

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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* Wythenshawe, Manchester, 27 April 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Lily Sutcliffe

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/Standardised by Annette Kuhn

* AW=Annie Wright, VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: First interview of two with Annie Wright; Tape T95-23 was recorded on first; Sound Quality: Good.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

VB: [inaudible; starts mid-conversation].

AW: Oh... clipping it on—

VB: [inaudible].

AW: Anywhere?

VB: Anywhere. These things always get tangled up, that's the other thing. I'll maybe just put it somewhere around here. The only thing is it tends to...

AW: Oh. It's like a mic, is it?

VB: Yeah.

AW: Is that right?

VB: That's fine, yeah. Yeah, that's great. I mean there was one or two questions I made a note of--

AW: Mhm.

VB: Based on what you were saying that I was wanting to ask you. Erm, actually, before we get on to talking about the cinema, I was wondering too if I could ask a couple of questions about yourself. Just to get an idea of your own background.

AW: In what way?

VB: Well just things like erm, were you born in Manchester?

AW: Yes. I was born in Hulme actually.

VB: Oh really.

AW: Hulme which is not all that far from here.

VB: 'Cause I remember you were saying about going to the cinemas in Hulme--

AW: Mhm.

VB: With your first...

AW: Well we lived in there. He lived in Hulme then.

VB: Right. And can I ask what your father did?

AW: Oh he was a carter. Whatever that was. I know he had a horse and cart.

VB: Oh really? Right, that's one of these jobs...

AW: He was naughty, my father. He ran off with another woman and went to live in Perth.

VB: Oh really. Was that when you...

AW: He left my mother with six children. Two working and four at home. Four at school.

[laughs] I never saw him [laughing] again. I thought the world of him as well. It was an awful

shock. I idolised him. He was in the last war. Erm, in the [19]14 war, you know. And he was away. I don't know whether he came home on leave, but he came home in 1918 and I was born in 1919. In the November. The apple of his eye.

VB: Aw.

[cat miaowing]

AW: Oh shut up! Go on. We don't want you! Go on.

VB: [laughs] So your mother must have had to work quite hard to...

AW: Well she did odd jobs. I don't think, she just sort of worked in the, she worked in the pub round the corner.

VB: Right.

AW: But she always, she went early. And then she came home, it was only as I say round the corner, to make sure we got to school.

VB: Yeah.

AW: You know, gave us our breakfast. And then eh, I was what? Seven and a half. I know the older two were working. My brother and me, my eldest brother and my eldest sister were working. And eh, the brother next to me, he would be, it was 1927. That's right, I was in my eighth year. Seven and a half, I was. My other brother was twelve, twelve and a half. My younger brother was, he'd be about five I think, something like that. And my youngest sister was only fifteen months old.

VB: Mhm.

AW: So, I've often wished that I'd have had the time to, I had visions of going to where he lived or whatever. And I had visions of somebody telling me that he'd like gone in for a drink or something like that.

VB: Yes.

AW: I wanted to see him. But I never got round to it. he died in, well he must have died in the fifties. And my mother, 'course they couldn't marry, 'cause my mother, those days divorces were... So erm, but I often wonder if I've got another family.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But you see, I was erm, researching the family tree. Because I've got a very unusual name. A very uncommon thing. Hatto. H, A, double-T, O.

VB: Ah.

AW: And it's German. I thought it was Italian.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Well somebody said it was Italian. Somebody said it was Spanish. Somebody said it was Dutch.

VB: [smiles].

AW: And somebody even said it was Chinese. And I said, well you can cut that out. None of us look like Chinese.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Anyway, I was curious and I thought, for something to do when I retired. You know, when I came here. And eh, anyway, one of my nieces put me in touch with a Professor Hatto from, she give me the wrong university in London but--

VB: Right.

AW: The secretary passed it. And he wrote back, he didn't say where he lived. Well, naturally. He'd retired. And she put a pedigree in the slip. And I've never met such a man who's so...! He's got names after every sub-, he's got letters. After every subject you can think off. And He married an Englishwoman. And he had one daughter. Retired now. He lives in, down South somewhere. And he was saying that there was Hatto in Staffordshire. Well both my parents came from Staffordshire. And there was one in, oh, somewhere else.

And then this lady wrote for me from erm, was it Sussex? I've got the letter anyway. And the name was Coral Hatto.

VB: Mm.

AW: So I thought, that's funny. Anyway, she wanted to know what I'd found out. She was doing the family tree as well. Anyway in the last letter, I said to her I'd come to a dead end on my father's side. couldn't get...

VB: Yeah.

AW: When I phoned. 'Cause my father, there was six of them, three girls and three boys, like us. 'Course they're all died now, you see. Well my nieces rung up and they asked them had their mothers left any documents. They said no. And apparently they were all disgusted at him. What he did to me mother, like. So I think they must have got rid of all traces of him. So I wrote an told this Carole.

VB: Yeah.

AW: So and I put at the end of the letter. 'Cause she said she'd keep in touch. I said, I hope you don't mind me asking, I said, but could your husband be an offspring of my father's, you see. Which is quite, I mean he'd only be about forty--

VB: Yeah.

AW: And she was eh, younger, according to what my mother said. She was quite a few years younger. And, eh, I said, "I hope you don't mind but, not that I want to sort of dig anything up." Which I wouldn't have done. I mean it's in the past. And she never wrote to me again. So, you know, I thought, oh! You know.

VB: You never know.

AW: So maybe. I mean I don't. But I would love to know. And I keep saying I'll write in touch. But it is a very unusual name. Very uncommon name.

VB: I don't think I've heard it myself.

AW: No, I've not heard it. There was a Bishop Hatto. But this Professor wrote me a lovely type, ooh, it was about that big. And eh, he said that erm, all the Hattos, our name goes back to ten-something. You know. It's lovely to read.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Ten-something. And erm, they were all wealthy people. So I don't know where the wealth's gone--

VB: [laughs]

AW: But anyway. Eh, they were bishops and yeomen, erm, you know, landowners. They all had plenty of money. But eh, it was lovely to read. I've had a couple of copies made. You know, my nieces have wanted one. And erm, but eh, I've often wondered whether, you know. I thought, I wonder if I write in touch, I'll put it as delicately as I could--

VB: Mhm.

AW: Just to see. But I believe that one of my nieces was talking to a woman in Bury. Eh, her name was Hatto.

VB: Mhm.

AW: So there might be an odd sprinkling. Perhaps they scattered [laughs] somewhere.

VB: [laughs]

AW [loud laughter]. Oh, God! I wish I could write a book.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Ooh, she [cat]wants to go out. Buzz off. The door's not open.

VB: The other thing I was wanting to ask was erm, what it was that your husband did.

AW: He was training to be a masseur [physiotherapist]. You know.

VB: A-ah!

AW: A massage. A masseur it is. But of course he didn't finish his training because he was called up so.

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

AW: Mhm. I was a weaver.

VB: Right.

AW: Right.

VB: Where was it you worked? I remember you said that. That you worked in the mill. Where was that?

AW: Yes. I worked at Thomas French's and Sons. I used to use, you know the Rufflette tape? On your curtains.

VB: Oh yes.

AW: I was on a great big loom and I was only, in fact I don't think I was as tall as I am now. And I had to have a box to stand to look in, what they call the shed, where all the...

VB: Yeah.

AW: You probably understand that. Erm, and eh, 'cause the Manager used to go, "Ooh! We'll have to do something about you. You are little, aren't you?"

VB: [laughs]

AW: And there was thirty-two pieces in it. Sixteen, and then it was six weeks training. I worked, you know, they put you with somebody more experienced. And a fortnight and I'd had ten jobs! In the twelve months [after] I left school in 1933, I tried every trade there was. Knitting. Dressmaking. Printing. You name it. Belts and braces.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Anything. And eh, this girl I went to school with went to French's. And she said, "I'll ask for you." Anyway, she did. And I got in. When I was fifteen in the November. And d'you

know, I just took to it like that. And my Manager said, "Ooh," he said, "We've never known anybody to pick it up so quick."

VB: Yeah.

AW: But, you see, if you're interested in something. And it was, it fascinated me. And I was there till I got married in 1939.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Ah.

VB: And your own family. Is that your children and grandchildren here?

AW: Yes. And great-grandchildren.

VB: Great-grandchildren! [laughs]

AW: Great-grandchildren. And that's my son and my daughter when they were babies.

VB: Right.

AW: That's one of my grandsons. The little one, in the white frame.

VB: Oh yes.

AW: That's my daughter's son. She lost three babies before she had him.

VB: Aw.

AW: And then the other two, the other three are great-grandchildren. Erm, Tony's a great-grandchild. And she's the youngest.

VB: Aw, she's lovely.

AW: Saskia. She's young. She's just two. She was two in March.

VB: Ah, so cute.

AW: I've got five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. So I'm not doing so bad, am I?

VB: No, not at all. I like the one of your own son and daughter.

AW: Your own what?

VB: The one of your son and daughter. The ones at the top.

AW: Yeah. They're not alike 'cause they're different fathers.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Yes, he's about nine months old there.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And Susan's, Susan's about ten months old there.

VB: Right.

AW: But the others they don't live far from me.

VB: Ah I see.

AW: My other little girl is erm, Elizabeth.

VB: Yeah.

AW: My grandson only lives off Norris Road there. Near the church. And the others, one lives in Sale.

VB: Yeah.

AW: In lives in [D?] near the hospital. So they're all, but of course my son lives over there.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And erm, my daughter lives at Atherton.

VB: Right.

AW: I see her every fortnight. She comes down and she never misses. But erm, I don't know, I'll have to get some bigger frames I think.

VB: Yes.

AW: [laughs]

VB: It's a lovely collection that.

AW: Mhm.

VB: It's really nice.

AW: And that's me when I was twenty-four. Ha, Ha! [laughs]

VB: In the middle. Can I have a, see it.

