

Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1995 and concerns memories of 1930s life; as such there may be opinions expressed or words used that do not meet today's norms and expectations.

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* Length: n/a

* Pinner, Middlesex, 27 July 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Anthony Venis

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn

* AV=Anthony Venis / MrsV=Mrs Venis/ VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: Second of two interviews with Anthony Venis; Sound Quality: Poor.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[tape very crackly; voices inaudible]

[sound quality of tape improves although voice speed fluctuates somewhat]

AV: As a child I certainly wouldn't be reading newspapers.

VB: Yeah.

AV: Erm, but erm, certainly I used to enjoy watching eh, the newsreels.

VB: Yeah. I'm sorry I'm just going to have to change the batteries 'cause I think my batteries are very low.

AV: Uhuh.

VB: [laughs]

VB: Just erm, 'cause it would be awful if we were talking and then afterwards I find out that nothing had been recorded.

[recording interrupted]

[recording restarts]

AV: You're expected to make a note of how long you've been eh, discharging,

VB: That's right. Yeah. I'm hoping this is going to. [tape extremely crackly; recording interrupted]

[recording restarts]

VB: Right, that should do it.

AV: Right.

VB: And then sometimes what happens is that the battery indicator doesn't work so, everything's moving around. [laughs] I'll take it that's okay.

AV: Yeah, I was saying how I enjoyed eh, watching the eh, *Pathe News* and *British Movietone*.

VB: Yeah.

AV: I think they were the only two companies that eh, did newsreel, did newsreels.

VB: Yeah. Cause they were sort of documentaries as well, weren't they?

[speed of voices quickens]

AV: Erm, normally a programme was made up of an A film, the main film.

VB: Mhm.

AV: The feature film. Then a B film. And the news.

VB: Mhm.

AV: And eh, they only had...

[voice fades away completely] [voices extremely faint; inaudible]

[voices become clearer although tape still crackly]

VB: It seems to be going round a bit faster than the other ones.

AV: It says four batteries. Four?

VB: Yes. It can't be helped.

AV: If you've just got eh, if you need four batteries--

VB: Yeah.

AV: And one of them is low--

VB: Yeah.

AV: Then it's just going to pull the other down.

VB: Yes. Ah well. I think it's been recording not too badly up till now.

AV: Uhuh.

VB: Anything else I'll take a note of erm. [pause 4 seconds] Yeah, it's interesting what you were saying about the American musicals really being the only musicals. [laughs]

AV: Well I won't say they're the only ones but they were the eh, the best.

VB: Yeah.

AV: Mind you, of course, I mean there were only the two.

VB: Yeah.

AV: 'Cause they were both English-speaking.

VB: Yes.

AV: I don't remember going to see eh, French musicals. Or German musicals.

VB: Yeah.

AV: 'Cause eh, they wouldn't have been in English anyway. But eh, they may not even have gone in for them. I don't know.

VB: Yeah.

AV: But the musical was peculiarly, or, primarily, American. There's no question of that.

VB: Yeah. [pause 2 seconds] So that was really your main interest in films.

AV: Well, I think so. Yes.

VB: Yeah.

AV: Yes, I used to... [pause 4 seconds]

VB: It's eh. I mean I just spotted a picture of Bing Crosby. Was he someone that you enjoyed?

AV: Oh yes. Well of course eh, he was always with [Bob?] Hope, as I said in the *Road* films.

VB: Yeah.

AV: And eh, there were many classics. *White Christmas*, I think, was one eh--

VB: Yeah.

AV: And of course the eh, eh because most songs in those days were ballads--

VB: Yes.

AV: You know, that you can remember and you hummed or whistled or sung to. Eh, that's why those, those erm, songs seemed to endure.

VB: Yes. That's interesting. So it was something that was both in the films and also in everyday life, I suppose.

AV: Oh yes, because on eh, on radio,

VB: Yeah.

AV: All of these songs that you heard, I mean they were all ballads--

VB: Yeah.

AV: In those days. And eh, apart from jazz and that but eh. And of course the films very often made the songs in the first place and eh... [pause 3 seconds]

VB: Yeah.

AV: And then the various disc jockeys. I mean they had disc jockeys in those days of course. [pause 3 seconds]

[MrsV comes in]

MrsV: I'm going to pop into Pinner so I'll take my bag.

AV: Oh right.

MrsV: I don't know whether somebody's coming to dinner or not. Very frustrating.

VB: Ah! That's annoying.

MrsV: Yes. So I'm going to get something and if they don't turn up I'll stick it back in the fridge. [Talks about person who is coming] So listen out for the phone.

AV: Yeah.

MrsV: See you later.

VB: I've just thought of someone else. Erm, Deanna Durbin. Was she someone that you?

AV: Oh yes, yes. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] *Three Smart Girls*, I think was one of her films, wasn't it?

VB: Yeah.

AV: Is that right?

VB: That's right. 'Cause there's a whole series of them, weren't there? There's like *One Hundred Men and a Girl* or something and--

AV: Ye-es. Eh, that's right because she was in musicals.

VB: Mhm.

AV: Mhm. I don't think, I can't remember eh, anything about the plots of those musicals because I suppose that's par for the course really. Because they were erm, I won't say without plots. But I mean the plot was incidental, wasn't it? Very often with this sort of thing. You saw it for the spectacle.

[voices get faster]

VB: Yeah.

AV: You know, the *Ziegfeld Follies* and all that sort of thing.

VB: Yeah. So it was the way it looked really than the storyline that was the--

AV: That's right, yes.

VB: And also the way it sounded as well.

AV: Yeah. Oh yes it was the dancing and this and eh, even now I love it. [voice fades; inaudible]

[recording faulty; voices inaudible; very faint in background]

AV: They were professional in a sense.

VB: [inaudible; says something about when AV started to get interested in films]

AV: Well, no. [inaudible]

AV: [Well we had access, we went along to the newsagents?]

VB: Yeah.

[inaudible]

VB: [Was that something where the whole family was involved?]

AV: Eh, I don't really know. Eh... [inaudible; voices speeding up]

[inaudible]

VB: [Says something about interest in costumes]

AV: Not really.

VB: No. Was it more the spectacle of the dancing?

AV: Probably that.

VB: Yeah.

AV: But the eh... [inaudible]

AV: [I don't know. I find it very difficult to speak for other people. I can only speak for myself?]

VB: Uhuh.

[inaudible]

VB: Were you interested in mysteries?

AV: Oh yeah. [inaudible]

[voices extremely faint; get faster; transcriber has speed control at minimum but voices still too fast]

[recording terminates]

[End of Side A]