

Interview with Respondent 0118

Date: 2/04/2014

Location: UCL, Department of History

Interviewer: Dr. Matthew Jones

Interviewer: So, I was wondering whether you could tell me a little bit about your life in the 60's.

Respondent: Right, I mean it was... huge changes in my life in terms of growing up when the 60s started. I was trying to do the math, I think we actually moved house technically in 1960 but so most of my memories from the 60's would be in the larger house because my brother came along in 1961, so that was a big change. Then I went onto high school, I was at primary school initially when the 60s started, so I started primary school..oh... about 63 I think, 1963. And so, then became a teenager [laughing] in the 60s, went through all usual 60s thing. I was still at school technically at the end of the 60s and in 1970 I moved to London.

Interviewer: Fantastic.

Respondent: So it was quite a spectrum from going to the cinema with my parents to going with boyfriends, friends.

Interviewer: Yeah. I remember in the questionnaire you framed it as going from eight to eighteen [Interviewer: Yes] in the 60s, which really is growing up.

Respondent: It did [?] Yes.

Interviewer: So what did you do for entertainment in the 60s outside of cinema?

Respondent: Once I was in my teens, and once I was sort of old enough to go out on my own, we used to go dancing a lot, it was a major *major* thing for us, I mean I think now they call it northern soul, but in those days it was just soul music from America. And they used to organise disco-techs as they were called then, very French, uhhm which were in church halls and places but the main thing was to just go and dance, and so we used to, this was in Cheshire, so we used to drive round little villages of Cheshire crammed into mini-vans and then sort of go to dances there. That's my major memory of that.

Interviewer: That sounds very exciting. Uhm, so whereabouts were you living during this period?

Respondent: I was living in Runcorn. [Interviewer: Runcorn] Which is now Holton.

Interviewer: And what were the cinemas like there?

Respondent: I was trying to think about this on the way, I think they had three, although I can only remember two, I can vaguely remember where they were. I remember going with my parents and I am pretty certain it's an Odeon, in my head it had that sort of deco style type and it was a huge event to go to the cinema. It was for

me as a child. And they had two stories, and we were posh so we would sit upstairs. Which now, you would sort of be miles away [laughing]. In those days that was... The thing I always remember as a child was that they had these huge draped curtains and they they shined the lights on them and it would change colours whilst you were waiting for something to happen. And it was sort of magical, it was it was, y'know they very decorated and sort of opulent and and the shiny thing looked like another world. And then for me, the big treat was that we would have fish and chips afterwards. Because we never normally had those [laughing]. But it was quite, it was quite, the whole thing was a big family event. In Chester, because I used to come into Chester, particularly as I got older, when I had friends who could drive who would travel into Chester, and they had at least two cinemas in Chester in those days cos you know we don't have any...

Interviewer: I heard this morning, yeah.

Respondent: [Laughing] Y'see it was kind of ironic, we do not have a cinema in Chester now. [?] But yes, they had two, at least in Chester. And the one here, the Odeon, which the fuss is about, because it was close to the Cathedral it wasn't allowed to show X-rated films.

Interviewer: Gosh.

Respondent: Well, that's my memory of it. And so some of the uhm, y'know the 60s films became more sort of progressive and open or whatever you call it. But but the cinema, the Odeon, in my memory, wasn't allowed to show films like that [laughs].

Interviewer: Goodness.

Respondent: We would go to the other one [laughs]

Interviewer: Were the cinemas in Chester different to the ones in Runcorn? [?]

Respondent: I think... It's hard to say, I mean I think for me it was coming out with my parents or going out with friends, and so with friends, for some reason we would end up in Chester. I have also been to Liverpool to cinemas as well, and certainly some of the cinemas in Liverpool were uhm, were sort of scruffier sort of feel to them .But I can't remember huge differences in Chester; it's just because I was a different age going to them.

Interviewer: So it was more the experience that was different rather than the...

Respondent: I'd say the magic was the memory of the ones in Runcorn [?] with my parents.

Interviewer: So who would choose what films you went to see when you went with your parents?

