

Interview with respondent 0706

Date: 23/7/15

Location: Cambridge Picturehouse

Interviewer: Emma Pett

Interviewer: I should have said at the beginning, there's three of us working on the project, myself, Melvyn Stokes who's the director and Matthew Jones who works in Leicester. So it's really helpful for the transcript if you begin by saying how old you were at the beginning of the decade and where you lived.

Respondent: Right ok, well I was born in 1951, so I would have been about nine in 1960, which means that I would have been about 19, is that right, yes in about 1970. I was born in Purley, in Surrey as it was in those days, it's now part of South London. We moved in about 1964 to Chipstick, which is basically just down the road in a slightly nicer area. So, basically the Surrey area.

Interviewer: So, basically it was your teenage years, one of the things I would think there was to talk about being a Beatles fan, and that was obviously a big part of your adolescence, so if it's ok with you to ask you about that.....

Respondent: Please do. I've thought quite a lot about it actually, because "A Hard Day's Night" made a huge impact on me and my friends, because we'd never seen The Beatles live. I mean, a few people we knew had been to see them in the theatre when they'd been playing and said how great they were and of course we had the records and we'd seen them on the television; but to go into the cinema and to have that experience of seeing them on a big

screen and have the music, which I still think is brilliant, from that soundtrack really produced so well, it was quite a powerful experience, actually.

Interviewer: You'd have been about 13 or....

Respondent: 13, I mean it hit me just at that sort of age when you're emerging from childhood into your adolescence, and you're beginning to look at boys and look at men and....

Interviewer: They were a boy band

Respondent: They were the original boy band. I mean it's a fantastic piece of marketing that film, when you look at it now, I mean they did a really good job on them, but of course that missed us completely, we were just enthralled by the humour and the energy and the attitude, you know, which was so different from how pop stars had been portrayed before. If you look at the sort of Cliff Richard films and things like that, they just now look so clunky in comparison to the sort of freshness and that kind of black and white, slightly arty sort of style, yeah. It was really...made a big impact, yeah.

Interviewer: You saw it more than once?

Respondent: Well, I saw it once when it first came out, yes, and I was really hopping mad because my best friend got to see it a couple of days before me and I was terribly jealous and I went round to her house and we were, you know, playing our Beatle records and she, bless her, recounted virtually the entire film script to me and sort of said "you must watch this bit" "you must watch that bit, that's the bit where John says this" you know. So when I went to see it, I kind of had a slight introduction to it in my head already so

I knew what the bits were to look out for. But nonetheless, no, I really, really enjoyed it.

Interviewer: You mentioned the humour, because that's the thing that I really like about it, that sort of irreverent humour The Beatles had right from the beginning that was quite distinctive. How irreverent did it seem at the time? Because it's quite, it's sort of subversive but in a very cheeky way...

Respondent: Yes, more cheeky than rude. I think they were quite careful about that, obviously it was a scripted film as well. Although I suspect there were a few ad libs got in but largely it was based, you know, written based on their characters, so it's probably a bit cleaner than it would have been if they'd been let loose themselves. I think the big difference was, and I've always felt that there's a scene very early on in the railway carriage where the guy gets in with the bowler hat and the four of them are sitting there and it's this sort of slightly gentle but nonetheless satirical thing about, you know he comes out with all this stuff about, you know, "we fought the war for you and bet you're sorry you won" you know, all that kind of thing, and I can remember sitting in the audience and at that moment it was sort of like a great split because that was exactly how I'd been brought up. That guy could have been my father, you know, we all had Dads like that and we'd all heard all of that, you know. I wouldn't say that we were particularly, you know, rude or naughty or anything like that, we were quite well behaved girls actually, but we were...it was...that post-war thing that you were brought up in where everybody was recovering from the war. In 1964 it's still only, what, 20 years after the end of the war and for our parents it had been a traumatic experience and at the end of it they

were just, you know, “we’re going to get back and get down to work and, you know, move Britain on..” and all this kind of... they didn’t have time really to process what they’d been through. So, as children we’d been brought up hearing endlessly about the war, and so it was always “this is what happened, blah blah blah, we were bombed, we did this, we were in the Blitz”, because of course it’s South London, essentially to say “oh well of course you didn’t know about this” so we always felt that bit excluded, you know. I can remember my parents saying to me, “oh well of course you didn’t have to go through all the rationing that we went through, because you born just at the end of the rationing period” and so on. So you always felt as if you’d missed out on the experience in a way, and almost being blamed for it, and you kept saying “it’s not my fault I wasn’t around” you know, and then suddenly this guy...you know, there this scene in the railway carriage, and I suddenly thought “thank God somebody has said what we’ve all been thinking”! Ok, it’s rude saying “I bet you’re sorry you won” but it was just fantastic, I could’ve given a round of applause at that stage and it suddenly connected that approach. We were the post-war generation, we didn’t have to sort of keep harking back to or keep struggling with it, you know. It was like “we’re turning the other way now, we’re going in that direction”.

