

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.

- * Transcript ID: EC-95-220AT002
- * CCINTB Transcript IDs: 95-220-14a-ag, 95-220-15a-m
- * Tapes: EC-95-220OT003, EC-95-220OT004
- * CCINTB Tapes ID: T95-139, T95-140
- * Length: 01:28:18
- * Spixworth, Norfolk, 14 November 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Ethel and George Cullum
- * Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn
- * EC = Ethel Cullum/GC = George Cullum/VB = Valentina Bold
- * Notes: Second of two interviews with Ethel and George Cullum; Sound Quality: Fair; this interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; the original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection - please contact Lancaster University Library for details.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[tape introduction by VB]

EC: Well I don't talk very nice on the tape, do I?

VB: Oh you do. [laughs] I think you've got a lovely voice.

EC: Yeah. Well I used to always watch wrestling--

VB: Mhm.

EC: And I used to get, I'd get very excited. And erm, I used to swear. And anyway, Mr Cullum, without me knowing, he put that at the back of the chair and he taped me. And when I heard my voice and the swear words--

VB: [laughs]

EC: Felt awful. What a horrible voice I'd got. Which, that isn't horrible to you?

VB: No, not at all. [laughs] Far from it. Eh, as I say I was very interested by what you were telling me and I jotted down a couple of things that I'd like to ask you some more about. Erm, I mean you mentioned a number of stars that you liked.

EC: Yes.

VB: People like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. And I wondered if there were particular qualities that you liked in a film star?

EC: Erm... [pause 2 seconds] I tell you what I do think. I think that actors today are much more natural than they were. They really... years ago when you were watching them, they were wonderful to you then. But as you get older and you see these new stars, they're much more natural.

VB: That's interesting.

EC: They made up more them days.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Didn't they? See, and the photography was different. I mean you got the views of the close-ups and they were really very artificial.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But they're not like that today.

VB: Mhm. So the whole style of acting was different then, do you think?

EC: Well yeah. It was much different. That, that... see, you didn't think it then. But, eh now you sit and watch a picture, you get into it and you don't think they're acting. But they did. You knew that they were acting. But anyway, I used to love the pictures. Yesterday, oh George, he like all the eh,

sport. He was watching the motorcycling. So I come in, I said, "George, can I go to the pictures for half an hour?" "What would you like?" I say, "Anything except that." So we sat and watched a film yesterday.

VB: [laughs]

EC: That was an old one though.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And erm, yeah, they have much, much better films now than they were years ago.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Better photography and everything.

VB: It's interesting because obviously you were telling me that you had been to the films right up--

EC: Yes.

VB: Regularly.

EC: From [a] kid of twelve.

VB: Yeah.

EC: We used to see eh... [pause 2 seconds]. E-erm, ooh, you got--

VB: [laughs]

EC: [pause 4 seconds] There used to be a comedian called Harry, I don't know whether that was Leemon or Lemon. [possibly referring to Harry Langdon] He used to be the comedian when I was a kiddie.

VB: Uhuh.

EC: I didn't see Laurel and Hardy then. That was too far back.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And erm--

VB: What was so good about him? 'Cause I remember you mentioned him before?

EC: Mhm. And there was another one. That was a silent film. That the words would come. His name was Fred Smith. That's when I was a kiddie. I remember we used to get erm, cowboys. I forget the names they had. Too far back. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: 'Cause you mentioned other stars, like Bette Davis was one that you mentioned.

EC: Oh yeah.

VB: What was it about her do you think, that made her good?

EC: Erm, [pause 2 seconds] she was dominating, wasn't she? She, she took us, you were there with her. There was Bette Davis, there was Joan Crawford. Eh, Mary Astor was another good act, actress. There was two sisters. Eh... [pause 8 seconds] Leslie Howard, he was English star.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And eh, Herbert Marshall. He had er, he had, he went in the First World War and he lost a leg.

VB: Ah.

EC: But he still, but he had an artificial leg when he was in the films. I seen a lot of his lovely films. Erm, who else? What was the sister's name? Short name it was. But Clara Bow.

VB: Mhm.

EC: She was erm... [pause 4 seconds] What d'you call it? She was a, sort of a, [pause 3 seconds] flighty sort of--

VB: Yeah.

EC: Flighty sort of... Marion Davies. [pause 8 seconds] Clark Gable. He came in later, didn't he?

VB: Mhm.

EC: Franchot Tone. Eh... [pause 4 seconds] See I can see the faces.

VB: Actually I brought along something I thought you might erm, enjoy seeing. A book that we have of films in the thirties.

EC: Ooh, look at that, 1938!

VB: Eh--

EC: Eh, now let me see who that is. It ain't Norma Shearer, is it?

VB: It is. Yeah. Did you like Norma Shearer?

EC: Yes. She's lovely.

VB: Yeah. 'Cause I thought you might enjoy--

EC: Yeah I've had one a lot later than this.

VB: Yes.

EC: Eh, since I've been married. But when I moved from the flat I didn't think I'd need it. So I give it to the young people upstairs.

VB: Mhm.

EC: 'Course, not as far back as this. Erm, Errol Flynn.

VB: Was he someone you liked?

EC: [That's English?] [inaudible]

VB: Mhm.

EC: [pause 4 seconds] That isn't Caron... [pause 2 seconds] Who was in *The 39 Steps*.

VB: Oh, Madeleine Carroll, Madeleine Carroll.

EC: Is that her?

VB: I'm not sure actually. It's eh--

EC: No. No.

VB: I don't know that face, I don't think.

EC: 'Course he turned out he, he was a Nazi spy at the finish.

VB: Really?

EC: Yeah. I read that not long ago. He was sort of a go-between. Oh I used to like Greta Garbo. Oh she was beau... Greta Garbo. John Gilbert.

VB: Mhm.

EC: [pause 2 seconds] Erm... [pause 3 seconds] Now, English star. Oh... [pause 2 seconds] he played in eh, schoolmaster, Mr Chips.

VB: Oh yes. Robert Donat. Yes. [laughs] Did you enjoy his films?

EC: Used to like him.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Oh, I didn't look. I knew, I could see.

VB: Mhm.

EC: [pause 4 seconds] Marlene Dietrich.

VB: Mhm. Did you like her films?

EC: Not much, no. Not particularly.

VB: Ah!

EC: No.

VB: What was it about her that erm--

EC: No. I can't say I was particularly keen for her.

VB: Mhm. Was there something about her that put you off a bit?

EC: I don't know. Erm, she married a film, a film director. [pause 3 seconds] Oberon--

VB: Oh. Merle Oberon.

EC: That's right.

VB: Yeah.

EC: That looks like little Jean Simmons But I don't think it is.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] Oh, Vivien Leigh.

EC: Yeah, she was in *Gone with the Wind*, wasn't she?

VB: Mhm.

EC: Yeah, Jean Harlow. I liked her. She was a eh, vamp, wasn't she? Blonde vamp. Eh, here's that English star eh, [pause 3 seconds] Ann, Ann... [pause 5 seconds] I know who it is. I was trying to say it, look.

VB: Oh, Anton Walbrook.

EC: Yes. I was trying to say it.

VB: Yeah.

[pause 4 seconds]

VB: Did you notice a difference between the English films and the American films?

EC: To be quite honest with you, now, I, I like the American films.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Erm, especially the eh, specially the police ones. Than the English.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But if you get a, if you really get a good English film, that takes some beating, doesn't it?

VB: Mhm. Were they different sorts of films then do you think?

EC: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] This is a old one.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Where you get this?

VB: E-erm, I bought it in Glasgow, just in a bookshop.

EC: Ye-ah.

VB: But eh, I think, 1938.

EC: Thirty-eight, yeah.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Used to like her. [looking at book] [pause 3 seconds] My life was picture crazy. I liked them all actually. There weren't many I didn't like.

VB: Were there ones that you didn't like?

EC: No, not really. I used to, not to say dislike, I probably think to myself, oh that wasn't as nice as the other one. Make some comparison.

VB: Mhm. [pause 2 seconds] But there was never anything that made you want to leave the picture?

EC: Well one of my favourites was *Gone with the Wind*.

VB: Ah.

