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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Matt LairdYear of Birth: 1946Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: 2nd of June 2023Interviewer: Sher AllanRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: NoLength of Interview: 44 minutes and 13 seconds.Location of Interview: Geraldine Baird’s home in RutherglenRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 0.31 | Matt was born in Springburn and now lives in Rutherglen. |  |
| 0.43 | Springburn Road at Xmas time. Springburn library. The Cooperative.  |  |
|  | “The Cooperative was a great store at those times. And, they had a massive display at Christmas time. Of toys. Toys that we couldn’t afford. But, they’d about five or six windows in Springburn Road. Filled with Electric train sets and bicycles and castles and forts. And tin soldiers. And they allowed you to go into the store and look around. They weren’t very strict about…They weren’t strict about letting you walk about and look at all these lovely toys. And, it was a big part of Christmas for us.” | 1.06-1.49 |
| 1.50 | The Princess picture hall in Springburn. Most posh cinema and best films in the area. ABC Minors. |  |
| 2.29 | Back up the road streets filled with shoppers and excitement. Happy if you got one thing for Xmas. |  |
| 3.13 | Went to Albert senior Secondary school. Wanted to go to junior secondary as they did rugby. Some famous footballers from school. Jim Forrest, Aberdeen. |  |
| 4.00 | Scout hall at Cowlairs. Music by Ronnie Lee, the Echolets. Joined the pathfinders. |  |
| 4.51 | Interviewer asks the respondent where he bought the clothes for the concerts and the dances. |  |
|  | Well, there was a big store on Saturday called Sellyn’s. Sellyn’s was up at Colston. Up at Balgrayhill. And that was always mobbed. And they sold Italian suits. Italian suits with a matching tie and hankie was the style. And pointed shoes, of course. And I’d a pair of bronze shoes that everybody loved. That I got out of Sellyn’s. And, grey gun metal was a very popular style at that time; 1962. But, fashion was important. And you weren’t trying to impress just the girls in the school. You were trying to impress your mates as well. Because they would always criticise what you had bought. And my mother used to get my suit out of Sellyn’s with a provie check. Provie checks were very big in those days. They were easy to get. But, you had to spend about two years paying them back.” | 4.59-5.58 |
| 6.01 | Shopping right down Springburn Rd great early 1960s. late 1960s shopping great Maryhill Rd where he lived then. Hoeys both places. Pubs-Woodside Inn. Lots of junior football teams. Works finished 12 on Saturday then football then dancing. Locarno, big band sounds. |  |
|  | “And Maggie Bell…Maggie Bell the folk singer, she stayed in Maryhill. She stayed in Abington Street. Just across the road from where I stayed. And she was the lead singer with this big band. A big band sound. Until she went on to become the leader of a group called Stone the Crows. And we used to go and watch them in the Burns’s Howff down on West Regent Street. That was a great place to meet on a Saturday morning. About 11.O Clock when the pub opened. But, if you got fed up there you would go down to the Scotia Bar, which was the folk bar. And, in fact, that’s where I met my wife in there. In the Scotia Bar. I met my second wife in the Scotia Bar. Billy Connolly was a regular feature in there. So was Hamish Imlach the folk singer. And they used to do a comedy routine. On a Saturday morning for the pu…for the punters…But, you always got great politics in there as well. Working class politics.”  | 8.21-9.56 |
| 9.57 | Talks about his friend Brendan McLaughlin who owned The Scotia Bar. Talks about folk groups during The Glasgow Year of Culture. Thinks Glasgow City Council not too keen on songs about hope for the working class. |  |
|  | “But, Arthur (McLaughlin) he ran a great club over in Carlton Place. The Star Folk Club. That was a must on a Thursday night. For the great acts he had in there. Julie Felix and The Fureys where in there as well. The Fureys band from Ireland. He brought great..great music to the place. And it was a great place to be. A great place to be on a Thursday night. The Star folk club.” | 11.49-12.32 |
| 12.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent for memories of the Cooperative in Springburn. |  |
|  | Very clean. The automated tube for the money made a whoosh. People chatting. Fantastic things to buy.  |  |
| 14.16 | Talks about going climbing about the urban area as a kid. Jumping around bomb shelters. Swimming in the Forth and Clyde canal. Sherry brother’s Graham of Marmalade the band. Kissing games at school. |  |
| 17.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers clothes being modelled in shops. |  |
| 17.40 | Fashion show in the McClelland galleries. |  |
|  | “But, I was always interested in fashion. You know. It was important to me to have the right type of trousers. You had a seam that ran down the side of your suit. And you had a cut. A wee V cut at the bottom of your trousers. And no turn ups. No turn ups. And straight trousers. And no buttons but zippers. And double breasted was very important in the jacket. You needed a double breasted jacket. And the shirt you wore had to have a pin through it. To hold your tie. Aye, the way you looked and the shoes…It was all important. And, of course, it became more important as Britain became a fashion capital. And Mary Quant. And the psychedelic scene came and you had flared trousers. In Glasgow we used to go shopping…You had to go shopping in Cambridge Street. Because Fletcher’s was the shirt shop. The shirt shop. That’s difficult to say (laughs)…” | 17.54-19.15 |
| 19.16 | Seventy seven sunset strip. Being a teenager. Paper round. Coloured socks. Teddy boys had money. |  |
|  | “Your socks, of course, at that time were coloured socks. In the early ’60s. It was turquoise and green and blue. It was important to have highly coloured socks. In the street where I stayed there were quite a few families that were teddy boys. But, to be a teddy boy you had to have money. And to wear that, kind of, long jackets and the blue suede shoes you had to have money, But, my aunts used to look upon them as rogues and villains. But, I looked upon them as fashion icons…” | 20.01-20.37 |
