

Interview with respondents 0723 and 0724

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Location: Café, Faversham

Interviewer: Emma Pett

Interviewer: So what's helpful at the beginning of the recording, because there's three of us working on this project and we work from a transcript that people can kind of pick things out of, so it's quite useful at the beginning if you just say how old you were across the decade and where you were living?

Respondent A [0723]: So at the beginning of the 60s I would have been 9. That's right yes and at the time I was living in Germany, so I came over to England, I came to boarding school in England in September 1962 and then my parents moved to England in 1963. So my cinema-going prior to that was ... I used to go to the cinema in Rome when I went to stay with my grandfather.

Interviewer: Very glamorous!

Respondent A: Didn't think so at the time but it does seem so in retrospect. I used to go to the British Forces cinema whatever that was called in the army bases where we lived and I also used to go to the AAC which was the American army cinema because my father was attached to the British embassy in Bonn so he had membership to the American Embassy Club so that way I got to see quite a mixture of things.

Interviewer: Yeah, quite a range. And then when you came over to England to go to boarding school. Was that in the South as well?

Respondent A: Yeah.

Interviewer: So your teen years were in the 60s and you were living in a rural community in the Kent area?

Respondent A: In fact not even in a village.

Interviewer: Not even in a village?

Respondent A: Not even in a village no, so no public transport.

Interviewer: So if you wanted to go to the cinema you had to get a lift?

Respondent A: That's right.

Interviewer: Had to go to a local town. How long did that last till? Did that change across the decade?

Respondent A: I suppose I went to university which was actually 1970s, so it kind of spans ...

Interviewer: A whole decade in that rural environment? This is going to be an interesting contrast for us because your cinema-going is going to be shaped by those circumstances and a lot of the people I've talked to were in towns. And yourself?

Respondent B [0724]: Me? I was the same age so in 1960 I'm 9 living in a suburb of Wolverhampton, so completely different you see. We did go to the cinema I think in Wolverhampton, they ... were all 1930s brick built

modernist. The ABC ... before then as a child [with] my parents also on holiday, this is outside the 60s, the one that sticks in my mind is going to see "South Pacific" in Bournemouth on holiday [in] 1959. Then in 1963 we moved back to the town where I was actually born, which was Dudley which is also a small town, its current size is about 90,000, the town of Dudley but the borough is 300,000. ... The castle is the highest point, Castle Hill is a road going down towards the railway station where there were the Plaza and the Odeon, again chains alongside the Hippodrome which was the theatre. So there was a tiny little cluster, there were other cinemas in the town that closed at one time or another but those were the last ones to close. The cinema-going, tried to remember all of them but I can't remember all of them. I left Dudley in 1969 so just about inside the decade. I moved to London as a student and then ... so that changed the cinema-going slightly first because you had a free film every Friday in the Anatomy Theatre, University College London. It has nothing to do with anatomy it's just the name of the lecture theatre, but it was one of those big ones, an old-style lecture theatre. FilmSoc put on a film every Friday and that was free, but there was also the Odeon Parkway, Kensington Odeon and I think there's an Odeon in Tottenham Court Road as well just inside the decade.

Interviewer: Can you remember, the beginning of the decade, one of the things we're interested in is the way cinema-going changed from the beginning of the decade, in some respects it felt quite like the 1950s broadly as well as in the cinemas themselves as you bought a ticket

for a seat, you still had the national anthem played at the end, can you remember any of those things? You would still have been quite young at that point. Did you ever go to the children's cinema?

Respondent A: Not in England, I did in Germany.

Respondent B: No, no.

Respondent A: I went to the armed forces one but not the other one.

Interviewer: So, your earliest memories of cinema-going, I think you mentioned "101 Dalmatians" and lots of big Disney films, you probably didn't go that often then, were those kind of treats?