Respondent: I think it must have been my paren-, oh nooo... no, I can remember, this might be out of the time, I can remember harassing them because I wanted to see 1001 Dalmatians because I had read the book and so I wanted to see the film, so that that was definitely from me. I can remember us intending to go and see Wizard of Oz, which must have been re-released, I'm not that old [Interviewer: laughing] and it not showing for some reason. And we went to see a Western film instead, so we'd obviously

decided we were going out whatever and my mum being quite distressed because she thought it was unsuitable, so I think Indians got killed and things. So, initially that would have been my parents deciding. With friends I think we kind of decided between ourselves and then we would get teenage magazines which we would sort of talk about some films and we would think 'ooh we must go and see that!'. And there was a period in-between, when it almost didn't matter what film was on, it was just somewhere warm and dry to go with the boyfriend. So there are few films I have been to see that I was only half-watching! As we got older, we would focus on the film again but there's that little period.

Interviewer: I hope you don't think me too impertinent, but why was the cinema a place to go with the boyfriend?

Respondent: [laughs] It's the cliché but the backseat of the cinema, that that it was preferable to be out-of-doors and you weren't in your parents house.

Interviewer: So privacy, warm, dry?

Respondent: Privacy, warm, dry [laughing].

Interviewer: I'm sure [laughing] Uhm, did you often go on dates to the cinemas then?

Respondent: Yes. My memory is that it was a fairly regular thing. I mean the backseat of the cinema boyfriend I remember not in Runcorn but somewhere outside of Runcorn and had to get a bus in so they used to show films on, they just kept showing the films, you didn't in those days go to one sitting. So you would just wander in, so we would go early see the end of the film, see the B-movie or whatever and then see the beginning

of the film and then leave because it had to get the bus home! So there's, apart from not watching anyway because I was on the backseat – boyfriend – there was also films that I saw, I saw Bonnie and Clyde like that. So I can remember seeing the ending first [Interviewer: Gosh] when he got shot and then sort of seeing the beginning and how we got to that point.

Interviewer: Of all the films that's not one you want to see the ending of first!

Respondent: No, exactly, that's probably why it stayed in my memory.

Interviewer: Do you remember enjoying Bonnie and Clyde?

Respondent: Yes, very much. I mean that that was the thing about being a teenager, that all these films were a big influence and so I had a beret, I wanted to be Faye Dunaway. I would have been, what, 15 I suppose 15, 16 – wanted to be Faye Dunaway. Definitely [laughs]. Persuaded boyfriend of the time, to he borrowed his father's sort of trilby hat, he was going to be Clive, but he was never actually comfortable wearing it. Spoilt it y'know!

Interviewer: No bank robberies you want to confess to?

Respondent: No, no! I mean, that's the awful thing really, it was kind of glossed over, it was glamour and very much the 60s rebellious sort of side of things, that as particular as we got older, Easy Rider, was a huge film with us.

Interviewer: You talk about Easy Rider a few times in the questionnaire..... I was wondering what is it about that film that appealed?

Respondent: I don't know, I look at it now and I think... hmm... [laughing] y'know and I think 'ohh that was a bit boring' and I think it was just - I think we were inspiring to something American – this sort of freedom. I'm growing up in an industrial northern town and in some ways it was still the 50s, it was still very sort of black and white and grey and there was this idea of like 'hey man, I just wanna be free like a bird' [laughs]. And uhm so it kind of, we actually bought, me and quite a few friends, we used to have the soundtrack of the film so we would sit in rooms and listen to it and they... there was a copyright issue, stereo was relatively new, and there's a track on the original Easy rider which had the sound of a motorbike going across the speakers, and then they realised they hadn't got copyright to take the sound from the film. So then they released it that didn't have the motorbike sound on it all and they re-recorded the motorbike sound and put it on.

Interviewer: Gosh.

Respondent: It was, it was a big sort of cultural icon for us I think. Still bearing in mind I'm still at school... But I mean there were huge changes y'know the May riots in France, meant, in 1968, I mean I was just doing my O levels at that time, and there was students on the streets and all this and we were sort of at school seeing all this happening thinking they're questioning things and so it was part of that sort of culture I think.

Interviewer: Mm... Did you... Were you exposed to any French films during the 60s?

Respondent: I thought I was and then afterwards I thought I'm not sure, I had a friend who was in with the art crowd set, at art college and I have this feeling that I saw

something called Jean-Paul Belmondo [?] but then afterwards I'm thinking oh no maybe I didn't. I know they had, some weird ones, sort of like Louis Benway [?] the cutting eye thing, but that's that's not from the 60s it was just something they had at Art College.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: But they didn't come mainstream to Runcorn or Chester [laughs], or even Liverpool as far as I know.

Interviewer: So it was a case of not having access?

Respondent: Yeah, lack of access.

Interviewer: Yeah. Uhm I love that idea of you and your having friends gathering to listen together to listen to these things.