Interviewer: There was that shift in the mid 60s. I look at The Beatles’ humour and the way they kind of gently poked fun at the establishment, and you kind of see that other comedians and people throughout the decade...but to me, well, looking back over 60s media, television, film, music and so-on, The Beatles sort of in some ways established that as an acceptable and popular thing to do.

Respondent: Yes, that's right. I think John Lennon once said something about being a Trojan horse, you know, that they sort of got in through the door and then everyone else followed after.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you, so it's interesting that you...you've kind of set out the perimeters of the generational differences, ideological differences, did you experience those shifting in other ways in the decade? I'm thinking about things like the fact that the national anthem was played at the end of films at the beginning of the 60s but by the end of the decade that practice had sort of more or less....

Respondent: More or less, yes ...

Interviewer: It wasn't quite as much the thing to do and, you know, there was a general... I mean obviously Churchill died in the middle of the 60s and by then there was a general shift in terms of patriotism. Did you sort of...were you ever consciously aware of it in any way? Because obviously that moment, that scene in "Hard Day's Night" had a big impact, it was the right time for you...

Respondent: Absolutely, in terms of patriotism, I don't know I think I was probably a fairly patriotic sort of person until I was in my 20s, partly because I had a fairly sheltered upbringing in a sort of middle class household, but I can remember the...the boring bit when the national anthem got played and to begin with as a small, well sort of a younger child, I would stand up because that was what you did. But, as the decade wore on, certainly there was a lot of tipping up of seats of people leaving, you know, and my parents began by sort of disapproving, but of course as the decade wore on I would

be going to the cinema by myself and although I wouldn't be one of those people who would be bolting out and ignored it, I sort of felt uncomfortable about it. I thought "why are we having the national anthem" it seemed a bit odd at the end of a film and I began to question it I guess.

Interviewer: What about any....what about the way that any other social issues impacted on the cinema space?

Respondent: Yeah well there was a lot of films sort of mid- to late-60s, I'm thinking about...what's the one with Terrance Stamp and..."Blow-Up". Was that 60s or was it early 70s?

Interviewer: That's late 60s.

Respondent: I mean that, I thought, was a very typical film of that period. I mean if you compare that to the stuff that was coming out in the first three years of the decade it's a vast step on. So, yes, I would say that from my point of view, living in a kind of suburban, middle class environment it was always like the party was going on somewhere else, you could sort of see that this swinging London thing was happening and, I had a friend for example who had an elder sister who worked in television and who would come back and tell us all these exciting stories about wild parties and things that went on, but as I was pretty much at school the whole time being very dutiful, I didn't partake. But I was aware that there were things happening, things were changing, things were not going to be the same as my parents' generation and the way that I'd been brought up; but I hadn't yet really got old enough to get involved in it myself.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: So it's like the cinema was showing you things that were...attitudes that were very different from the way that you'd been brought up and asking questions. When was "Oh! What a Lovely War" I think that's '70 isn't it? Or '71? Perhaps it's a little bit outside the period.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think the play was 60s.

Respondent: The play was 60s. I mean that was another...after you'd been brought up on all those war films, particularly the Second World War films, you know "Dambusters" and "Reach for the Sky" and all that kind of jolly good chaps stuff, which I think was very necessary to people recovering from the war if you like; that film, I never saw the stage play, turned round the whole thing, asking a question, you were looking at it from the private soldiers' point of view basically and the, you know, the lower ranks and the working man and criticising the generals and all of that kind of thing. I suppose, again, I'd been brought up with a big question mark over the conduct of the First World War, my father was interested in military history and he certainly wasn't, you know, terribly gung-ho about it, but to actually see it depicted and depicted in kind of an imaginative way just sort of makes you think "hang on a minute, this isn't quite the story that we thought about the fighting forces, what a disaster."

Interviewer: That ability to question the set narrative...

Respondent: Yes exactly. I mean you could just see questions being asked all the way...you know in different films and things.

Interviewer: I find that really interesting because the fabric of society didn't change that much in a kind of everyday way.

Respondent: No, no.