Respondent A: Those I saw when I was in Italy actually, so the first film I remember seeing after I moved to England was "Summer Holiday" with Cliff Richard. I remember queuing outside the Embassy cinema I don't remember going to any films in England before that so that would have been 1963 or something like that? My mother must have been over from Germany, it must have been in the school holidays or something.

Interviewer: What can you remember about going to see "Summer Holiday"?

Respondent A: Not much to be honest.

Interviewer: Was it just people queuing outside?

Respondent A: Yeah I think so yes.

Interviewer: And what about you, can you remember what the first thing you went to see was?

Respondent B: The only one from memory is the one I mentioned which is “South Pacific” in Bournemouth but I have no memory of the circumstances or setting at all, unfortunately. I remember the film, I remember the songs because I’ve seen, you know, bits since then. I remember my mother being particularly impressed with the fact that they put filters in front of the ...

Interviewer: Oh the smoke?

Respondent A: No there were coloured filters.

Respondent B: No, coloured filters. “South Pacific” is a very odd film, a very unusual film and they changed the colour of the background so they put filters in front of the ... it changes from kind of blue to yellow to green to red to purple while they’re singing, it’s a very unusual film. It didn’t register with me at all at the time and I don’t think it comes out so well in the film as on stage though, it’s actually a film about racism. The hero is in love with a South East Asian girl. He’s one of the coast watchers, he gets killed, of course, in the end, but the actual circumstances of going to ... that must have been in ’58 but ...

Interviewer: That’s okay. When you started going to the cinema in Dudley, your local cinemas that you just described, were you going with your family or with your friends ...?

Respondent B: Until about 1963 or ’64, ’63 I’m 12, ’64 I’m 13, until then I went with my parents. So I went to the cinema with my father, that was in Wolverhampton, the ABC Wolverhampton.

Interviewer: Can you remember anything about that?

Respondent B: No I can't, the film I can remember but I can't remember anything about the ABC. ... "Swiss Family Robinson", that's 1960 that is, that was on holiday as well so ... that was with my parents, but once you get to about 1964 I went on my own or with friends.

Respondent A: City slicker.

Respondent B: Well, yeah, it was a town, you didn't even need to get on the bus.

Interviewer: People went to the cinema with their friends when they were younger. People trusted ...

Respondent B: Yeah.

Respondent A: There's a kind of paranoia now.

Respondent B: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you go with your parents?

Respondent A: I never went with my father, I don't remember my father ever going to the cinema, not once. He must have done when he was young but I don't remember going along with him once. I just remember the ... went to a girl's school so as a treat we were taken to the cinema to see "The Dambusters". So that was exciting, don't think anyone enjoyed that, we all sat there going ...

Interviewer: Did you go on a bus or something?

Respondent A: I think the school hired a coach. This rickety old coach that we used to go in, god knows how we survived.

Interviewer: Where did they take you, to the local cinema?

Respondent A: I would imagine it would probably be [unclear] or Crandell, I think those were the nearest cinemas to my school. Not that either of those exist any more I have to say.

Interviewer: So as you were kind of getting a bit older, did you either take a particular interest in particular film stars or types of film, was there anything that kind of ...?

Respondent A: I kind of did, yeah.

Interviewer: Was it part of your cultural life or was it ...?

Respondent A: Yeah. I remember, the first one I went to see without parents, not counting the children's ones I went to when I was in Germany, I went to stay with a friend in London and we went to see "Hard Day's Night" at the Finchley Odeon I think which was very exciting.

Interviewer: In the 60s?

Respondent A: Yeah 1964 or something.

Interviewer: Before it came out ...

Respondent A: She was from London so we were able to go in the right ... but I used to read the newspapers quite a bit so I used to read film reviews and I suppose, when I left boarding school and things, my mother and I used to go up to London sometimes and see quite new and not quite

arty but quite interesting films like “Blow-up” and “Morgan A Suitable Case for Treatment.”

Interviewer: Those were quite interesting. Going back to “Hard Day’s Night,” can you remember it being exciting seeing the Beatles on the big screen?

