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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Winifred (McLaughlin) HenryYear of Birth: 1941Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: 2nd of May 2023Interviewer: Rachel KellyRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: Yes (Number of: 5 )Length of Interview: 1 hour 20 minutes and 4 secondsLocation of Interview: Winifred’s home in SaltcoatsRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 1.13 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her earliest memories of Glasgow’s Highstreets are. |  |
|  | “Yes, the earliest memory I have is that on a Saturday morning because cigarettes were still in very short supply…It was the end of the war. It would be about 1947 I would say. My mother used to take us down to Lewis’s on a Saturday morning. And you would queue at the side. Not at the front of Lewis’s but looking at Lewis’s to the right hand side. There was, like a, loading bay and a railway bridge. And people queued right down the side of that loading bay out into the street. And it didn’t matter if it was cold, rainy or what…” | 1.18-2.01 |
|  | “Yes, Lewis’s became a favourite as I got older. When my friend and I were about maybe ten or eleven year old…We must have been quite well behaved girls because there was the commissionaire on the door and he was there to keep the children out. But somehow or other he always let my friend Nan and myself into the store. And we would wander for hours. We would look at all the different things and giggle at the big hats and look at the furs, And we really…we just had a great afternoon. Every Saturday afternoon that was where we went. Down to Lewis’s. We finished up in the pet place which was on the top floor. And, I can’t really remember what was in the pet place. Just small pets. I think, for some reason, I can remember a monkey…”  | 2.25-3.18 |
| 3.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent what Lewis’s looked like inside. |  |
| 3.39 | Respondent describes different Lewis’s departments. Counters, haberdashery, market stall. upstairs conventional store. Wooden stalls . Lifts. Lift operators. |  |
| 5.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers Lewis’s at Christmas.  |  |
|  | “You went to see Santa [At Lewis’s] at Christmas. And again, you queued for ages and ages to get up to Santa. But while you were queuing you were looking at…They had cordoned it off in such a way that it was a passage way. And it had elves and fancy things on the wall. They really…they did it so well…” | 6.00-6.25 |
| 6.26 | Paid a shilling for a ticket to see Santa. Had to be careful who she told she had been. Respondent talks about the living conditions of one of her wee friends. There was a hole in the wall of the tenement. She was an only child and a wee princess she says. Was brought up in Townhead. |  |
| 8.36 | Respondent talks about the shops and businesses on Parliamentary Road. Valerio’s Café. Vettriano’s chip shop. and how her mum got a job in a china shop. Massive Cooperative. Barret’s Shoe Shop. Pubs on every corner. China shop-unusual. Mum worked in Reid’s Tearoom, Buchanan Street. Met owner of china shop there. Mum then worked in the china shop. Big grocers, Curley’s [?]. Gizzi’s ice cream.  |  |
| 13.36 | Interviewer asks the respondent for any more memories of shops in the City Centre. |  |
| 13.39 | Respondent describes her memories of Goldberg’s store. Where she got all party dresses. The toys were amazing. |  |
|  | “And actually, when I got older. I worked in Goldbergs. I was in the industrial clothing department which was horrible. Because there was just overalls and men’s work boots and things. But they also owned…The same manageress was also the manageress of the perfumery department. Industrial clothing was on the fourth floor and perfumery was on the ground floor. And I was the fifteen year old junior. So, I spent all day running up and down the stair with baskets. You weren’t allowed to use the lift if you were staff. And the lift had a man on it. That was it. A man worked that lift. I didn’t last very long. My father came in and went-‘No, this is not happening’. And I left there and went to work for my mum in the china shop on the Byres Road.” | 14.07-15.05 |
| 15.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she received any training at Goldberg’s. |  |
| 15.14 | Respondent can’t remember any. Was just get on with it. Junior duties. Other staff where ok towards her. No trade unions that she knew of. |  |
| 15.53 | Interviewer asks the respondent about working in the china shop on Byres Road. |  |