EC: I thought that was lovely. [pause 3 seconds] And erm... [pause 3 seconds] I weren't so fond of comedy. I used to like eh, nice, romantic. When I was younger.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But now I like nice family films.

VB: Right.

EC: I don't like too much sex.

VB: That's interesting. So your taste changed.

EC: But I, I don't now, specially on the television, I don't really think they want [need] to show you so much sex as they do. I mean, if you see them go in the bedroom you know what you're going to do. What they're going to do or... But you don't expect to see them actually doing it. But you do these days, don't you? And erm, I don't care with my husband, but if my grandchildren were here I'd feel very embarrassed about it.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And there's been a lot of films lately with that, too much of that business.

VB: D'you think they handled that sort of thing better in the thirties films or...?

EC: Well you didn't get it as bad as, you knew what they was... I mean I saw a film with Lillian Gish called *Broken Blossoms*. That was ever so old. And she apparently was pregnant. But you guessed that. And she, I think she dies on the ice. And she'd got a rose in her hand. That was when I was a kid. But erm... [pause 3 seconds] No, I will say they make films much better now. Better with the photography and everything, and they did use too much make-up.

VB: Uhuh.

EC: Now a lot of them they don't bother with the make-up so much now, do they? Bette Davis used to make up. She was mostly a villain though, wasn't she? Erm, I see, I saw her once, they were on a... [pause 2 seconds] a, a [inaudible] That's Claude Rains. I think he was her husband [referring to

Paul Henreid]. And erm... [pause 6 seconds] He used to... and that was funny. He used to light two fags in his mouth--

VB: [laughs]

EC: And give her one. Yeah, something '[Gone?] Voyager' I believe that was called [referring to *Now, Voyager*]. But then when you look and 'course eh, then there was the... [pause 5 seconds] Bogart and eh, [pause 4 seconds] the Swedish star.

VB: Oh yes erm, Ingrid Bergman.

EC: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Well that, now that's another nice film. And there was another nice film with Mary Astor and eh, Bogart in erm, [pause 2 seconds] the 'Falcon' [referring to *The Maltese Falcon*] and that big fat man.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: That was another old film. That was quite... and *The African Queen*, I thought that was a beautiful film. But that wasn't in the--

VB: No, it's--

EC: That wasn't right an early one.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Was it? What was that? About thirties?

VB: Oh, it must've been the forties.

EC: Yeah. But that's good. That's a lovely film.

VB: Was Humphrey Bogart one of your favourites?

EC: Yes, yeah.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Not necessarily Lauren Bacall.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But him I did like.

VB: What was it you liked about him?

EC: Oh I don't know. 'Cause he looked like my brother. [laughs]

VB: Ah! [laughs]

EC: I don't know. Well when you're young, you're sort of romantic aren't you? You know. 'Cause I liked them, really it's 'cause I liked them all. There wasn't many I didn't like.

VB: Mhm. [pause 3 seconds] D'you think you were more interested in the women stars or the men stars? Or much the same?

EC: No. I liked, I liked the whole thing.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But as I say the films nowadays are much, made much better, photography and everything.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Make-up and all that sort of thing. But they do expose themselves a bit too much; but there you are, that's the times, isn't it?

VB: Yeah. It is interesting because I mean obviously, as I say, with you having that--

EC: All these years. That's seventy years I've been watching that, isn't it?

VB: Do you think you enjoy the films more now than when you were watching them then?

EC: Well, I recognise the films that are on there. That's not like sitting on a wide screen.

VB: Yeah.

EC: I don't go now but really eh, a few years back, if that was extraordinarily good picture, I would go on my own. You see. And there's no comparison about the screen and that, is there? What one did I go and see? And I've been with my grandson. When he was about twenty. He used to say, "Would you like to go the pictures, Grannie?" And I used to go with him to the Odeon. That'd be something special. The pictures I don't like is the outer space business. I can't... I don't like them at all. [coughs]

VB: Mhm.

EC: I suppose that if Mr Cullum'd liked the films, we probably would've kept on going.

VB: Yes.

EC: See he had a car and that was [more?] for us to go out in the car and see the pictures, wasn't it? And we've had that, we've had a television, erm, about thirty-two years.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But that one is what we bought for our 50th anniversary.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That's a nice one. Erm, did you watch Freud in the... [possibly referring to 1984 TV mini-series]

VB: I didn't, no. I missed it.

EC: Aw-w. S'lovely. Oh it was beautiful acting, lovely. Now that fellow in there, I could, well all the women liked him. That isn't a romantic feeling, when you get to my age, but you can feel, he loved this woman. But she was poor and he was prejudiced again, and he was very arrogant. But at the same time you knew his inner feelings. He acted so good in it, that was really lovely. We did tape that. For my daughter-in-law. That was really lovely. But see that's modern, isn't it?

VB: Mhm. It was interesting when you were saying there that it's quite different watching it on that [television] and sitting in the cinema.

EC: Yeah. Well I mean everything now is bettered since that. I mean they get these new things up and all that sort of thing, don't they?

VB: Mhm.

EC: And then 'course we got the wide screen, didn't we? With the glasses. But I never did, I never ever did that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: They used to supply you with glasses. But I never, I didn't ever do that--

VB: Yeah.

EC: At all.

VB: How did you feel yourself, sitting in a cinema? How did it make you feel?

EC: Oh I used to come out, it made you feel lovely. Think you've had two hours enjoyment like that. Especially eh, when I was, when I was on, years... when my son was young, I used to have a night

out. George would look after my son. And I had a night out. We would go out in them days. I used to bus. I used to mostly go to the Regent. And I used to... that was my night out. And he used to have Friday nights out with his father. And when, when I was erm, pensioned, if George didn't come home for dinner, he had a cup of tea at night. And I couldn't get there quick enough. I scrapped around and got all the dinner all laid out. And off I'd go with my pension book. And sit there. I used to smoke then. Used to have a pack of cigarettes. And I used to, "Only got two left!" I used to get so much--

[Mr Cullum comes in]

GC: Hallo, Val.

VB: Hallo.

GC: Y'all right?

VB: Fine. Yourself?

EC: All right, thanks.

VB: Good.

GC: Busy?

VB: I think so, yes. [laughs] Ah.

EC: Oh yeah, that's as good as a dose of medicine going to the pictures. I mean, there wasn't much else for us to do was there then.

VB: Mhm. So did you get quite excited as you say, when you were getting ready to go?

EC: Yeah. All eager to get there. I used to... I had been twice, to ext... to those pictures on different... but erm, I was at the Odeon one afternoon. And I used to always treat myself to a, [pause 2 seconds] a peach melba. That was on a stick. That was my treat. The pictures and that. I didn't

smoke then, I don't think. Anyway I was sat there and all of a sudden I got something in my mouth. And that was a piece of rope--

VB: [gasps]

EC: About that long.

VB: Oh! Goodness me!

EC: Anyway I called this young woman. Told her. So she says, "You come with me to the manager's." So anyway I went to the manager's. "What's your trouble?" I said, "This." I exaggerated. I said, "I've been in the toilet, sicking," and I said "I've missed half the picture."

VB: [laughs]

EC: "Ooh dear," he said, "That's awful," he said, "'Cause that's not our fault, you know," he said, "but I will write up about that to the people." That's Rank.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Rank's the picture people. So he said, "Well I'll give you another, a ticket. You come in tomorrow." Which I did. But I got a letter from Rank. 'Cause you know I was picture mad.

VB: [laughs]

EC: "George," I say, "I got a role in the pictures!"

VB: [laughs]

EC: But that wasn't. That was a letter of apology. And eh, eh this week I would be getting some ice cream. And I had about four boxes of big ice cream that they sent me.

VB: Oh well, that was worth it.

EC: So that was worth it, wasn't it?

VB: [laughs]

EC: But erm, I wasn't sick over it but I just sort of made it up like that. But that was a lark in the family you see 'cause they all knew I was film struck.

VB: [laughs]

EC: And I thought I'd got a job. As long as that said Rank at the top--

VB: [laughs]

EC: An extra.

VB: Ah.

EC: Extra [or one?] Oh yeah, I used to love the pictures.