Respondent A: Oh god, yes!

Interviewer: You know there are different accounts of the Beatles playing in cinemas as well which is interesting, they were used as venues in the 60s ...

Respondent A: My mother took, my brave mother took me and 9 friends to see them at the Hammersmith Odeon.

Respondent B: Wow, that ...

Respondent A: Yeah.

Respondent B: That’s quite something actually.

Interviewer: So you saw the Beatles live, what was the atmosphere like in the cinema, were teenage girls sort of over-excited?

Respondent A: I can’t remember. I can definitely remember the excitement at the Hammersmith Odeon, I suppose they must have been but [were they] sat there screaming or something I don’t know, how old were we? 12, so it was quite a long time ago.

Interviewer: I mean they were the original boy band but the films are quite interesting because they’re quite ... they poke fun at that kind of class

establishment and they capture that moment when there was that generational ...

Respondent A: Particularly "Hard Day's Night." "Help" was a bit silly. It's a bit like the original "Casino Royale," it was a bit all dive in and let's all be daft. There are some really cringe-making bits in there as well talking about racism.

Respondent B: It's very much in its time.

Respondent A: Absolutely, yeah.

Respondent B: It's a caper. I didn't sort of ... going to the cinema tended to be something which one did, I wasn't very interested in stars, had no interest in any particular genres, although I did go and see, early on, things like "Mary Poppins" and "The Sword in the Stone" then went on to things like "Bonnie and Clyde", "Catch 22", "MASH", "Woodstock" "Women in Love" all those and thought, yes, that's fantastic, yeah great.

Interviewer: Was there a sense in which they captured how you felt at the time some of those films?

Respondent B: Oh yeah definitely, I went to see it twice.

Respondent A: And "MASH"?

Respondent B: Yes, yes, did I say "MASH"?

Interviewer: When was "MASH"? Was it 1970?

Respondent A: That can't be it, I saw it ... well I must have seen it after I did my A-Levels, I must have gone back to Tunbridge Wells just to see it then, shows you how far afield I had to go to see a film.

Respondent B: "Bonnie and Clyde" '67, "Battle of Britain" '69, "MASH" "Woodstock" "Women in Love" "Catch 22" ...

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about ... you went to see "If" twice. It must have captured your imagination. What was it [that appealed particularly]?

Respondent B: It ... encompassed lots of things which we were already thinking without being able to put them into words at the time. The politics of the time, and I don't mean politics with a capital "P" but the way you felt about the culture.

Interviewer: There was a kind of anti-establishment ...

Respondent B: Oh definitely.

Interviewer: It's actually interesting putting that alongside "Hard Day's Night" because that's quite cheeky isn't it?

Respondent B: Yes it is.

Interviewer: And that was the Beatles, that moment where by the end of the decade, particularly with "If" and Malcolm McDowell's character in that was quite confrontational ...

Respondent A: Oh yeah, a lot, a lot it's really quite frightening and the café sequence is quite frightening as well with him and the girl. That was quite shocking at the time and probably still is actually.

Respondent B: And “Bonnie and Clyde” is just a legalist sort of thing, very stylish legalism, shooting people. I just used to let them wash over me when I went to the cinema either on my own or with friends from school.

Interviewer: But you did feel that they somehow captured the spirit that existed at the time?

Respondent B: Yes, sort of, but as I said it’s not quite as definite as that because remember I said, we were still in the habit of going to the cinema as a matter of course, it was one of the things which you did. It wasn’t making a statement going to the cinema or anything like that, occasionally you’d go along and see a film like “If” and think right, yes, there’s other people out there that think like this obviously, they’re making a film which is about that mood. It’s as much a mood as it is ...

Interviewer: It is yeah. Were you aware ...

...

Respondent B: That’s where I went to see.

Respondent A: Oh they just got planning permission to go ahead with the restoration of the Dreamland Cinema in Margate.

Interviewer: Exciting.

