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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Heather MarshallYear of Birth: 1948Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: 15th of May 2023Interviewer: Sophie FensomRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: No Length of Interview: I hour, 4 minutes and 59 seconds.Location of Interview: Heather’s HomeRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 0.30 | Heather states that she was born in Glasgow. |  |
| 0.34 | Interviewer asks the respondent during which era she first remembers Glasgow’s Highstreets. |  |
| 0.40 | The late 1950s early 1960s. Didn’t go into town much as a small child. Was travel sick. Tramcars shaky. |  |
|  | “The city centre was fascinating. I have great memories of going into town. And also of walking through the town. You could go huge distances from one end of the city to the other without really realising how far you were walking. So, it was very interesting.” | 1.24-1.41 |
| 1.42 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers what kind of properties were open on the highstreets of Glasgow. |  |
|  | “One in particular I remember was in Renfield Street. And it was the most fascinating tobacconist’s shop. And in the window it had more pipes than I’ve ever seen in my life. Different sizes. Different kinds of wood. And they were all very expensive. And you could get all sorts of…My Dad smoked a pipe. So, it was a great treat. My mum would go in and buy some tobacco for my dad for his pipe. And the smell in the shop was exciting and interesting. Not like the horrible smell you get from cigarettes these days. It was a rich, almost like toffee, tobacco smell. So, I remember that clearly.” | 1.53-2.36 |
| 2.37 | Mentions clothes shops, haberdashery stores, wonderful shoes shops, Carter’s furriers, Sauchiehall street, furniture stores, jewellery shops.  |  |
| 3.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent which shops she visited regularly. |  |
| 3.35 | Mentions Lewis’s, her favourite. Her Mum would got to Daly’s Treron’s Pettigrew and Stephen’s, Henderson, C&A, Sauchiehall Street. Frasers and Wylie and Lochhead. Buchanan street. Sad to see the demise but online shopping the thing now. She enjoys online shopping but misses the day out aspect. |  |
| 5.30 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any highstreets processions, parades or carnivals. |  |
| 5.36 | Orange walks only one she remembers. Describes her experience. |  |
| 7.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent if the highstreets were lit up at Christmas. |  |
|  | Lights now lovely but don’t have the magic. Argyll St particularly so. Her and her father worked in H Samuels, Argyll Street. Men coming into get jewellery for Christmas last moment. |  |
| 8.50 | Goldbergs, off Arglye St. Could open an account. Ladies’s hairstyles. Big shops petered out at the Trongate. Barras at the weekend. |  |
| 10.18 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the buildings looked like on the highstreets. |  |
| 10.23 | Mostly old buildings. Ornate clock on one of them. A lot still there in Buchanan Street with different facades. C& A new building. |  |
| 11.44 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she remembers about the interiors of the buildings. |  |
| 11.47 | Talks about tube system for money in Dallas’s. |  |
|  | “The ground floor would be tiled [in Glasgow’s department stores] but as you went further up the store there would be lots of carpets. Carpeted corridors, if you like. And, one thing then that you don’t get now; all these beautifully dressed shop assistants. I mean, people talk now about personal shoppers. Being able to go and have someone do it. In those days that happened. The minute you looked at anything or touched anything or glanced at something. An assistant would appear as if by magic. ‘Can I help you?’ And they would help you with colours. They would help you accessorise the thing that you were buying. And, as I say, that doesn’t…I think a lot of people felt that it was a bit intimidating. If…And especially if they were looking at something that they actually couldn’t afford. I think some ladies may have felt, you know, ‘oh, I better buy it. I’ve tried it on. And I think I better buy this. But, the interiors of the store… They were beautifully lit. And it wasn’t harsh strip lighting. It was proper chandeliers almost. Not…Not the ones with the huge glass dropping bits. But, you know, in general, the lighting, I think, was aimed to make you look as attractive as it was possible. Not the harsh strip lighting that you get now.” | 12.31-14.09 |
| 14.10 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she shopped for any particular products. |  |
| 14.20 | Had to go to the highstreets for clothing school uniforms, furniture etc. No online shopping. But there were ladies who ran minodges.  |  |
|  | “Clark’s shoe shop had a machine that the child stood in. And I don’t know if they still do it now and the X…you could see an X Ray of your foot. I don’t think health & safety would allow that now. So it was…It was a way of measuring your foot. But, when you put the shoes on they would put you back into the machine, so that you could see where your toes were. You were asked to wriggle your toes.” | 14.33-14.56 |