Interviewer: I mean for women they tended to leave school, get married, have children their lives weren't necessarily that different from their mothers' lives in that respect, but what they saw on the screen, like you are saying, it indicated that there might be other possibilities and one of the things that some of the other people I've interviewed have talked a little bit about fashion and, I hadn't thought about it until they raised it, how fashion was sometimes used by people, and The Beatles did this with the haircuts and...somebody told me a story about a tie, he had an op-art tie made. So you could go into restaurants where you were supposed to wear a tie and he wanted, actually wanted the doorman to stop him and say "sorry sir, you should be wearing a tie" so you could kind of move it to reveal it because it was sort of camouflaged with his shirt and, it seemed to me that fashion was a way for people did some times express themselves in a slightly different way...were you aware of that?

Respondent: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Was that something that influenced you at all?

Respondent: I'm actually not somebody who's ever really been that interested in fashion and clothes. I mean I'm very pragmatic approach I just buy things to wear, so I'm not really up on that. But two things struck me, first of all was jeans, because nobody wore jeans until the 50s and then I can remember buying my first pair of jeans when I was probably about 13 or 14

and being almost embarrassed wearing them because I thought people were going to...I mean my family didn't wear them, you know girls wore short white socks and nice skirts, you know that kind of thing. But I was kind of, yes, okay, we'll go along with this and yet jeans had become almost the...certainly through the 60s and 70s you only wore jeans. I mean I can remember walking down the street and thinking you know two thirds of everybody walking down the street was wearing jeans. You kind of think, "well this is like uniform" you know, it's like Soviet Russia. And the other funny thing I just want to mention which isn't to do with films much but it is to do with subversion. A friend of mine at school who was a very good artist, we had to do...we had to design a tie, that was one of the things we had to do in classes, and she did a very good design, brilliant, you know, neat sort of black and white thing with wiggly bits all over and it was put up on display, it won a prize, you know, it was fantastic. And I was looking at it and she said, "come and have a look at this" and I said "oh I've seen your tie" and she said, "no, turn it sideways" and I looked at it sideways and it said "piss off" in very kind of elaborate gothic lettering and nobody'd noticed it. That's absolutely the 60s, isn't it? We were all good little girls but that was what was going on underneath.

Interviewer: It was a sort of cheeky...compared to some of the more aggressive forms of counterculture that you had in the 70s, in the 60s it was...it did seem to be quite sort of tongue-in-cheek.

Respondent: I think a lot of people talk about the revolutions and the social revolutions of the 60s, but I don't think a lot of it filtered through to people. You know, I don't think one should assume that because there was a kind of fast set, if

you like, in our cities, out in the suburbs we were all very much still, you know, doing the right thing and I don't think it really hit people until the 70s, the consequences of the things that had happened in the 60s. The 70s was quite a dangerous decade...

Interviewer: But there was...what's interesting about the 60s was the seeds of it, I think, and that's what you're describing.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And the way in which people may not have kind of very, very openly broken social conventions but they were, was just a sort of gentle... cracks were showing and things were, as you say, there was a lot of...

Respondent: The cracks were showing and things were, as you say, there was a lot of...

I remember people on the radio saying "young people are asking a lot of questions these days" and I can remember listening to that and thinking "well why don't you bloody well come up with the answers". It sounded so patronising and I thought, you know, either defend your position, if it's worth having, you know if you actually believe in these values you should be defending them, not just sitting there saying "well young people should be asking questions", you know, well where's the answer then.

Interviewer: That's great. So apart from...obviously you were quite young so you would have been too young to remember things like the Kitchen Sink films, but apart from The Beatles, which obviously made a big impact, are there other elements of cinema-going that you can remember? So things like the way the programmes were structured, the other kinds of things that were shown with the film?

Respondent: Yeah, because when you went in there was always a B feature, wasn't there, and an A feature, and sometimes you got a news reel, which was great fun because that was in colour and we had a black-and-white television at home, so that was always exciting, to see the Queen in colour or the Test match or whatever it was. There were those wonderfully kind of patronising commentaries. Yeah, I mean, you reckon you got good value and a good trip out, you know, when you got the two films. My family were quite keen on cinema-going, well my mother was basically a very keen cinema-goer, because I think she'd had the habit from the 30s and the 40s, so she would go once a week, and if there was a suitable film that I could see as well, you know, that wasn't out of my age range or whatever, she'd take me along. So I got to see quite a lot of films that way, and then if...

Interviewer: When you were quite young?

Respondent: That's right, and then obviously if they were the standard U certificate films for kids I got taken to those. I remember seeing a lot of the Disney films which were very colourful and, you know, fun....the "Swiss Family Robinson" and "Kidnapped" I remember, you know, being very excited about and things like that.

Interviewer: Did you...could you, can you remember any of the news reels? Do any stick in your mind or was it just a general....