AW: [still laughing] I was only about twenty-four there.

VB: Aw, that's a lovely one.

AW: Yeah, [laughing] it was taken during the war.

VB: Yeah, I like your wee jacket.

AW: [laughing] Well it was a, they were called jeep coats, you know.

VB: Oh really!

AW: And they were loose.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And they were a lovely material. They were washable. And that was peach.

VB: Oh-h, lovely.

AW: And it just eh, I think it just fastened at the neck.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And erm, I thought the world of that jeep coat. And eh, when I remarried and I went to live in the house that he had, that is father had anyway, there was an outdoor licence there. And there was, believe it or not, this coloured man used to come in and he wanted my coats!

VB: [laughs]

AW: And I said, you can't have. And d'you know who he turned out to be? Kenyatta.

VB: Goodness me!

AW: I couldn't believe it. Turned out to be Kenyatta. And I thought, ooh, I think I've rubbed shoulders. [loud laughter]

VB: That's amazing.

AW: Oh, it was a lovely coat. [laughs] It was like erm, it was like a hair, but it was very soft.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I couldn't tell you...

VB: It looks almost like velvet or something.

AW: Yeah, yeah. No it wasn't! It was like erm, eh, something like that but it was like silky. And it washed beautiful.

VB: Yeah. It's a lovely photograph that as well.

AW: Mhm.

VB: It really is.

AW: Yeah.

VB: So, I mean the only other couple of things I wanted to ask erm, were if you'd ever been a member of a political party. Or if you had any strong political views.

AW: Well I've always been Labour--

VB: Right.

AW: And I'm not likely to change it now.

VB: Well, not with the present government anyway. [laughs]

AW: Oh, God, no! I don't know. They expect you to live on your pensions. God only knows, I don't--

VB: Aw goodness me.

AW: I don't honestly.

VB: Yeah. And the last thing I was wanting to ask was erm, what religion you'd been brought up in.

AW: C of E.

VB: C of E. That's great. As I say it's just to get an idea—

AW: Yes, I know.

VB: Of your background.

AW: What you doing? Are you writing a book or something?

VB: Eh, yeah, well, it's a two-year project that's, what we're doing is going around and talking to people in Manchester and also in Glasgow, North London, and East Anglia.

AW: Oh, I see.

VB: So we're trying to build up a picture about erm...

AW: Like in those days, yeah.

VB: Yeah. And whether people preferred different films, say, in different parts of Britain. Different stars and...

AW: Well I certainly wouldn't like to be a teenager today. 'Cause it's bad enough around here, I just don't understand the mentality. I mean I know it's rife, it's everywhere but...

VB: Yeah.

[cat miaowing]

AW: She wants to go out.

VB: Aw, goodness me.

AW: [laughs] Have you got your tape on as well?

VB: Yeah. We'll just put it off for a minute if you want.

AW: I usually open the window, you see.

VB: Right.

AW: But eh, go on! [To cat] How dare you interrupt. Now stay out now till I've finished.

[AW comes back into room] There was no temptation. I feel sorry really for the youngsters of today because they've got so many temptations.

VB: Yeah.

AW: You know. It's erm, I would be out of my mind. I mean I had no trouble with my two, thank God, but I weren't particularly strict with them. But eh, although my second husband was, with my daughter.

VB: Yeah.

AW: He was very strict with her. She didn't like it. But erm, he didn't really bother with my son, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But he did want me to change his name and I said, "No. Why should I change it?" I said, "He's got a name to be proud of."

VB: Yeah.

AW: And it wasn't as if I wasn't married or anything, you know.

VB: Yes. Yes.

AW: Boot erm, as I say, today, no, I wouldn't like. And I think I always, I mean I've always loved children. I would have liked more really but, under the circumstances, but, erm, I think if I'd have been married today, I don't think I'd have had any.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Not with the state--

VB: Yes.

AW: Of the world, you know. It's, ooh, I don't know. Never thought I'd live to see it like this.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And I think to myself, well I don't think your sacrifice was worth it, you know. [laughs]
You know.

VB: [laughs]

AW: I certainly won't be celebrating VE Day. I've never celebrated it, I'm not going to start now.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I have nothing to celebrate.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I know it's a long time ago but you don't forget.

VB: No.

AW: It's always there. I've never got over it, you know. But eh--

VB: Yeah.

AW: There's days when I still go off, but I can't change it.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But erm, you know, I sometimes think, you know. I don't know whether you've read it, about that Peter, is it Peter Lilley Putting through to get the pensions back.

VB: Oh yes.

AW: I don't think they should ever have took it off us.

VB: It's terrible. Yeah, it really is.

AW: I mean Vincent was only twenty. I mean all right, we know that for war, you could have lived longer. And when I remarried, 'course you give your pension up.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I got a hundred pounds. And I mean it sounded a lot then.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But erm, and I've always thought, I thought, well at least they could've, in fact I've thought many a time about bringing it up. Wondering whether any other war widows that's remarried, which I've spoke to a few--

VB: Yeah.

AW: Which erm, somehow the marriages like mine didn't seem to work out. Perhaps we shouldn't have, I know I shouldn't have married again. But anyway, as I say, it's in the past. But, and I thought, well at least they should have, in part compensation, for what's it's worth. They could have at least erm, you know, given us say half of it for what it was. I got 31 shillings.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Oh, it sounded a lot in 1940 but, I got 31 shillings for my son. I was at home twelve months 'cause I was in a terrible state.

VB: Mhm.

AW: I knew then that I had to buck my ideas up and I went back to work. 'Course I was living with my mother then. Well it was my house but she was living with me. And 'course she could mind Vincent for me--

VB: Yeah.

AW: Otherwise I wouldn't have left him. It was either that or go on what was then Public Assistance. And I thought, no way. My pride wouldn't let me. In fact, when our Vincent was fourteen months old, I went out one day, I was in such a state. I thought, I've got to do something. I've got to. And I went to Dover Street. And I joined the ATS [Auxiliary Territorial Service]. Just walked in. Had my medical and everything. And when I went home I told my mother. [laughs] She went mad! "What about this child?" she said. [laughs; coughs]. I said, well, I said, anyway I got to know part of the Army would. And then I thought, ooh, if I put him in now, he won't know me.

VB: Yes.

AW: He might grow up, all these things. He might resent me like children do that's been put in care and things like that.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And then I thought, oh no, I couldn't do that. Anyway she said, all right, she said. Anyway she got a bit fed up. She must have thought I was having a good time or something, which I wasn't. But I loved it, I really loved it. And I thought, right. I'm going to work hard and I'm going to be at least a Sergeant. And that was my goal. And then, 'course, my mother got fed up. Well they couldn't hold me, you see, with having a child.

VB: Right.

AW: So I had to come out. Oh, I was heart-, I thought, God! Is nothing gonna go right for me? I was heartbroke! So she said eh, as I say my mother thought I was having a good time. Far from it. But I was with a good crowd. And eh, and funnily enough, when I went to see the Officer, like there were women officers. Eh, you know, very eh, lah-di-dah. So, she said, "Ooh, what a shame! What a pity! You've just been promoted!" [bursts out laughing]

VB: Oh no. [laughs]

AW: I said, "Oh, promoted?" I said, "Could you tell me?" She said, "Yes." Corporal Shepherd. And this corp--, I was a devil, me. I did not like, mind you there was elastic knickers. Ooh they were horrible, the clothes. Eh, khaki knickers with elastic in them. They were [laughs] horrible! After wearing French knickers anyway, when I was in my teens.

VB: [laughs]

AW: And the stockings were thick green. So I turned my stockings inside out. I turned my skirt up shorter than it should be, regulation level. Instead of putting my haversack erm, I think you had to put it that way, I slung it over my shoulder. And this corporal, cause we slept in the same dormitory. They were curtained off, you know. And bunks at the bottom and the top. And you had to be in for such a time. I think it was ten o'clock, something like that. And I was at Lancaster--

VB: Right.

AW: Because I went in the Castle when I was there. I was with the King's Own. And erm, Morecambe, was it Morecambe that was out of bounds? Or was it [Heysham?]. No, I think I could go to [Heysham?]. It's not far from Lancaster. I think it was Morecambe boot course. And there was a long, winding path from the barracks.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And there was, you know, like a lodge at the end, you know, to show your pass. And this corporal, I've never forgotten. Eh, what was her name? Corporal Leopard, I think. Something like that. Like eh, Corporal Shepherd, probably. And she used to let me get halfway down the path. Then she'd shout, "Montague! Come back. Go inside. Change your

stockings.” [laughs] “And put your haversack on!” [laughs] And she, she didn't really pick on me. I never felt that. But she must have thought, right, we've got a rebel here. Which I have been inclined to be a rebel, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Not eh, criminal or anything like that, but it's inside me. And this defiance was there. Anyway, the Officer said Corporal Shepherd. And I couldn't believe it! So anyway, when I went back I said, “Thank you.” “Well,” she said, “Let's face it. I know I pulled you up 'cause you was doing all the wrong things. And you knew you was doing the wrong things. And I had to keep to the rules.”

VB: Yeah.

AW: She said, “But your uniform was always so smart. Everything about you was like what we wanted.” She said, “We watch these recruits.” Like, you know. I suppose like they all do. And she said, “You took such a pride in your uniform.” Because my brother was a long-serving Lancashire fusilier. And he gave me some tips. How to keep my buttons clean without clean-, keep them shiny without cleaning them every day. And none of the girls could understand why I didn't clean my buttons every day. And I wouldn't tell them. And also they were good shoes. They were strong. They were brown.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And they were a bit, I've always had sensitive feet anyway. So he gave me a tip how to soften them. And they kept looking at me. He said, “Go on, don't be mean.” I said, “No!” And they said, there was I polishing away there--

VB: [laughs]

AW: [laughs] But I did. Funnily enough, the only thing I couldn't do was tie a knot in my tie. It was either too big or too small. That was the only thing, I never mastered that. And I always had to ask one of the girls to. They say, “Good mind not to. You won't tell us how to keep your buttons,” you know. But they were a lovely crowd. And I was heartbroke when I came out.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Thought, God, what else? Everything's, everything I've tried to do seems to have gone by the board. It must be fated or something. It's a good job I'm strong. I've got a good outlook, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But it was good periods to look back on.