| 21.03 | Dancing in Maryhill at Maryhill Juniors football club.  |  |
| 21.25 |  Lady Madonna sung in the Picasso Club in Buchanan Street a week before it was released. |  |
| 22.43 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any record shops. |  |
| 22.45 | Castles record shop in Springburn.  |  |
| 23.55 | American music on Radio Luxembourg. Emigration to America-high standard of living. Sister went to live there and raised a family and died there. |  |
| 25.30 | End of rationing. Had never seen a banana .Brother brought home trifles from his job at the Cooperative.  |  |
| 26.34 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any other workers in the shop such as assistants, security, cosmetics. |  |
|  | “Well, of course, you had security in the big stores. Like, in the town and Lewis’s. Lewis’s was another place we used to go to at Christmas time with maybe four or five guys. And the security guard would allow you in as long as you looked presentable. And you didn’t look as if you were going to cause a lot of trouble. Cause, they had the escalators in Lewis’s and we’d never seen an escalator before we tried that escalator in Lewis’s. And they had a great café in Lewis’s with good looking sales girls that were probably round about sixteen. They were a bit older than us. They were about sixteen. They looked very attractive. And we always…for some reason we liked to go to Boots the Chemist at the corner of Union Street and Argyll Street. Because, in the make-up department you had all these girls that looked like film stars. Because they had blusher on. And lipstick. Beautiful colours of lipstick and false eyelashes that we’d never seen before at that time. But, they looked like they’d stepped out of Hollywood.” | 26.40-27.51 |
| 27.52 | Football boots to buy. Springburn Harriers. |  |
| 28.51 | Talks about working at the savings bank at Cowglen. Parties. Sports centre. Swimming, Karate. |  |
| 29.40 | Architecture in Rutherglen. Odeon, Rutherglen. The Rule (?) Cinema. Cinemas beautiful and warm. |  |
| 31.50 | Shops in Rutherglen. Burtons, Sellyns. Biggest, broadest street in Lanarkshire. |  |
| 32.35 | Club started by man who used to play in a big band in Dennistoun Palais. Club trendy. For all ages at different times. Had duke box. |  |
|  | “There was a great store for men in Dennistoun. They would make suits to measure. And it was an expensive shop. But, if you’d been in that shop people would talk about you and say ‘oh, Matt went to that shop up in Dennistoun.’ I can’t remember the name of it now. It was well known. Sean Connery and the Beatles actually had good suits out of there. It was that well known. The Beatles actually went to that store I mentioned earlier. Fletcher’s in Cambridge Street. And got these striped shirts that were very popular at the time.” | 33.20-33.54 |
| 33.55 | John Lennon’s shirt. Peter Weir. |  |
|  | “But, also in Cambridge Street was a great hairdresser’s. Fuscos. Because, hairdressing was very important in those days. I started to get interested when I was about twelve and I decided-What am I going to get? You could get 2 and 6 for a haircut but 2 and 6 for a friction[?]. And you could get a Tony Curtis. You could get a semi-crew. You could get a Perry Como. But, I always liked the Tony Curtis. And, I’d a fantastic head of hair. Black hair. And the Tony Curtis went in real well. The only trouble was when you went to the swimming baths you had to keep your head out the water. Because it destroyed your…It destroyed your pompadour at the front. The other problem was to try and get the Tony Curtis effect, you had to get two combs, you had to curl them. And leave them in for a while and maybe use a hairdryer on them. But, here, I made the mistake one night. I went in front of the fire. To try and get the curl perfect. So, they’d come right over my…Coming down between my eyes. But, here, the combs melted. The combs melted and it ended up my mother had to help me, going hysterical. She had to cut the hair. So I made a bit of a mess of my Tony Curtis.” | 34.40-36.09 |
|  | And of course, at that time as well, a lot of my mates who had good…well-paying jobs were buying scooters, Lambrettas. And you know that, the Mod thing came in. And you still had the Rockers going about Glasgow. So, you still had battles between the Mods and Rockers in Glasgow. Teenagers. But, you know, that’s something that you’ll always get. Tribal jealousies. | 36.17-36.44 |
| 37.00 | One side of the street in Rutherglen had pubs. Chapmans and the Vogue. Other side dry. Churches as a kid. |  |
| 37.44 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers boy’s brigade parades. |  |
| 37.50 | Boy’s Brigade marching down Springburn Road. Going to watch rains made in Springburn going abroad. |  |
| 39.07 | Orange walks down Springburn Road. |  |
|  | “Of Course, on May Day they would have big marches from the different unions. They would march into George Square. And they would march from there to the Glasgow Green. And the Glasgow Green always had different shows going on. They would have show…they would have a carnival on and they would have various singers. I saw Chaz and Dave singing in there, So…Deacon Blue. And I saw various pop groups appearing that…It’s not as big…I went this year to the May Day rally but it was miniscule compared to what it was back in the ‘70s and the ‘80s.” | 39.47-40.32 |
| 40.35 | Interviewer asks the respondent how he sees things going post-Covid. |  |
| 40.46 | Says we are getting back. Mentions Independence March 125,000 people. Great speakers. Talks about Covid a bit. Empty shops. Mentions Braehead. |  |
|  | “Hopefully it will recover. Because we do need…People do need to go into town and do a bit of shopping. That kind of therapy is good for people Retail therapy. It’s good for people. Because they can meet their friends, have a good chat and have a coffee. And it’s an excellent way to spend a Saturday.” | 43.25-43.46 |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for his contribution to the project. |  |
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