Respondent A: Saw that on Facebook this week.

Respondent B: It became a hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses, which is why it still exists. It's got a preservation order on it.

Interviewer: It's fascinating when cinemas become places of worship isn't it?

Respondent B: It is. That's demolished, I think, that's opposite at the bottom of Castle Hill. I'm trying to think, that's Dudley Zoo there that's the entrance to Dudley Zoo and the Odeon is there right over the road, that's the Plaza. There's the Plaza.

Respondent A: "The Nympho"? I was clearly away that week.

Respondent B: This is Dudley zoo at the back, the station is here, that's the Hippodrome which was a theatre, I think ...

Interviewer: They are all clustered together.

Respondent B: There was another one at the top of the town as well.

Interviewer: They're so big -- a lot of them are two or three screens.

Respondent B: 1876 it would hold in the Odeon.

Interviewer: Can you remember the sense of grandeur in those cinemas? You know the curtains and ...

Respondent B: Yeah, again I liked the changing lights with the curtains.

Respondent A: The pink and green.

Respondent B: Yes they ... changed colour as they came across and you know you had reflective bits at the bottom so when the lights changed it changed the colour of the curtains.

Respondent A: And a lot of them had that reflective stuff in the floor as well
didn't they?

Respondent B: Yeah. The tip-up seats I certainly remember.

Respondent A: Sitting on them to look over people.

Respondent B: Well they're all raised, usually kind of red velvety plush, grubby
because they were ...

Respondent A: With ashtrays in the back ...

Respondent B: There were smoking bits and non-smoking.

Respondent A: I don't remember a non-smoking bit.

Interviewer: They were staffed more weren't they, I think, in those days, you
know, usherettes to show you to your seat?

Respondent B: Yes, that's right, with a torch.

Respondent A: And continuous performances.

Interviewer: Yeah, you buy a ticket for a seat and you stay. Did you ever stay for
more than watching a film ...?

Respondent A: I don't think I've got the patience to do it but my father, I think
my father said it was useful for homeless people because in cold
weather they could just buy a ... if they could afford a ticket they
could stay in there and keep warm.

Interviewer: What about the other things on the programme? And do you
remember what the other bits ...

Respondent A: "Look at Life" was it?

Respondent B: Yes, that's right.

Respondent A: Pathé News.

Respondent B: Yes.

Respondent A: Second features.

Respondent B: I don't remember anything about them but I do remember the adverts which used to be a standard advert, a sort of charming woman in a beautiful looking sari showing curry and a voiceover saying "now in Dudley." The same pictures ...

Respondent A: Come to the [inaudible] Gardens.

Respondent B: And the voiceover would tell you where it was.

Interviewer: It was a still image?

Respondent B: Oh, no, she'd smile and she'd point ...

Interviewer: Oh, so it was an actual ...

Respondent B: Yeah, it was a bit of film. The voiceover would give you your local address to whatever it was for but it was the same advert.

Interviewer: In different ...

Respondent A: A little still on the front of the ...

Respondent B: So “blah blah blah blah and now in Westgate” or whatever the local curry house was -- voiceover would do it and give you the address of whatever you were advertising for.

Respondent A: Pearl and Dean.

Respondent B: Pearl and Dean.

Interviewer: These are all quite, well they're chain cinemas. Did you ever go to the little fleapit cinemas? Do you remember?

Respondent A: In Ashford there were two cinemas. One was the Odeon which was in the High Street which is where people used to go and the other one was literally the other side of the tracks, the far side of Ashford Railway station, which is probably still there unlike the Odeon and that was always known as the fleapit. I don't think I went there ... I may have gone there once after I left school because I went to school in Ashford and everyone looked down on the fleapit, no-one goes there.

Interviewer: Kind of a bit tawdry.

Respondent A: Yeah, I think so. Probably showed grotty sort of ... it showed horror films. I remember “To the Devil a Daughter” or something like that.