Respondent: No not really. I probably didn't really understand what was going on that much anyway. Just people waving...they weren't very gripping bits of news reel anyway.

Interviewer: They were things like the Royal Family opening things...

Respondent: That's it, they were lots of things like that you know.

Interviewer: What about travelogues and things like that?

Respondent: Oh yes, I remember being a bit baffled by those.

Interviewer: I was going to say, because people didn't...there weren't so many places to get information from, before the internet and everything, so for a lot of people you would see things at the cinema that you might not necessarily see in other places. I was wondering if you could remember that feeling at all?

Respondent: Not particularly but then I've never been somebody who...I wasn't kind of inspired to go and travel abroad or you know that sort of thing, I've never really been like that ,so I suspect I sort of watched them and thought "mmm, yeah" and then wasn't very excited by it.

Interviewer: Didn't make a big impact. So as the decade progressed were there...and obviously, did you stay a Beatles fan for long?

Respondent: I was infected at an early age.

Interviewer: The other thing I was going to ask about "Hard Day's Night" before we move on, was the class thing because they... that scene in the train carriage it was poking fun at the generations but it was also a class thing wasn't it?

Respondent: Definitely.

Interviewer: And they were cheeky working class boys from up North as opposed to the Southerners.

Respondent: There's a lot in...you see there's a lot of stuff in "Hard Day's Night" when you look at it. There's sort of like the outsider in the group and the Ringo scene when he's walking down the tow path and he meets the boy who's sort of left his little gang of boys and there's that kind of mirror image of the gang of boys and the one that's feeling left out and I think that if you were ever in a group of school friends, you know, and you were the one that had been left out by the gang you could sympathise with that. Yeah, I mean I've thought about that film quite a lot and I've seen it several times recently and I... I think there's actually...it's a much better film than it thought it was at the time, you know, it's just a kind of puff for The Beatles, but actually it's quite clever you know there's quite a lot of stuff in it.

Interviewer: And Richard Lester went on to do other things, didn't he?

Respondent: That's right.

Interviewer: Do you have any...apart from the overriding thing of they were a boy band and it was exciting, did you have any awareness of, you know "I'm a middle class girl from the South and these are..."

Respondent: Well yeah, I think, my parents, well my mother was a bit disapproving. She said she thought The Beatles didn't speak properly you know, of course that was very important in those days, and they were Northern and they were Liverpoolians and definitely a bit suspicious. My father was a bit more laid back about it, but then I played the records you see, and my mother liked The Beatles when I got the LP for Christmas and played that through and she said yes they actually are quite good, aren't they. So sort of, they were allowable, you know, and I can remember my father actually saying

“well most kids need to go through a period of bad taste in order to learn what good taste is” so that was the way he played it. Which sounds ghastly, but no they weren’t...I think they sort of accepted that a lot of comedians came from the North and you know that kind of thing, so they weren’t too phased by the class difference. I was made aware of it, but it wasn’t kind of forbidden or anything. I mean it was shifting a little bit anyway.

Interviewer: So as the decade progressed and you became an older teenager, did you develop a taste in other films? You know literary adaptations or can you remember the...you remember “Blow-Up”?

Respondent: Oh yes, yeah. I don’t know, I sort of just. Let me think, when did I join the NFT, that would have been when I was sort of in London in the 70s so I think, no...I mean I just used to go to the local cinema whenever I saw a film I fancied. So that would have been particularly in the school holidays I think, I often went with my friends....just trying to think. I actually...

Interviewer: Could you talk a bit about what the local cinemas were?

Respondent: Oh yeah. We had two cinemas, it was really good, we had the Astoria and we had the Regal and The Regal was slightly out of town that was between Purley and Coulsdon. The Regal wasn’t as nice, I don’t know why it just wasn’t as exciting. It was functional, I suppose that was an ABC cinema and Astoria would have obviously been part of the other chain, I don’t know which you know..

Interviewer: Odeon?

Respondent: Probably, yeah

Interviewer: Those were the two big chains

Respondent: Sure, but the Astoria I absolutely loved, I mean that was my kind of magic palace.

Interviewer: You described it as magical, you used that word because it's the sense of walking into another world?

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Was it quite well kept?

Respondent: I don't know, I suppose it was but the thing was you went in through the front door and then you went up some stairs on the right and there was a sort of upper floor and, to one side, there was what sort of seemed like a huge restaurant I supposed it must not have been much bigger than this place, and as a treat we used to go there every Friday lunchtime and I was allowed to eat sausages, which is my favourite thing. So kind of, having sausages in the Astoria on a Friday lunchtime was just...

Interviewer: With your family?