Respondent: Oh yes, yes that was – it was a big thing, sitting around and hanging out and listening to music.

Interviewer: Were they the same friends you would go to the cinema with?

Respondent: Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you have specific friends that you went to the cinema with?

Respondent: Erm... I suppose I had a close group of, I think, two separate groups really, there was the friend who hung around with the art college group, and then there were

women friends, girlfriends I was at school with. Because I went to an all girl school so and then there were boyfriends, so there were almost like three groups.

Interviewer: Would you see the same types of films with all of the groups or would they have different tastes?

Respondent: Uhm... I'm not sure. I mean, in retrospect I'd think no, I'd prefer to go and see that with women friends, but at the time no, I think it was whatever was around was on. I think the, as I say, sometimes there were films that you'd think 'ooh that's a must see!' we will make sure that when that comes, we will go and see it. And other times, it was Friday or Saturday, we're going to go out and we are going to go to the cinema and then we will probably get a takeaway or go for a Chinese or an Indian meal or something.

Interviewer: And whatever was on, would do?

Respondent: There would be quite a selection on, well 3. [laughs] That was a selection in those days. And so we would probably pick one of those.

Interviewer: You mentioned B pictures earlier on?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: What were they like?

Respondent: This is where I can't remember, I mean, I think I - when I was emailing you I mentioned going to see a double bill of James Bond once because and then I wasn't

sure which James Bond it was after all that, but they certainly because I think James Bond was catching on they then, with the new one, they coupled one of the old ones so people kind of got up to speed with who James Bond was cause people weren't aware of that in those days. Other than that, I think they were fairly nothingy and my memory is that they got more nothingy. They used y'know to be quite a good double bill, and then it became something and... I mean now they've kinda vanished.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you remember the news reel being shown?

Respondent: Oh yes, but whether that was the 60s or not, in my head it sort of 50s because it's a very sort of plummy British person and its got like an aerial or something [?]. It's all in black and white, its all very stirring and erm I mean I can remember that they used to play 'God Save the Queen' at the end and you had to sort of stand up, or well one was sort of expected to.

Interviewer: Did you?

Respondent: Uhh probably as I was younger, and probably not as I got older and then it kinda faded anyway.

Interviewer: Mmm. In terms of the news reels, uhm do you remember enjoying them?

Respondent: I remember finding them boring I should think rather than enjoying them. As I say, they were black and white- is my memory, possibly they weren't, but in my memory they were black and white and they were things that didn't concern me. And increasingly as I got older and - I'm thinking although this might be a more conflated memory - I became more aware of the sort of overtones and the sort of British Empire

sort of culture that was seemed behind them and was increasingly uncomfortable with that.

Interviewer: You say that you didn't go the cinema alone in the questionnaire?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah I wouldn't have done.

Interviewer: Why not?

Respondent: I think it just wasn't done. It's like, as a woman I don't know about men – in fact I think the idea of a man going to the cinema alone in those days was considered sort of dirty raincoat [laughs] sort of style

Interviewer: Really?!

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I can remember when I did go the cinema alone which was later, post-60s, and how strange that felt and how sort of slightly uncomfortable. I mean now I could do it, y'know 'I want to see that, but no one I know wants to see it' or anyone i could drag along would be bored and I would rather go alone. But no, it was like you wouldn't go into a pub on your own as a woman in those days. It was in its way, it was more restrictive I think.

Interviewer: That's interesting, that's really interesting. I wonder then if we could I fi could ask you to take me through a typical evening or afternoon out at the cinema? I suppose we might have to do two of these, one from when you were younger [B: laughing] and one from when you were grown up?

Respondent: And one in the middle when I can't remember! [laughing] Right. With my parents, as I say would be quite grand, my mother would dress up, we would have - my memory is of her wearing a fake fur coat that used to sort of smell of perfume that was very soft. But then I was thinking I'm not sure if that was when she went to the cinema or when she went to the theatre with my father and it's more when she was leaving me with the babysitter and they were going to something sort of cultural. But certainly it was a big event. We would go to the cinema and we would buy a box of chocolates from the foyer, because they didn't have all the popcorn and whatever then - and we would eat the chocolate quietly during the thing and at half time, between the films they would have somebody come out with the thing round their neck and the ice cream.

Interviewer: And that's your ats? [?]

