburn north-west. You know the State in Kilburn, you had the Ritz in Hendon, you had the Grenada in Willesden Church Road end, and you had the Odeon Craven Park, Hillesden. So that's where we used to go and I think I said there was a flea pit...there was a Coliseum and a Picardy. Picardy was there, but I don't remember much about them. Might have only gone once.

Interviewer: What was the difference between the flea pits and the other cinemas?

Respondent: See, 'coz I only went there once, I think they were filthy. I mean as I just mentioned, it felt luxurious to me, the fitted carpets, the lovely seats were all velvety sort of stuff...carpety I suppose. But the flea pits floor was like wooden. You know, they were just wooden and it was dirty in there. The others did feel luxurious.

Interviewer: Did they show the same types of films?

Respondent: Yeah, because we'd have only gone if, you know, if we liked the film that was on. You know, there were much better films on at the Collie, which was the Coliseum. But I do know that the Picardy, I only ever went there once. I can't remember much about it, but the Coliseum I might have gone to a couple of times.

Interviewer: What types of cinemas were the Picardy and the Coliseum?

Respondent: What do you mean, what type?

Interviewer: Well you talk about flea pits and...

Respondent: Yeah, they were...

Interviewer: They were the flea pits.

Respondent: They were the flea pits, yeah.

Interviewer: Um, do you remember the differences between the Odeon, the Ritz, the Gaumont and the Grenada?

Respondent: Well the Ritz always...I think it sort of lived up to its name. It was a bit nicer, and that was in Hendon. It was till at that time a little bit posh in Hendon. The State, that was a big building. And the Grenada was a smaller place; that was in Willesden. The Odeon was a big place, but of course you only ever got one film on. Not like now, you have a half a dozen films on. You got one film, one main feature, and you get a second one and Pathe News. And then advertising for...what I loved was that it was all local shops; "Come to the Fish and Chips Shop", "Sampson's Fish and Chips Shop"'it's down the road". But now you don't get such local things. I suppose people come for the local shops, mind you they're not there for more than five minutes now.

Interviewer: Did you use to go to the places that were advertised?

Respondent: Yes, if we wanted anything. And I remember I bought a radiogram when I was sixteen from...ugh I've forgotten the name, but it was a shop in Hillesden and you could pay for it weekly. And then, yeah I was only sixteen and my mum was a guarantor for me. And I did, I used to pay things half grand a week...it was about £36 if I remember. I'm sure I've got the receipt upstairs, I never throw anything away. So...all up in the loft. Yeah, so I bought that...that was from a local shop.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: The name nearly came to me then, but it's gone.

Interviewer: You talk about, in the questionnaire, about stars and the appeal of the stars. But you've also said that the choices you made about which cinema you went to were dictated by the films that were showing, and which film was on. Which was more important to you? Was it the films themselves or the stars that were in them?

Respondent: Well, it'd be the starts, 'coz you don't know what the film's about. Do you get that?

Interviewer: I see.

Respondent: Yeah, it would be the stars.

Interviewer: So which stars were you a fan of?

Respondent: June Ritchie, and do you know, I believe, it didn't come to me the other day, 'coz there's a girl that I like now, I never liked girls since June Ritchie. She was just wonderful. I mean you've got all the goddesses like, you know, Marylyn Monroe and things like that, made it...I couldn't relate to them. But the girl that I like now is Sheridan Smith and I believe she's the new...do you know Sheridan Smith?

Interviewer: Yes I do.

Respondent: I believe she's the new June Ritchie.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So what was it that you liked about June Ritchie?

Respondent: She was gorgeous. Just gorgeous, and yet you could copy her, if you know what I mean.

You know, the American stars had long dresses and all that, and you couldn't copy all that, but she just had her hair in a nice style and it was up in a French plait, and she was very pretty, she was a lovely girl, and now I think Sheridan Smith is like her. She just wears her hair, I don't know if you saw it the other night, 7:39, wonderful film, and mind you, I love him. He's my favourite. And she was on it and she just had her hair in a pony tail but she looked beautiful. And I think she is to me the new June Ritchie.

Interviewer: You mentioned in the questionnaire the French plait, Julie Ritchie's French plaits and how you copied it. Why did you do that?