|  | “Well, that was just a small shop [china shop on Byres road etc]. It was quite exciting because, as I said, you couldn’t get anything but Delft in those days. That was what they called it. And this Mr Robertson… He used to go down to the potteries. And he would bring up…He would get sent up these crates with straw in them. And, you never knew what was in the crate until you unpacked it. So you were unpacking and it was like treasure. You know. A beautiful cup would come out and you would be looking to see if there were more cups. Can I make up a set from this? And the window would be done as best we could do it. With the nicest of the cups and all the rest of it. The hardest place to work was on the Byres Road. Because we made it quite clear that this stuff that was coming up from the potteries was all seconds. And you knew it was seconds but they would come in and they would look at the cup. And they would hold it up to the light to make sure it was china. And they would run their finger round it. And they would, maybe, rattle two of them together. Because you get a lovely sound from china, it’s like a bell. And they would maybe rattle them together. And I’m saying-Don’t rattle them too hard. You’re going to break them’. You know. But you were smiling nicely and, you know. Then they would say-‘I think there’s a little flaw there. Could you perhaps take some money off this one?’ And that went on constantly…” | 15.57-17.32 |
| 17.50 | Loved working with her mum. She had a gift for sales. Respondent talks about window dressing at the china shop and clearing the pavement. Mentions where the shop was. French café there now.  |  |
| 19.29 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her favourite thing was about working in the china shop. |  |
| 19.34 | Talks about how selling was her favourite part of working in the shop. Mentions her favourite part of working in the china shop. Compares job to other jobs she has had. Talks about the character traits of the man who ran the shop. Worked there for four years. Boss larger than life. Had laughs there more that in Goldbergs. |  |
| 22.19 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she has worked in any other shops. |  |
| 22.24 | Respondent recalls being a Saturday girl in Littlewoods on Argyle Street from the day it opened. She was working in William Collins the printers at the same time. Printer’s unions. Worked there for a year and a half until she got married. |  |
| 23.05 | Respondent talks about getting job in staff purchasing. Pay was a pound as opposed to eighteen shillings. Did shopping for staff to prevent shrinkage. Respondent describes the job. Talks about meeting her good friend Wilma McCabe whom she is still friends with and who comes to visit her every year from Canada. Other perk of job was being able to shop. |  |
| 26.25 | Respondent describes what Littlewoods on Argyle Street was like inside. Counters. Cafeteria. Was quite modern looking in 1959. Had counters for underwear, ladies wear etc. Favourite thing about working there was Wilma McCabe. |  |
| 27.52 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her particular responsibilities were when she worked in the office at Littlewoods.  |  |
| 27.57 | Respondent talks about her particular responsibilities-ensuring numbers where correct and the money she received was correct. Mentions her least favourite thing about working there. Having to clean the fridge. |  |
| 29.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent what other shops she liked to shop in. |  |
| 29.16-29.56 | “I used to love to go to a shop in the Townhead…And it was called Johnny Blair’s and it was quite famous. Everyone went to Johnny Blair’s. Johnny Blair’s was where you got your comics and you got…He had a one armed bandit. And there was always somebody playing the one armed bandit. I never did. I could never see the sense in it. It never was empty. There was always someone standing in front of it. And he sold sweeties and things like that. But, it was Johnny Blair and his sister Fanny Blair who ran it. It really was quite a well-known shop in the Townhead.” |  |
|  | “I remember my mum taking me to Pettigrew & Stephens. Now, my mum had worked in Pettigrew & Stephens until she got married. She was the lift girl. Mum was tiny. She was only four feet ten. And I think she was about seven stone soaking wet. So, I can imagine she must just about have reached the buttons. And that was her job. And she’d a very smart uniform. And back when she married my dad in ’39 …Again, she came from a background where my gran was left widowed with six children. And she was the oldest and had to go out to work. So, to get supplied with a uniform would be a big thing. I used to love her to take me there, to Pettigrew & Stephens because it was a very, very posh shop.”  | 30.05-31.02 |
| 31.07 | Respondent talks about House of Fraser and the overhead wire that took the money to the cash office. |  |
| 31.31 | Respondent describes going to Paisley’s for her school uniform. Had to go there for uniform for Charlotte Street school.  |  |
| 32.14 | Respondent describes the interior of Paisley’s. |  |
| 32.95 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe the inside of Pettigrew & Stephens.  |  |