VB: Yeah.

AW: An they had a lovely photograph. I mean I don't like having my photograph taken. And eh, I had one taken just head and shoulders. And I lent it to a friend. And I never got it back.

VB: Aw, shame.

AW: And it was the nicest photograph I've ever had. And she says she'd lent it to somebody and not got it back. And it was a really nice photograph. And I thought, ooh, something else gone as well.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Can't win. So. [pause; 4 seconds] When I sit here on my own and think, I have a laugh and then I think, when I start getting a bit depressed I think, right, forget it.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Block it out. You know. It's nice to look on the happy times which, you know, you've got to do really otherwise you wouldn't. I couldn't have kept going if I didn't.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But erm...

VB: I mean I was very interested by--

AW: [bursts out laughing]

VB: The things you were saying in your letter. Really.

AW: [laughing]

VB: Erm, for one thing, the number of cinemas that you mentioned. I mean, I had to note them down.

AW: [Laughter]

VB: So many!

AW: There were then.

VB: Yeah.

AW: As I say, there was only the cinema and dancing.

VB: Yeah.

AW: 'Course if you didn't dance. I did a bit of dancing. Not much. Not enough. 'Course when you didn't dance erm, that was it. But eh, oh aye! I was all over the place. And then I thought of some more after that.

VB: Really!

AW: Most of them have been pulled down now--

VB: Yeah.

AW: With the, you know, through the war an bombs and erm. [pause; 2 seconds] Funnily enough, the last one we saw together was called *The Rains Came*. With Myrna Loy. And I think it was Tyrone Power. It was a lovely film. They were all weepies, you know. Vincent, he was laughing at me. He say, "Oh, what you crying for?" [laughs] Well, I am emotional anyway. I don't like crying in front of anybody but I can cry with you. If you understand what I mean. But eh, our Susan was the same when we used to go with her. She say, "Give me a handkerchief, mum." [laughs] And eh, anyway, he went to a different place, then he finished up in Swindon. In a little village called [L?]. A lovely little village, Little village pub. And I went to stay with him before he went to France. When was that? About, well say, I think it was

the beginning of April. I know erm, it was three years to the day when I met him. [inaudible]. But he went the following morning, on the 17th.

VB: Mm.

AW: And eh, anyway, he wanted me to stay at this little pub. With the [Cowlies?]. They were lovely people. And eh, they ran the pub. And he wanted me to say. And she said, "You can have the baby here. You're very welcome. There's plenty of room." 'Cause she had a couple of sons away. She said, "You'd be very welcome. We love having you. You can have your baby here," she said. "And if you do decide to stay, it's only for the war." 'Cause you were safe there. She said, "And if you ever want a place of your own, we'll try and get you one." But 'course, as I say, when you look back you think, all these ifs. And life is full of ifs. If you'd have done this, you know.

VB: Mhm.

AW: And I didn't. I came home. But eh, they were lovely people. Anyway, I lost touch with her. I think they moved because eh, one of her sons was missing. In the war. She kept in touch and then when I wrote again, I think they must have moved.

VB: Mhm.

AW: 'Cause he was erm, ex-sub postmaster. Real typical landlord, you know. They were lovely people.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But eh, and I think to myself well, they say one thing leads to another. I'm sure your life's mapped out for you.

VB: Yes. It certainly sounds like that.

AW: But erm, you know, I've got some nice memories of the people that I've met, you know. But it was pitch black. I couldn't see anything and I can remember the bedroom. It was very long. It was up the stair. Very long. It was bare boards.

VB: Mhm.

AW: White they were. Scrubbed. But they had all sort of mats. With an old-fashioned fireplace. 'Course, a double bed.

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

AW: He said, "I'll be home for the christening," and things like this. "I'll come back," he said. I've often thought of those words. Anyway, all I could hear, everywhere was pitch black. And he turned round and he said to me, erm, "I won't go if you don't want me to." I said, "You couldn't do that. Where would you go in the village?"

VB: Mhm.

AW: I said, "There'll be a [inaudible]." I remember the journey I got to get there. Took me hours in the old-fashioned train. Erm, in fact they thought I hadn't gone. But anyway. I said, "Where would you go? You know you'd be a deserter. You couldn't do that. Don't ask me to make a decision." [laughs] I said, "No. You're a soldier." He was a Territorial. If he hadn't been in the Territorial Army, he wouldn't have been called up. But he would probably have been, 'cause he wasn't in a reserve occupation.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But perhaps they'd have had him a bit longer, you see. But there you are. But eh, I said, "Ooh no," I said. "You can't do that. They're going to have a roll call before you go. They're going to make sure nobody's missing." So he said, "I suppose you're right." And then about half an hour after I was at the window, open the window, put the lights out in the room, and they haunted me for months after. All I could hear was marching feet. And they sound terrible in the dark. Marching feet to the station, you know. You know, those steps haunted me for ages. Six weeks after, he got killed. Couldn't believe it.

VB: Mhm.

AW: His mother came to tell me. Because the notification had gone to the house what we lived in when we were married, first married. 'Course, the lady knew my mother-in-law, so she passed it on. And I went in one day, wondering what they were all doing there. And they told me. "Oh," I said, "No. No. He said he'd come back." And that was good enough for me. I really believed it. And they all looked at me. They said, "Sit down." Somebody wanted to give me a drop of whisky. I said, 'No', I said, "No. I don't believe it. You're mistaken. He's lost his memory." Any excuse. To really believe. And I didn't believe it till after the war. Every soldier I saw, I looked at. He was in the Royal Engineers. I looked at every soldier. But his mother said, "Listen, they wouldn't send this notification." Which I've kept for my son, all my bits and pieces and medals and what have you. For my son when I go. And they said they wouldn't send me if they wasn't sure. If he was missing, it's a different thing.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Funnily enough, a while after, two soldiers came to the door. And they said, "Oh, are you Ann?" So I said, "Yes." So he said eh, "Well we don't know whether we're doing right but we thought it might ease your sorrow. But we was with him." 'Cause he was on the rearguard. They was the last to leave, you see. Whether he ever got on the beaches, I don't know. I've never really found out. But they were on the rearguard. So they're the last to leave. And he said, "We was with Monty." They called him Monty, you see. They said, "We was with Monty when he was hit. There was the three of us."

VB: Yeah.

AW: And 'course, his name must have been on as they say. And he said, he didn't suffer. He said he just fell.

VB: Mhm.

AW: And he was a big lad as well. He said, "He just fell." He said, "And we wanted to go back." But the officer said, "No. There's no way. It's every man for yourself." He said, "He's probably dead anyway." So they said, "Oh let's go and make sure." He said, "No." He said,

"It's obvious." 'Course, they were gonna go. He said, "Well if you do it, I can shoot you."
Which they can, you know, for insubordination.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I said, "Oh well that's something." The only consolation that I thought about after was, well, had he, say, gone through Dunkirk, he might have got sent to the East, the Far East. I thought, well I couldn't have borne that. You know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: The terrible. I saw them come home. It broke my heart.

VB: Mhm

AW: Oh it was horrible. And two of them committed suicide. Oh they were terrible wrecks. It was heartbreaking. And I thought, well, you know, that could have been my Vincent, you know. So, that consoled me in a way, you know. But erm, when my sister-in-law comes to see me. "Are you coming out to celebrate VE night?" I said, "No way! What have I got to celebrate? Your husband came home. Mine didn't!" "Oh, you can't be like that." I said, "Well I am. You go and enjoy yourself, Vera. I'm not going."

VB: Mhm.

AW: She went and I sat there and... [laughs]

VB: I understand.

AW: Oh dear. Never mind. It's an experience, I suppose. I just feel that, you know, they say you shouldn't look back. But how can you not look back?

VB: Uhuh.

AW: I mean, you know, your memories are there! You can't just block them out.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But when I'm sat here and I've thought to myself, I just seem to be one of these people that, even though I've tried, something's always, there's always been an obstacle.

VB: Mhm.

AW: You know what I mean. You can understand that. I thought, it's not for the want of trying. I should have been, you know. But erm, just one of those things. But I thought, I can console myself, it's not for the want of trying, so. Anyway, my two children have done well. So, and they're comfortable.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I mean, they've had a damn sight more than me. They've got more than I ever had. But at least they've worked for it.

VB: Yeah.

AW: They're quite comfortable. And they're happy, so. And I've got all my children. So.
[pause; 2 seconds]

VB: Well they certainly look quite...

AW: That's my daughter. The one, the bride there. That's my daughter there.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Eh, an that's my granddaughter in the other white. The other bride.

VB: Ah.

AW: That's her little girl.

VB: Right.

AW: And that's her when she was little.

VB: Yeah.

AW: So she's erm, she's certainly not like, you'd never dream that Barry was her father. He's very dark, like us, you know.

VB: Yes.

AW: Emma's blonde, but eh, she's not a bit like her father.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I said, "Are you sure you've not been with the milkman?" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

AW: There's Anthony. Terry. Daniel. Stephen. Elizabeth.

VB: Who's the baby at the bottom there? The bottom photo.

AW: Oh that's, that's erm, Saskia.

VB: Ah, I see.

AW: Or is it? Yes, I think it is. I picked that one out when she was a baby.

VB: That's a lovely shot that.

AW: Yeah. [laughs] I had a choice, you see, and that took my fancy.

VB: Yeah, that's lovely.