Respondent: Well it was lovely to have a French plait, just because you saw the back of it. I like the way...I'm very into hair, you see, and I loved the way her hair looked. And I liked it, so yeah; I could do it you know.

Interviewer: Did you do that with any other stars' looks?

Respondent: I'm trying to think. I don't think I did. You know, there was Leslie Count, she had that very short style which actually would suit me but I didn't copy her. Or...there was a lovely girl called...ah I forget her name. She was in Professor Higgins, in that film with him. She had very short urchin hair. She's now in a advert at the moment. So anyway....but no, I don't think I did.

Interviewer: And what about male stars?

Respondent: Well I didn't copy them.

Interviewer: [Laughs]. No I'm sorry, I meant were you interested in male stars?

Respondent: Most definitely. Oh, Audrey Hepburn was the name of that girl.

Interviewer: Audrey Hepburn.

Respondent: Um, was I interested in them? Yeah, I mean if he was handsome, who wouldn't be at that age? Look at him, yeah! I mean I loved Alan Bates, Albert Finney, Ian Hendry, you know. *Hosh Bucosh* I can't say his name, I can't spell it...but he was in with Whistle down the Wind with Hayley Mills and he was absolutely gorgeous 'coz we hadn't seen him before. This was a new one on the block, you know. So yeah, it was mainly...we would go for good looks and things like that, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you think that the stars that you liked were good actors as well, or was it...?

Respondent: Yes!

Interviewer: Yes, good.

Respondent: Yeah, because it couldn't have helped. I'm a realist, you know, I can't watch a lot of stuff because it's not even saying it properly, you know. So no, they were good actors, I thought. Mind you, I have seen some bad...made me think "ah that's a bit wooden" 'coz you are more tuned to it now, I wasn't then. To be honest, I saw a film the other day, saw half hour of it, and it was the Go Between. I'd forgotten about that and I thought "Why did I forget about this? Allan Baits is in it! Julie Christie..." It was a horrible film. To me, the half an hour I saw...no wonder I forgot, it's so boring, you know. I think they were trying to take after Lady Chatterley's Lover, which never saw until Sean Bean was in it, so that's much later. So I wasn't thinking that at the time, I just...it was nothing, the Go Between. But I mean it was...

Interviewer: Do you remember seeing the Go Between in the '60s?

Respondent: Yeah, now I've seen it the other day, "ah I remember this" because I'd went to see it because Alan Baits was in it, but, you know, it was too long drawn out, like I couldn't quite understand it. You know, you had Edward Fox in it who was wonderful. But I saw the film called The Servant with Edward Fox's brother, James Fox and, what's his name, Bogarde, yeah, he's the servant that took over. I do remember that.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy it?

Respondent: Yes, I did. I didn't like it at the end, you know, 'coz he took over, I didn't like this sort of thing, but anyway, yeah.

Interviewer: Good. You talk in the questionnaire a bit about the differences between English and American films, and you've mentioned today the difference between English and American stars, you talked about the hairstyles of America stars being very elaborate. I wonder what is it about the English films that you liked?

Respondent: I understood them alright, you'd imagine. I mean even lately I watched the Sopranos, I loved it, couldn't miss it, I've got the box set, I've seen it again. But half the time, I don't know what they're talking about, half the time. You know, so I should imagine it's that. And I just felt that English films are more realistic, why I don't know, was it because I could relate to, I don't know. They just felt more realistic.

Interviewer: In what way could you relate to them?

Respondent: Because, although a lot of them were northern, I could relate ...nothing like that was happening in my life, it was happening in the films, but, perhaps I don't know, I could either aspire to it or say thank God that isn't going on, or...but at least I understood them. When I looked at them, I liked their looks, you know, I mean most of the Americans were like (??) sort of clean cut. Apart from Elvis. I mean that was different entirely.

Interviewer: So you're talking specifically about the northern movies.

Respondent: Yeah, I can't think ...because they were all northern. I can't think of any local ones in the '60s.

Interviewer: What about the swinging London movies?