|  | “So really everything from furniture, carpets, bedding…You really had to go to the highstreet. There was no…No online shopping then, obviously. Though, in the poorer areas of Glasgow, and Maryhill was one of the poorer areas. There used to be ladies who ran what was called a ménage…These ladies had access to wholesale suppliers. So, you would have your name in a little book. And every week you would pay money. And, at Christmas time it would be a ca…You would see what your balance was. And the lady who ran the minodge would have all these items. House hold items, clothing, Christmas gifts. So, you could actually…It was like budgeting for Christmas. But, in the main, if you wanted anything you went into tow…Into town was what we called it. We went into town for it.” | 14.59- |
| 16.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she went to tearooms and restaurants in the stores. |  |
|  | “We used to shop quite a lot in Byres Road in the West End and Great Western Road. Not that there were many clothes shops. But, there were lovely tearooms and bakeries. And there was one particular one on Byres Road called Barclay’s Tearoom. And as a special treat I would be taken there for…There was cakes, there were a German company called Counzil [?}.And they had these delicious little cakes. They were inside chocolate. The casing on the outside was thin, crispy chocolate. And then they would have things like mousse and sponge. And even little bits of jelly inside. And the other place that I was taken as a treat. And it’s still there to this day. Was the University Café. At the bottom of Byres Road. For a Knickerbocker Glory…” | 16.24-17.16 |
| 17.41 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she has any memories of hearing music in the stores. |  |
|  | No memories of piped music unless in a music store. Went to live in Aviemore as young adult. |  |
|  | "One of the stores on Buchanan Street which is Fraser's store...The interior hasn't changed much. Fraser's is in an atrium. So, you went up each level and round a balcony. And you could always look down into the middle of the store. And, occasionally, they would have someone, perhaps, playing the piano, or maybe a quartet playing stringed instruments." | 17.50-18.19 |
| 19.03 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers people modelling clothes in the store. |  |
|  | “Yes, very elegant ladies. And often you would be in the store and you were told that there was going to be…they called it a fashion parade then. And it was fascinating seeing these very beautiful women all dressed up and accessorised to the eyeballs and downwards. Yeah, that happened quite regularly, in the…the stores like Lewis’s and Copeland’s and Fraser’s did that. They often had fashion parades…” | 19.06-19.41 |
| 19.42 | They had long corridors and plastic seats. Sitting meant potential purchasing. |  |
| 20.22 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the changing rooms were like. |  |
| 20.26 | Changing rooms just with a curtain. Not as many as in current times. Frasers had one room at the back in each department. Help given. For example in corsetry. |  |
| 21.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers hairdressers being in the stores. |  |
| 21.31 | Lewis’s had a hairdresser. Taken to local hairdresser or your mum cut her hair. |  |
| 22.00 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe her memories of the staff and the customer service in stores. |  |
|  | “My initial memory of the staff was how well dressed and tidy they were. And very elegant and very smart. The customer service, as I said, I think some people found it… They found it intimidating. Because, some people just wanted to look without any interference-‘Well, I’m just looking.’ You would hear people saying that quite often. But I think when…I think as you get older. You appreciate someone who will say-‘Well, if that’s not the right size. I’ll bring you…’ You know. To get that kind of assistance initially, in choosing something, or if you’re looking for something and you don’t know where to find it. It was…I think the assistants were on commission in those days. I think they had a basic wage. But, the more they sold they earned commission. And rightly so. But, I do think the…I think the level of customer service was better than it is now. Stores…It’s still good in stores like Marks & Spencer’s. I think they’re still training staff to recognise when a customer needs help. And I think that’s the secret. Is being able to recognise when someone just wants to browse or when someone’s looking as if they need a bit of help to find something.” | 22.08-23.47 |
| 23.48 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any particular characters |  |
| 23.52 | Staff seemed to have materialised from thin air when you needed them.  |  |
| 24.29 | Interviewer asks if the respondent remembers home delivery or gift wrapping services in stores. |  |