Respondent: Yes that's it, and if you were lucky you would get some ice cream as well. If my mother was feeling kind or or, I don't know, I don't know what the circumstance were, but sometimes we would get chips on the way home. And as I say - once, *once* [excitable] and I remember this we had a wimpy burger which was wildly exotic! [A: laughs] I'm vegetarian now, but they were a terrible sort of British imitation of American hamburgers [laughs]. I just remember this, they were so exotic. It was an event - akin to going to the theatre.

Interviewer: It sounds quite formal?

Respondent: Yes, yes. That's my memory of it, as I say and there was, I was aware of this class structure. I was aware that we were upstairs and there were people downstairs [laughs a little].

Interviewer: Was it cheaper to sit downstairs?

Respondent: I think it was, yes. So I think we were away from the people [whispers] 'in the cheap seats'. I know that sounds terrible. And then a few years later I would have been at the back of the cheap seats. Sort of, half-watching the film, hoping my father wouldn't quiz me on what the film was about because I couldn't remember too much of it. I remember the camaraderie – I remember going to see some horror film, I'm thinking it was Day of the Triffids [?], and then I'm thinking no, it's probably I've got the wrong date, but something along those lines. And I remember everyone cheering when they lopped the head off the plant or the monster or whatever it was and I had not really experienced that before, possibly from sitting in the posh seats with my parents [laughing]. And that was quite a nice feeling, that sort of – and of everybody not taking it seriously, and sort of y'know laughing. That was, that was different. And then with friends.... I don't know, I can't remember us buying food and things you see. It was not the same sort of thing at all. And it was more something we would probably go for a drink afterwards and discuss it. I can remember talking about the Graduate with friends. That was again, big influence on us. We wanted to be sophisticated older women! [laughs] And now I am! Something else – no, I'm sorry I have lost it. There was one other thing I was going to say about sort of types of cinema.

Interviewer: That's okay. If it comes back to you let me know. I wondered whether we could talk about the Graduate for a little [B: Yep] What sort of an impression did it make on you?

Respondent: Oh again, it was for me, as I say, I identified with Anne Robinson – yeh – for some reason, because obviously I am much more the age of the daughter or - . I just liked that, again it was funny it had quite a bit of sex in it which was a feature of the films in my mind. I think part of them were educational for us, y'know we were growing up in a sort of fairly restrained 50s background, and suddenly films were becoming more open. That's how I am aware of which films were showing in Chester [laughs]. And again the music was a big part of it – again I bought the soundtrack record. [laughing] Do you remember records?

Interviewer: I remember records, just about!

Respondent: And I remember being terribly disappointed because it was literally the soundtrack and so there was a scene where he gatecrashes a formal Jewish party or something, and it had the music from that in it as well and I remember thinking 'that's not what I wanted, I wanted Simon Garfunkel!' (21.43) But yeah again it was I think the sort of message in that about freedom and not following what your parents want, those were the sort of influences for us. Certainly we , my group of friends, certainly we aspired to that culture, I think basically because we were gawky teenagers and so to see that sophistication of Mrs Robinson we thought yeah.

Interviewer: That's lovely, that's a really nice image. Um, you talked a bit earlier on about uhm kind of the glamour of the cinema buildings themselves and the curtain with

the multi colours lights on it. You mentioned in the questionnaire that late after that, uhm, cinema felt like uhm more of a more glamorous alternative world, I wonder what you meant by that?

Respondent: It's what I was saying about growing up in Runcorn. Black and white, it was grey, it was across the river from Wigness [?] where all the chemical plants were. So it was relatively smelly as well uhm and we would just sort of finding out about sex and drugs and rock n roll I suppose [excitably], and there it all was in the cinema these people having these glamorous lifestyles, like Bonnie and Clyde and Easy Rider and the Graduate. It was all an alternative world really.

Interviewer: So it went from being the glamour of the building and the space [Respondent: Yes, yes] to being the glamour on screen?

Respondent: Yes, yes. My later memories are more about the films and much less about the cinema. I think I saw 'Barbarella' in a quite grand cinema in Liverpool. That's my memories.... It was quite an impressive building, but other than that, none of them have really stuck.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Respondent: I mean I loved it as a child, I can remember seeing Oklahoma, and again that's probably I'm not sure when that was on, but it was in *cinemascope*. And again we were upstairs, and if my memory serves me well, it was an opening shot of the corn [?] being as high as the elephants eye and as a child I felt I was going to fall into it. I was so impressed, I mean you look at it now and you think wha – there is nothing, but having seen smallish black and white to seeing this huge screen and it was the same, and I

know this is the 70s I think, or maybe not – the James Bond film I saw in techni-colour or cinemascope or something in London for the first time. And that was pretty staggering to have the big screen.