Respondent: No, they didn't appeal to me, funnily enough, because I wasn't, you know, they talk about how the older '60s was full of drugs and everything. It bypassed me entirely. I knew nothing about it. I didn't have the money to go up swinging in London, didn't know where, you know, London was really. Although I lived in it, I never went to the West End. Even when I was working, every job, my dad used to say...you know travelling to work is like unpaid over time, so I always worked locally, and you know, that was it. I didn't go up to London. So I couldn't really relate to that at all.

Interviewer: So Willesden wasn't swinging.

Respondent: Let me see...no, I suppose really I sort of went to work in men's clubs. I hated them, but I went, because my mum and dad went and I used to go there before...there was a dance hall called the Carlton Rooms in...what's it called, Kilburn. That was the most luxurious place I've ever been to. When I go by now, it's the Muslim place now...but it was sweeping stairways coming down. I was too young to be in there, but my older friends snuck me in there and I had to stay in the toilets all night. I could pop out and just look and see these sweeping staircases. That in my memory was like a Hollywood movie. To me, it was so wonderful; fitted carpets and stairs coming down. I'd like to go there now and see what it's like actually.

Interviewer: It sounds lovely.

Respondent: It was just something I'd never seen. And I was just a kid. And I only went there the once, but I remember what it was called, the Carlton Rooms, and it was a dance hall. But as I saw I was just too young. But it was wonderful.

Interviewer: Just turning over my page. You've mentioned Elvis today and you also...I mean you talk about him in the questionnaire in relation to Cliff Richard. I wonder, what is it about Cliff Richard and Elvis that appeal?

Respondent: Well Cliff Richard didn't appeal to me at all. He was...I could see that he was good looking in his movie, which was fabulous, and I liked it 'coz I liked music...it was wonderful that song. And Summer Holiday and that sort of...I loved it but he never appealed to me for some reason. But Elvis absolutely did and I was too young to know why, but he really did. But Cliff didn't...but I liked both 'coz you know, they're good singers.

Interviewer: Did you like musicals then?

Respondent: Only those that I've mentioned. I remember my husband went to see Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, which was an America film. I think I did see it, I can't remember. I know he went to see it and told me about it...but it wasn't my cup of tea. But Summer Holiday was fantastic. Of course, there are films later on, you know, like A Star is Born, so it's later on that.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you saw Summer Holiday?

Respondent: I bet that was the Grenada. That wouldn't have been the Odeon. I bet that was the Grenada in Willesden.

Interviewer: Why would it have been at the Grenada?

Respondent: I just have a feeling that it was...I can see it, yeah, I bet it was the Grenada in Willesden, yeah.

Interviewer: Sure.

Respondent: I don't know.

Interviewer: I wonder if we can get back to something you mentioned a little earlier on which is the ice cream in the intervals and the usherettes that brought that around. Now that's something that we don't have nowadays, and it's something that I haven't experienced at all in my life, I came into the

world far too late for all of that. So I was wondering if you could tell me just a little about how that worked.

Respondent: Well, the film would end, but she would always be in position, but she had a little light that she clicked here, she had a thing over her shoulder, you know a tray, and she had light above the tray, so you could see her if you happened to look across, she was standing there, waiting for the film to end. Within minutes, the film ended, she clicked on her light, and everybody would fly down to get....and it was quite expensive six pence, yeah. She'd get a tub, she'd have tubs, choc ices and ordinary ice things. That was the main thing. I think you got nuts, I'm sure...I think they were called Monkey Nuts, funny nuts they were, yeah, yeah yeah. I think you could buy them. And of course everybody, there's be a long queue and you'd get a tab and a wooden stick...of course the choc ice you just peeled off the paper and it was ordinary ice cream. That was it; and then you went back to your seat and you ate it, and she...oh, she'd also sell, yeah I remember that, Lyon's made lollies. Yeah, they were Lyon's made! And then she would wait and when there are absolutely no more customers, she'd click off her light and...'coz the lights come up then, and then she'd click off her light and off she went beyond the curtain. Yes, so that was the break.

Interviewer: And then you'd eat your ice cream during the second feature?

Respondent: No, because it didn't take long. There wasn't much of it. Because while the lights were on, there was nothing on; she was selling, they were selling then...so it just depends how far you were back in the queue. There was usually more than one. There'd be one this side, one that side, there might...there wasn't one upstairs; you'd have to go down. If you were upstairs you had to go downstairs. And they were nicely...I liked the cinemas because you had a bar in front, the seats, you know, and you'd have a few stairs...I liked it very much. It was lovely in there. Yeah, very nice.

