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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Geraldine BairdYear of Birth: 1950Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: 25th of May 2023Interviewer: Rachel KellyRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: Yes (Number of: 4 )Length of Interview: 1 hour, 28 minutes and 50 seconds.Location of Interview: Geraldine’s home in RutherglenRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 0.54 | Interviewer asks the respondent when she was first in the highstreets at night. |  |
| 0.59 | When she got a job at aged fifteen. Went to the dancing a couple of time but didn’t get picked to dance.  |  |
|  | “But, I never got a dance because I was a wee fat bird. So you never…Then it was very much wee dolly birds and things like that. It wasn’t something I enjoyed so I’d to find an alternative. And then I discovered a pub called The Scotia. The Scotia’s in Stockwell Street and it was a whole lot of people who were different. A lot of people who were into literature, traditional music…They were politically, some of them, motivated. And usus…Just a crowd…usually a lot of drink taken. And that was my saving grace. I spent my adolescence in The Scotia. I got into pubs at fifteen because I was a big lump of a girl and they wouldn’t have known I wasn’t eighteen. And The Scotia for me was a lifeline. It taught me a lot of things. I met a lot of different kinds of people. I was introduced to authors like Steinbeck. And politics. The CP. They were all Socialists. The Socialist’s work…I got…went to loads of parties, smoked lots of dope and heard wonderful music. And, of course, what happened in those days a lot of social groups formed out of the pub. Maybe the walkers would go walking and other people would go for weekends to the folk festivals like Auchtermuchty. I started to go to the folk festivals. Which were absolutely wonderful at that time…So, it was a bit of an alternative way…None of my friends…I had to make a whole new group of friends. But we had great craic.” | 1.28-3.30 |
| 3.32 | Went to a wedding in the West End with the folk people. Still goes into the Scotia. Still sees the same people. |  |
|  | “If you didn’t get into The Scotia for some reason. You went across the road. It was a pub called The Wee Man’s. And it had red Formica everywhere. It was a real working man’s pub. It wasn’t like the festering wounds as I call it. The Westering Winds round the corner. It was a pub where it was an overflow of us. And they quite liked us coming in because, I think, we spent money. And we used to talk to the old fellas. And some of their stories were amazing. Maybe they worked in the fish market down there or they worked in the markets. Oh they were…One guy was a ragman. Peter. And he had a horse and he used to have the horse outside…There was Peter. There was Freddy Anderson. Who was a guy who became a poet and quite a well-known poet. Matt McGinn was around. Billy Connolly was in the pub when he drank and when he had a stutter and played the banjo. But I didn’t know him well.” | 4.13-5.15 |
|  | “Because there was also folk clubs. There was a folk club up on Sauchiehall Street called Clive’s. Clive’s Folk Club and it was an all-night affair. At that age I wasn’t allowed to stay out. But, I’d two older sisters so I just told my mother I was with them. And I went to Montrose Street Folk Club. I got as far as, I think, Paisley. It was just a really good time and for me, as I say, who was a bit awkward. Not a lot of confidence because of the size thing. It’s just I feel that niche…I mean we were all strange. There was no doubt about it. I mean at one point The Blue Angels started frequenting the pub. And they just merged in. I mean, and they were wild. They used to come in all their motor gear and helmets. And you’d see them on the 18 bus going back to Maryhill. And I mean many a laugh we had. And I still have lots of good friends…There was an innocence about it. I mean it wasn’t really about the drink to be fair. It was more about company and like minds.” | 5.16-6.24 |
| 6.25 | Pubs closed in the afternoon and they played football on Glasgow Green. |  |
| 7.11 | There was a union centre in Clyde Street with some events. Went to the Tunnel bar which she says was a dive but good if you didn’t get into The Scotia. |  |
|  | “There was the Tunnel Bar which was a dive. But, if you didn’t get into The Scotia it was an alternative. There was this guy who worked as a cooper. And Tam, God rest him. Tam used to bring in the dregs of the barrel. We’d all drink that. Wonder we didn’t go blind. And then sometimes we went up to The State Bar on Holland Street. But, it was the same ilk but a bit more sophisticated. And the State Bar had bands on which was diff… I mean The Scotia had…What happened in The Scotia was that people came in took out their guitar and started singing. There were all wee rooms. So, there was maybe four different sessions going on. People like The Dubliners the Clanky [Clancy] Brothers. People who were appearing in concerts appeared in The Scotia. It was a real hub. It’s still going. Very different but it’s still going.”  | 7.18-8.10 |