Interviewer: In full colour as well.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Uhm when you were - I suppose I'm talking about the early 60s now - when you were a child, do you remember going to the Saturday morning children's cartoon screenings?

Respondent: Briefly, I was talking to a friend about this uhm yes, we tried it, I think looking back, because my brother had just been born and my parents were trying to get me to go do things [laughs], uhm so I was sort of packed off to that and I remember hating it to be honest. It was full of rowdy boys! [laughing] and the films were terrible, they were really old and in my memory black and white and there was a serial, and so I just turned up and had no idea what had happened before and I have a feeling, it was sort of – it was either maybe it was both – there was something batman one, not the Zach Kapowell [?] one, but previous in black and white, and something with cowboys and possibly a cartoon. No, I hated it, I'm sorry I really did and I think I kinda resented being there and I just found the boys a bit rough and it wasn't really ... [?] at all.

Interviewer: When you say the boys were rough, what were they doing?

Respondent: I don't know, I mean I just...[?] I had a sheltered childhood, I suppose they were noisy and rowdy and jumping about a bit and I would be used to just sitting there and watching the film. [laughing] with gloves! It was sort of a bit of a shock.

Interviewer: So you didn't go back there too often?

Respondent: Not if I could help it no. I can remember taking my brother to films so I then as a teenager, taking my brother to various things. I think we went to see Mary Poppins and Bambi, things like that.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy these films?

Respondent: Uhm, semi- I mean I had some difficult family times, which I don't want to go [A: That's fine] into – which kind of coloured seeing that.

Interviewer: Okay, uhm you talk in the questionnaire about uhm well, Bonnie & Clyde and Easy Rider a few times...

Respondent: [Laughing] Indeed...Very limited memory...

Interviewer: No, no no! I think it's fascinating that those films really take prominence [B: Yeah] I think that's really interesting. But you also mention uhm well in the questionnaire also you mention going to see Bambi with your brother [oh right], but you also talk about going to see Beatles films with your friends. [B: Oh yes, yes] Did you enjoy those?

Respondent: Yes! Very much so. Uhm this was probably the start of going to films independent of my parents, was being allowed to go – although I think I had been to sort of things like Pinocchio on Saturday mornings club with friends but my memory of the Beatles films was that it was sort of marking being almost a teenager. I remember going with a friend, we watched a ‘Hard Day’s Night’ [?] and having this big debate about whether we felt like screaming at the end because it ends, in my memory, with teenage girls sort of going ‘arghhh the Beatles!’ and I’m saying ‘I think I quite felt like screaming, not sure, but felt a bit of a scream coming on. It was sort of – but yeah – went to see ‘Help’ as well, which I thought was terribly sexy because I fancied Paul McCartney and I must have been about 14. Uhm this is slightly embarrassing, but there was an episode where he gets shrunken, and then he is - I think he is made full size again, but he has fallen out of his clothes – so it was a sort of naked Paul McCartney, and I was sort of touched by this, but I wasn’t quite sure how or why. [Both laughing] I knew this was ‘woo’, [**** on ??]

Interviewer: Uhm you also talk about uhm lying about your age in order to get to see James Bond films? Tell me about that.

Respondent: Well, I can’t remember how the ratings went now, but I suspect you had to be sixteen for some of them and then, well, I can’t remember how the ratings went, but certainly from about 14, my friends and I we could pass for older y’know because the look, in those days, was really quite made up with sort of like lots of eye makeup and false eyelashes and things, and so from about that age you could get away with being older but, the first one I remember doing it for was that James Bond film so – if we could work out which one it was and when it came out we would know how old I actually was. But certainly, because, I remember that because it must have been the

first time after a while you sort of glide through. And with the boyfriend on the back seat again, I would be routinely lying about my age and just sort of go in and buy tickets. But that was the first one I remember thinking 'I need to see this!'

Interviewer: Were you nervous?

Respondent: Yes, that's, that's why that one stuck because that must have been the first one. It's sort of, 'will they spot us?' 'will they know?' Once you have got away with it, and as I say, with that boyfriend, didn't even cross my mind really.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. Uhm we asked a question in the questionnaire about looking for, whether you looked for further information about the film's stars and their careers and their lives. And you said that sometimes you looked for that sort of information in television programmes or in T-magazines that you mentioned earlier or in conversation with friends. I was wondering when you talked about team magazines earlier, I got the impression that you were looking for reviews of films in there. Would that be accurate?