| 33.05 | Talks about the interior of Pettigrew & Stephens and some of the goods sold in there. It was all very posh. She describes how her mum enjoyed seeing her old colleagues in there. |  |
| 33.51 | Talks about people’s holiday habits and how they wouldn’t go to Pettigrew & Stephens to buy clothes. |  |
| 34.32-35.00 | “C & A’s was where people went to buy clothes that were, kind of, up to date. I think that’s where I…Stuff that I bought. You know, when I was working in…That everybody had…As a teenager everybody had pencil skirts. And three inch heels. And you could buy everything in C & A’s…” |  |
| 35.06 | Mentions Graftons. Respondent talks about a possible fire at Graftons (May 1949-13 girls or women killed) next to a cinema that showed foreign films called the Classic. |  |
| 37.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers and music and /or models in the stores. |  |
| 37.17 | Respondent remembers the models in Goldbergs. |  |
|  | “Goldberg’s. You didn’t hand over cash in those days. In those days what you’d do. You’d get…Someone that you knew would have a Goldberg’s line. That was what they called it. And you would ask them for the Goldberg’s line. And you would go to Goldberg’s and you would get whatever you were buying. And then, it would come like an account. But that was quite a strange idea in those days. People just bought things with cash. Nobody used bank cards or anything like that. So to get a line from Goldberg’s and go…You had to be very cautious with your money. Because you weren’t handing it over at the time. It would be very, very easy to buy too much. You know. And think that tomorrow would never come.” | 37.56-39.00 |
| 39.01 | Talks a bit more about the Goldberg’s line. Notes other places were the same. Bremner’s, Millers, a well-known warehouse too.  |  |
|  | “And there was Miller’s on Miller Street. I remember that’s where my going away outfit came from. So, I remember that one. And Miller’s was a different idea. You bought in there. And on a Friday night the man came round with a book. And you paid so much of it. Almost like provident cheques. This was the same idea but you only used it in Miller’s. You couldn’t use it in other stores. So, you went into Miller’s. You bought your stuff. And the man came on a Friday night to get your pound or whatever it was. And, again, that was quite common in Glasgow. That was…That was a way of life for Glasgow people I would say. Was the man coming…The tick man they called him…Because people couldn’t afford to buy stuff outright. They weren’t getting that kind of wages. So that was how they lived. And by the time that was done it was time to go and buy another outfit for the kids or shoes or whatever.” | 39.54-41.07 |
| 41.11 | Talks about going to a warehouse in Hutcheson Street. Thinks it must have been one of the first of its kind. Mum bought sheets and towels etc. |  |
| 42.10 | Respondent remembers Woolworth’s café when she worked in JP Harrington’s. She remembers it was a very good café. She mentions that Goldbergs had a restaurant but that she wasn’t in there often. |  |
|  | “Eating out wasn’t a big thing in the ‘40s and early ‘50s. I think, maybe, we did more of it. I remember at Halloween when you used to go out dressed up. And people would give you money, or an apple or an orange. But you would get an odd wee bit of money. And we always went to a café. Chip shop. That was right facing. On the Parliamentary Road but right facing Stanhope Street. No, St Mungo Street. Right facing St Mungo’s street but on the Parly Road. And that was where we went. And we would get chips and Vimto and we would sit in. And that’s the only time I remember sitting in a café when I was young. And, as I say, when we were older, we used to sit for hours with the juke box and the hot orange. And that was in Gizzi’s Cafe[?]. We also used to go to a café. It’s not there anymore. It was almost facing the main gates of The Royal’ [Royal Infirmary]. The old gates of The Royal’. It was called Victor’s. And we used to go there. That was our other café that we used to frequent.” | 42.59-44.16 |
| 44.20 | Interviewer asks if there was a staff canteen in Littlewoods. |  |
| 44.25 | Respondent talks about Littlewoods staff canteen. She says it was good and a good bit cheaper than the canteen downstairs. She says she can’t remember the staff canteen in Goldberg’s. She says that they brought a sandwich or piece to work with them. |  |
| 45.20 | Respondent says she remembers the decorations in shop windows at Christmas but not lights on the streets. |  |
|  | “I remember the first big sign…neon sign that I ever saw. And that was as you came down…I saw if off the tram. It was on the corner of what is the Central Station and Gordon…not Gordon…Gordon Street, yeah. And it was a…It was Barr’s Irn Bru. And it was a man with a turban. It was massive. I mean it took up half the building. And I think that was the first neon light I ever saw. And I don’t know what age I was then. I can’t think. I think I was maybe late primary school.”  | 45.36-46.20 |