Interviewer: And you say there were upstairs balconies to these cinemas.

Respondent: Would you call them balconies? It was like, you know, you came upstairs and you had like a...what do you call it...a hallway, and alleyway, where you could look down on those and you could look up to those. And then you had another set of stairs that came up like that, and then you'd have you aisles off it, so you stepped off the stairs coz' they were just stairs, you know, they didn't have no ending. But if you were right at the front, it was like a piece of, you know, to keep you in. Like you'd have on a garden wall, just a piece of iron or something, I don't know what it was.

Interviewer: Sure, like an iron bar?

Respondent: Yes, something like that. And on the front of that would be an ashtray attached...I suppose it was a bit like a bar, you know, and you had your thing attached to the back of it, your ashtray. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Lovely. Did you prefer sitting upstairs or, downstairs?

Respondent: We always did.

Interviewer: Always.

Respondent: Always sat and I liked to sit near the front, I didn't want to be at the back with all the snoggers, you know, so I liked to sit near to the front...so there were one, two, three rows, and as I say we'd sit on the edge, like near the stairs, if we could, and yeah.

Interviewer: It's interesting you mentioned the snoggers at the back. Was that something that went on a lot?

Respondent: Oh yeah, you know, I mean we just knew that's where the snoggers were going...coming for a snog, and they'd be at the back and we didn't want to sit with them. We wanted to see the film.

Interviewer: I was going to say, because you were caught with your husband to be at the time, but you weren't in the back rows having a snog [laughs].

Respondent: No, no, I mean...where did we use to have a snog? We had a car...see he was four years older than me, so I was fourteen and he was eighteen. We first met when I was ten and he was fourteen, that's why I wasn't allowed to see him anyway, obviously he climbed up my window and that, but we were totally innocent. And he used to say, "right, when are we're making our plans, I'm bringing my radio". Well, his radio was like a small microwave, and he had this big leather jacket that was zipped and this big thing...of course my granddad lived underneath and he had to climb up the tree, because I was on the first floor, and granddad caught him, called the police, so the police went, and stuff like that, because then he got caught and then, you know, they sort of said he's nobody, they'd gone. Of course when he got caught, my brother caught him and I got into well trouble. My dad blamed it on my Cuban heels... I had Cuban heels at the time as shoes.

Interviewer: That's lovely. And your dad blamed them for...?

Respondent: Yeah. "You're not wearing those Cuban heels anymore!" and that was it. I wasn't allowed to go out. But of course I did, I used to see him, I'd sneak.

Interviewer: But never in the back row of the cinema [laughs].

Respondent: No, definitely not.

Interviewer: Front row only.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: You talk about A Kind of Loving, and watching that, of course June Ritchie in it, and Alan Bates. You say it was, and I apologise for being a little risqué, but you say it was the first time that you sort of saw a naked female in a film. Did that have an impact on you at all?

Respondent: Yeah, well it stayed with me. At the time it was [gasps], I think the whole audience gasped because we wasn't expecting that, you know, she said she was pregnant, oh no, sorry, before she said she was pregnant, obviously. Yeah, no she'd gone to...her mother was away or something...they'd gone to somebody's house and they'd been talking about "shall we this and that", and they'd been scared, and then it was such a big thing, could you imagine, she said "alright, well you go out the room then". I mean it was such a big embarrassing thing, so he went out of the room, then he comes back in and...I don't know what she had around her...something around her front, and you saw, as he comes in the room, you saw the back of her neck; she had the couch behind her. And it sort of zoomed in on her and came around the front, and she stood up, and as she stood up, you just saw her naked back, and you saw her buttocks, and he then put his arms around her, and whatever she had—it must have been a towel or something—slipped down, and then he's got his arms around her [gasps]. Oh God she's naked and he's got his arms around her...yeah, it was very much like that.

Interviewer: And there wasn't much of that in television, or other types of entertainment.

Respondent: I'd never seen it before. Never! Never in a film, I forget what that film was...might have been...do you know '62, '63?

Interviewer: I don't...

