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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: George SutherlandYear of Birth: 1944Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview:30th of June, 2023Interviewer: Sher AllanRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: Yes (Number of: 1 )Length of Interview: 25 minutes and 53 secondsLocation of Interview: George’s homeRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 0.31 | Was born in Waterside street in the Gorbals. |  |
| 0.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent during which era he first remembers the high streets. |  |
|  | “But the shop I really remember is Wullie Scorgie’s [?] in Roseberry Street. It was supposed to be a newsagent’s. But you could get almost anything in this newsagent’s. And what he did…What he turned out in the back shop was unbelievable. Toffee apples, candy balls, tablet. And later on as a young teenager, 12, 13, 14 year old I became one of his paper boys. I also remember the other shops in the Oatlands area. My dad once said-‘You could live, get born and die here and not go anywhere else.’ Because there was everything in Oatlands. Undertakers, doctors what have you. There was everything. My first memory of the city centre was getting off the 101 trolley bus at Glasgow Cross and going along the Trongate onto Argyle Street. I didn’t know the top of the town like Sauchiehall Street even Buchanan Street existed. My city centre was the Trongate and Argyle Street and the shops there. The big shops there. But, in Oatlands Itself you could get a variety of shops. One that springs to mind was when the Sunday School trips were due Curries [?]the newsagents on Polmadie Road got the tinnies in. The tin cups. And all the kids that were going on the Sunday School trip got their tin cup. They had to go and that’s where they got their drink. Their orange juice or their milk. The other one was Jeannie McCann’s that was the original Jeannie aw things. You could get almost anything in Jeannie McCann’s. And my mother actually worked part-time in there for a while, you know. At the corner…At one corner of Polmadie Road there was a Cochrane’s. And at the other corner at Woolsey Street, Polmadie Road diametrically opposite there was a Galbraith’s. They were grocery shops. Cochrane’s were famous for their teas. Also on Polmadie Road at the lower end, the even numbers, was the Co-operative Dairy and the Co-operative Grocery. You could get almost anything in there. The butcher’s shop was round on Rutherglen Road. But the highlight for me as a young teenager was The Piccadilly Café at the corner of Rutherglen Road and Polmadie Road run by an Italian family. Your big spend in there was maybe a glass of warm orange juice [laughs] and you sat and listened to the juke box. And I remember when they first got the new duke box with the 45s in it The Everly Brothers brought out ‘Cathy’s Clown’ and by the time that had run its course. That particular record was wobbling all over the place.”  | 1.05-4.22 |
|  | “I remember following Clyde Football Club as a boy. I spent quite a lot of time at Shawfield. Every other week when they were at home. And I filled in the gap in between it when they weren’t at home we’d go to Shawfield Juniors in Roseberry Park, Toryglen Street. That was it. We played football over in Richmond Park which I’m sad to say has been vandalised by Glasgow City Council. It’s no longer the park it was, you know.” | 4.23-5.05 |
| 5.06 | Was a taxi driver and used to do Glasgow Tours. Talks about how he thinks the council are responsible for ruining the city’s reputation for parkland. Glasgow Green. |  |
| 5.36 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he has any vivid memories of Glasgow’s nightlife from driving taxis.  |  |
| 6.23 | Says he regrets going into taxis as he missed out on family life. Did the taxi runs for kids every year. |  |
| 7.19 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he had any regulars in his taxi. |  |
| 7.24 | Talks about a couple of ladies they called the dolly sisters.  |  |
| 8.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever had any sex workers as fares. |  |
| 8.29 | Says yes quite frequently. Particularly in the city centre. |  |
| 8.56 | Talks about unwittingly being a getaway car. |  |
| 12.50 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever used to go out to the dancing or shopping for going out clothes.  |  |
| 12.54 | Went to the Locarno and the Melba in Govanhill. Got his suit from a tailor other than Jackson’s. Had to get ‘Hamish Burke’ shirts with high collars. Went to the Majestic too. |  |
| 15.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent what his memories of Christmas on the high streets. |  |
|  | “Lewis’s was the place. Their windows and not only their windows…I’ve got photos taken with Santa Claus in Lewis’s grotto. That was the wonder of Christmas then. And then the only lights were in the windows so there wasn’t any lights in the streets the way there are now, you know. George Square wasn’t lit up neither was Argyle Street neither was Sauchiehall Street. It was the shop windows that were lit up and decorated you know…That would be the early ‘50s. The early ‘50s. I can’t actually put a date on when they started lighting up the streets at Christmas. I imagine it would be late.. maybe early ‘70s before that happened, you know. The other thing I remember about Christmas was the Central Station and the Christmas tree in the Central Station. My dad giving me a penny to put in the box and the model railway, if you put a penny in, the model railway ran round the…round the tree [laughs].” | 15.18-16.40 |
| 16.46 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he used to shop for a holiday wardrobe. |  |
| 16.49 | He didn’t but he thinks his mother and father probably did. Went youth hostelling as a teenager. Toured Scotland and hitch hiked.  |  |
| 17.32 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there were shops were he shopped for camping gear and hiking gear. |  |
|  | “The shop to buy your bike from was Rattray’s the Flying Scot’s shop up in Dobbie’s Loan in Townhead. And they also sold cycling shoes and short etc, you know. And the other place you went to was The Army and Navy Stores where you could pick up sleeping bags and things, you know.” | 17.40-18.13 |
| 18.15 | Was a boy scout and this encouraged him to go travelling in his country. |  |
| 18.48 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers shopping for his scout uniform. |  |
| 18.51 | Uniform was bought for him and kilt was handed down through the scouts. |  |
| 19.25 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he ever worked on the high streets apart from the taxi driving. |  |
| 19.30 | Worked as a paper boy and worked in the Co-op butcher’s shop in Rutherglen Road.  |  |
| 19.49 | Rutherglen Road had quite a variety of shops. Piccadilly Café , King’s Café , Birrels sweet shop |  |
|  | “And I remember, ok it was the ‘50s, my mum and dad took me to the Ritz picture hall in Oatlands and we’d stop we made before we went to the pictures was into Birrells. Rationing was still on so they would buy their sweets at Birrell’s before you went to the pictures [laughs}.” | 20.14-20.35 |
| 20.36 | Interviewer asks the respondent what films he went to see. |  |
| 20.42 | The Searchers, Dam Busters. Went to the Odeon club in Rutherglen. Saw lots including Flash Gordon there. |  |
|  | “I don’t like…Now that I’ve stopped driving it’s really brought it home to me. There’s things you need transport for to get to. As an example, that broken piece of kit. The single bed caster up there. We want to go…You and I want to go to B & Q to get casters to replace the ones that are on the bed, right. But we can’t do that because we’re…We haven’t got the transport to take us. We’ve got to rely on either our grand kids or my daughter to that, you know. Were as before we could quite either get on a bus…or go to a hardware store. If he didn’t have it he would order it for you. That doesn’t happen anymore, you know…Whereas before, as a schoolboy everything was on tap around me.” | 22.18-23.30 |
| 23.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he feels that shopping was more personal then. |  |
| 23.37 | He thinks it was more personal in the past.  |  |
| 24.33 | Talks about doing the taxi trip to Troon without children apart from his grandson. |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for his contribution to the project. |  |
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