| 46.56 | Respondent states that she remembers her parents taking her small children to see the lights in George Square. |  |
| 47.32 | Respondent talks about shop windows with trees and toys, recalls getting perfume for Christmas in around 1953. |  |
| 48.22 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any shops with white goods. |  |
|  | “Bow’s of High Street. I remember Bow’s of High Street was quite a…a sort of household shop. And they had, like, nice lights. And fancy fireplaces. Because the fireplaces that were coming in then were like tiled fireplaces. And they had white goods as well and they had a china department. It was always there. Bow’s was always there. Because I remember I used to walk past going to school on the other side of High Street. There was a fruit market on that side. Fyffe’s Bananas. Their big store was there. On the corner of Bell Street and High Street. And Bow’s was on the other corner.” | 48.44-49.42 |
| 49.50 | Respondent remembers the first ever washing machine that she saw. She goes on to talk about going to the steamie when she was young. |  |
| 50.46 | Respondent recalls the cold winter of 1947 and that people put coats on their beds to stay warm. She remembers her Dad’s army great coat on her bed. She also remembers a trend for patch work quilts. |  |
| 52.15 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any other cinemas or theatres. |  |
|  | “I was never away from the Glasgow Empire. I was the Glasgow…I saw everybody in there. I’m trying to think who I saw. Slim Whitman. Roy Rodgers. With Trigger. And Trigger was stabled at the stables in Parliamentary Road which was near where I stayed. Cause that was the Police stables. So, Trigger was stabled there. And we were all standing about waiting to see this lovely white horse. I saw about everybody there. Johnny Rae. You probably don’t even know these names. But they were all really, really big stars when I was…Morecombe and Wise were there but they didn’t go down very well. Johnny Beattie. Doug McRae. All the Scots ones. All the real old Scots actors. But, a lot of the American stars came over. They said that if you made it at The Glasgow Empire you’d made it. If you got bombed out at The Glasgow Empire they were the hardest audience in the world. You know. And we went there…I went there often. Nearly every week. Somehow or other we got the money to go to The Glasgow Empire. That was our place. Cause it was just at the bottom of Parliamentary Road.” | 52.20-53.46 |
| 53.53 | Respondent mentions that she very rarely went into town to the cinema. She states that she went to their local cinemas as opposed to in to town. |  |
| 54.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any characters in the streets in the highstreets.  |  |
|  | “People used to come round the back and sing. And mum would throw them a penny. You know. And some of them were absolutely terrific singers. They wouldn’t of been out of place in a musical hall. They were really, really good. “ | 55.08-55.24 |
|  | “Music to the queues…the pictures queues in those days, was very common. When you went to the pictures you had to queue. If the first house was on you just queued until it was finished. And then they would let you in to see the second house. So, you were queuing for maybe half an hour or something like that. Well, these guys would play like buskers. In the street. And they would play to the queue and the queue would give them pennies. That was very, very common. That happened all over Glasgow. I remember going to the Southside for some reason one time. I think my mum was cleaning for somebody on the Southside. And when we were finished we went to the…the pictures. And standing in the queue. And, as I said, I was a dancer all my life. I was an Irish dancer from when I was three years old. So, here’s Winifred up dancing along the queue along with the man, you know [Laughs].” | 56.39-57.47 |
| 58.15 | Talks about Irish dancing in Glasgow as a young girl and the competitions in Glasgow. Talks about changes in Irish dancing. Mentions her first dance school in an old man’s club in the street where she lived with teacher Maureen Lynch. Then talks about dancing in parochial halls and then with Peggy O’Neil in Anderston. |  |
| 1.01.19 | Interviewer asks whether the respondent went to dancehalls. |  |
| 101.27 | Respondent talks about the parochial halls she danced in as her parents wouldn’t let her go to dance halls when young. They did formal dancing there. Rock and roll not the thing. Husband thrown out of every parochial hall for jive dancing. Smooching was forbidden. |  |
| 1.03.55 | Talks about going to the Denniston Palais. |  |
| 104.14 | Interviewer asks what everybody was wearing at that time. |  |
| 1.04.20 | Respondent describes the dresses. |  |