AW: But I keep saying I'll get some, you know, the big frames to put them all into.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Bit of room. 'Cause erm, mind you, I like to look at them. But I thought, well, if I get a bigger one. They've got some bigger than that.

VB: Right. Yeah.

AW: I could put them on the wall, you know. And that's my son. And that's his second wife, that.

VB: Big strapping fellow, isn't he?

AW: Yes he is. He's the living image of his father.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Although a lot say he's like me. I suppose, 'cause Pauline said to me, "Who's he like?" So I said, "Well, a lot say he's like me but for one thing. He hasn't got my eyes. And he hasn't got my mouth." So she said, "Well, he must have something of you." [laughs] But a lot used to say he's like me, but he's erm, got his father's eyes. Got his father's build. And he walks like him.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I said, "When you come here," I said, "I don't see you. I see your father."

VB: Yeah.

AW: And I was so sorry that he never knew him. I couldn't even say he'd seen him, you know, in the hospital. I couldn't even say he'd seen him. "Well," he said, "You don't know any different. There's nothing you can do about it." But erm, and my daughter's just as dainty. Just as slim. She's very slim. And that's her son. [moves mic out the way]

VB: It's an awkward thing that.

AW: And that's her son next to her.

VB: I'll just leave it there if you like.

AW: She lost erm, she lost three babies. She had two miscarriages. And a little girl stillborn. But he was er last hope. That's him in the cricket team. At the end. And she's erm, he was her last hope. Anyway, touch wood. She wanted a girl, actually. But she said now she wouldn't. "Well," I said, "After your losses you'd have been grateful of anything," you know.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Mind you I've got a preference for boys. I love all children but I've always had a preference for boys. I don't know why. Father figure, I suppose they say, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: That's why I suppose I like men.

VB: [laughs]

AW: I'm more at home with men. [laughs]

VB: Ah dear. It certainly sounded, from what you were saying about your courting days, going to the pictures and everything, it sounded like a very happy time.

AW: Oh it was, yeah. It was lovely. They were the happiest days of my life, apart from the years with my father, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Oh yeah, they were romantic days. I don't think it's the same today. I don't know but there don't seem to be the same eh, romance. We've got cards with the, we always had a rose on it. Something, used to press them in my books and...

VB: Aw, lovely.

AW: Things like that. I don't know what's happened to them. Anyway, they faded. Anyway they fell to pieces. Lovely cards. And we used to go to this little sweet shop. And I always remember it had three, two steps. And he used to buy me these quarter of liqu-, I think they were liqueurs. And they were ninepence a quarter then which was a lot of money then. You could get a lot for ninepence, believe me. And eh, apples. Oh we used to have a right beano upstairs on this double seat near the wall.

VB: [laughs]

AW: [beginning inaudible] 'Cause we wouldn't be separated.

VB: Aw. [laughs]

AW: And, aw it was very romantic. I idolised him. He was lovely.

VB: What were your favourite stars at that time?

AW: What?

VB: Did you have favourite stars?

AW: Oh yes! Oh eh, [pause; 2 seconds]. Clark Gable. George Raft. Erm. [pause; 4 seconds]
There was loads of them. Oh, Fredric March.

VB: Aw.

AW: Eh, oh! There was loads. There's that many I couldn't think of all of them.

VB: Sounds like all the handsome men that you're mentioning.

AW: Oh yeah! Oh yes.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Yeah. They were all handsome men, they were. Erm, oh there was loads of them. Until I see them on here now, you know, I have to sit and think about it. Oh, George Raft! I would have loved to have danced with him. [bursts out laughing]

VB: [laughs]

AW: And Simon [Polero?]. Ooh! [laughs]

VB: Uhuh.

AW: Ooh I used to go in ecstasy over him. I thought they were really gorgeous. Which they were. They were very good-looking in those days. Eh, I mean, when they go mad over some of them today, I look at him, I think, "Oooh! I don't know what they see in him." [laughter]

VB: [laughs]

AW: Arnold Schwarzenegger. And... [laughs] "What's it in them? Woo! I don't like his mouth!" [laughter]

VB: [laughs]

AW: No, they were really, oh! And Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy.

VB: Oh Nelson Eddy. Yes.

AW: I was watching a film, eh, what was it called. One of her old films. Erm. [pause; 3 seconds] Oh I can't think now what it was.

VB: I've got some pictures that I thought you might like to see that I brought along with me. There's one of, erm, it might be from *Rose-Marie* or something, with Jeanette MacDonald in it. [pause; 4 seconds] I probably won't be able to find it now having said that. Here it is. Erm, let's see. You'll probably enjoy seeing some of the other ones as well. I don't know if you remember Frederick [Hardwick?]?

AW: Oh John Mills. Nova Pilbeam! Good heavens!

VB: No, I can't see that. Here's one from...

AW: It's funny you should say that. When the war broke out on the Friday. Yes, they were called up on the Friday 'cause they all had to leave their work, you know. Those that were in the Territorials, reservists. 'Course the regulars was already there but the reservists. Of every erm, force. Well 'course my Vincent had to leave his work, you see. That was on the Friday. He had to report to his barracks. And the lady next door to me was Welsh.

VB: Right.

AW: And erm, she had one little girl and she was expecting another baby. And she came from Caernarfon. So, her husband was called up. He wanted her to go home, you see. To be safe, sort of thing. I mean nothing had started then, really. And 'course my Vincent wanted me to go. Neither of us wanted to go. 'Cause we're both in our own homes. Anyway he talked me into it. Anyway, funnily enough, we went on the Saturday. 'Cause he naturally thought he were going away straight away, you see. Which they didn't. And eh, he said, "I'll feel better if you go with Elizabeth." So we went. So we got there on the Saturday. And eh, her mother spoke Welsh. So Elizabeth said, "Don't speak Welsh while Ann's here. She doesn't understand Welsh. You can speak English. Speak it." Eh, her mother was Welsh, her father was a Cornishman. Anyway, erm, it wasn't a very big, it was on a slope. North [Penrose?]. I always remember it. Twenty-two I think it was. Anyway, it wasn't far from the

castle. And on the Saturday night we went to this cinema. Well some sort of a cinema it was. And that was on.

VB: Really!

AW: I remember him singing. And it's funny, that was one. Anyway 'course, Sunday, we'd erm, Chamberlain, was it? That said the war with Germany. Anyway, at the night-time Elizabeth said to me, "Ooh, I don't know about you but I want to go home." So I said, "Well I do." I'm not very adaptable in other people's, I mean some can kip anywhere but I've never been like that. Specially with strangers. I was going to go home anyway. I'd had enough. I couldn't settle. "Right," she said, "We'll go to the station and see." Anyway, we went in the castle while I was there but I'd already been in the castle before. Anyway, we went down. We found the time of the trains. We didn't say anything about, oh. I don't know how they got word that we were coming home. It must have been telegram or something. To tell them that we were on our way home. Anyway, we got home on the Monday afternoon. We got a taxi from the station with Elizabeth being pregnant. And I said to Vincent, "Right. I am not going away again. I don't care whether they're bombs or what. I'm not leaving my little home." So Elizabeth told her husband. She said, "And I'm not going either." [laughs]

VB: [Laughs].

AW: And it's funny you should bring that.

VB: Ah.

AW: *Sing As We Go*. Ooh.

VB: Was Gracie Fields someone that you particularly liked? Gracie Fields. Was she...

AW: Yeah, she was all right. I thought her voice was a bit, I didn't like her going, "Oooo!"

VB: Right.

AW: Oh, nah! [looks through book] [Name of film? Rosa?]. Don't remember seeing that.

VB: I've got one of the handsome men. I don't know if Robert Montgomery was one of your particular...

AW: Oh Robert Montgomery! Oh aye.

VB: Janet Gaynor is that, on the other side?

AW: Oh Janet Gaynor! Charles Farrell and Janet Gaynor. They were like Nelson Eddy and--

VB: Were they?

AW: Jeanette MacDonald. Yeah.

VB: Right.

AW: They made films together. 'Cause I went into Salford once. We could cross over the Irwell from where we lived. Hulme was here, Salford was there, and we passed over Mark Addy's Bridge. And erm, I went to a cinema there. And I saw them two. In erm, *Sunny Side Up*. Was called *Sunny Side Up*.

VB: What was that about?

AW: [laughs]

VB: It's not one that I've...

AW: [laughs] Yeah, I can't remember what I did yesterday! [laughter]

VB: [laughs] Ah dear.

AW: You know, your memory plays tricks.

VB: Aye.

AW: Mind you, when things, as I say, in those days, they stand out.

VB: Yes.

AW: I mean there's nothing, I don't think they'd have the memories today that we had, you know--

VB: Yeah.

AW: Of love and romance and what have you. It was a very romantic time. But for all yeou was in love, you didn't see, it wasn't done to kiss in the street. Because them days, everything was taboo. You know, it just wasn't done. You'd hold hands, link arms. But...

VB: Is that right?

AW: True. No kissing in the street. Not like you see couples now, nearly eating one another in the shelters. [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Oh dear.

AW: Oh dear.

VB: Erm, I thought you might like to...

AW: Robert Donat. Oh yeah! The Gaumont. Oh, the Gaumont Cinema.

VB: That was quite a big one, wasn't it? The Gaumont.

AW: Oxford Road.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And the Odeon is still there. On the other side. Then there was one called the Plaza. And then there was erm, oh, I can never think of it. Where Oxford Road station is. They showed all cartoons. All the afternoon, you know. [Referring to Tatler]

VB: Ah.

AW: Used to see men fast asleep, sleeping through all the programmes. And then there was the Regal where my son was a projectionist.

VB: Right.

AW: Erm, and then oh, there was eh. [pause; 3 seconds] 'Course we went onto Stretford Road then. There was the bughut, whatever they called it [possibly referring the Picturedrome]. Near the triangle. It was horrible. Erm, then of course the York, where I met Vincent. Crescent, the Popular, the ooh! There was loads of them. The Imperial. Erm, the

Casino. Trocadero. Ooh, you name it. All within. We went to them all. There was nothing else to go really.