Respondent: '64 even, I don't know, but that was a shock. Of course, I loved it so much anyway because he used to sing on the bus, and her own name was Ingrid in the film and, you know, you thought he was so in love with her. Of course, once she said she's pregnant, after all that he gets married and she she's not pregnant, and the mother in law hates him. It's terrible, it's disastrous what happens. No, but that scene, yeah it certainly stays with her. Such a shock.

Interviewer: Were you aware of cinema becoming kind of more liberal more generally, or was it just that one sequence that stayed with you?

Respondent: Umm, let's think. That because you actually saw someone naked. Other stuff was, if you thought about it, you knew what was going to happen, but then they'd go on to something else. I suppose that's straight right in front of you: she's naked. And, you know, there was other films, which you didn't see that in, so I didn't think about that sort of thing....

Interviewer: I mean the reason I ask is because you mention Alfie somewhere in the questionnaire, and Alfie's got a bit of a reputation for itself because of its abortion subplot...

Respondent: Ah, that wouldn't have entered my head.

Interviewer: No...

Respondent: I wouldn't have thought [gasps] disgusting, or...no. It wouldn't have entered. It was...well it probably went over my head, I don't know. It was just there. But with June Ritchie you saw it. Your eyes are telling you, whatever else is going on in films, where they suggest it and all that, its suggestion. When I saw it with my own eyes, it's...so that's why. Alfie, I loved it, but what a swine he was, you know. And loved as I told you Jane Asher. But she was going out with Paul McCartney and so it made it look a bit more...but you know I just, I liked it and I liked that American woman, I forget her name now...would have been her sister anyway.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: She was actually one bigger sister.

Interviewer: Her name completely escapes...

Respondent: It's written there.

Interviewer: It is, yes. Umm...

Respondent: Anyway, it doesn't matter.

Interviewer: From the Poseidon Adventure as well.

Respondent: She's in lots of films.

Interviewer: She is, yes.

Respondent: Very famous, she was his old girlfriend yeah.

Interviewer: I was interested in that Paul McCartney connection that you mentioned, because you said earlier that you were very into music at the time as well. So I wondered whether there was a connection between your tastes in film and your tastes in music at all.

Respondent: I suppose there was. And I mean 'coz through Alfie I think they did a lot of songs didn't they? But then I wouldn't have known them before I went, so I can't really say that. And A Hard Day's Night I saw.

Interviewer: Did you like the Beatles?

Respondent: I liked their music. I thought they were ugly, I thought they were as ugly as the stuns. When I look back now, I think "Oh no, Paul was a handsome little boy", but he wasn't my type at the time. My type was Elvis. Hair pushed back, you know, the quiff and all that. And of course they didn't. They had the flat, you know...so they were entirely different. So I loved their music, yeah, fabulous music.

Interviewer: And was that why you went to see their films?

Respondent: Yeah. A Hard Day's Night. I think that was all I'd see.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: There was only about one, wasn't there?

Interviewer: They did also Yellow Submarine.

Respondent: No, that's too way out for me. Wasn't my...

Interviewer: And the other one they did was Help.

Respondent: Help. I did see that, but did I see it at the cinema or did I see it later on? That I can't remember.

Interviewer: But A Hard Day's Night made an impact on you.

Respondent: Well, I saw it because you know, the fans...I think it was more like a documentary than anything. The fans were running around and you got them singing and that sort of thing, yeah.

Interviewer: And that happened in the cinema that you were at?

Respondent: Oh no, the fans were in the film.

Interviewer: Oh in the film, I see. Sorry, I got the wrong end of the stick.

Respondent: No, I'm trying to think about those sort of things where they rushed down to...which I don't think I was ever present to anything like that. No we were very reserved. And as I say, you know I stopped '68, stopped the cinema because I didn't go anymore. So practically I hadn't after that.

Interviewer: And that was because your child was born.

Respondent: Yeah. Just didn't have the money. We were very, very poor in those days.