Respondent: It was with my mother and my grandmother. We didn't...the school I went to didn't do Friday afternoon school, at least not when I was younger, so I knocked off at Friday lunchtime, and then we'd have this meal.

Interviewer: How civilised!

Respondent: I know those were the days...and it was just...and ice cream, and it was just bliss. I mean when you think...I mean actually when you think about it, 1950s food was pretty, you know, dour and tasteless so this was wonderfully exciting. And then of course you could sit and see film poster

because they always had the posters of what was being shown so they were fascinating because there were often kind of ladies with bits ripped off them going “ahh” and exciting...

Interviewer: Yes, they've got some of those old posters here.

Respondent: That's right, I mean all that sort of stuff, so I mean whatever was on that week I was just fascinated: what was the title, was it ... that was really evil you know all that kind of stuff and after that I was allowed to go off to the ladies you see and that was the really exciting bit because you went down some little stairs, which must have had mica or something in the middle of the stone because it sparkled, how magic is that, and you could go in through this into the ladies' loo which was all sort of... a ladies' powder room type thing and there were velvet curtains outside. Velvet curtains! I mean it was just like, you know, the boudoir of the princess, and you could pose around with these mirrors because there was nobody else in there I mean the whole experience was just fantastic. And then occasionally we went to see the film afterwards and that was even better, so I just got the whole thing it was brilliant...

Interviewer: So that was the Astoria. I mean that sounds like that cinema was quite impressive in itself. Do you remember...was it quite a big cinema?

Respondent: Well, it's hard to tell because I was a child and it no longer exists, it's been turned into flats, sadly. I don't know I wouldn't like to say, I would say it was huge, it wasn't as big as this cinema was...

Interviewer: Was it art deco on the outside or was it...?

Respondent: Mmm, possibly.

Interviewer: So you were actually... your memory of the local cinema is quite special because some people remember going to kind of flea-pits locally, and going into town for the luxurious kind of cinema. But you also did go into the West End sometimes? You talk about going to "Lawrence of Arabia"...

Respondent: That was my other ...

Interviewer: Those films ran for a long time didn't they?

Respondent: Yes, that was a fantastic experience. We went up as part of a school trip, a gang of us from school, some sort of house outing or something, so there was... we had all ages, some of the older girls were in charge sort of thing and we went up to London and we saw it at...it was a cinema somewhere near Victoria Station I can't remember which one it was, and you went in, and of course that was the first film that we'd seen in kind of wide screen and surround sound and you know, it's a massively impactful film, you know it made full use of that kind of technology didn't it? And you know there's the famous cut, you know when he does the "I'm going to go to the desert" and I mean it really was just...you know. And I came out of it... I mean we all sat on the train going home and I mean we were all madly in love with Peter O'Toole, but it wasn't just that it was just the whole... it was a good film. I've seen that so many times since and again it's a better film than it seemed at the time.

Interviewer: And the cinematography is really stunning. It's still really stunning now.

Respondent: It is yeah. And the whole business about him going off to the desert and it being this whole other world and then he comes back at the beginning of the second...because that film was chopped in half so they could sell ice

creams, after they'd rescued ? from the desert, and the second half goes back into civilisation and then it goes back out into the desert again and this time it's not as pure and wonderful, it's all got bloody and nasty. And there is a sense, I think, in that film of there being two existences, one of which is practical in the real world and the other's almost like a dream world, like a world of the imagination and it's Lawrence's kind of poetry that does it how I feel I am myself in the desert rather than being constricted by society. That again is quite a 60s sort of thing isn't it? This two worlds thing, and I think that was very appealing because at that point I suppose when I saw it I'd be about 12 or 13 so your head is full of lots of imaginary things and exciting ideas and images, and yet you're stuck doing Latin homework you know. So it was sort of, that sense...

Interviewer: It fired up your imagination?

Respondent: Yeah it did.

Interviewer: Took you into a different world , and I think cinema seems to have had that appeal very much so in this decade. There were some really extraordinary films made because there weren't many other things apart from...

Respondent: The television was a little black-and-white box you see, and you didn't get something like that experience from the screen. And I don't know...I was about to say something but I've forgotten what it was now. "Lawrence of Arabia" that was it, was a very cinematic experience and made me appreciate what a cinema was, what a film was, because up until then most of the films I'd seen were either Disney or were all black-and-white you know, and that was just such a spectacular film that it made me sort of go

“whoa, this is what a film can do”. Whereas “Hard Day’s Night” was this huge kind of engaging film, “Lawrence of Arabia” was just a powerful thing that really gets inside your head you know.

Interviewer: Did you develop any awareness of directors? I mean did you hear people discussing David Lean?