Respondent: No, I think it was more, it would have been something like film new, like y'know 'so and so is shooting the new such and such film' rather than 'this film has come out and it's a must see'. I can't remember reading reviews for films in that way, so it was more about again, it was more about the look and ... I can't think how many of them were about Easy Rider. I don't know how that came into the radar, y'know some of them it would be centred around the star, so there would be stuff about Faye Dunaway or possibly there would be something about 'getting the look', y'know how to get your beret [laughing] for that look. But I can't remember, I mean now my

cinema-going is informed by reading reviews and thinking 'oh that sounds interesting, I hope it comes somewhere near Chester!' but not so much in those days, no. It was more, I'm afraid of 'we are going to go to the cinema, that one looks least bad'.

Interviewer: [Laughing] Least bad, that's a nice way of thinking about it. Uhm oh I was fascinated by this, you talked about Marlene Dietrich.

Respondent: [Gasps] But that's not at the cinema, that's...

Interviewer: On TV...

Respondent: Yeahh....

Interviewer: Do you remember them showing older films at cinemas?

Respondent: Not really, no. I mean apart from the Saturday morning thing, where they were definitely creaky old. I can't remember seeing films like that on the big screen then.

Interviewer: So the Marlene Dietrich would have been purely on television?

Respondent: Purely TV, yes.

Interviewer: What was it about her that appealed to you?

Respondent: Again, it was a sophistication thing [laughing] again I think, as a sort of gawky teenager, she was sort of in control, it's like Mrs Robinson as well. The two characters have that sort of – I mean they're not – I mean it was a funny age for women

in some senses because, I mean liberation, women's liberation or whatever you call it, didn't really happen until into the 70's. I remember sitting with my father and brother and there was somebody with a burning brown [???] and both sort of laughing at these stupid women and I'm thinking 'Hang on! [laughing] It's like pointless being 'maid' [???] here'. But at the time the culture we had grown up in was to be the fifties house wife. From a middle class background I was supposed to get myself a rich husband, and then be a housewife and it was kind of realising that this wasn't the game plan for my brother that made me realise there was a double-standard and so images of women who were some way in control and independent were appealing to me certainly so, we've got Faye Dunaway 'Shoot them' [??], Marlene Dietrich and Mrs Robinson. And Bancroft, I'm calling them Anne Robinson haven't I?

Interviewer: Yes you have. Of course she's Mrs Robinson the character. [Respondent: Yes, Mrs Robinson the character] Yes sorry, I hadn't even picked up on that.

Interviewer: The other star you mentioned, Terence Stamp.

Respondent: Ooooh. Yeahhh. Again you see I can't think that I saw that many of his films, so that must have been stuff from the magazines. He had beautiful blue eyes, he still does actually bless him. But yeah he, Ahhhh..... Sorry I'm having a moment!

Interviewer: [Laughing] Am I to assume it was purely a physical attraction?

Respondent: [Laughing] I presume.... I never met – Again it's something about what they represented. Because there was this - this cross cultural thing, not culture – class thing, in the 60s. So as I say I was brought up very middle class - 50s housewife and then coming up from London it felt like there were a lot of these working class dramas

with all these sort of wide-boys [?] and 'little bit dangerous, little bit rough' y'know and that was quite appealing [laughing] y'know from the sort of, sort of – Cheshire set that one might have been pointed towards, to see something like that. So yeah, I am getting a flood now of sort of 60s films coming back; *Alfie*, *Up the Junction*, *Georgie Girl*, all those sorts of one, all again, set in London which compared to Runcorn was incredibly glamorous. And again with the sort of working class ethic and this – no not ethic – definitely not ethic – Oh, feel to it and the sort of possibility of freedom again.

Interviewer: Do you think that association between uhm London and this freedom from what you, correct me if I'm wrong, but what seems to have felt like was a repressive atmosphere in Cheshire? Do you think this played into your decision to eventually move to London?

Respondent: Oh definitely. Yeah, I went uhm for my education at the time, but uhm no definitely London seemed to be where it was happening. And America you see [...] – anywhere other than Runcorn! Even Liverpool and Chester you know. Poor Runcorn. [laughing]

Interviewer: Uhm, when we asked about, film genres uhm you gave an interesting response. We listed every genre we could think of [Respondent: Oh right] and uhm also a space to fill in other genres that appealed to you [Respondent: Yeah] and under other you noted Kitchen Sink.

Respondent: I think I meaning the ones I've been talking about, *Up the Junction*...