Respondent B: Dudley ... The whole thing is built on a hill, there was top church and bottom church and at the bottom church you go down the hill again to where the castle is. But at the top church there's another chain cinema so there were at least 3 surviving into the 60s and there

may have been smaller ones but I don't remember them ... or didn't go to any of them.

Respondent A: I think it may have been an ABC, the fleapit in Ashford, but I don't actually know what its proper name was. It was just known as the fleapit.

Respondent B: When I moved to London all of the economists were explaining the economics of how they priced tickets. ... [Inaudible] was just north of Euston Road.

Respondent A: It's that green thing, green monstrosity now isn't it?

Respondent B: Yes. Gigantic office, but behind Tolmer [?] Square there was a cinema and it was called the Tolmar [?].

Respondent A: Gosh, how long ago was that?

Respondent B: Very long time ago. Tottenham Court Road of course had chains and things ... but I don't think I ever went to the [inaudible]. There probably were only the chain ones. I think there was a small cinema in Camden Parkway. It may have been called ... the Regent? I think it was the Regent. That was a small cinema but again it was a proper one I remember seeing [inaudible]. It really was a proper cinema.

Interviewer: Did you ever see -- you talked a bit about American cinema and British cinema -- did you watch any European cinema?

Respondent A: I did when I was in Italy. I may have done if I went to London with my mother but I can't think of a specific one. I mean "Blow-up,"

the director's Italian but it's an English film. There must have been something we saw that wasn't ...

Interviewer: You didn't see any of the nouvelle vague type films?

Respondent A: No.

Respondent B: No. But they were free, the UCL FilmSoc films tended to be nouvelle vague, foreign ones and can I name one now ... I can't. The only one ... there's an American one called "Flying Dutchman" which was incredibly ...

Respondent A: [Inaudible] and Humphrey Bogart?

Respondent B: No, I don't think ... in that case it's not called "the Flying Dutchman." It's about a woman on the New York underground who seduces and then kills people.

Respondent A: I don't remember that one. I missed that.

Respondent B: It's American arthouse, they used to show ... A friend of mine we used to go most Fridays, there was a 5 o'clock and an 8 o'clock so you used to go immediately after lectures or a bit later.

Respondent A: I was going to say, that carried on into the 70s really till the weekend we discovered everything was being shown every which way. Because we used to go a lot in the sort of ... that was the 70s of course but it did carry on for a while, that culture.

Interviewer: It did, yes. The 60s ... cinemas started closing in the 60s, a third of screens closed over the decade. But I think the impact really hit in the

70s. Some people can remember their local cinemas like those big Odeons and places closing. It varied from place to place.

Respondent B: The Odeon. The Plaza had kind of descended ... it wasn't showing ... it was showing cheap films. The Hippodrome theatre had become a bingo hall, the one at the top of the [inaudible] so that's one out of the three that was actually gone.

Respondent A: You've got three here haven't you, Plaza, Hippodrome and Odeon?

Respondent B: That's right, that's the Odeon. That's a recent shot so it's a Jehovah's Witnesses hall.

Respondent A: I used to have to travel to a number of different towns to see anything.

Interviewer: So where were the places you went into?

Respondent A: Ashford, not so much, that was where I went to school but I don't remember it having that many good films on. Once I was old enough we used to take the bus, if I could get my parents to drop me near a bus stop, I used to get the bus to Maidstone. I remember going to see "Bonnie and Clyde" there and "Barbarella", and there was a cinema in Tenterden which was a very large village-type town, which sometimes had interesting films on. The most interesting was the cinema in Cranbrook which had a cinema which was a private cinema, it was called the Regal, in fact my Latin teacher lived next door and it became a public cinema and it really was a little teeny ...

Interviewer: What sort of films did they show?

Respondent A: They showed quite mainstream films. I remember going to see “The Creature from the Black Lagoon”. It was so low down, the balcony, that the boys, they must have got stalls, actually put their hands over the edge of the balcony during the gruesome scenes of the creature emerging ...