VB: **Mhm. Did you ever think about doing that yourself? About actually going into the pictures?**

EC: Oh I would love to. Ye-ah. I would have loved to. I knew I wasn't good-looking enough or anything but I wouldn't mind being an extra--

VB: **Mhm.**

EC: Just to be in the films.

VB: **I mean when you were actually watching the films, did you ever imagine yourself in that sort of--**

EC: Oh when I watched the films, my dear, I was in the picture. 'Cause I thought I was the girl in it [inaudible]. I was wrapped up in it really.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I'm not so wrapped up in it now I'm older but you're a bit romantic when you're young, aren't you? I didn't have George then.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And erm, another picture what impressed me was eh, years ago, that was called *Barbed Wire*. I think I told you about that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That was our actor Clive Brook in that. And now see some pictures I still got impressed on my mind. Now like eh, *Gone with the Wind*. I saw that twice.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And everyone in that film was good. Olivia de Havilland. Eh, I now said is name, who, who--

VB: Oh erm, Leslie Howard.

EC: Yeah.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And I saw him in another picture with eh, Ingrid Bergman. Where he taught her to play the piano.

VB: Oh-h, erm, it's not *Intermezzo*?

EC: They fell in love didn't they?

VB: Yes.

EC: That was another lovely picture.

VB: Yes. Is that the one where erm, he's, he's married to somebody?

EC: Yeah, and they fall in love. I don't know if he's her tutor or what.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But that was another lovely picture, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

EC: And Al Jolson. That was a nice picture, the first talkie [referring to *The Jazz Singer*].

VB: Mhm.

EC: That was quite good picture. [pause 3 seconds] 'Cause I don't remember them all but--

VB: Mhm.

EC: But I tell you, I never ever missed a one week. And sometimes that was, that was when I was on my own.

VB: Mhm.

EC: When I went with George, we used to go about three times a week. 'Cause that was our entertainment, wasn't it?

VB: Mhm.

EC: 'Cause he liked the pictures as well. And 'course we got the newest stars, didn't we? Now 'course you got erm, Clint Eastwood. Now we both like him. You got [Charles] Bronson. Steve McQueen. They all the new ones. But even that, as they come along they got better and better, didn't they?

VB: Mhm. Did you find that you erm, thought about the films a lot when you were, when you weren't there?

EC: You did at work.

VB: Yeah.

EC: 'Cause we were all, that was all our enjoyment.

VB: Ah.

EC: See, I suppose I couldn't afford to buy it. But I sat with a, I worked with a woman who was about four year older. That'd be old then. Well she had a magazine, she used to pass it on to me, you see. We all used to... I worked in a boot work. And that, about as big as this. Benches. All benches along. And 'course that was the topic, wasn't it?

VB: Ah.

EC: "Oh did you go to the pictures last night? What was it like?" Well then 'course, if that was good, we'd all go. See what I mean.

VB: So you found out by talking to other people.

EC: Yeah. 'Course we didn't all like the same people. We didn't all like the same films, did we? So that was a topic to talk about, wasn't it?

VB: Was it mainly women that were working in the...?

EC: No, just the, these were women.

VB: Ah.

EC: The men's were in a different department.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And eh, you know, that was your topic. "Did you see so-and-so? Oh, go and see it. It was lovely" and all that sort of thing. "Don't go and see that. That's awful!" See what I mean.

VB: Mhm. Did you talk about things like what the stars were wearing in the films?

EC: No, I don't think so.

VB: A-ah.

EC: I don't think we, well we probably did. But I don't remember that outstanding.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But I do remember eh, like talking about the stars. I was trying to think, there was two sisters. One was Barbara [possibly referring to Barbara Stanwyck]. [pause 3 seconds] With Alan Ladd. And erm, her what wore the peek-a-boo and erm, she used to wear her hair down like this.

VB: Ah.

EC: Erm, she finished up in England. She lived in England. Because Alan Ladd, you got *Shane*. That was another good film. With erm, [pause 2 seconds] oh, that was a cow... western.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Then 'course we had eh, him what just died with cancer. Erm. [pause 3 seconds] My memory [today?] [pause 3 seconds] John, John Wayne.

VB: Ah. [laughs]

EC: John. We both liked him. And we both liked Steve McQueen. I like, we liked Errol Flynn.

VB: Mhm.

EC: 'Course years back we liked Douglas Fairbanks. Then we liked his son, [Douglas Fairbanks] Junior.

VB: So did you enjoy these sort of adventure films?

EC: Yes. Yeah. And eh, then we saw a film, *The Man in the Iron Mask*. He was erm, [pause 3 seconds] I think he was a foreigner in that. [pause 4 seconds] See when you go I shall, that, I'll remember the name. That's how it is, isn't it?

VB: Yes. [laughs]

EC: That's how it is, isn't it?

VB: 'Cause you mentioned a number of erm, the sort of western stars there. Was that a type of film that you enjoyed?

EC: Eh, what, [pause 3 seconds] no. I like, I like westerns now but they weren't my favourites.

VB: A-ah.

EC: I liked the love stories.

VB: So was it more these particular actors that you mentioned then, the John Wayne and--

EC: Oh probably, that was to do with it.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But I did like Joan Crawford. And eh, I liked Jane [Joan] Fontaine. I saw her in *Jane Eyre*. Erm, I saw her in *Rebecca*.

VB: Mhm.

EC: They, they're the sort of pictures that I liked.

VB: Yeah.

EC: That was nice. *Rebecca* was nice.

VB: Aw. Great film isn't it?

EC: That's a lovely film that is. She's a wicked old housekeeper. She got burnt up at the finish, didn't she?

VB: Mhm. What was it about Joan Fontaine do you think that you liked?

EC: Erm, well she went as a, he lost his wife. There was a bit of a mystery wasn't there? She was supposed to be dead in the boat.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And she went as a young wife. But the housekeeper was jealous of her, wasn't she?

VB: Yeah.

EC: But previous to that, I think that was Orson Welles [referring to *Jane Eyre*] and somebody else.

VB: A-ah.

EC: There was two versions of that, weren't they?

VB: Yeah.

EC: Eh, *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* were two separate films, weren't they? Erm, but *Jane Eyre*, the wife was in eh, they kept her in a room, didn't they?

VB: Huh! Oh ye-es. Yeah.

EC: 'Cause she was sort a mad, wasn't she?

VB: Yeah. So do you like that sort of film, where there's a bit of a mystery?

EC: Yes, yes, yeah. I love thrillers.

VB: Yeah.

EC: I like erm, erm... [pause 3 seconds]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

VB: Did you like the sort of Sherlock Holmes films as well as Hitchcock?

EC: Oh yeah! Erm, they used to be eh, B films on there. Written by erm... [pause 3 seconds] Oh we used to get the books out of the library. They were always B films. That'd be second turns.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But did you see *Psycho*?

VB: Oh ye-es.

EC: See that one. And I saw one with erm, [James] Stewart in it, where he was afraid of heights.

VB: Oh yes. Erm--

EC: *Vertigo*.

VB: That's it. Yeah.

EC: I also saw him in a picture with Grace Kelly. Where he had a broken leg.

VB: Yes. Eh, I know the one you mean.

EC: And erm. *Rear Window*. And he say, saw the murderer, didn't he? Well that murderer turned out to be the detective in eh, [pause 3 seconds] eh, the detective in a wheelchair.

VB: Oh yes. Erm, Raymond, Raymond Burr. *Ironside*.

EC: Yeah. And Raymond Burr was that murderer. Before he got famous.

VB: Right!

EC: Yeah, he had grey hair.

VB: I see it now. Because of course he got a lot stouter.

EC: Yeah, yeah. 'Cause the first time he ever did that eh, detective affair, he got shot, didn't he? And 'course after that he was always in a wheelchair.

VB: Mhm. [pause 5 seconds]

EC: I've seen hundreds of films in my time, ain't I? Literally hundreds. In seventy years. [laughs] I've seen them all.

VB: If you counted them all up, yes. 'Cause I mean if you were going a few times a week.

EC: Yeah. And another lovely film I see called *The Heiress*. That was Mont, Mont, Montgomery Clift. And erm, that erm, Joan Fontaine. What's her sister's name?