Respondent: Yeah, I was always one of these boring people who wanted to read everything and you know, and read all the credits at the end, and I wanted to see who directed it and I started to recognise names of course. And there was a lot of stuff in the publicity for “Hard Day’s Night” about Richard Lester and what he’d done. So, I mean yeah I was the kind of person who would find the time to see who these people were and I was given a prize at school some time towards the end of the 60s and I was told I could have a book and I was asked what I would like and I asked for “The Film Till Now” by Rotha, which was the only book I think I knew about the cinema. So I got that and I started reading that and I became very interested in silent films, which I hadn’t really seen much of because they certainly weren’t on television and they weren’t in the cinema and I became very intrigued about this and later on in the 70s I got very interested, I still am interested, in silent films. So that was the sort of starting point for that interest. Eisenstein, I was terribly into Eisenstein.

Interviewer: Was that in the 60s?

Respondent: That was in the 60s.

Interviewer: So how did you discover Eisenstein?

Respondent: There was a programme on BBC 2, it must have been at the end of the 60s

I think, called World Cinema and they used to show you know foreign films on BBC2 once a week. I mean, would that they would do that now, and on one occasion they showed Alexander Nevsky followed by the two cuts of "Ivan the Terrible". It was after Nicolai II had died which would have been around '68, '69 possibly something like that. Again I just loved them. I still think they're the best things I've ever seen and then I went to the National Film Theatre and saw them again when I was slightly older. I've always loved those films because they are just so outrageously, particularly "Ivan the Terrible", so outrageously non-realistic. I really like non-realistic stuff you know, it's sort of in the line of "Lawrence of Arabia" if you like, that sort of impact film.

Interviewer: The idea of cinema exploring...

Respondent: Yes, and I just loved the style of the acting in "Ivan the Terrible" which is very much like silent film acting but in a talkie you know. But I just love these kind of big gestures and theatrical...why don't we do this? It's just such fun. Why does everything have to be realistic with people sort of standing on street corners mumbling you know?

Interviewer: It's interesting to see your reaction, because when people think of the 60s they think of Kitchen Sink realism...

Respondent: That's right.

Interviewer: Were you at all aware of the Classic Cinema chain that existed in the 60s that showed old films because there were a couple in London and there was one in Waterloo station some people have remembered. I don't think

they showed things like Eisenstein, I think they showed kind of comedies from the 30s, but I was just wondering if you had become aware of them at all?

Respondent: I might have seen them advertised but I was a bit too young you see, as I said I was at school until I was 18, well 17/18 and, I wouldn't have gone to the cinema on my own. That's another interesting thing isn't it because in those days, particularly for women and especially for girls you wouldn't go to the cinema on your own. That would be...dangerous you know.

Interviewer: We've had stories about being...not being attacked, but groped, kind of low level sexual assault.

Respondent: Funnily enough I went to the cinema in Cambridge about 15 years ago with my daughter and my son, it was in the Grafton and I was sitting next to...my daughter was there and my son was there and there was a spare seat at the end of the row for some reason and a man came and sat next to me and halfway through the film put his hand on my knee. I just knocked him off and then sadly I turned around and he'd gone and I thought well thank god that was me and not my daughter because she was about 14/15 at the time. So it's still goes on I guess but I wouldn't hesitate going to the cinema on my own now, but in those days never.

Interviewer: Particularly in the West End of London. Kind of actually staying on that theme of who you went with because that's quite an interesting thing; you were introduced to cinema by your Mum so there was that kind of endorsement from a family culture. Do you think that that kind of made it...some people saw cinema as a slightly lower cultural form...do you think

the fact that your Mum loved the cinema almost allowed you to take a greater pleasure in it?

Respondent: Oh yes I think so. I mean, it's interesting, my family were kind of quite cultural, they read a lot and, so we were very much a book-based family, and cinema was just seen as entertainment, it wasn't really seen as serious culture very much, but I think my Mum probably...I mean she went to concerts as well and went to the theatre, but I think she quite enjoyed film more than I realised at the time because we went so often. But it was also a way of shutting me up you know, as a small child, "what can we do with her in the holidays." That doesn't change does it "I know take her to the cinema".

Interviewer: That's great. You mentioned newspaper articles and magazines and things, can you remember anything that you used to...so you got that book at the end of the 60s, but presumably your interest in the cinema was also fed by looking at other things?

Respondent: I used... I mean I used to buy, what's it called, "Films and Filming" or something. I started buying that round about 17 or 18 so that sort of age and I used to just read reviews in the local paper or bits about film stars what films people were in, that I was interested in.

Interviewer: Did they influence you or did you want to find out yourself?