VB: When you say that one of them was like a bug hut, were there some that were a bit more up market?

AW: Well, it was a bit seedy and that.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I think it was bombed in the war--

VB: Ah.

AW: Or they used it as a shelter. But they used to go because they got a cup of tea. And a biscuit. In the afternoon, in the interval in the afternoon. That didn't draw me at all. That was about the only cinema that we avoided.

VB: Right.

AW: It was really grotty, you know. But the others were very nice. Oh we went all over the show. We went out every night 'cause me mother used to say, "Can't you stay in one night?" And his mother used to say, "D'you have to see her every." [laughs] "D'you have to see her every night?"

VB: [laughs] Were you going to the pictures more or less every night then?

AW: Yeah!

VB: Really!

AW: That's why we saw all these films! Yeah.

VB: That's amazing.

AW: Yeah. It was very rare that, I think if there was a film that we'd already seen, erm, we'd go the Speedway--

VB: Right.

AW: At Bellevue. And then we'd go into the amusements park. Then a couple of times he took me to Main Road to watch Manchester City.

VB: Ah.

AW: But the main one was the cinema.

VB: Yeah.

AW: 'Course when my son went to the Regal, mind you, this was long after the war when my daughter was at school. We used to go into the UCP, have a meal and eh, 'course we got in free, you see, 'cause Vincent. He always had a passion for erm, ooh, Jap desserts. I don't know whether you know them. They were like, they were all coloured, brown, yellow, and they had coconut inside.

VB: Right.

AW: My son had a passion, so I used to take him a quarter, you see. He used to come down and have a chat with us in the interval. And eh, but that's em, well they were twins. Regal twins. You could go into either. Whichever you wanted to show, two cinemas.

VB: Right.

AW: 'Course when they started closing, he was already married. He married when he was very young. He realised that he would have to, so he trained to be a domestic service engineer--

VB: Right.

AW: Does all the washing machines and things like that.

VB: Right.

AW: Done very well. Been there for years.

VB: When you were saying that I was wondering, did you go much into town to go to the cinema?

AW: No, not really.

V: In the thirties. Was it mainly...

AW: Or if we did, we either went to the Gaumont. Eh, it could've been the Odeon. I can't remember. But eh, more or less we stayed.

VB: Yeah.

AW: There was that many cinemas, you know, you had your choice.

VB: Yeah.

AW: You didn't really need to go into town. You know.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause the ones that you mentioned, as I say, I was struck by just the sheer numbers of them. I mean, can I ask you about the particular cinemas you mentioned before? Eh, there's one called, you know, you were saying you met your husband at the York.

AW: The York cinema in Hulme.

VB: What was that like? Was it...

AW: It was pretty typical. They were all pretty much the same, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But erm, it was funny I should go there because, I don't know if I mentioned it in my letter, I was on shift work, at French's, six-two. So we could go out that week. The second week we couldn't so we saved our money. So you used to go with some of the girls to town. To the cinema. Or we used to go to a tea dance or something, at the Plaza [ballroom] or somewhere like that. But erm, this particular Friday night, there was a Capitol on Princess Road. There was a Claremont near us. And there was the Trocadero, and that was quite a few. So I said to my mother, "Oh, I think I'll go to the York cinema." So she says, "What

d'you want to go all that way for?' Because we'd moved from Hulme. We went to Moss Side which was posh then. You was going up in the world if you went in Moss Side. 'Course the house we had, they were only two up and two down, as you know. Outside toilets and that. And they brought loads of kids up in them and how they did, I don't know. 'Cause there were six of us. But anyway, we sort of started working. But one of my brothers he said, "Ooh, it's about time we moved out of here," and bettered ourselves, you know.

So we got his big house in Moss Side. It was a lovely house as well. Bathroom and three rooms downstairs. It was a palace to us, you know. So, my mother said to me, "What d'you want to go all the way for?" I said, "I don't know." I didn't even know what the film was. I said, "I don't know." I believe in fate, me, I don't know about you. I think if something has to, or there's somebody for you, you'll... And I don't know, I had this feeling which I get, this intuition for different things sometimes. I had a feeling that I had to go to the York that night. And the picture was called 'Up the Pole' [referring to *Love Up the Pole*]. Don't ever remember seeing it afterwards but anyway. So of course I go in. It was like continuous. You could go in and then watch, and then when you saw what it was up to you could go out, you see. Well I was already in. And this boy come in like. It was still dark. Come and sat next to me. Didn't look at him. Anyway, he started moving me foot. So I thought, you dare! Do anything to me, I'll hit you with my handbag! And it was funny, we've laughed many a time over it. So, I still didn't look. I just pushed me foot away. Anyway, he didn't bother again. Anyway, a few minutes after he said to me, "D'you want a cigarette?" So I said, "No, I don't smoke." I do now, but. I said, "Oh, no, I don't." Oh it was unheard of unless you was naughty. I said, "No. I don't smoke." So he said eh, "D'you want a sweet?" I said, "No, thank you." Anyway, eh, he didn't bother then and I was dying to have a look at him. To have a sly look, and I thought, no, he might think, you know what lads are. And [laughing] in the interval I did have a sly look. Anyway, when the lights went up we both looked at one another. As far as I was concerned that was it. We both looked at one another and he smiled. And he had a lovely smile. And his eyes wrinkled up. They had lovely long lashes and I thought, ooh, that's not fair. Lashes on a lad, you know. He had lovely eyes. Grey-green they were, laughin eyes. And I thought, oh, that's me! And I thought, that's it as far as I was concerned. I real cheeky smile he had.

So he said, "Can I buy you an ice cream?" So I didn't know whether to say yes so I said erm, "Yes if you like." You know.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Please yourself. Anyway he did. Anyway that was it. Nothing more was said. After that we kept having a sly look at one another. 'Course I was dressed up to the nines. I was nice and slim and that. Thought a lot of myself actually. Which I don't now. And eh, as I was going out he said, "Goodnight." Sort of "Goodnight." Walked up York Street towards Stretford Road. He didn't need to go that way. Or did he? No he didn't. He lived round the corner. As I found out after. Anyway he stopped with some lads that he used to go camping with, go to school. Cause he was a Catholic like, you see. He went to St Wilfred. They were all his mates from school. So he said, "Goodnight" again. So I said, "Goodnight," and walked on, and I was dying to look back. And I thought, No! You might give him ideas, you know. Not the ideas they get now, but. Anyhow I went trotting off. Anyway I got round the corner on Stretford Road and all the shops were lit up then. Aw it was just like a wonderland. And I'd only just got onto Stretford Road and I hears these footsteps running up behind, and it was him. Walking beside me. So I just looked at him. He said, eh, "Oh," he said, "What's your name?" So I said, "What d'you want to know for?"

VB: [smiles]

AW: "Well, I want to know," he said. I said, "I'm not telling you." So he said eh, "Well tell me what it starts with." So I said, "A." Well my name's Annie really, but I don't like Annie. I only sign it on documents. I dropped the -ie when I left school. Eh, well he said every name under the sun but Annie, you see. So, "Well," he said, "It must be one of them." And I thought, should I...?

[Start of Tape Two]

AW: [continuing conversation about meeting husband for first time]. "Where you going?" I said, "You're very nosy, aren't you?" I said, "I'm going home" So he said, "Where d'you live?" So I said, 'Moss Side." I said, "I'm going to [C?] Road to get a bus to Princes Road, then walk down." I think it was a bus, yes, it would be a bus. [talk going on in the background] So

erm, he said, "Oh. I'll walk with you," he said. "Can I walk with you to the bus stop?" So I said, "Yes." So he said, "Can I see you again?" So I said, "Yes, if you want." Anyway I had to tell him I was on two-ten [shift] that week. "Oh," he said, "I'll come and meet you." So he said, "I won't come Monday nights. I go out with my mates on a Monday night. But I'll meet you Tuesday." So I said, "How will I know you'll turn up?" Hoping to God he would, you know. So he said, "All right, I'll give you my comb." A comb, no less!

VB: Aw.

AW: So I said, "Anybody can buy a comb!" "Oh no," he said, "Not this one. This is special." So he gave me the comb. I had to laugh, smiled after. Anyway, I didn't say anything to anybody at work but I couldn't stop thinking about him. Anyway I was like getting ready to come home about ten o'clock and I went in the toilet like you do and I'd had my hair permed. The first perm the week before. It was all curly. Ooh, I didn't half fancy myself!

VB: [laughs]

AW: And eh, two of the girls was in. And I put some, I've never used a lot of make-up. And I put some lipstick on, so one of the girls said, "What're you doing putting lipstick on?" So I said, "Mhm. Never you mind!" They said, "But you never put lipstick on." And I said, "Ooh, I'm putting it on tonight." [laughs] "Oh", they said, "Something going on here." I said, "No there isn't. There's nothing going on, you know." "You don't put lipstick on for [supper?]." And I still wouldn't give anything away. Anyhow, I got outside at ten o'clock and he wasn't there.

VB: Tch. Aw.

AW: So I thought, oh my heart's sunk. Oh well, there's other fish in the sea. Anyway, I just got round [inaudible]. Oh no, I started walking then because it was easier to walk to go to Moss Side rather than get the bus. It was only half an hour's walk. So I thought, oh, never mind. It's okay. A few steps and he come dashing up. [laughs] Out of breath. So he said, "Ooh," he said, "I'm sorry I'm late." So I thought, well I'm not gonna wait for him, you know. [Man's voice: something about shutting door]. All right. I'll shut it. Okay. [shuts door] So he said, and I always remember it, and I'm going back to what, 1937--

VB: Mhm.