VB: E-erm. Olivia de Havilland.

EC: Yeah. They're sisters. Different name.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Did you know that?

VB: Yeah.

EC: You knew that.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And eh, she's a heiress and he did really love her. And erm, she thought he was after his [sic] money. He was at first. But then he got to love her. And that finished up she wouldn't open the door to him.

VB: Aw.

EC: That was, that was a lovely picture. [pause 3 seconds] I think that was... then I saw another one with erm... [pause 3 seconds] Oh, it's what I say, I could keep on and on and on. Ralph Richardson. He was another good actor, wasn't he? [pause 4 seconds] And then the picture I saw him in, the little boy, he was in the kitchen with him. He now directs pictures. Oh, I can't think of his name. [pause 3 seconds] That was a murder picture.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I used to like Dirk Bogarde. But 'course that was, that was later on, wasn't it? [pause 4 seconds] But I, now, when they come on, I look at the, at the cast but I don't know many of the names.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Well I don't actually, I don't bother, worry about the names, do you? But 'cause I used to know all the names, didn't I?

VB: That's interesting.

EC: Yeah, I used to.

VB: Yeah.

EC: I saw eh, Marilyn Monroe in *The Seven Year Itch*. She was lovely, wasn't she? Oh I loved her. And erm, [pause 3 seconds] eh... [pause 6 seconds]. *Sunset Boulevard*. I saw that years ago.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: When Gloria Swanson was in it. And erm, [pause 3 seconds] he died, he... Will, William Holden.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: I saw that. And 'course now they made it into a musical and all that sort of thing. And eh, I think they had another version of that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But I saw that old one. And I saw another old picture. Claude Rains. Walter Huston was in it. And he picked this prostitute up. But now I can't tell you the name, the title of it. I can see that all--

VB: D'you think he was, was he a good actor Walter Huston? Did you like Walter Huston?

EC: Oh-h, he was lovely, lovely.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And he could sing too. He sung erm, 'September Song', didn't he? Yeah, he was good. And, eh, ooh I tell you what was a lovely picture, called *Giant*. With eh, Elizabeth Taylor and eh, Rock Hudson.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Did you ever see that?

VB: I haven't seen that. No.

EC: I read the book. The book was different to that. That was a lovely film. There's we got eh, that young actor, who died in a car crash. Who played in *East of Eden*.

VB: Oh yes. Erm, James Dean?

EC: That's it.

VB: Yeah.

EC: James Dean.

VB: Yeah.

EC: I saw *East of Eden*. I saw him in *Giant*. And I saw him in the *Rebel Without a Cause*.

VB: Aw-w.

EC: Seen them. Because erm, silly boy, he got fast cars. He got killed didn't he?

VB: Mhm.

EC: I see all them. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: 'Cause I was interested when you said as well that you, you read the Sherlock Holmes books.

EC: Yeah.

VB: Did you read them before or after seeing the films?

EC: Well, no. Eh, sometimes. Sometimes I'd already read it. But if I saw this film and I liked it, I would get it out of the, the library.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And, actually, that was nice. Because when you're reading that book, you can see these people who you'd already seen on the screen.

VB: Yeah.

EC: So that made it much more interesting.

VB: Yeah.

EC: So that was nicer really. Though they'd be a bit the ring of change in the story.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But actually you were rea... seeing these people who you'd seen on the screen. But they were always B films.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That would be the second film, in the...

VB: Mhm.

EC: But you always got two, two films.

VB: Yeah. I'm sure you're right because I can't read Sherlock Holmes without thinking of Basil Rathbone.

EC: That's right.

VB: It's erm--

EC: It's erm Nigel--

VB: Nigel Bruce.

EC: Yeah. I'm afraid they're both dead now, aren't they?

VB: Yeah, I'm sure actually. Yeah.

EC: Yeah. [pause 3 seconds] I think that's much nicer. 'Cause I'd read 'Giant'.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But if I'd have seen, read that after I'd eh pictured her, oh she was absolutely beautiful in that, when she was young. Eh, Elizabeth Taylor. She was lovely looking girl. But 'course she got fat and that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And when I saw her in the films of eh, eh, her husband, I didn't particularly like her then [referring to Richard Burton].

VB: Ah.

EC: Not so much. 'Cause she took awful parts then. Like Virginia Woolf [referring to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*]. They were always bickering and all that sort of thing. But she was lovely in *Giant* with Rock Hudson and they had a son and a daughter, did you see it?

VB: I haven't. No.

EC: They had a son and a daughter. And erm, the daughter was a, eh, like er father, she loved horses and she loved everything in the country. The boy was a sort of tender sort of boy. And he fell in love with a dark girl and 'course his parents objected to that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That was really lovely. See you would get right into that. That was lovely. And 'course James, he was a, he was poor but he struck oil.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And that was eh, very nice picture. I'm still trying to think of them sisters' names.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That wouldn't be Barbara Murray? No. First name's Barbara. Barbara and Joan. [pause 4 seconds] [referring to Joan Bennett and Barbara Bennett]

VB: Oh it's so annoying.

EC: I can see their faces, as if they're sitting there.

VB: Mhm.

EC: They were two nice actresses.

VB: What sort of films were they--

EC: And I tell you I liked Maureen O'Hara. She was nice. 'Course that's a recent one. She was in *The Quiet Man* with John Wayne. Did you see that?

VB: That's a good one. Yeah.

EC: That's a lovely picture, wasn't it? 'Course that was a different role for him from the cowboys. But that's really good, wasn't it? You know and I'm erm... [pause 3 seconds] [laughs] Well 'course I didn't see them all but... [pause 2 seconds] Mean' cause I saw, saw eh Al Jolson in, that's one of the first talkies I ever saw. Then erm 'course I saw him when Larry Parks took the part of him in the other two pictures [referring to *The Jolson Story*].

VB: Mhm.

EC: But funny thing, he never acted after that, did he?

VB: Ah.

EC: Larry Parks didn't. But he took a lovely part in that, you know.

VB: Oh it's, it's, yeah.

EC: Erm, I liked [inaudible] *Queen*. That was another love picture. I liked that. [pause 5 seconds].
Seven Year Itch was nice. [pause 4 seconds]

VB: What about films now?

EC: Eh?

VB: Are there stars you like in the modern stars [sic] just out of interest?

EC: [pause 2 seconds] I have to say, "Can I go to the pictures for two hours, George?"

VB: [laughs]

EC: So I say, "You've been sitting watching sport, George, for four hours. He'll say, "Have I really? What would you like?" That's on tape, you see. He's good like that, so... Well that ain't fair for him to sit and watch it. And 'course he'd like one of them Sky--

VB: Oh the satellite things. Yeah.

EC: Yeah. I said, "You can have that when you're on your own, George," I say. "If we had that..." "Well there's films on as well." "Yeah, but," I say, "That'd be all sport." So anyway he can forget about it. [pause 6 seconds] Yeah we went, we went to the pictures right up till he retired. 'Cause we lived right near a cinema.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That used to be ninepence.

VB: [laughs]

EC: Ninepence. But my John, he was about, might been about fifteen. He never wanted to come to the pictures.

VB: Mhm.

EC: He used to like fishing, John. So eh, when he was old enough to leave, just had to walk down the street that's all. That was called the Capitol.

VB: Mhm.

EC: It's a fruit shop now.

VB: What film did you watch yesterday? Just, what was the film that you watched yesterday?

EC: Eh, oh that was eh, erm, to tell you the truth, that broke down.

VB: Aw-w.

EC: We got to see the finish of it. That was the cowboy, that weren't up to a lot. The photography was awful.

VB: Mhm.

EC: All we saw, we didn't see the horses. We saw the hoofs. And I should, we don't know. See I always look at the bottom to see where that was made.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And I'll [say], "There's a film on there." George say, "I'll put your film on." If I can't sleep, I'll watch a late night film. And invariably I will doze off and go to sleep. And I'll get up and go to bed. Well this film, eh, he said "I'll put you on... ", but he didn't know but that was a [smoker's?], erm horror film. And eh, that was all snow and all that. I thought to myself, I bet that was made in Canada. And I was right. But I didn't see it all.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That was awful. I didn't like it.