|  | “Occasionally we used to get skirts that would wear likes of say a Christmas dance or something. So, you wanted something a bit special. Again, it would be in the parochial hall. It would be in St Paul’s hall they called it. Was, Rita’s in the Gallowgate. Because she had really modern stuff. It wasn’t stuff that would do you. But, in those days you were inclined to buy stuff that would do you forever. But it didn’t. But it was more what they’re buying now. You know, the young ones will buy stuff and then they’ll wear it and they’ll discard it. It was more than kind of stuff. Maybe not so well made, or, you know. But it was great for going out for a night. I had a black skirt with sequins on it. And, oh, I thought I was no small drink...And this black skirt. And under it was these sticky out petticoats…” | 1.05-1.06.20 |
| 1.06.30 | Interviewer asks what the standard of the dancing was like in the Denniston Palais |  |
|  | “In Glasgow? Glasgow dancers are the best in the world. They really are. You know? I didn’t dance with many other people but my husband was a terrific dancer. He was a great dancer. Anybody else that I did dance with…you could follow their steps because they knew what they were doing. They really are. They’re good dancers in Glasgow. They were in those days. I don’t know about now but they were then.” | 1.06.33-1.07.08 |
| 1.07.10 | Interviewer asks what the men were wearing |  |
|  | Respondent describes suits at night. Draped jackets and tight trousers. |  |
| 1.07.55 | Respondent describes how teddy boys used to dress. |  |
| 1.08.43 | Interviewer asks about markets on the street.  |  |
|  | “That was the Sunday afternoon trip. Down the Barras. Just to look about. And you got queues because they had tenements. And you went up the stairs in these tenements. And inside where the houses would have been were stalls. And they sold everything. Everything you could think of you could buy in the Barras. But up these tenements it was really treasure troves. Somebody would be selling stamp albums. And somebody else would be selling…And stamps of course. And somebody else would be selling comics. And electrical stuff and it was just non-stop. There was everything. Locks and keys and you know…” | 1.08.51-1.09.38 |
| 1.10.15 | Interviewer asks the respondent about how she feels the Highstreets in Glasgow have changed over time. |  |
| 1.11.15 | Talks about her husband and when they went out from. |  |
|  | “I think they went through an era in the ‘60s, ‘70s ‘80s where you could see that there was a bit of money about. And, they were very good actually. It was quite a pleasure to go up to Glasgow and go about. I miss Lewis’s. I think when that went…It was never the same going into the town and going to The St Enoch’s Centre as it had been going to Lewis’s. And then Littlewoods went Woolworth’s went. And Goldberg’s became What Ever Woman Wants. And then it went altogether. Gradually you saw them all…But, they didn’t get replaced by the same standard of shop. I think that was the sad thing. Maybe people’s taste change and their way of buying… There used to be beautiful furniture shops in Glasgow. And that’s something you don’t see now. I remember when we were engaged and we used to go a walk at night. And we used to look in all the furniture shops and pick out what we were going to have when our boat came home, you know…[Laughs]” | 1.10.20-1.11.36 |
| 1.14.13 | Interviewer asks what the respondent would say caused the changes in the Highstreets. |  |
| 1.14.20 | Respondent talks about her opinion of why the changes happened. The demise of industry. Talks about Collin’s. |  |
| 1.17.20 | Respondent talks about litter problems on the Highstreets. |  |
| 1.17.45 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she had the chance what advice would she give to Glasgow’s current planners and businesses. |  |
|  | “I think they must be charging a terrible price for the taxes. For the business taxes. I think if they gave people an incentive to come back into the city with the businesses. Maybe gave them a…A, sort of, a tax free holiday. I think they would encourage them. And then that if they see that they can make the money they’ll stay. Sure, you’ll get ones that will come in for the two years and then bail out when the taxes…You get that everywhere. But, yeah, I think that that would maybe encourage them to…to stay in the city.”  | 1.17.50-1.18.38 |
| 1.18.44 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she imagines the future of the Highstreets to be. |  |
|  | “Unless they change things it’s only going to get worse and worse. We’ll need to find a way. Parking’s another big bugbear. People are not going to come into the city if they can’t park. They’re not going to come into the city of they can’t drive round because of the bus gates. So, they’ll need to look at all these things for future planning. Need to look at what they’re doing. And what they’re doing to the city. It’s only going to end up houses. It’s going to end up luxury flats but no soul.” | 1.18.54-1.19.30 |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project. |  |
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