AW: And he said, I just forget where he said he was with his mate. And a bomb had gone off. So erm, I believed him, you know. I was thrilled to bits. Anyway, he said, "Can I see you on Saturday?" I think he met me every night. That week. He may not. I can't remember really. But I know he said, "Can I take you out on Saturday?" Well, I was thrilled to bits. So I said, "Yes." He said, "All right, I'll meet you." 'Cause he worked till about six o'clock, seven o'clock, something like that. And he still lived in Hulme. He hadn't moved from where he was then. So erm, I went out. Bought myself a new coat. I'm a lover of green. I love green. Always have done. And I bought this new coat and it was the latest, it had big lapels. I'll never forget it. And I bought eh, I was all in green anyway, apart from my shoes I think.

Anyway, my sister said, "Oh come on, I'll touch your hair up." And my mother was dead against it. You know, they were dead old-fashioned in them days. Everything was taboo. And it was only a tuppenny rinse, what you could get. And all you did was just brush it on. It washed out. 'Cause I was a lot darker then than I am now. Oh, I was thrilled to bits. All these lovely auburn tints in my hair, you know. So my mother said, "What're you doing?" "Oh," she says, "It's all right." Anyway, they had a corner shop. My mother asked me to go for something and he was already there. I hadn't ad my coat on then. And he looked at me but he mustn't have realised who I was, you know.

VB: [laughs]

AW: So I thought, "Ooh, he's looking." And I didn't let on. I was enjoying this, you know.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Anyway, I went in and came out and passed again and he looked again. So of course, a couple a minutes after I goes out in my green coat, all dressed up. So he looks and he said, "Was that you that's just passed me there?" [laughs] "Why didn't you speak" [laughs]

VB: Aw.

AW: I said, "No," I said. "I was enjoying it." He didn't recognise me. He said, "I've not seen you dressed like that before." [laughs] I'd been in my working clothes. But anyway, it went

on from there. And then I was going with him a few weeks and he said, "My mum doesn't know that I'm going with a girl, you know. I've told my dad I'm going with your brother."
[laughter]

VB: Aw dear.

AW: See, he was only seventeen like me, you see. So I said, "Why?" And he said, "My dad'll understand but I don't think my ma would," you know. Anyway I took him home first when I was on the six-two [shift]. You had a day off in the week. So I took him home. I said, "Right, I'll go home. I'll get changed" Normally you went straight out from work, you see. Anyway, I took him in and introduced him to my mum. My mother was weighing him up, you know, like they do. She never said anything. Anyhow, when I got home, she didn't say anything that night. The next afternoon Vincent was working, you see. So, we didn't go out every afternoon. But, erm, most afternoons we did. But we didn't this time. Anyway she said, "Is that boy a Catholic?" There was a lot of bigotry in those days. I don't know whether you know that. Oh, it was like marrying a foreigner! So I said, "I don't know." Which I did. He told me, Vincent. He was a practising Catholic actually. So I said, "I don't know." I thought, forgive me for telling lies. Anyway she said, "Well you ask him. I think he is." So, I thought, it doesn't make any, I wouldn't care if He was a Jew! [laughter] Said, "All right. Ask him." I said. "Don't make any difference to me anyway." So she said, "I bet he is." And she was dead uncanny, that way.

VB: Mhm.

AW: She seemed to be able to pick them out. Used to fascinate. I mean there was Catholic families like his everywhere in the street. In fact a lot of them were Catholics, you know. And erm, so I was telling Vincent. 'Course he was very, eh [pause; 2 seconds] easygoing. And my son is. It's got to be really bad, anything to worry him.

VB: Mhm.

AW: And I wasn't like that. I was a bit on the serious side. I tended to take things serious, you know. So, 'course, he just laughed. So he said, "What did you say?" So I admitted that I didn't know. So he said, "Well you should have told me. There's nothing to be ashamed of."

Anyway he took me one Sunday to see his mother. Before they moved into a bigger house after. Well. I don't know what it was but I think I'd been on a trip or something with the mill. And we didn't get home till the early hours. I don't know how he knew, but he was there. And 'course it was late. It was the early hours of the morning. And I said, "Well, come home with me. You can sleep with my brother." Anyway, we went in, my mother was still up. Now, would she go to bed? She wouldn't move till we moved. So she said, "You'd better get to bed. Go and sleep with our Jack," she said. So we both looked at one another, I thought, no goodnight kiss tonight!

VB: [laughs]

AW: Anyway, the next morning I went home with him to see his mother. Well! I'd just got to the door and it was one of those houses like I had during the war. You walk right in. There was no lobby or anything. And I just got to the door. And he went in first and I've never forgotten it. She frightened me to death. She said, "Where the bloody hell have you been all night?" she said. Well, I wanted to run, run off. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

AW: So he said, "Just a minute, ma! Just a minute, ma," he said. Put his arms round er, you know. His dad was, I loved his father. Never really cottoned on to his mother. She was all right. But I loved his father. I love a father figure I suppose.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Anyway, he said, "Just a minute, ma. There's somebody here to see you!" So she looks. So he come for me, like. He said, "This is my da and this is my ma." My ma, he used to call her. So she weighed me up, you know, weighed me up and down. "Oh!" she said, "So you're Jack."

VB: [laughs]

AW: She said, "Since when did Jack wear skirts?" 'Cause his father hadn't let on, you see. Vincent must have told him not to tell his mother, you see. "Oh, so this is Jack, is it?" she said. [laughs] Anyway, she weighed me up. We were going out, only stayed a few minutes.

So I said to Vincent, "I don't like your mother." He said, "Oh, she's all right. Her bark's worse than her bite", you know. [laughs]. But anyway, it just, chance, formed from there. 1938 Christmas Eve. The brother older than me got married the morning, we got engaged at the night.

VB: Mhm.

AW: And then he went to camp, to Territorial camp in the June. Eh, for a fortnight. Came back. All the relatives were there, waiting for him. His mother, sons, sweetheart. Anyway, we waited. It was a beautiful Summer's day. Oh, he was cleaning his rifle. And he kept looking round at me and going [mouths something inaudible]. So the sergeant knocks his head. [laughs] This woman said to me, "Oh," she said, "Isn't it nice when you're in love?" [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

AW: Anyway, when we were going home, he said to me, erm, "We're getting married in August." Well I nearly died. "I said, "You what?" He said, "We're getting married in August." I said, "Oh no, we're not."

VB: [laughs]

AW: "I'm not getting married till I'm twenty-one." Which was my goal sort of thing. He said, "I'm not waiting till you're twenty-one," he said. "We're getting married on August the Fifth. I've been thinking about it," he said. "I want to get married. Your mother'll go up the wall. You're only eighteen." [laughter] I said, "I don't care." He said, "I've been thinking about it. No, I've made my mind up." I said, "Oh. Don't mind me!" [laughs] Or words to that effect. So I said, "Oh, give over." "No," he said. And he was dead serious. And he wasn't a serious person, you know. So I said, "You mean it, don't you?" He said, "Yes I do. I've made my mind up," he said. [laughter] Anyway, I said, "We haven't got much money." He said, "I've got some saved up," he said. I said, "Well, I'm having a white wedding or none at all. I've always set my heart on a white wedding." He said, "You can have a white wedding as long as we get married." All right, fair enough. Anyway, we only had about what, six weeks. Something like that.

VB: Goodness me.

AW: So I said, "Your mother'll go." He said, "I don't care what my mother'll do. I've made me mind up anyway." She told him. He told her. 'Course when I went to see her again she said, "I believe you two are getting married." So I said, "Ooh," I said, "It wasn't me. Don't put the blame on me." So she said erm, "It's a bit of a rush, isn't it?" Well, those days that's the first thing they thought of.

VB: Aw dear.

AW: They were that bad minded the lot of them. The first thing they thought of that you was having a baby. Well I was most indignant at that, you know. So she weighed me up, she said, "It's a bit quick, isn't it? Is there any reason for it?" So I said, "No there isn't." See she couldn't come out with it like they would today, you know. They weren't as open. They'd rather think about it. So I said, "Anyway, don't look at me. It was Vincent. As soon as I met him he had it all planned." So she said, "I think you're a bit young." So I said to her, "How old was you when you got married?" So she said nineteen. So I said, "Well I'll be nineteen in November." So of course she couldn't say anything. But his dad was thrilled to bits. But I must admit, she was very good. I told my mother and she turned round and said, "Oh well, you make your bed, you lie on it." And she never did a thing towards that wedding. Really. And his mother did it all. I give her credit. All we had to do was put the banns in. 'Course we were both in different parishes. I was in Moss Side, he was in Hulme. So rather than go to two churches, as I say, he was a Catholic anyway. So my auntie said, "Well, give Vincent my address. It won't make any difference, you know. They're not to know."

'Course there was controversy then, where we should get married. I was willing to get married in the Catholic church. 'Cause I think I could have took to the faith really. I don't know. But I wanted to please him as well. Well, you should have heard my mother. Oh-h! I was between two fires. I could've understood it coming from his mother. Being Catholic. But not from mine! And I mean I know she was bigoted but I mean she had friends that was Catholics in the street and that, you know. Well! Oh, I thought, here we go again. So I told Vincent. Her attitude is awful. She also said she wouldn't come to the wedding. She said, "I'm not going in no Catholic church," she said. By the way, what are you?

VB: Erm, I'm neither, so. [laughs]

AW: Aw are ye. I didn't want to offend you. It's never bothered me. I've always, funnily enough, I've always ad Catholic friends. But anyway, so I said to Vincent, "She says, 'I'm not setting foot in a Catholic church'." So he say, 'Well my mother could say the same but she's not like that,' you know. Anyway when he came for me he got hold of me mother. So he said, "Listen. I'm not having Ann upset. It's her day, our day. If you don't want to come to the wedding that's entirely up to you. My mother's going. She's not bigoted like you. And she's got more to be bigoted than you have." She was married in Salford Cathedral, his mother. Anyway, so he said, "We'll get married in the Registry Office," which Catholics don't believe in. I don't know about now. But it wasn't recognised then. I said, "I'm not going to no Registry Office. Two of my family's been married in a Registry Office. Not me. It's either a church or nothing." So his mother said, "I don't mind. I would've liked you to have married in our church."