VB: Mhm.

[Mr Cullum comes in]

EC: Thank you George.

VB: Oh thanks very much.

EC: Would you like a biscuit or anything?

VB: Erm, I'm all right just now actually, thanks.

EC: George? There's some cream biscuits.

GC: Do you like cheese biscuit?

VB: Erm, no I'm okay just now actually.

GC: Right.

VB: This coffee's fine.

EC: There's plenty biscuits there. [pause 4 seconds] And I always like to see where they're made.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And I don't particularly like the Italian films. And I don't like dubbed films.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I don't like dubbed films. They never get it right.

VB: Yeah.

EC: You'd see the mouth but the sound is different. Another lovely film I saw was erm, [pause 2 seconds] erm. Oh Georgie, erm, [inaudible] [star?], I mustn't touch that... George, what was that--

GC: Mhm? What was what?

EC: That can go on there, won't it?

GC: What was what?

EC: Oh right. He squeeze me an orange out every day. You have lemon juice. Do you want orange juice in it?

VB: Erm, no I'm fine. This is fine.

EC: His memory might not be good. George, what was that nice film we saw? Anthony Quinn was in it. Eh, Gregory Peck. That soldiers film. Where that girl was a traitor and they had to shoot her? What was that called?

GC: It wasn't Gregory Peck. That was David Niven. David Niven. In Greece.

EC: Eh?

GC: Somewhere in Greece [referring to *The Guns of Navarone*].

[pause 3 seconds]

EC: That's a bit old. That's been on air twice, Saturday. [pause 3 seconds]. Annoying when you can't remember.

VB: It is. I know. [laughs]

EC: You don't remember, George?

GC: No.

EC: Can't think of the title. Neither can I.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That's interesting.

VB: Mhm, it is.

EC: But mine's about 1960. Though in that, that gives you a lot of the old films.

VB: Yeah.

EC: I'm good at faces though. And eh, when the films, through watching all the old films, "Ooh, look, so-and-so's son and..." But he don't remember.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But he do when I pointed that out. But he wouldn't remember. And even when they're disguised, like with bears and that, I say, "You can see who that is."

VB: [laughs]

EC: "I can't." But I can see who it is. Must be [madness?].

VB: Mhm. Were you interested much in the technical side of things? The directors and the photography? Did that interest you?

EC: Years ago we never got all that. But now you get whole list, don't you?

VB: Yeah.

EC: All who, although I can't say I'm actually interested in that. I like if there's a song. And I like to know what the... who's been playing the music. But, anyway that really goes a bit too quick for you to see them on there.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But you never got that years ago. And 'course, what I'm talking about, they wouldn't be talking. You got it on the, you got the writing on the--

VB: Yeah.

EC: Because when we were kiddies, they used to shout out, "Look behind!"

VB: [laughs]

EC: All them sort of things, didn't they?

GC: [from a distance] Was that film called *The Guns of Navarone*?

EC: Eh?

GC: Was that film called *The Guns of Navarone*?

EC: Yeah.

VB: Mhm. Well, that's good. [laughs]

EC: That's another lovely film.

VB: Yeah.

EC: That kept [with us?] and that was a girl who was a traitor. They all were sort of suspicious of one another. But Gregory Peck. I like him.

VB: Mhm.

EC: He's a lovely star. I saw him in beautiful picture. With erm, called *Duel in the Sun*. Oh that was a nice picture. Erm, there was two brothers. Gregory Peck was a... [pause 3 seconds] the villain.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And Joseph Cotten was the man what really loved this girl. And eh, how the title come in, they both realised they loved one another, and they had a duel, in the mountains. They both got guns in the sun. Oh, to me that was another lovely picture. I didn't go with George to see that. But that's been on there [television]. But then, for me, it's nice to see it again because there's some of the parts in it that I've forgotten.

VB: Yeah. [pause 5 seconds] Do you find erm, when you're watching a film like that that you'd seen years before, does it bring back memories of the first time you saw it?

EC: Yes, yes, yeah. To be honest, that is what I like on there [television]. Films.

VB: Mhm.

EC: My family used to laugh at me 'cause, actually you say films--

VB: Mhm.

EC: But I used to say, the filum [sic].

VB: Mhm.

EC: And they used to say, "You and your filums." [sic]

VB: [laughs]

EC: You know. They used to take the grin out of you, really.

VB: Aw. [laughs]

EC: But even now, my daughter-in-law, or my grandchildren, they'll say, "Granma, can you remember who was in so-and-so?"

VB: Mhm.

EC: And they'd say, "Wait till you see Granma and ask her." And eh, I nearly always know.

VB: Yeah. So are you not interested in the sort of soap operas and things like that? Or, no?

EC: [indicates no]

VB: I'm the same actually. I like watching a film on the video or, but eh--

EC: Well that's nice at the time. I mean the licence seem a lot a money but then, when you reckon it up, I mean, 'cause we don't go out at night.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Bit past that, aren't we? But I mean with George seeing football and me seeing a film, that run out quite cheap really.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: 'Cause I don't know how much they'd pay for the pictures now.

VB: Well, I mean, three or four pounds.

EC: In pounds, isn't it?

VB: Yeah. Yeah.

EC: No, I used to get in for ninepence.

VB: [laughs]

EC: That'd be fourpence halfpenny, wouldn't it [in decimal coinage]?

VB: Oh-h. [laughs]

EC: It would, wouldn't it?

VB: Mhm.

EC: What I, oh, that mustn't go on that.

VB: I'll turn it off if you like.

[recorder switched off]

[recorder restarted]

VB: I was interested when you were telling me just now--

EC: If you want to write, d'you want to write a book about it?

VB: Well when you were telling me just now about your cooking and eh--

EC: Oh yes.

VB: That was interesting.

EC: Well, we had a fireplace and that had two hobs at the side. And from the chimney, there was a hook that come down there. And on that would be hooked a saucepan, and mother would go, well we had relations in the butchery. So we were pretty lucky with meat like that. So that'd be half full of bones, and get in the heat. And out of that you got the stock, you see. And erm, 'cause when the, when that, we used to do that half and that would eh... [pause 7 seconds] George. George. [pause 4 seconds] I'm trying to think what's the--

VB: Not like black lead or something?

EC: Black lead!

VB: Yeah.

EC: Yeah. You used to have to black lead that, every day. And erm, eh, there was no carpets or lino on the floor.

VB: Mhm.

EC: [pause 3 seconds] [Mr Cullum comes in] What's the stuff you clean your hearth with?

GC: Oh black lead.

EC: Black lead, yeah. And erm, they... big square red [spit?], and you used to have eh, rag mats for them. I'll bring you that thing to show you.

VB: Oh that would be great.

EC: I'll bring it out to you. I'm a bit wonky...

VB: Okay.

[pause approx 17 seconds]

EC: That was Mother's.

VB: Oh-h! I've never seen one of these.

EC: Now I'll show you how you do it. [pause 4 seconds] I'll get a duster. [pause approx 19 seconds]
And erm, you turned that off have you?

VB: I'll turn it off if you like. I'll leave it on if you like. 'Cause it would be nice to hear how you do that.

EC: Yeah. That's a piece of hessian.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And you put this through there like that.

VB: Yeah.

EC: 'Cause with the hessian that's easy to go through, so--

VB: Ah, of course.

EC: So you got to fold it and you pull out that.

VB: Yeah.

EC: That's that.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Well then what you do, these pieces of rag, I'll show you the [length?] and everything. I even had them when I was first married. Only I was very lucky. I lived next to woman what eh, worked in

a, a shop and she used to do alterations. So all the nice stuff what she got over, she used to bring that over for me.

VB: Ah I see.

EC: So I had nice new stuff in mine. This is about the length of it.

VB: So that's about maybe two or three inches. And an inch wide.

[both speaking at same time]

EC: So what you do, you go like that.

VB: Yeah.

EC: This is my mother's.

VB: A-ah.

EC: So you know how old it is, don't you?

VB: That's amazing. It doesn't look it.

EC: See only with hessian, that's a lot easier to do.

VB: A-ah.

EC: 'Cause that's got bigger holes in it. Hessian is like a piece of eh--

VB: Yeah. So you just pull that--

EC: So you don't have to do this.