Respondent: Oh yeah I mean our local paper used to have a review of the film that was on and I used to use that pretty much as a guide as to whether I was likely to like the film or not.

Interviewer: That's where the listings were... So you did actually set some store by what the reviewers said?

Respondent: Yeah, if the description sounded interesting and if they said it was a rubbish film I probably wouldn't have bothered going.

Interviewer: Did you ever collect, obviously you were a Beatles fan, did you put things on your walls?

Respondent: Oh yes. My wall was covered in Beatles photos and later on after I had various other stuff and I managed to get a poster for "The Ipcress File" and a poster of something else, was it "Lawrence of Arabia" I think it was. I went round to the Astoria and just trotted in, in all innocence, I know it was really funny, I just sort of walked in and said to the manager "what happens to the posters when you've finished with the films" and he sort of said "oh we send them back" and I said "well have you got a spare one" you know "can you let me have one" and he gave, I can't remember which way round it was, one of them he gave me at the end. He said "come back at the end of the week and I'll give you one" which was one of the films and the other one he actually posted to me, would you believe? So I had those two posters on my wall for ages

Interviewer: "The Ipcress File" and "Lawrence of Arabia". Did you, because you mentioned "Zulu" as well could you...were you a Michael Caine fan, as well?

Respondent: I was a Stanley Baker fan, I preferred him. That was interesting because I mean it's not the sort of film you would necessarily think'll be designed for sort of younger teenaged girls, but I was fascinated by it. I mean it was a

very sort of simple story and very dramatic obviously and again there's that class difference issue in it. But what was so funny was I went to see it...I can't remember who I saw it with, but I came back and told my father and my father never went to the cinema, he just sort of didn't do it, and he said "oh, that sounds quite interesting" and we were on holiday somewhere and it was raining and the film was showing again in the local cinema and I said "why don't we go and see this film, oh it's fantastic" and my father said "oh perhaps we might go and see it then". So, to my amazement he actually went to see the film with me, and he really enjoyed it and I was so pleased that we'd found a film that he too could enjoy...

Interviewer: There's a very Welsh character in it, I remember that.

Respondent: Well they're all a bit Welsh in that one. But again, that's another film which is better than you think.

Interviewer: It stands up quite well, "Zulu".

Respondent: Yes, not in historical terms but as a piece

Interviewer: The way the story is told.

Respondent: In fact my son when he was, went through one of his periods of exclusion from school he was supposed to be doing a project on Africa, colouring in drums or something, and he got cross at school so they decided he should have a few days at home, and I had a video I think of "Zulu" at the time and I said "are you doing Africa, well let's watch this". So I put "Zulu" on which he watched and I suppose he was about 10, something like that, and he said "why were these British guys out there shooting these black people?" So we sat down and had a really interesting talk about colonialism and stuff

like that, and he went back into school and was sort of talking about this period in British history and they kind of got a bit “whoa”... They were supposed to be colouring in drums you know.

Interviewer: It is really interesting as well, the way those films capture the views on something like colonialism at a particular time.

Respondent: Again it's a bit of a question mark about...was this the right way to go about...at the end you know we've done all of this and shot all these people, but was it really what we should be doing?

Interviewer: Yeah, it questioned it slightly, but not too much.

Respondent: No, and that's what's interesting, because as a child when I saw it, it was just very much the narrative I was interested in, and yet when I sat down with my son and watched it he immediately saw it from a very different point of view, he was quite a young chap as I said so...

Interviewer: Because of the way he'd been taught about it at school.

Respondent: Just the natural, and because of the relationships with black people as well. I mean we didn't, as a child I don't think I ever saw a black person until I was virtually in my late teens something like that. Whereas my son has grown up with black people all around him, it's never been a problem. So it's a bit like why would a white guy shoot a black guy...

Interviewer: It's really interesting. I don't want to keep you too long because I know it's... there was something I was going to ask you but it's just slipped my mind...I know what it was about “The Ipcress File”. One of the things I was interested in when I re-watched it was the long scene at the beginning

where Michael Caine makes the coffee, and there's all these Habitat things in the background and I was wondering if you can remember the introduction of a lot of consumer items in stores that happened in the 60s, and how that was reflected in cinema. Did you have any awareness of it?

Respondent: I think actually I was much more aware of it in American films because obviously America was ahead of us in terms of consumer products so whenever you saw American films it was always a bit baffling that they had all this stuff they were using, all these things and weird stuff that we didn't have.

Interviewer: Can you remember any examples?