Respondent B: That’s not a balcony.

Respondent A: A balconette then, if you will.

Interviewer: So how many did it seat?

Respondent A: I don’t know I can’t picture it really.

Interviewer: 50 or so?

Respondent A: No not as small as that, probably not more than 100 or a couple of hundred but apparently it had started life as a private cinema.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Respondent A: But then I insisted on leaving school and doing my A-levels in Tunbridge Wells which allowed scope for going to more cinemas because there were a couple in Tunbridge Wells and at least one in Sevenoaks, but it was very scattered unlike [real name’s] experience of sort of mainly going to cinemas in the same town ...

Interviewer: You went to a lot around Kent. I guess that’s part of your cinema-going experience?

Respondent A: It is, yes.

Interviewer: You have to kind of find your way to see different films ...

Respondent A: Reliant on public transport or parents.

Interviewer: If you were to pick, and I guess sort of more towards the end of the decade, but if you could pick a film as a sort of favourite from the decade what would you go for?

Respondent A: I have no idea.

Respondent B: The other thing you have to remember [is that] there are a lot of films which have been seen by both of us after they came out.

Respondent A: Yeah that's true, actually, yes.

Respondent B: So you know the kind of popular films really, our daughters both fell in love with the kind of caper-y element of the James Bond films.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent B: So ...

Interviewer: Did you go and see ...?

Respondent B: No.

Respondent A: They used to come out in the spring and that was usually when I was staying with my grandfather in Italy, so my "James Bond" speaks Italian.

Respondent B: You see I didn't see any of those.

Respondent A: My mother liked James Bond that's why we used to go see those.

What would I have gone to see more than once, I feel that would clarify ...

Respondent B: "If" is the one.

Interviewer: "If," yeah, well if you went to see it twice ...

Respondent B: The trouble is, I know I went to see more films than that but that's the only one I can remember. I can't find a chronological list of films and I couldn't get through the alphabetical list, it's far too thick.

Interviewer: That's interesting that "If" resonated with you like that because it is very much of its time.

Respondent B: Oh, yeah, definitely.

Respondent A: I must have gone to see "Help" more than once and "Hard Day's Night" more than once and "Bonnie and Clyde" I think.

Interviewer: Did you like "Bonnie and Clyde"?

Respondent A: I did, why? It's so horrible, isn't it.

Interviewer: Something fascinating about it.

Respondent A: Yeah, yeah. It's hard to pick out a favourite.

Respondent B: "Bonnie and Clyde" ...?

Respondent A: Perhaps because it was one of the first films I went to see without parents.

Respondent B: It's nasty in a sort of realistic way. Certainly wouldn't have said that that was a favourite. Again "If" was the most [memorable?] one I suppose.

Respondent A: And it's funny looking back on some of them that enjoyed great success at the time, you think "what the hell was all that about"?

Respondent B: Yes.

Interviewer: Some stand up better than others. "If" stands up quite well.

Respondent A: Yes it does.

Respondent B: Our younger daughter likes it because she can understand, she gets the 1960s if you see what I mean. So there is a sequence of shots when they're out in the local town dressed up in large coats and one of them takes out a pin from his lapel and the other one takes out a pin from his lapel and they start jousting with the two pins and the gal falls on the floor, and everybody else is walking around. We used to do things like that in the street, that's exactly what we used to do, prat around in the street. That was one of the things you did do.

Interviewer: So it captures that ...

Respondent B: A 1960s sort of thing to do. It's not so much about rebellion but it is very much a film like that, in the same way that "Hard Day's Night" is.

Interviewer: It's that kind of playful, almost cheekiness.

Respondent B: Playful, cheeky, yeah. Silly, slightly surrealistic.

Interviewer: So even though, you were saying earlier that you wouldn't have said the cinema was particularly important, it was just something you did rather than you being a cinephile, but even despite that there's some kind of broader cultural resonance with certain films?