VB: Pull it through.

EC: So that comes like that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And that folds over like that. Then you do all that roll--

VB: Yeah.

EC: And then you do the next roll like that. That's what we used to do with all the old clothes.

VB: I see. So that must look really nice actually, when it's done. I'm just trying to imagine it.

EC: Yeah.

VB: It must look--

EC: I was very lucky. I had all this lovely new stuff.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And eh, I used to get the colours. And before I done mine, I would do a diagram of it. [doorbell rings]

VB: Yeah.

EC: That was when I was first married.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Now then. I'll drink my tea, shall I?

VB: Yeah.

[pause 10 seconds; Mr Cullum talking to person at door]

EC: Lady's eh burglar alarm went off. And George went over to see if anyone was about and that's them come to thank him--

VB: Yeah.

EC: Now then, how far were we up to?

VB: Well you were telling me about your own life with your parents.

EC: Yeah.

VB: I mean I was interested as well when you were telling me before we put the tape on--

EC: Yeah. Told you on the phone, didn't we?

VB: Yeah. About the, that you all had different jobs to do in the house.

EC: Well we're talking about the stove at the moment.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Now we could go on to the, the mats on the floor.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Is it on?

VB: That's me. Yeah.

EC: We didn't have any lino or carpets in them days. What we had was eh, eh rag mats they were called. Rag rugs. And erm--

GC: Window cleaner.

EC: Oh. [pause 16 seconds] [GC looking for change] George, there's money in my handbag. Pound notes. [pause 3 seconds] And we all had our diff, see mother had twelve [children].

VB: Mhm.

EC: But they weren't twelve all at once.

VB: Of course. [laughs]

EC: Not all in the house if you know what I mean.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Eh, mother had eh, three in four years, I think. So the eldest went to live with my grandmother up London. So he was out of it, see.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Well we all had our jobs to do. One had had to go the, that was called, that was brick dust, what you used to do the knives and forks with. That's one job. And erm, another one'd have to go and get the rabbits' food. And my brother had to go and get [moss?] Another one'd have to scrub the stairs. Another one scrubbed the, anyway, we were all doing, all had... mother never done no work. There was, she was lucky in having seven girls, instead of boys, wasn't she? Mind, she had enough to do with the washing and eh, and getting the food ready didn't she?

VB: Mhm.

EC: But we were very fortunate. We didn't have too much to eat, but we all got a good, good eh dinner, because father had an allotment. So he had his own vegetables and that. And also his brother was a butcher. So mother would get a whole bullock's head, bullock's head. And she'd had the tongue, she'd cut the cheeks and then roll it up like that. And 'course the bones went in that, to get all, get all the stock.

VB: Yeah.

EC: So erm, so we always had a good dinner. But for our tea, our bread was cut off and you didn't have any more once you ate that up.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That be... 'cause they were bigger loaves. They were square loaves. They have long ones now, but they used to be square. We'd have a round and a half. And you didn't ask for any more.

VB: Mhm.

EC: 'Cause you knew you wouldn't get it. And erm, but we did get, did get a good meal in the dinner hour. Through father having vegetables the allotment.

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

EC: They would cook with the skins on and you would have to sit and peel them, and I think we got a bit of, nah, it wouldn't be butter, a bit of margarine on the top. Or we'd have bread and beetroot for tea. Or bread and jam. And when you bought your jam in them days, you didn't have jam jars. You had to take the basin up the shop and they used to get it out of a big jar. So they'd weigh the basin first and then whatever you wanted in that.

VB: A-ah. It sounds like you had a very good, good food.

EC: I had, honestly. I really did have a happy childhood. But I erm, there was two younger than me. But I always looked after the baby. I used to like that job. But the others used to have to wash and wipe. Well they'd be out to play but I'm still... but I liked that.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But the little girl died when she was about a year. And the little boy I told you, he got killed in a motor car. And eh, we all learnt cooking from mother. We had to learn each to cook, Saturdays. But I didn't get married till I was twenty-eight so I was still at home. I did cooking long before I got married. Still do the same thing. And eh, when we were sitting at the table, we weren't allowed to talk. Father would have a cane on the table. And if you, I had a brother and sister. They were ever so close. They come next to one another. And he used to make her laugh and giggle. And she nearly always missed her tea. 'Cause father would make her get down [from] the table. 'Cause she couldn't stop laughing. They were ever so close together. That one, she was the only one what died young.

VB: Mhm.

EC: She was fifty-eight. But all the others were over eighty when they died. My sister died at ninety-four. Last year. My mother was ninety-three when she died.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And all the others are in the eighties. Like I am. And eh, 'course eh... [pause 3 seconds] had something to tell you, oh and we had this goat for the milk. And that used to, that used to stand in a bar. And that only had... I had a sister that'd only ever milk it. And 'course we used to get occasion rabbit for dinner. And we'd had a chicken. But we only had a chicken if father saw a what they call a chicken picker.

VB: I don't know what that is. [laughs]

EC: No. Well it's a chicken [stumbling over words] pick feathers.

VB: A-ah!

EC: So if they don't kill that, that's gotta do all of them. Or sometimes they're egg-bound. When they're egg-bound, they die. So soon as father see that they were egg-bound, we had that. But that was put in a saucepan. So that I don't know whether we tasted chicken or not. Don't suppose we did really.

VB: [laughs]

EC: But anyway. And 'course we used to have to go selling stuff off father's allotment. And erm, we used to sell beetroot, lettuces, anything like this. To earn money.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And erm, I used to, all us younger ones, I used to do, we used to do errands for different people. Well, perhaps I'd earn sixpence a week. But you didn't have it. You'd have to give it to your mother.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Erm, but we were fortunate in having my uncle for the butcher's.

VB: Mhm.

EC: We often got sheeps' heads. We used to have aswell. Mother would cook, and the brain. She'd cook them.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But now you're not allowed to have that at all.

VB: Ah. Yeah.

EC: With the tongue, you cooked that and then you take, the skin come off. I think, I think we took turns in having that. I ain't sure about that. But we had plenty of bread, stuck in the gravy. And great big old dumplings. But when I look back I don't know how my poor mother coped with all that. But

we all had jobs. We had to do, clean the bedrooms out. The front room in them days, you never went in the front room. That was the private room actually.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And that used to have to be done once a week. That'd be the older ones. But the jobs got... And we never ever had new clothes. Never. Mother used to bath us in front, we had a big guard round the fire. And father'd put a piece of wire netting round, 'cause that acts like that. So that when we were kids we couldn't poke into the fire. Well we'd have a, mother had a big bath in front of this fire. And bath all us kids. And eh, our vests what we took off, used to be pegged on that guard, so that'd be ready for the next day.

VB: Mhm.

EC: We didn't have no nightdresses. We slept in our petticoats.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And we used to da, have to feet [possibly referring to darn] our stockings. And we used to make our own knickers. That used to be. Mother used to cut them out--

VB: Mhm.

EC: And that used to be shaped like this.

VB: Ah, I see. So it's sort of like triangles.

EC: And then when you opened it, there was the legs.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And then you sew that up. When father was on night work. Anything so we kept quiet. So we used to sit and do that. But erm, I loved all my brothers and sisters. I had a favourite brother and a favourite sister. And my favourite brother, George took him fishing and all that. He spent a lot of

time with us. But eh, I get on right with all my sisters. And mother used to hide us. We used to get hidings. And my brothers used to get the strap. That used to hang in the cupboard. I had a brother what was a bit of a trouble. He did need strapping. But mother, if we were squabbling in the living room, she used to, perhaps she'd be washing up.

VB: Mhm.

EC: She used to get the dish cloth.

VB: [laughs]

EC: You see. And that used to hit your face and come right round your neck.

VB: [laughs]

EC: 'Course, we laugh about it now.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Funny isn't it? And now they say you shouldn't smack children. That's all wrong. You do want smacking. Not across the face. Cross the back of your legs. We used to get smacked. And my son. I didn't hit him much. George never ever hit him. But I used to hit him if he was naughty. I used to sting him at the back of his legs. And when we had his children to look after when they were little, now he say, "Don't forget, Mum. If they want a smack, you smack them." He was a schoolmaster. So John didn't object to us smacking them. If they needed it. But I didn't, I didn't do it. Not to the grandchildren. But I did my John. I said, "D'you remember me smacking you, John?" And then erm, when he brought the kids round, and then he'd you know, hitting, I said, "You don't want to smack them, John. I never used to do that to you." He said, "Pity you didn't. I might've been all the better for it."