Interviewer: I was interested in that. I mean you're say in the questionnaire that you stopped going at that point. Were there...actually, I suppose your child may have been too young...I was interested in whether you took your child to the cinema.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: No, he'd been too young. Just couldn't afford it. I mean, the truth is, and my nephew pointed it out to me, 'coz I'd forgotten, a few years ago. We used to buy potatoes which were (?) a pound. And me and my husband had a plate of chips every single day because we couldn't afford anything else. But we'd buy the children vegetables soup, Heinz vegetable soup, and we'd put potatoes with it. That's what they ate. But we couldn't even do eggs. Very...yeah, when I look back now, I think "oh my goodness." I mean it never bothered me, we just got on with life even though we were poor. We didn't know it then. So...

Interviewer: But you still found money to go to the cinema with.

Respondent: No, this is after we were...

Interviewer: This is after...

Respondent: When the babies were born. Two sons...I'd stopped the cinema. We couldn't do anything.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Couldn't afford anything.

Interviewer: We've talked a bit about the differences between kind of films about the North and films about the South...well, swinging London movies and how you weren't necessarily part of swinging London. Umm...

Respondent: I did see Blow Up.

Interviewer: Blow Up.

Respondent: I'm not sure if that was '60s or '70s.

Interviewer: '60s.

Respondent: '60s. I saw it...it was David Bate—not David Bate....Hemmings! David Hemmings was the actor. Taking picture—it was so alien—what's all this about? You know, I didn't understand it.

Interviewer: Didn't like it?

Respondent: I can't say I didn't like it, 'coz I liked David Hemmings, a good looking bloke, but I don't think I understood it.

Interviewer: I'm not entirely sure I understand it now to be honest.

Respondent: I'd a world I don't know about models taking pictures of them, and in all sorts of different places. Yes click, click, click, click, I don't know...you know, it wasn't my life.

Interviewer: You say though that the Northern films that we talked about earlier, they, and I'll quote if you don't mind, "they showed you the way that kind of other parts of the country, in particular the North, lived." Was it different to how you lived?

Respondent: Now different. They seemed...'coz I lived in London, so it didn't seem like such a hard life as what they had up there. You know, they had outside toilets and things like that. You know, I'd never

lived in a home with an outside toilet, so it was just, it was a bit different. And of course, 'coz my father was from Sunderland, so when I went out to visit, and there was an outside toilet, what a shock. You know, and newspaper hanging there. I was very shocked. So...

Interviewer: I can imagine.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, and there was no bathroom, and everything was done in the front room, 'coz there was this massive hob and she put the iron on there and she put the cooking on there and the coal in there. Everything, you know, it was all done...and that was the only heating. Not that we had central heating, but ...we didn't even have a phone, but yeah, so...question, was that the right question?

Interviewer: Yeah, no, no, I was asking about whether life in the films in the North was different to yours.

Respondent: I don't think so. I think because theirs was so bleak, oh my God, if you remember Saturday Night, Sunday Morning, Rachel Roberts was in it and she looked like a woman of about sixty, she had her old coat tied up, her husband was coming home from work on a motorbike and they all looked so old and grim and dirty and everything, you know, nothing suave about it.

Interviewer: No, I'll agree with that.

Respondent: It was a bit like Susan Hampshire, now she was in a film with Laurence Harvey, I forget what it's called. She was the...I think she was the rich girl and he was in love, I think it was a French girl, do you remember this film?

Interviewer: No, I don't.

Respondent: Susan Hampshire, yeah. And she was the pretty, lovely girl that he was going to marry, but he really loved this earthly French woman, Catherine Deneuve, one of those names. So the cleanliness

as opposed to, you know....I did see some films that I didn't mention, you know, 'coz I forgot about them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But yeah, there was a difference, but I don't know if I relate. I'd say that I related to it, but certainly more to them than to the Americans.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. We've addressed a lot of kind of things I don't want to talk about on that page I'm afraid. Umm, yeah, we ask in the questionnaire about this kind of relationship between your life and the life that you see on the screen and whether the two relate to one another. And I thought the response that you gave was very interesting. You said it seemed that getting pregnant outside of marriage was happening more and more and married women were having affairs with their husbands' not knowing that they were bringing up someone else's child. And maybe it was because you were coming of age and that had always gone on, but you know, that you didn't necessarily know about it before. I was wondering, did any of those sorts of things that you saw on the screen, those social problem films, anything that happened in those, did those sorts of things happen in your community?