We went to see our minister. Eh, my minister from where I was. And he was a bachelor all his life. And he was giving us instruction on what is called sex today, which was unheard of. I didn't even know what it was! Hadn't even heard the word! And I was most annoyed. I thought, ooh, fancy a man not being married, you know. I wasn't that green. I mean I was green, but I knew it was wrong somehow.

VB: Yeah.

AW: 'Course Vincent, he took it all as a joke, which he always did. And then we had to go and see Father [Sewell?] which was the Catholic priest. So, he was a lovely man. Very well loved he was. So he said, "Have we got a new convert here?" So I said, "I don't know. I'm between two fires at the moment. I won't commit myself." But what put me off then, the thing that put me off was when you got married, they don't do it now, but when you were marrying a Catholic, you had to sign a form to bring any children of that marriage up in the Catholic faith--

VB: Mm.

AW: And I didn't want to be bound by that. But even though it was the rule then, they don't do it now. 'Cause there's a lot of mixed marriages, you see. So Vincent said to me, "If you want to get married in your own church, it's all right by me." Anyway, I did. And there was a lot of little two-up, two-down houses empty then. Those days. Anyway this lady that had the house we did get, she moved just across the road. She wanted a bigger house. And it was nice. It was a lovely little house. Little back yard. And the only thing was, there wasn't a kitchen as we know it. It was curtained off.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I mean, there was only two of us. It was lovely. Anyway I furnished it. And she came with me to buy bedding and things like that. My mother never did a thing. Really upset me. Anyway, ordered the flowers. You can see, I've got lilies there. I wanted roses. 'Cause I love roses.

VB: Mhm.

AW: "Ooh no," she said. "Red roses with white. It's unlucky." I've thought since, well, I couldn't have been more unlucky. But anyway, and I didn't know she had ordered lilies. And I nearly died when I seen the bouquet. Madonna lilies. Ooh, God! Anyway, and the cake, she ordered the cake and everything. All we had to do was just put the banns in. And I was telling our Susan: "How much did it cost you, mum?" [laughs] So I said, "You might not believe it, with the room. We ordered a Labour room, it was, up in [Steadin?]. And you can hire it for ten shillings. But you had to do your own catering. All the crockery and everything.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But my eldest sister was always in the catering trade. And she set it beautiful. I don't know what we had for music. I can't remember. Anyway, I said it cost £40.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Considering what hers cost. She's been married what? Twenty, twenty-seven years this June. And I said, "Well," I said, "That was a lot a money those days. It was a fortune."

VB: [laughs]

AW: I said, "I didn't save much towards it. Vincent saved it all." So she started laughing. So she says to me, "How much was your wedding dress?" [laughs] So I said, "Believe it or not twenty-one shillings." [laughter]. I said that it was [satin?].

VB: Looks lovely.

AW: I said, "And the veil was, I think, four [shillings] and eleven [pence]."

VB: Yeah.

AW: And I can't remember, well my shoes wouldn't be much. I got white shoes on. I said, "The orange blossom was about two and eleven," something like that. They were plastic, you know. They don't believe you! You know, I said, "It's fifty-five years old, that, now." No, it's more, isn't it? Fifty-six isn't it. '39. Erm, and I got them all from Bon Marche on Stretford Road. [laughing] Oh dear.

VB: You looked lovely anyway.

AW: Yes, everybody says it. Of course, me serious, he's smiling. I'll show you his soldier photo while you're here.

[goes to get photo; approx 12 seconds]

VB: Oh!

AW: Isn't that lovely?

VB: That's a beauty. It really is.

AW: Makes you think, doesn't it?

VB: Yeah. I see what you mean about his eyes. They're very warm sort of expression he has, hasn't he?

AW: Mhm. Yes.

VB: Lovely eyes.

AW: Yeah, but he was always smiling.

VB: Mhm.

AW: And his eyes used to wrinkle. My son's does. He's got, my son's got his eyes.

VB: Yeah.

AW: If he'd have had brown eyes he'd been more like me.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But he's got his build and everything.

VB: Yeah. [laughs]

AW: And I think sometimes, what a waste.

VB: Mhm.

AW: You know. It was on the wall but I moved my wardrobe.

VB: Ah I see.

AW: And I've just left it on my tallboy now.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Keep saying I'll put it up here. I'll get Paul to put it up.

VB: That would look very good. Ah. It's a lovely photo.

AW: Oh aye. Never mind. I've got my memories, so. Better to have loved and lost they say, don't they?

VB: Well yes, yes.

AW: I wouldn't have missed it for anything. You know. He was a Lance Corporal. He was up for a promotion as well. It was too late. You know, you can't conceive... [pause; 2 seconds] You know, when you look at them and think, you know, it's hard to explain. You think, well,

[pause; 2 seconds] how can I, you know, how can you really believe that they've, they existed really? You know, I mean, we know they did but. You know, under the circumstances you think... [pause; 2 seconds] I have a change, well I change it over now and again. We have a change--

VB: Yeah.

AW: When I do, you know, when I do a bit of swapping round. I put that up there and then I put that in there. But I did intend putting it up. But I was going to, you know, get other frames. That's worn quite well.

VB: Yeah.

AW: And I said to our Vincent, I said, "If I took that out and got another frame..." He said, "Yeah. You'd take a risk." If it was exposed to the air.

VB: Yes I could imagine that.

AW: But now, you could have one take off now, as you know, probably. He said, "But it wouldn't be the same."

VB: Yeah.

AW: That's the original, you see.

VB: Yeah.

AW: So he said, "No, leave it mum. Leave it as it is." I said, "Oh, the gloss is a bit tatty now." He said, "Oh well. You can chance it." Then again, I'm not saying it would crumble, anything like that. He said, 'But you might take a risk.' Exposing it to the air, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: He said, "You can have one taken off if you want." I said, 'No, I don't want one taken off. I just wanted to put it in a different frame.' But then somebody said, "Ooh, it wouldn't look the same." They keep putting me off. But that's worn quite well actually.

VB: Yes it has.

AW: It just a bit faded. There's probably dust inside.

VB: Yeah.

AW: So. [pause; 3 seconds] Oh well. [pause; 3 seconds] [laughs] Are you thinking how much I've changed? [laughs]

VB: No.

AW: [laughs]

VB: Actually I was thinking how little you've changed, [laughs] to be honest.

AW: A lot older. Fifty-six years older.

VB: I mean obviously there is a difference but I mean, you can tell it's you originally.

AW: Mhm. And that suit that Vincent's got on was from Montague Burton's.

VB: Right.

AW: 'Thirty Shilling Tailors'. [laughter]

VB: Right.

AW: Used to be all the go, them.

VB: It's very smart.

AW: 'Thirty Shilling Tailors'.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Mm. Our Susan, she always gets me going on days gone by. I said, "You're not supposed to dig up the past," I said.

VB: [laughs]

AW: So she said, "Oh. I just can't believe it." "Well," I said, "It's true!"

VB: Yeah.

AW: I said, "You go and get the books out of the library!" A friend a mine gave me a book about the erm, war evacuees.

VB: Right.

AW: Called 'Farewell Manchester'. And eh, she wanted it back. I lent it to Susan. I said, "Go on. Read that and see what happened during the war." I said, "I could've sent our Vincent away but I wouldn't. No. He was all I had at the time." But it was erm, this woman compiled it. The actual girls and boys.

VB: Yeah.

AW: How they were treated. Some were treated well. Some weren't, you know. It's not very thick. Anyway, I give it the lady back. It was very interesting. Mind, I said, "I saw that anyway." I knew quite a bit about it, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But it was interesting to read.

VB: That reminds me actually. Have you seen this book about erm, cinemas in Manchester? I just came across this. It's not just in Manchester. It's sort of north-west cinemas. There's some nice ones of the cinemas in Oxford Road. I think that's maybe the place that I've marked there. Erm, somewhere round about there.

[pause; 3 seconds]

AW: Pageboy. Oh, the Queen's! [pause; 3 seconds]

VB: Oh that's Bolton.

AW: Oh that was the other side of town I think, the Queen's [possibly referring to the Queen's Picture Theatre].

VB: Yeah.

AW: There was erm...

VB: I'm sure there's one there of...

AW: Oh the Oxford Cinema! Oh! 've probably seen him! Oxford Cinema. 1925! Oh, gosh! He was probably still on the door when we went. Oh, that was the [inaudible]. I didn't know it. Set by the river, at [N?], the River Mersey. [mumbles; inaudible] Majestic. [pause; 3 seconds]

VB: It's maybe past that bit where it gets on to the...

AW: Yeah the Majestic. That was in, where some of them are, I'd heard of them, but erm--

VB: Yeah.

AW: But no, they weren't in our area.

VB: Yeah.

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

AW: [in middle of saying something about children in the street]. For a penny crush. Oh the Piccadilly! Forgot about that. [mumbles; inaudible]

VB: Is that one that's still there?

AW: Oh no. No.

VB: Yeah.

AW: When did that become the, I wonder if that became the Gaumont. [pause; 3 seconds].
Oh look. Piccadilly Gardens! [pause; 4 seconds] Piccadilly Gardens. I don't remember that.
It's a long time.

VB: Mhm.

AW: 'Memories of a Manchester Dance Hall manager.' The Piccadilly Cinema, Manchester, 1925. Oh I probably wouldn't remember. I wouldn't be old enough, would I?

VB: Ah, it's probably too..., yeah. Did any of the cinemas you went to have a dance hall in them as well?

AW: Erm, not one the ones we went to.