Respondent: Well of course their cars are very different, fins at the back and all kinds of, we had a Morris Minor you know. I'm just trying to think now, swimming pools, they all seemed to have swimming pools and they all had kitchens with enormous fridges and all this sort of...and you think "why have they got all of this?". I can't think of any particular film that I saw, but it was just a general impression that America was colour and America was big and America was always gadgetry stuff. Whereas good old Britain was kind of nice and friendly and unchallenging, because we just had sensible things in our kitchen.

Interviewer: There's a couple of scenes, there's one in "The Ipcress File" and maybe one in "Darling" where they're in supermarkets and they refer to it in the film as "American style shops", which I find really fascinating because supermarkets just seem so ordinary if you've grown up in the 70s...

Respondent: Absolutely yeah, there is a scene in "The Ipcress File" where Michael Caine is going down through a...he meets his sort of boss doesn't he in a supermarket and they're putting things in... and that seemed quite revolutionary because...not even in Purley...we didn't do self-service in those days, it wasn't probably in for another year or two before Sainsbury's went self-service in Purley and that, that was deeply shocking I can tell you, my whole mother's generation were kind of "I'm not shopping in there again". They were used to going in and asking somebody behind a counter to go and fetch the goods for them, and they said "right, we are being made now to do the work to go round, we're having to be the shop assistants and find things, rather than somebody doing it for us".

Interviewer: It's really funny isn't it, I can't...there's certain things like that that I can't imagine it being a new thing.

Respondent: If you think if you went into Sainsbury's with your shopping list and you said "I want this, I want this, I want this" and somebody would scurry off round the back and bring the things up and you would say "yes, that's what I want, no I don't want that one I want the other three oranges" or whatever it was and then all of a sudden you're present with a basket and a do it yourself, and you think "sod you!, I'll go somewhere else where they serve me". I think it's funny because it's all going round again with online shopping now because you now put your order in online and they deliver it to you. It's just the same as we used to have in the 50s, I tell you what I'm after and you go off and get it for me. But yeah "The Ipcress File" was...I loved that film and again I think it's another film that was actually a really, really good film. There was a very....I'm quite sort of nostalgic in a

way about that opening scene because there were several things that he had in his kitchen that we had at home. That coffee grinder that he uses, we had, my Dad had one of those. I was a bit baffled by the plot I must admit when I saw it the first time.

Interviewer: The plot? The plot of "The Ipress File

Respondent: Yes I now understand it a bit better. "The Funeral in Berlin" I also watched as well and I really liked that. I just liked the atmosphere of those films and it was recognisable enough that you could look at it and think "oh yes, I can identify with this setting" but strange in that obviously there were, you know, mysterious things going on and things going on that you weren't aware of and things that Harry Palmer isn't aware of, he's being led up the garden path by the establishment. It's sort of that nice mixture of the familiar and the strange, which I like about that film.

Interviewer: And it's kind of replicating those establishment hierarchies, and challenging them...

Respondent: Yes it's the same thing again, you can't trust the establishment, you can't trust the people in authority because they are actually hypocritical and double dealing.

Interviewer: That's great. Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you'd like to add? Are there any particular memories of seeing anything that we haven't...

Respondent: I don't know, I mentioned films which I thought were particularly important to me, I mean not just that I enjoyed them but that they made a difference to me in the way I thought. There were a lot of other films but

some of them just kind of pass me in a bit of a blur now. I mean obviously if you mentioned ?? I would remember that but I can't think of any others that particularly stand out. There was a film called "The Sergeant" with Rod Steiger in it, which I think is actually a gay film, and I went to see it with a friend of mine, a school friend, and we thought it was brilliant but we never realised it was a gay film because again it's not a topic that was discussed or that I knew much about. So we managed to sit through the entire film without realising what it was about, which is quite sweet in a way isn't it?

Interviewer: There were things in other films that were significant changes in the 60s so, you know, the fact that abortion was...still happened quite a lot, back-street abortions and that, the shame of getting pregnant outside of marriage. A lot of those are there in the Kitchen Sink films, which you'd have been too young to watch. They were also in some of the later films like "Alfie's" got an abortion scene...

Respondent: Yes, I can remember seeing that. That was the first time I ever saw, or was introduced to the concept of abortion actually, what it involved and all that.

Interviewer: Were you at all aware of things shifting for women?

Respondent: I would say no, because I don't think they did shift much in the 60s. In fact, even when I first went into work, which was 1970, things were still pretty traditional. It did change during that decade, but of course my mother didn't go out to work, she was at home, all my friends' mums were at home that's what they did....

Interviewer: Were you quite limited with the kinds of employment that you were directed towards?

Respondent: Oh yes, I mean at school it was you were teaching, nurse, secretary and that was about it really. Oh and actress, we had a few actresses and that's your lot. Yeah, so I think that's probably it...

End of Interview