Respondent: Yes, I got pregnant before I was married. Husbands and wives you wouldn't have known about, I can't remember if anybody had any, you know...no, I don't think I knew of anybody, no. But yes, for the pregnancy, I got pregnant before I was married. I was married in February, my son was born at the end of July, so that case, but the affairs, no.

Interviewer: What was the reaction to that pregnancy?

Respondent: To that pregnancy, well for me it was okay, but my sister got sent away to, you know mother and baby home, where they take the babies, but she wouldn't let go of her baby. So, you know, she came back and married her husband...I think she married him before...she had the baby first, and I think she married him before I saw her coming back home. She was ten years older than me. Anyway, when it happened to me, of course she was right there for me. And that was alright, you know, my

husband was over the moon because he kept asking me to marry him and I wouldn't marry him, I was too young, and all I saw around me was broken marriages, but not affairs, I'd not see these affairs, but broken marriages...And, 'coz the night when I said I would marry him, he went and got new car wheels, so we went and got married the second of February '67, and my baby was born 31st of July, so I was about four months pregnant.

Interviewer: So I suppose your...the time that your sister got pregnant was quite a bit before you.

Respondent: Yeah, 'coz she was ten years older. Yeah, it would have been ten years, 'coz she was eighteen and I was eighteen, so she was eighteen and yeah, you know. She got sent away, I don't know why.

Interviewer: That sounds really difficult, really traumatic.

Respondent: We've never spoken about it, and I'd like to speak to her about it, but I don't know how she's feel.

Interviewer: But then these films must have been, I mean you say that they felt kind of relevant to your life because of that, and I can certainly see that.

Respondent: Hmm, but you didn't see anybody get sent away, did you?

Interviewer: No, not getting sent away.

Respondent: But you saw the shame, I was okay, I avoided the shame 'coz I got married you know, before...by then my mum and dad was split up anyway. So you know, I didn't have dad sort of...whereas she had to go away.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I mean for the blimming neighbours, you know, terrible.

Interviewer: It's a different age. It really is. Umm, the last thing that I wanted to ask was about...you identify yourself in the questionnaire as having a working class upbringing. I wonder what did a working class upbringing mean in the 1960s?

Respondent: Well, your father worked. My father worked. If he went out on a Sunday night and got drunk, he was up at 6 o'clock next morning to go to work. No matter what, he was at work. 'Coz you didn't get any of this unemployment stuff. You had to go in front of a panel and beg for money. And I don't know this but my mum's told me, father only did it once. It was called UAB, Unemployment Assistance Board; and you had to go before them and it was after he's come out of the war, you know, he was out of work for a period, and you go up to the Unassisted...what was it? The Unassisted...

Interviewer: The UAB...

Respondent: The UAB, but what was it called? Unemployment Assistance Board, yeah. And he had to go to them and, you know, beg your case, and what you got offered a pound of butter, "that would do you for..." you know, it was that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So he was never...he never claimed dough, I don't think they had dough (?) in those days. So you know, he always went to work. So...what's the question? Dad worked.

Interviewer: I was asking about kind of what working class life was like in the '60s.

Respondent: I think I lived in a, horribly, it's still alive now, God knows what...I had to go back some years ago when I was doing my history, and it was blocks of flats, and it was called a Crescent, the Curzon Crescent in Willesden, it went round in a crescent, you know, and they'd put all the kids in there and the man opposite used to sell toffee apples, 'coz he had ten kids, and he used to sell toffee for a

penny and put them outside his flat and everyone used to come. You know, the ice cream man used to come around on a bike and you know that sort of thing, it was wonderful, but dad always worked and most of them worked. You know, most of the people around, we used to see them going to work every day.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Respondent: Mum worked in a nursery, she had four kids, but she worked in a nursery, she would take me to the nursery, I was the youngest. Take me to the nursery with her, you know.

Interviewer: Wonderful. Well that's all I had to ask about, but before I close up I just wanted to ask if there is anything else that you wanted to add that I haven't asked about, or that you didn't get a chance to mention.

Respondent: What about the '60s?

Interviewer: About the '60s, about cinema in the '60s, about the cinemas you visited.

Respondent: No, I think you've asked me all the questions. I think I've told you everything.

Interviewer; Wonderful. Well thanks ever so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

End of interview.