VB: [laughs] Ah.

EC: Getting some more apples, George?

GC: Aren't many more there. Just going to see John.

VB: It's lovely having this sort of weather to be out in the garden in November, isn't it?

GC: Yeah. Yeah.

EC: He always do go out in the garden.

VB: It's great.

GC: Yeah.

EC: But my older sisters, they used to go to the Bell Hotel, which is in Norwich. Used to walk all the way from Sproulston, which'd be three miles. 'Cause there weren't no trams [up there?]

VB: Mhm.

EC: And they used to go and buy eh, beef dripping and stale buns. Used to walk all that way. And eh, they also used to walk to the farm and get eh, skimmed milk. They skimmed it with the butter. But before they went to school, they used to have to go and get... I never had to do that. And I never had to go to the hotel. But my older sisters did. [pause 3 seconds] She's getting a little bit about my life, George.

VB: I know it's--

GC: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EC: I never ever told my John about that.

GC: John said this morning, he said, "The good old days. I wouldn't want to go back to those."

VB: [laughs]

EC: No, I don't say I would. But I think the children today have too much. John used to sit on the floor and play with a jar of buttons. He'd amuse himself... Now the kids they want about six toys. Then they get fed up with it, don't they?

VB: Mhm.

EC: They want something different. 'Course there's this computer business.

VB: Yeah.

EC: And eh, father kept the birds. And eh, he used to go to the fair. Club and all that. And when he sold a bird, he'd probably get a pound for it. Then he'd buy my mother something new.

VB: Mhm.

EC: But we never had new clothes. They were handed down three. I used to wear a green astrakhan coat. I absolutely hated it.

VB: [laughs]

EC: Even when I went to work I had to wear it. But two sisters, they'd had that before me. And then that wasn't new when we had it, that was given to us. But we had all hand-me-downs.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Nothing. But father worked on the tram shed. Trams. And I suppose he had an extra big family. Used to bring a lot of parcels with clothes in. Mother had a little machine--

VB: Mhm.

EC: Which she used to, you know, try and make you [inaudible]. But my mother was a lovely woman. And eh, my older sisters didn't like my father, but I did. Ever such a clever man, father was. He went to, he went to school with our schoolmaster. And they had to pay a shilling a week in them days. And he was in India for twelve years. He was an interpreter. But course when he come back he

got my mother. Mother was brought up in an orphanage. A Catholic orphanage. She was ten year younger than him. A nice smart soldier. And they got married. And 'course instead of having an interpreter's life, he ended up with twelve kids. So he wasn't a very happy man. He was bit frustrated man.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I didn't realise that till I got older. And I can see what that must've been like. You learn a lot from films, you know, don't you? So eh, he would've been proud of my son. Being a schoolmaster.

VB: I'm sure. Yeah.

EC: George is pretty, I ain't all, well I don't know, I ain't all that bright. George is much brighter than me.

VB: I don't know about that. [laughs]

EC: He's more, I'll admit that. He's eh, now I got older I don't bother. 'Cause I get in a muddle pronouncing words.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Like something had happened. A month ago, I say, "You know. Last week." He say, "Last week? You mean last night."

VB: Mhm.

EC: Yeah John. George's son. More.

VB: You've got a wonderful memory though.

EC: Eh?

VB: For films and the film stars and... It's amazing.

EC: Well, it's something that I can do.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I machine. I knit. And eh, I mean I make these.

VB: Really!

EC: Make that. I mean I make this out of different... I make cushions. And I used to make my dresses. And erm...

VB: Mhm.

EC: That ended 'cause when I got to wear trousers, 'cause I got very bad legs.

VB: Mhm.

EC: I used to make blouses out of my dresses. But I got now so that I can't concentrate on that. And I really, I can afford to buy a jumper. Instead of worrying about to make it.

VB: Yeah.

EC: 'Cause years ago I used to be glad to do that. To save the money. But my daughter-in-law say I'm intell, if I say I ain't intelligent, she say, "You are." See. She say, "Don't you say that."

VB: [laughs]

EC: "Cause you are."

VB: Absolutely.

EC: "Just because you can't pronounce words."

VB: Yes. [laughs]

EC: Don't she, George? She always say, "What you been up to, Mum?" 'Cause she's a, something to do with health. She got a lot of people work under her.

VB: Mhm.

EC: "What you been doing, Mum?" You know. "[inaudible] with so-and-so." And eh, but I thought this out myself. First of all I knitted it. And erm, anyway John say, "Mum, I got some stuff exactly that colour."

VB: These are lovely. I wouldn't have--

EC: Well when I get up I have to press on, to get out of the chairs. And I used to [inaudible] to make a mark. So that's what I did. But George made these cushions. George done that.

VB: That's amazing, 'cause erm--

EC: And eh, we got a friend over there, who works at the shop--

VB: Mhm.

EC: What do all this sort of thing.

VB: Ah I see.

EC: And she come over. She said, "I don't whether these'd be any use to you. If not you can dump them."

VB: Mhm.

EC: And anyway, what George did, covered these. Recently. So eh, I used to do all this sort of thing. But course George do it now. And eh--

VB: They're very professional.

EC: My daughter-in-law and John they're, well not proud. But they're pleased to think that we can still do these things. And anyway. That's off isn't it?

VB: I'll just put it off just now. Yeah.

[tape turned off]

[tape restarts]

EC: George Formby. I wasn't all that struck on him. Don Ameche. Used to like. He was nice. [pause 5 seconds] I tell you who I think's lovely looking, or was. Ava Gardner.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: I loved her looks. Lovely wasn't she? [pause 5 seconds] [It wasn't all about looks?] I didn't like him.

VB: Oh, William Powell?

EC: I didn't enjoy them. I didn't like William Powell at all. If he come on here I don't want to see him.

VB: 'Cause I was going to ask. We were talking about the sort of detective mystery films. And I was going to ask you about William Powell. *The Thin Man* and--

EC: They used to make a lot of films. They had a dog.

VB: Yeah.

EC: But I, I wasn't fussy about him at all. [pause 5 seconds] Used to like Fredric March. Erm, [pause 3 seconds] I seen this film. She was a lovely looking girl, wasn't she?

VB: Mhm.

EC: I saw her in a film with erm, [pause 3 seconds] erm, who took the part of the bloke with two legs?

GC: Bader. More. More, More.

EC: More. Kenneth More.

VB: Oh yes.

EC: [inaudible] That was a wartime film. [referring to *Reach for the Sky*] She was having an affair with him. And she was got to commit suicide. Then I saw her in a picture with Marlon Brando. A *Streetcar Named Desire*. Saw that. And then 'course she was in *Gone with the Wind* [referring to Vivien Leigh].

VB: Mhm.

EC: I think she's every bit as good-looking as Jean as eh, Elizabeth Taylor.

VB: Yeah, she's quite similar. Similar sort of type I suppose. Yeah.

EC: Eh... [pause 4 seconds] Gene Raymond. I don't remember him. [inaudible] Then another one, Colin Brown. [inaudible]

[rustling]

EC: [inaudible] Jean Arthur, she was in eh, she was in *Shane* with the late Spencer Tracy. She married eh, Clark Gable.

VB: Oh Carole Lombard, yeah.

EC: She got killed in a air crash didn't she? And then 'course he got married again and they had a son didn't they? After he died. [pause 4 seconds]. Oh, that's the Bennett! That's what I was trying to say.

VB: Oh yeah! The sisters.

EC: Joan Bennett and Barbara Bennett.

VB: Yeah.

EC: Two sisters. They were very good. That isn't her. Barbara and Joan. They were two nice looking girls. I used to like Joan Fontaine. She always took the part of, she was always a good mur... She was in a Alfred Hitchcock film. With Cary Grant [referring to *Suspicion*].

VB: Mhm.