Respondent B: Oh yes, yeah. I mean that's right, broad cultural resonance is absolutely ...

Interviewer: I mean when I look at the 60s, just the range of films that came out, going back to how we started the conversation, choice and how that seemed to disappear, some people can get quite nostalgic about this almost a golden era of cinema but did you feel like cinema was something quite vital?

Respondent A: Yeah, I mean I think at the time, as I said, I certainly used to go quite a lot and for me it was an effort, it wasn't just walking down the road to the Odeon, I had to organise transport and things like that. Quite a lot of the time if it was something I really wanted to see I would have to go up to London after ponce-ing money off my parents. My mother and I used to go and see new releases relatively frequently I suppose. Things like "Midnight Cowboy" and "The Graduate," not so much the sort of ... I mean I certainly loathed those war films ... I loathe westerns, they absolutely bore me senseless. I mean I know war films are very worthy some of them but it still bores me.

Interviewer: I think war films are kind of of the post-war generation really. I think these films you're talking about like "If" and "The Graduate" were of your generation. There's quite a big gap between the ideologies.

Respondent A: And there's a gender gap as well. I mean [real name] is much more interested in that kind of thing than I am. Even watching documentaries about them, I tend to watch them if I'm with [real name] I watch them but I don't watch them on my own, they're too depressing and dry I've got to have a bit of [inaudible].

Respondent B: Again I don't know how it worked in Germany but you weren't in England. On television all the [films were shown] ... within a few years of them being released, was the example "The Dambusters"?

Respondent A: I don't think that would have been too popular where I was, I have to say.

Respondent B: No, as they drown people especially Russians during the war. The black-and-white war films from the 1940s right the way through to the 1950s, up to things like ... when did "The Dambusters" come out?

Interviewer: Late 50s.

Respondent B: Yeah, they were all on television. All on television one after the other, several times. Anyone of my generation who lived in England would have watched them with their parents, you could sing all the theme music. Kenneth Moore's "Reach for the Sky." All those would be on the television, it wasn't that you would watch ... they were just there, you turned the television on of a Saturday or a Sunday and you

got it. You would also get all the musicals, all the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers ones as well. So, yes, there was going to the cinema and it's different because of the quality of the experience, but you'd have got all those old films anyway, they would have been part of the Saturday or Sunday entertainment.

Respondent A: We did get films shown to us at school sometimes. Someone used to come around with a projector and a screen ... all sorts of films. Just a really weird assortment.

Interviewer: Eclectic?

Respondent A: Yes. Gosh, what's that one about going to the South Pole? "Scot of the Antarctic" and ... some of my teeth fell out while watching that. It was boring. Blood everywhere, embarrassing. Just a really weird assortment of films but nothing particularly enjoyable I have to say. I had completely forgotten all about it.

Respondent B: At school we had educational films, you know shorts. One made by the London transport about taking two buses to France, they were very proud that they were taking the buses to France. You know British Railway films, post office films.

Interviewer: Information-y films.

Respondent B: Information-y films, so the guy, the teacher he was also a railway buff.

Respondent A: Oh, the one who was in "The Railway Children"?

Respondent B: No, no, not him. There was ... in my first grammar school, you had to set up the projector and the screen and you took a precious 20 minutes out of lunchtime. There's a story for you. The second school, the geography teacher who was also one of the members of the debating society, was a railway buff who was originally from Yorkshire and originally from the [Keighley and Worth?] Valley Railway. So in "The Railway Children," they wouldn't let the actors and actresses touch real trains, it would have to be the museum staff, so Bernard Cribbins turns around and [speaks to] "Mr Mitchell," our geography teacher who was a guard on the train for "The Railway Children," the original, you know with Bernard Cribbins and ...