Interviewer: Sure... The London based ones.

Respondent: Yeah... and also the earlier ones, but then I'm thinking I probably saw those later, I think I read the books of the *Grim up North* ones...

Interviewer: Yeah, *The Taste of Honey* ..

Respondent: Oh *The Taste of Honey* – Oh no I definitely saw that.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah, I definitely saw that one. *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, I think I probably saw later and I think I read the book. There's another one around that time that...

Interviewer: What other ones were there? *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*?

Respondent: Didn't see that – I remember that was.... uhm... I know who it was but...

Interviewer: Yeah, what about *Kes*?

Respondent: No, no I didn't see that. Not at the time.

Interviewer: No, that's fine. But you mentioned *Kitchen Sinks*, but you also said that you can't see your other tastes on our list?

Respondent: Ooooooh [laughing]

Interviewer: I was wondering, let me show you.... [Respondent: Oh I'm sorry! How pretentious!] Not at all, not at all! I was just interested in whether there were other types of films that you liked.

Respondent: Uhh.... oh dear –

Interviewer: I don't mean this in an accusatory way at all – I was just interested.

Respondent: Yeah no, I can't think of what I meant there – It sounds awful doesn't it. I mean now, I like European Art cinema, not just European and other things...

Interviewer: But in the 60s exposure to that was limited.

Respondent: Yes, well certainly where I was. I mean... I suppose now I like films where it is more about the film and less about the genre. Not a lot happens, but erm I have never liked Westerns. Oh I'm sorry...

Interviewer: No, it's absolutely fine. There are other genres that do exist that we hadn't thought about so....

Respondent: I remember quite a few sort of historical films now, 'Witchfinder General' and Julie Christie 'Far from the Madding crowd' [???], you look at her now and she has got a lot of 60s eye makeup on, at the time we thought she had the natural look because we were wearing like two pairs of false eyelashes there and the pair underneath. Oh yeah! And so that was relatively little makeup and was seen as the natural look. Wasn't she brave?

Interviewer: Did you like Julie Christie?

Respondent: Yes, yes I think so. Another fairly independent free-spirited –

Interviewer: Yeah, also I suppose also associated with that London glamour that you were talking about earlier?

Respondent: Yeah... yeah...

Interviewer: I was just reading through a few of the.... [Respondent: ... stupid!] Bless you, no – gosh no - honestly it's not a stupid comment, it was stupid of us to give you a list of genres rather than simply asking what appealed. It was just that you mentioned that the- these kind of grim up-North dramas, as you put it, *Saturday Night Sunday Morning*, *Taste of Honey* and so forth, they were antidote to Technicolor Westerns. [Respondent: Yeah.. yeah] which now I understand what you mean by that given what you said earlier. You also mention that the aspirations of those in the film match your own, I wonder, what aspirations were these?

Respondent: Billy Liar wanting to get out of town. Very much so – It was aspirations in terms of there being more to life than this boxed in grey world really – and that there being a life of the mind of cultured life.

Interviewer: Mmm. We briefly mentioned earlier European films, and the lack of access that you had in Runcorn and Chester. Were you aware of movements like the French New Wave and what was going on?

Respondent: As I say, peripherally because I had a friend who had some friends who were in art school. So they were that bit older, and very glamorous – or it seemed to me at the time – and they had access to it. So again, also there was some sort of image of just anything French was a bit ‘ooooh!’ and that they were seen as very sophisticated and things like that. There was some sort of idea again that there was this world – and then what I had seen on the news, as I was saying about – had quite a profound effect really. Is it the uhm the Situationists? - the art protest movement from the May 68 events. So again that made me realise that there was different ways of looking at the world and something – that wasn’t happening where I was.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s interesting – I like the idea that those films were kind of in your awareness [Respondent: Yes] even if they weren’t available to you.

Respondent: I’m thinking I saw the *** [???] or whatever it is, the Jean-Paul.... And then I’m thinking maybe I didn’t y’know. I know they had the facility to project things at the art college but I’m not quite sure which ones we got to see now.

Interviewer: That’s fine, it’s a long time ago. I just wanted to shift briefly into talking about 60s films now? Because you mentioned that you don’t own 60s film as such, because you say in the questionnaire, you are not one really for owning films. But you have re-seen some recently on I assume TV?

Respondent: Yes, TV, mostly.

Interviewer: What’s the appeal of them now? Is there an appeal of them now?