EC: Where she thought he was trying to kill her but he wasn't. Eh, the other what I was trying to say was Ed, Edgar Wallace. Was it Edgar Wallace? Yeah, well he that used to be B films with [inaudible]. Films like--

GC: You're talking about the mystery writer. Edgar Wallace, the mystery writer. They made films of his. [inaudible]

EC: There he is. Look.

VB: Mhm.

EC: And I also like eh, Glenn Ford. He's dead now isn't he? Cowboys. Bette Davis. She wasn't as good-looking as that.

GC: He's reincarnated wasn't he? Supposed to be. Glenn Ford [probably referring to *A Date With Destiny*].

VB: Mhm.

GC: Yeah. He reckoned that eh, he went and saw his burial place.

EC: Ooh yes, in Norfolk.

GC: Yeah. He, he went to, I believe that he was hypnotised, you know, they hypnotise them and--

VB: Mhm.

GC: They can go back in the past can't they? And erm, he erm, he didn't know. They just made a recording of his comments while he was under hypnosis. And he was talking about, he lived in Yorkshire. And he came over and he went and eventually he found his, where he was buried. Funny thing, isn't it?

VB: Oh! [laughs] Sends shivers down your spine.

GC: [laughs]

EC: Where he go Sundays.

GC: Pardon?

EC: That was where he'd go Sundays.

GC: Where?

EC: Where he went, his burial place. It's in Norfolk.

GC: No it wasn't. It's in Yorkshire.

EC: In Yorkshire was it?

GC: Yeah.

EC: You see look, how much make-up they had on them days.

VB: Mhm.

EC: You see that, can't you? They don't make up like they used to. Not nowadays, do they George?

GC: Well, 'course they've had all the years experience now haven't they? I mean if you went in front the television cameras they make you up, don't they?

VB: Mhm.

GC: To suit the light. If you were to see these, see some of these people that are made up for the cameras, eh, they look ugly. They look more like parrots. Mhm. They highlight different parts of the face and what have you.

EC: Loretta Young, she was nice. Yeah, that was in the Sunday paper about a month ago that he was a Nazi, a spy. Errol Flynn, wasn't he, George?

GC: We-ell, they said he was. He can't contradict it, can he? I mean so, I don't believe all you read.

VB: Mhm.

EC: No.

GC: He can't contradict it. He's dead.

EC: Charles Laughton was another good actor. Saw him in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. And also when he took the part of eh, Henry the Eighth [referring to *The Private Life of Henry VIII*]. Seen that. Old pictures weren't they? He was married to Elsa Lanchester.

VB: Ah.

EC: And she was in that picture with him. But now like you read nearly all these old stars were homosexuals. That put you all off.

GC: Was eh, Charles Laughton--

EC: He was a homosexual.

GC: Was he with erm--

EC: We didn't really know these things.

GC: Listen. Was he with John Mills in *Hobson's Choice*?

EC: Oh yeah, that was good. That was English film. That's really good that.

GC: Yeah. That was very good film.

[pause 6 seconds]

EC: Birds were there, just flew off.

VB: I just caught it.

EC: Edna Best, she was married to erm, erm, one what got artificial leg. Herbert Marshall.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That look, I don't know if but that looks like Ron [Frixon], I ain't got my glasses on.

VB: It does, doesn't it. Erm--

EC: Is it him? That's Edna Best.

VB: It doesn't, doesn't say there. It's just got Edna Best and Vivien Leigh. But it does look like--

EC: She looks like Jean Simmons to me.

VB: Mhm.

EC: It's interesting book isn't it?

VB: Mhm. Well I thought you might enjoy seeing that.

EC: Yeah.

VB: After our talk last time--

GC: She did have a big thick book, with all the--

EC: It's 1938, George.

GC: Well you did have a big thick book, didn't you? With all the--

EC: Yeah. I was ever so sad... Soon as I knew you were coming out, I felt I wanted to go and ask them if I could borrow it.

VB: [laughs]

EC: That was up the flat. Only I thought I know all... [pause 8 seconds]. Robert Taylor. I used to like Robert Taylor. Robert Taylor's married to Barbara Stanwyck. They got divorced, didn't they. And they both married someone else.

GC: He couldn't act though could he?

EC: Eh?

GC: He couldn't act.

EC: Well a lot of them, see years ago, that was mostly the, their good looks what got them on.

VB: I was going to say. He didn't really need to act! [laughs]

GC: Robert Mitcham, another one. But I think the worst one of the lot--

EC: Victor Mature.

GC: No, yeah, there's another one.

EC: Well he couldn't act for toffee!

GC: There's another one. He never changed his expression whatever film he was in.

EC: English?

GC: No.

EC: Or American?

GC: American. Can't think of his name.

EC: But Victor Mature, he couldn't act for toffee. [pause 7 seconds] Who's that?

VB: I was just thinking that same thing. But I think it's Anna--

EC: You can't understand that, can you?

VB: Is it Anna Neagle? 'Cause I think. That's the only thing I can think of from the signature.

EC: Yeah. That would be her, yeah.

VB: It doesn't, doesn't look like her picture. [laughs] I think you're right about all the make-up and the--

EC: That's lovely [inaudible]. He go to the pictures too, he say, " That's who I like."

VB: Oh Clark Gable.

EC: Yeah. He was my hero.

VB: What was it about him do you think that made him so good?

GC: Bit of a he-man wasn't he?

VB: Mhm.

GC: He never did take a gentle part did he?

VB: Mhm.

EC: *Giant* was a lovely picture, wasn't it, George?

GC: Mhm. Yeah.

EC: You know you never saw it.

VB: I haven't seen it but I'll definitely try to after hearing about it.

EC: That was outstanding picture that was.

VB: Mhm.

EC: That was very moving. There was such a lot in that. And 'course there was James Dean and the other stars. Eh, Carroll Baker was the daughter wasn't she? What's that other nice picture we saw?

GC: I don't know whether she was. Was she in James Dean's picture?

EC: Eh?

GC: She wasn't old enough to be in James Dean's. They had a remake of that haven't they? *Giant*.

EC: Carroll Baker.

GC: Yeah she wasn't very old.

EC: Ooh George! She's getting on. 'Course she is. That was Carroll Baker. Now George, what was that film with erm, Charles Bickford where they quarrel over the, where Gregory Peck is on that horse.

GC: Oh you're talking about--

EC: *The Big Country*.

GC: Yeah. *Big Country*.

EC: That was another lovely film. Did you see that?

VB: I haven't seen that one either.

EC: Gregory Peck.

GC: It was a very good picture, Charles Bickford, eh, the English actress. What was her name?

EC: Carroll Baker.

GC: Yeah well the English actress as well, was in that as well, wasn't she?

EC: Erm, [pause 3 seconds] Burl Ives.

GC: Yeah, Burl Ives. Him and Charles Bickford were duelling, weren't they?

EC: Who was the other one, oh! Little Jean Simmons.

GC: Jean Simmons. That's right.

VB: Mhm.

EC: Ooh, that's Robert Taylor. He wasn't all that crappy an actor was he?

GC: No. He could act.

EC: Well honestly George, I was saying, really the actors today act better than they did.

GC: [inaudible]

EC: You knew that.

GC: I mean, 'course the films themselves, eh, they flow. There's a continuity in today's films but they're very, eh, intimate sort of things than years ago. You can always see where they left off taking the filming that day to start the next day.

EC: That goes [inaudible].

GC: The flow of the film is natural today. The films are far better. But they're now beginning to spoil them by foul language. [inaudible] It doesn't lend anything to them at all. Not to my mind. I think you can express yourself without using that sort of, this that and the other, but nearly every film that you pick, that you see today is--

EC: But he laugh at all this sex business, but I don't. I don't laugh at it. But I suppose that's the best thing to do, laugh. Eh, [inaudible] is one of the worse ones.

GC: Stone, she's a--

EC: Oh yeah, she's a sexy bugger, she is. No, I mean to say, if they're going in the bedroom and they shut the door, I mean you just draw your own conclusions. But they actually show you what they're doing during... so we both laugh to take the embarrassment off.

GC: Yeah, they're very explicit... what they show now. [tape cuts out]

[End of interview]