Respondent A: I've just remembered another one of the first films I saw when I moved to England, I think I actually saw "Around the World in 80 Days" which I had forgotten about. I think that was after ... maybe it was with my grandparents in Folkestone, so that would have been early on maybe '62 or something, but sad to relate the one that did have an effect on my was "The Moon Spinners" which was a Disney film. However, I think that was the genesis of my obsession with Crete. It was a terrible film.

Respondent B: That's a little cultural thing as well, I mean, it just reminds me, Folkestone was ... the first time I ever went to France and that was one of those transport free day trips with my father but in a two-week holiday we usually went to the cinema.

Interviewer: It was part of the holiday?

Respondent B: Yeah, and that was one of the things, that's possibly why we went to see "South Pacific" in Bournemouth, I can't remember what we went to see in Folkestone.

Interviewer: So it was sort of an annual thing in the summer holiday?

Respondent B: Oh no, we went to the cinema as well, but we would go to the cinema as part of the ...

Respondent A: Really, as part of your holiday?

Respondent B: Well remember you've got young children, you didn't go to the pub, you didn't go out and ...

Interviewer: What do you do when it rained?

Respondent B: Exactly, that would be one of the things.

Interviewer: Interesting. Is there anything that we haven't covered?

Respondent A: I mean neither of us [inaudible] ... I think it would make more of an impression.

Respondent B: I was always mildly fascinated by the highly polished stones near the top of the ticketing machine, which is flat so you got, the screen with a hole at the bottom of the counter and you say how old you were and what film it is and it comes out and that was a 1930s-style. The original 1930s-style ticket machine.

Respondent A: I definitely remember having those little tickets certainly until very recently.

Respondent B: The Tube tickets used to be issued by similar 1930s machines.

Those I always remember. The sort of things which fascinate you mildly and aren't that important when you come to think of it. The woman who sold ice creams ...

Respondent A: Intermissions, what's happened to intermissions?

Respondent B: That's right, would have a little sort of light and the light points downwards.

Interviewer: It's quite exciting.

Respondent B: That's right, it doesn't shine the light upwards so that it [shows on] the screen, it's so that you could go buy an ice cream.

Interviewer: Those big trays that they had, incredibly heavy, someone was describing it.

Respondent A: Really?

Respondent B: It was huge.

Interviewer: And it's incredible that they carried it ...

Respondent A: That's right, yes.

Respondent B: I suppose you couldn't get it up and down ...

Interviewer: ... the steps, but they had to stand there for quite a while.

Respondent A: Gosh, yes.

Respondent B: There must have been some kind of ... some had Walls and some had ...

Respondent A: But they all had that Kia-Ora stuff. Awful. And they advertised it as well.

Interviewer: I mean you still get that at the intermission in theatres, but the people selling things have a little counter. When you think about it it's quite extraordinary.

Respondent A: It is, isn't it.

Respondent B: I suppose it probably looked at the time old-fashioned. It's nostalgic now because, as you get older, once you get beyond say 20 you realise that when you see something like the ancient tomb at the [inaudible] you think that is absolutely fantastic. But when you walked into the Odeon, this is a bit run down, oh, never mind, I'm here to see the film. The fact that it was a bit art deco.

Interviewer: Didn't really register? That's just what cinemas were like?

Respondent B: When you say what was it like going ... no you were there to see the film. It's only as I say later on, when they start resurrecting things like the Finsbury Park Astoria that you realise what a fantastic building. All that kind of ... was it plasterwork? The fantastic Arabic ...

Interviewer: I don't know what it's made of, but the decoration ...

Respondent B: Yeah. One of the things which happened, this is not your field but every year my father took us down to the Grand Theatre to see pantomime and the [name of group inaudible] at the time of course was one of the popular B groups would come and they'd just play a

load of Beatles numbers or what have you and the whatever it was ... you know it's all humour, the old fashioned dames and the principal boy is obviously a woman, but I can't remember anything ... the Grand has got preservation orders on it, it's fantastic, I can't remember anything about it at all. You didn't go there for that.

Interviewer: No, you were focused on what you were going to watch. That's great, thank you both very much.