Respondent: Reminiscence is their appeal [therapy??]. It's interesting because, it because it was so formative – because as I said, 8 to 18 – so a huge change in my life, it's interesting to see what sort of films did effect – it's interesting to see whether they were particularly special or whether it was just because of the time and where I was. Some of them I think have stood the test of time and others as I say – Easy Rider when I saw it, I thought 'oh' it just sort of goes on a bit... it's a bit wandering, but at the time it was 'yeah – oh those terrible red-necks!' Now you think, that was a bit predictable and y'know, a bit over the top. But no, it's interesting to see – its interesting to see now to look back on the whole sort of image and realise how - how we were sold that image I think – what the 60s dolly bird was like.

Interviewer: The kind of swinging London image....

Respondent: Yes, that's it. That's it. Which we sort of aspired to I think... And yet it was also quite restrictive for women really to be that sort of dolly bird because you were supposed to be slightly brainless.

Interviewer: Yes. When you were looking at those images of women on the screen and thinking of films like *Darling* with Julie Christie. Did you see *Darling* in the 60s?

Respondent: I don't think so.

Interviewer: No problem, and also *Alfie* I suppose has a number of problematic images of women. [Respondent: Yes, yes.] Were you aware of those films talking about I suppose the dark side of that swinging London phenomenon?

Respondent: Certainly with *Alfie* I was disturbed I think, and I think – there were a couple where I started - there were these sort of glimmerings of these feelings forming... that this wasn't right and I wasn't comfortable with it. Because there was – the feeling was that you were – the alternative seemed to be 50s housewife or dolly bird – so dolly bird seemed freer, and then you realised that this was also still quite restrictive and you were still being an image and a sex-object but I think it was only glimmerings of feeling uncomfortable. I mean I look at it now and think '*That's terrible!*' and yet at the time it was '*oh what a lad!*' – it was much more that sort of thing. '*Oh Alfie, you are a one*' [???] sort of thing, rather than '*that's an appalling attitude to women!*' I mean there was an awful lot of sort of low level of sex comedies at that time, which again had huge available women scantily clad – almost into Benny hill territory now!

Interviewer: Are you thinking of the Carry On films?

Respondent: No, no – I don't know – Something called 'Here we go around the mulberry bush' and there as another called 'candy' where someone went around sleeping with everybody. And at the time it was sold as freedom, and yet it wasn't entirely.

Interviewer: And you were... a little aware, beginning to become aware?

Respondent: Beginning to become aware of it, I mean my images my role models if you like were always the stronger women, Marlene Dietrich and Bancroft character. And so I was increasingly becoming uncomfortable with being made to be, or being thought to be a dolly bird. I mean we were doing our A levels so my group of friends were

discussing English Literature and things like that, so we were starting to think about these things. I must have read Germaine Greer somewhere around that time. I don't know, it's possible that would have been the 70s wouldn't it.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. I'm actually at the end of the questions that I had for you. Before we ended I wanted to ask whether there was anything else you felt was important to say, or interesting or that you wanted to share that I haven't yet asked about.

Respondent: I don't think so. You have captured very well actually – You have helped me unpack quite a lot of things that I had forgotten. They were in their somewhere – and also the whole change in culture that happened in the 60s because I was very much in it and it's interesting to kind of look back on the outside now and think 'oh gosh' y'know.

Interviewer: I find that fascinating, particularly hearing someone talking about the cinemas relationship to that for them.

Respondent: Well, it was a view of the world – from the outside for me really.

Television was in black and white till the very end and I don't know if we got a colour tele immediately – so it was either a small black and white world or a big screen colour world.

Interviewer: Even if the Technicolor was Westerns.

Respondent: No, that was the ones from the early 50s as a child, rather than – because another Western I did like was Butch Cassidy and the Son Dance Kid although that's not

exactly a Western in that sense, it's a new wave-Western. I'm thinking of John Wayne - white hats and black hats where everyone's very clean and then there was the grubbier with the ones with longer hair.

Interviewer: So what is it you liked about Butch Cassidy?

Respondent: Oh, uhm it again it's the rebellion thing – there was more rebels in there – Sundance Kid was kind of cute although actually I think I quite liked Paul Newman, although he was relatively old, we thought he was a bit old – but erm the costumes because it was going from mini-skirts to the long dresses Laura Ashley thing. Whatever her name was on the bicycle with the long dress, that was quite a good image. The banter and the humour there again – things that step out for me. That's another film that I have seen again and thought 'yeah that's still alright'. It's still a nice film.

Interviewer: Good, good. Well, thanks ever so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

51.05: Finish