| 24.40 | Furniture was delivered to homes. |  |
|  | “What they did provide was alteration service. So, if something was too long. Or, you liked the dress but you were in between sizes and it just needed altered slightly. Then, the wonderful seamstress with the tape round her neck would appear, and again, you could sometimes get that done the same day. But, generally you had to come back and pick…and of course, there was a charge for that…” | 24.49-25.27 |
| 25.28 | Interviewer asks if the respondent remembers any other stores with a cash carrying system to the office and back. |  |
|  | Dallas’s had cash carrying system. She thinks Pettigrew & Stephens had that as well. |  |
|  | “Dallas’s was an anomaly. It was…Dallas’s had what they called…they had constant sales but they always called them Red Letter Days. And I mean this happened maybe twice a month. Dallas’s would have a R…They also had a nice restaurant. I remember that. But, they weren’t really the highstreet. They were at Cowcaddens which was close to Sauchiehall Street but wouldn’t really qualify as the highstreet. It was an area called Normal School…” | 25.54-26.30 |
| 26.46 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she remembers about the festive period on the highstreets. |  |
|  | “The window displays…I mean, it must of cost a fortune to put the work in and to have the skill to do it. I mean, some of them even had motorised figures and reindeer that nodded their heads. And the window decorations…People would go into town just to look at the windows. And then, of course, the majority of them had the…You would visit Santa Claus in the store. That was a great thing. But, Lewis’s, in particular, because of where it was on Argyle Street, every single window was different. And, some of them would have…I don’t know what it would have been made out of but it did look like snow. In the base of the window. And, especially the toy displays. And there was always a huge…Even as a girl, I was fascinated by the train sets. And it would be whizzing round in the window.”  | 26.52-28.03 |
| 28.04 | Thinks window displays might be broken into in modern times. |  |
| 28.42 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any security on the doors. |  |
| 28.36 | No recollection of security. Mentions security in the Middle East where she lived for 7 years. |  |
| 29.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she worked in any other stores in the highstreets. |  |
|  | “But, then I had a job. A Saturday job in C & A’s in Sauchiehall Street. That was exciting. I was in the millinery department, the hat department. And it was a very complicated process. Because, if you sold a hat, inside the hat was a tiny, little cardboard…piece of cardboard, no bigger than a postage stamp. And it was fastened on to the inside of the hat with these staples. So, you had to very carefully prize open the staples. Take the card out. And next to the till was a little wooden box. Like a little post box. And your card went into the post box. Money went into the till. And at the end of the night you had to go to the accounts department with your till. And your till and your wooden box had to tally up. Less, of course, the float that would have been in the till anyway. So, that was always nerve wracking. There would be someone with an old fashioned adding machine. Where you pressed the buttons and you pulled a handle. Ad you would be sweating thinking-oh, please, please let the money tally up. Because, it was…You had to make up the difference if it wasn’t right. You didn’t get the difference if it was over though. You weren’t recompensed for that.” | 29.54-31.13 |
| 31.14 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her training entailed in C&A. |  |
| 31.16 | Not much. Till. Hats. How to talk to people. |  |
| 32.37 | Interviewer asks the respondent about the pay and conditions at C& A. |  |
| 33.00 | Seven & shillings and sixpence. Canteen. Staff seemed happy. |  |
| 34.26 | Interviewer asks the respondent if the staff had a trade union. |  |
|  | No trade union for part-time workers but thinks there was for full time. Worked in Burnbrae hotel and in The Doublet on Park Road. |  |
| 35.07 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she worked as part of a team. |  |
| 35.08 | Was part-time. Had supervisor and there were other members of staff. Not part of the commission earning staff. They got more expensive sales. |  |
| 35.47 | Interviewer asks the respondent to talk her through an average day at work. |  |
| 35.51 | Start time. Uniform. Sore feet from standing in formal shoes. Take dust covers off hat stands etc. Arrange hats. Ask if people want to try on. Check the hats for hair. Dusting. |  |
| 38.00 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there were some things that some workers were allowed to do that others were not. |  |
|  | Senior members more responsibility. Dressing of counters their responsibility. |  |
| 38.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there was any stock out the back that was checked if someone asked for something. |  |
