

Going to the Pictures

MEMORIES of my childhood are very distant but what will always stay with me is remember 'going to the pictures'. We didn't have much money but my dad took a job in the 'Phoenix', the cinema in Sawfield place off Garscube Road. My mum used to wrap my baby brother in her shawl and take my older brother and me to the 'First Hoose' as my dad let us in for nothing. As I remember, the seats were wooden and used to clatter up and down when people left.

We would see the 'A' film, the news, the folly-up, then the 'B' film and at the end they played the 'National Anthem'.

The 'Folly-up' was generally a 'Cowboys and Indians' of Buster Crabb during which you booed for the baddies and cheered for the goodies and at the most exciting part it would stop, and on the screen it would say next chapter, next week, great exciting stuff!

When mum got her wages on a Friday she would splash out and take us to the Astoria in Possil Road, it cost sixpence for adults and threepence for kids. Beside the pictures there was a wee shop that sold homemade sweets. Never since then have I tasted sweets like those. I used to press my face against the window and drool, candy balls, humbugs, macaroon, pink and white tablet, yum!

Down from the Astoria was a hall called the Magnet, better known as the 'flea-pit'. We were told not to go there but it was cheaper than the other picture houses, so we used to sneak in for the Saturday matinee and we then had some money for sweets. When I was nine, dad was working in Saracen Foundry and as our houses were condemned we got a house in Denmark Street just down the road from the Foundry containing our first bathroom. With no free tickets we could only go to the pictures on Saturday afternoons. We went to the Avon in Saracen Street and waited in a queue to get in. When I was fifteen I used to go with a crowd of girls and boys. I remember one night one of the

boys paid me in. The other girls were mad, I wasn't too pleased myself when I found out I had to sit beside him and let him walk me home because I didn't really fancy him, he had big ears and smell't awful.

The other picture hall in Possilpark was the Mecca. They used to have competitions on the stage, singing Yo Yo's. It was great fun. What I like about this hall was the toilets, they were nice and clean and safe, the one in the Avon was dingy and frightened me.

Sometimes I was allowed to go further afield as long as my big brother took me. There was the Grand at Cowcaddens, The Seamore, The Blythswood in Maryhill and The Cambridge in Great Western Road. I remember one Easter just after the war, when rationing was still on. It was raining and we had no coupons left for sweets. Mum boiled us eggs in the teapot and painted them. She then sent us to The Cambridge and told us to roll them down the aisle as it was on a slope.

As we passed the sweet shop there was a crowd of kids, "come on" shouted our pal. "Hainnies are selling sweets without coupons." We joined in the queue. As we bought our sweets, a drunk man staggered into the shop and bought more sweets for us. I remember it was blackcurrant boilings and, being greedy, I ate both pokes of sweets. On reaching home I was very sick. My mum was on hand with her solution for all ailments. A big dose of castor oil. Yuck!!