VB: Yeah.

AW: No. 'Picture Palaces 1930'. Oh I'm trying to think of that one that was on the corner of, oh the Longford. That's one I forgot--

VB: Aw.

AW: Stretford.

VB: Right.

AW: Mm. Jack Buchanan. *When Knights Were Bold*. Ah!

VB: [Laughs].

AW: There you are, the Gaumont.

VB: The Gaumont. Right.

AW: Oxford Road. 1935. Jessie Matthews. 1935.

VB: Did you like Jessie Matthews?

AW: Yeah. She was all right.

VB: Ah.

AW: She was eh...

VB: 'Cause I was hearing a bit about...

AW: Aw, the Paramount! That was later. The Odeon, it is now. It's in Oxford Road, yeah. It'll be, I should imagine that changed to the Odeon.

VB: Ah.

AW: Ooh, look at all the girls. At the Paramount Theatre.

VB: It's amazing seeing all these smart uniforms.

AW: Oh aye, they all, yeah they did. The usherettes had the same uniforms as well. I think that, yes, I think that changed to the Odeon. 'Cause it looks the same, eh, you know. [turns pages]

VB: Obviously the romantic films were a great interest. Did you like comedies and..?

AW: Oh yes. Oh aye.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Erm, Laurel and Hardy. And who was the others. Yet I couldn't laugh at them now. It's funny that, isn't it? Mind you, they were all Cowboys and Indians when I used to take the children to school. 'Cause I used to clean steps, you know, for tuppence a time. We all had steps, you know.

VB: Right.

AW: Some had one, some had two. And we used to stone them. And we used to do that to get some coppers. Used to park all the children on me in the street.

VB: [laughs]

AW: Was only a penny to go in. It's an Irish club now actually.

VB: Right.

AW: Yeah. The Lyceum. Mhm.

VB: So was that quite a small cinema then?

AW: No, it was fairly big.

VB: A-ah.

AW: And those that had erm, the posh kids, went in the other door.

VB: Really.

AW: They paid tuppence, you see, they were in the best seats. [laughs] Oh. [turns pages]

VB: Did you go to the matinees on a Saturday?

AW: Yeah. The matinees. Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Well we never went at night. I don't think we was allowed out at night.

VB: Ah.

AW: I used to just take them Saturday afternoon. The mothers used to perhaps give them [inaudible] jaw eh, sweets. And give me a couple of coppers for taking them, you know.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But erm, Plaza Cinema, Stockport. We didn't get that far.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Out of bounds. Well they weren't out of bounds but they were out of our district.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Oh, [name of orchestra?]. I remember going to eh, from school, to the [pause; 3 seconds]. [Inaudible] Free Trade Hall. Erm, you know, I was bored to death. I've never been really, I could never read music anyway at school. I suppose if I couldn't read music I wasn't a bit, oh the Apollo! Oh, yeah, we went there. Not very often. We did go a couple of times I think. Erm, and eh, I could remember the piece of music but. And there was a pause and everywhere was quiet. What did I do? Go and clap!

VB: [Laughs].

AW: And the teacher's face! I've never forgotten it! Oh, when I got to school the next day, did I get a telling off. "How dare you!"

VB: Oh dear.

AW: Oh well I didn't know. I mean I didn't know it was a pause in the music. I thought it'd finished. [laughs] Oh I was always in trouble.

VB: Aw dear.

AW: I was always putting my foot in it. Oh, Gracie Fields. [Name of film?] 1945. [turns pages]

VB: Did you like George Formby?

AW: Oh! The [P?] Lane Co-op! They used to have dances there.

VB: Right.

AW: Yeah. The Co-op. We went a couple of times. But as I say, dancing wasn't our, well not mine anyway.

VB: I don't know why, but when you mentioned Gracie Fields there, I thought of George Formby. I was wondering if you liked him.

AW: Yes. Oh, mind you, I didn't like him.

VB: Yeah.

AW: Oh the church in Dickenson Road. They've made it into BBC Studio. That's right. Made it into the BBC Studio. Oh 'School For', oh, Frank Randle [referring to *School for Randle*]! Jimmy Clitheroe. I remember them. [turns pages] Dickenson Road, Rusholme. Oh aye. Walked down there many times. [turns pages] Oh I remember the Gaumont Cinema in Chorlton.

VB: Ah.

AW: We don't go to it but I remember the Gaumont. A lot of them have gone now.

VB: Mhm.

AW: *Hobson's Choice*. 1953. Pendleton. Gaumont Cinema. A lot of them have been made into bingo halls.

VB: Yeah. Cause I was wondering if you still watch a lot of films or go to the pictures much.

AW: If they come on but I was asking our Vincent, eh. I was telling about that old one, *Maytime*.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I said, "I wonder why they don't show them. They're showing a lot of them, of my generation." So he says, "Well," with him being in the cinema like. He said, "Well. The trouble is, mum, a lot of them were made with nitrate. And, eh, they can't use them."

VB: Ah, I see.

AW: For some reason they can't use them. He did explain. But eh, he said, "They can't use them. That's why they don't show them."

VB: Mhm.

AW: Because they must be subject to probably warp or something like that, you know.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Ooh, look at all the kids there. [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

AW: 1957. They'd recognise themselves, some of them.

VB: I'll bet.

AW: There's a lollipop. Ah. Cinema on [Inaudible]. Market Street, Manchester [referring to the Cinephone Cinema]. Oh yes! I remember that. He used to show [pause; 3 seconds] naughty films.

VB: Really!

AW: That's right. The old Market Street. Yeah, I remember that. He used to show erm, naughty films. Oh, it was demolished. 1974. *Lawrence of Arabia*. [turns pages; 8 seconds] Coronation Street. Granada Studios. 1960. Classic Cinema, Morecambe. It's been closed. The Odeon Cinema, Burnley. Ooh, Picture House, Oxford Road. Opened in 1911.

VB: Mhm.

AW: [whistles]. Whoooo! Pyramid Cinema. Later the Odeon in Sale. Yeah, I remember that. It's erm, it's like a night club now.

VB: Mhm.

AW: Mhm. That's what I was trying to think of. Where they showed the cartoons. The Tatler!

VB: Oh really!

AW: Yeah. The Tatler. Oxford Road Station's down there. Erm, they only showed cartoons and *Batman* and Flash, what, *Flash Gordon*. And it only lasted about an hour.

VB: Right.

AW: So it was changing all the time.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I think it's the Cornerhouse now. Yeah. Part of the Cornerhouse. And at night, not then, not when I used to go, but, in later years, recent years, they used to show, blue films. You had to be a member.

VB: Ah I see.

AW: Yeah. That's what I was trying to think of, The Tatler. Mhm. Used to see men fast asleep in the seats.

VB: [laughs]

AW: They'd still be there when the show was over. They didn't bother them either. You know, didn't wake them up. Didn't wake them up to say, "Get out". By the river at Northenden. Oh, it's very interesting, isn't it?

VB: It's good. I know. I enjoyed looking at that.

AW: Mhm. [turns pages; 9 seconds] There's no theatres in though, is there?

VB: No.

AW: Just for cinemas.

VB: Just the pictures.

AW: Clayton [referring to Carlton Super Cinema].

VB: Yeah.

AW: The Rochdale Hippodrome. 'Cause we had a Hippodrome in Hulme.

VB: Oh right.

AW: But that was a theatre, you know.

VB: Aw I see, yeah.

AW: Oh my auntie used to take me very week when I was a child. It didn't matter what artist was on. We used to go up in the gods and they were all, tiers, you know. Very wide [pause; 2 seconds] benches, actually. And she always bought a block of Bourneville chocolate. The dark chocolate. Ooh, I hated it.

VB: [laughs]

AW: She used to buy me some sweets I think. But every Saturday night without fail. No matter who was on. She took me there. I remember, the Hippodrome. I think it's still there. It was a bingo hall. I don't know whether it still is. But erm, mhm, Charlie Chaplin!

VB: Was he someone you...

AW: I said to our Vincent, I said, "You know," I said, "All the things we laughed at when we was kids." He said, "Don't tell me you've lost your sense of humour, mum."

VB: [laughs]

AW: I said, "No. But I suppose, in your childish mind." And they used to make the kids, if there was anybody they'd say, "He's behind you! He's behind you!" {laughs} Aw dear. Our Vincent said, "Ooh mum," he said, "You're always going back."

VB: [laughs]

AW: I said, "No I'm not! I just look back to have a laugh." He was upset when he had to leave the cinema.

VB: I bet, yes.

AW: Because he erm, there wasn't a thing he didn't know about it.

VB: Yeah.

AW: But as he said, well you probably know, the cinemas. There's only one or two. Cause we had one in Wythenshawe, the other side. The Forum. Used to take the children. And that closed down years ago.

VB: Yeah.

AW: I used to go there. The Cinema. But erm...

VB: **That's a shame that, yeah.**

AW: Lovely that. Lovely book.

VB: **That's great. Thanks.**

AW: *The 39 Steps*. Ooh, that was on not that long ago, on here.

VB: **That's great.**

AW: That was on the other week. Yeah. And what else? *Goodbye Mr Chips*. Mhm. He [Robert Donat] suffered from asthma, didn't he?

VB: **Did he?**

AW: He was a bad asthmatic I believe. Mhm. So somebody said.

VB: **Yeah. 'Cause someone was telling me that he had quite a bad stammer when he was a child. But he'd sort of developed, you know, what a beautiful voice he had.**

AW: Mhm. Yeah.

VB: **And he tried to overcome the stammer.**

AW: Yeah, somebody told me he was asthmatic.

VB: **Yeah.**

AW: I didn't know. He was erm, d'you want another drink?

VB: **That'd be lovely actually, yes. Thanks.**

AW: Ooh, I've left your teabag in.

VB: **Och. [laughs]**

AW: I don't know.

[End of Interview]