|  | Hats replenished from drawers. Stock room quite far. You asked more senior member of staff if customer had a query. |  |
| 39.48 | Interviewer asks the respondent if her job changed at all in response to seasonal promotions. |  |
| 39.53 | It didn’t as she was part-time. |  |
| 40.02 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her favourite thing about working in C & A was. |  |
| 40.07 | Felt grown up. Having older people ask for advice about hats. Independence. |  |
| 41.01 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her least favourite thing about the job was. |  |
| 41.05 | She didn’t like the colourful canteen talk as she was not old enough to understand. |  |
| 41.48 | Interviewer asks the respondent how this job compared to other jobs she has had. |  |
| 41.53 | Completely different. First of all secretarial work. Not sure why didn’t go into retail full-time. Would not have liked to stand all the time. Bank job was seen as a good job. Then worked in tourism. |  |
| 44.07 | Went to discos. Mentions The Locarno and The Majestic.  |  |
|  | “I was in town at night occasionally because I got a job in a bar after work. It was actually quite funny. It was what eventually became Victoria’s, I think it eventually became. But, when I worked in it, it was called Caesar’s Palace. And it had a casino and gambling. And there was I in the bank all prim and proper all day. And at night I used to go downstairs to the toilet and change into a toga with sandals. To go and work in this nightclub, Caesar’s Palace. So, I maybe worked in there a couple of nights a week just for extra money. Everybody did then. Everyone had a second job to supplement.” | 45.06-46.07 |
| 46.09 | Interviewer asks the respondent how she felt when she was walking the highstreets at night. |  |
| 46.14 | Didn’t give walking at night a second thought. Mentions the all night buses from George Square. Didn’t feel unsafe on the bus.  |  |
| 47.35 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her key memories were of the city at night. |  |
| 47.39 | At one point pubs closed at 10.00pm. So, people out late. Never felt unsafe but left when she was 21 and up north for 20 years.  |  |
| 49.17 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she had takeaway after being out. |  |
|  | Didn’t have takeaway. Can’t remember takeaway. Wimpy open till 10.00pm. Were fish and chip shops but not open till midnight and beyond. |  |
| 50.15 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she still goes to the high streets at night. |  |
| 20.19 | For theatre or a show. Nowhere to park. After 6pm you can parkin Blythswood Square. Goes to Kings theatre a lot. Have to drive from Erskine. Meals out due to this. Going down coast easier for that. |  |
| 51.36 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she goes into the city for shopping. |  |
| 51.43 | Rarely goes in. Prefers shopping online. Goes to Silverburn where there is parking. |  |
|  | “It’s a shame, but then, a lot of the stores that used to have wonderful food are no longer…You know, Lewis’s had a fabulous basement food department. There was Ferguson’s, another beautiful store that…wonderful cold meats and cheeses all imported from abroad. But, they’ve all gone. But, you know, there’s not much reason now to go to the highstreet now at all; which is quite sad.” | 53.15-53.50 |
| 53.51 | Interviewer asks what the respondent thinks has caused all of these changes to the highstreets.  |  |
| 53.55 | Doing things online. Very few of her friends who are not computer literate. Wasn’t in Glasgow for 20 years. Reliability and availability of public transport. Noticed big change when she came back. Stock not the same in terms of size. Thinks it’s a big miss now. Stores encourage online shopping. |  |
| 57.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she had the chance what advice would she give to Glasgow’s current highstreet planners and businesses. |  |
|  | “When you speak to retailers. Or, you say, ‘Oh, Why are you closing down?’ It seems to be the amount they’re charged to rent the properties. Because they’re not owning them. They’re paying lease holder rental. So, I think if whoever oversees that tried to make having a store a more attractive proposition. And also tried to encourage small businesses. I mean, I shop online with a website called Etsy…Now, some of their small businesses, they have the most beautiful things. And I…If, as a shopper I was able to access a store like that on the highstreet. I would go into the town two or three times a week. I mean for me it’s free on the bus to travel into town…” | 58.38-59.33 |
| 1.00.30 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she imagines the future of Glasgow’s Highstreets to be. |  |
| 1.00.35 | Talks about demise of Sauchiehall Street. Talks about Borders and Waterstones. Smaller independent stores. Enjoys Great Western Road. Cut price stores undercut department stores. |  |
| 1.04.30 | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for sharing her memories with the project. |  |
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