| 9.15 | Mentions the owner of the Scotia John Rowan. Talks about a woman giving birth in the Scotia toilets and asking for a Carlsberg special. |  |
| 9.40 | Realised via The Scotia that there was a whole world out there. Mother encouraged them to read. Sent them to private schools from a working class household. Talks about her Irish immigrant family and the importance of education to them. |  |
| 14.45 | Talks about The Barras and Paddy’s Market and the Irish connection. |  |
|  | “My sister took me to The Boys and Girl’s Exhibition in Kelvin hall. We went on a tram and the tramlines were just at the top of the road. The Hamilton Road where I live. And you could hear at night them shunting along. Because I would be in bed at the front of the house. And they took me on a tra…and we went upstairs in the tram and looked out. Now don’t ask me…It would be fifties, mid-fifties. Just before the trams disappeared. But my god. The Boy’s and Girl’s Exhibition. It was wonderful. And I think at one of those they had a plane inside…You could go down the emergency shoot. And oh my god, you thought, you know. And it was so innocent you know.” | 16.37-17.23 |
| 17.35 | Talks about Rutherglen as a child and no need to leave there. Cafes were a bit rough. Not allowed there when older. Church shows. Parochial hall. Went to one party on a boat in Govan with her friend who worked in Govan. |  |
| 21.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she felt safe in the streets of Glasgow or not. |  |
|  | “When I was about seventeen or eighteen after the pub at ten o clock. And walking through Glasgow Green by Shawfield and up to Rutherglen. It never felt any…never saw anything. In fact the 12 late bus. It was a party or a fight. You never knew. Mostly it was a party. There would be somebody up giein it laldy and you’d be coming home from the pub yourself. And very rarely…I don’t think I even saw a fight. But, no, it wouldn’t of struck me that there would be anything. But, then again, I think we were naive. We came from quite a sheltered…we didn’t know. I had never seen violence, or, I mean, obviously, we knew what was happening in the world. But, it never touched us. So, it wouldn’t have been something we’d of looked out for.” | 21.34-22.25 |
| 22.28 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her key memories of Glasgow at night were. |  |
| 22.40 | Loved the architecture of Glasgow. Appreciates what it was built on. City Chambers. |  |
| 24.41 | Interviewer asks the respondent about Paisley’s. |  |
| 25.51 | Staff were brilliant. Got uniform there for private school.  |  |
| 30.32 | Talks about the haberdashery at the corner of her street and her sister making clothes. |  |
| 32.41 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the interior of Paisley’s was like. |  |
| 32.42 | Glass and wooden cabinets. Old Fashioned. People helped you. |  |
| 33.41 | Went to C&A as there were good sizes. Went to Goldberg’s and Lewis’s at Christmas. Loved the Christmas lights. Mesmerised by the jewellery shops in the Argyle Arcade.  |  |
| 36.07 | Went to the Briggait once. Didn’t like it but knew people that did. Describes Lewis’s . Describes some of the Catholic churches round the City Centre. |  |
|  | “When as a child my mother took me… and it was called The John Ogilvie Procession. And John Ogilvie was the only Scottish martyr that was hung at Glasgow Cross. And a Catholic one. And we walked from Glasgow Cross up to High Street. Because the tale was that he was buried along with the criminals in High Street. And then we all walked back saying your prayers. And you know. All sort of praying for the beatification so that he could become a saint. And, actually, I remember, it wasn’t all that comfortable sometimes with people jeering and things like that. Which you would get anyway. Making a public display of something that they didn’t agree with. Also, I remember my mother and I. We went on a THEN… an anti-abortion march. And there was this guy, Tusha Sarka [?] an Indian guy I was at university with. And Tusha was with a placard saying-pro-abortion. And my mother went over and hit him with the umbrella. She said-‘Tusha you should know better.” | 39.33-40.47 |
| 41.44 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any other parades on the streets of Glasgow. |  |
|  | Parades in Rutherglen around the 12th. Catholic marches tend to take place elsewhere now like at Carfin Grotto. Went on a CND march and union march. |  |
| 42.58 | Interviewer asks the respondent about going to cinemas or theatres in Glasgow. |  |
| 43.05 | Mostly went to The Citizens. Handel’s Messiah at the Glasgow Concert Hall. Went to Folk clubs like Montrose Street, or Clive’s Club or The Ballad Club. |  |
| 44.18 | Inteviewer asks the respondent if she has any other memories of Lewis’s Store. |  |
| 44.23 | An emporium. If you couldn’t get it anywhere else you got it in Lewis’s. Got a trench coat there in the 1970s and bought bags etc there. Great haberdashery there.  |  |
| 49.10 | Remembers a wholesaler across from the Scotia who gave them Eggs. Religious shop Carruthers [?] in Royal Exchange Square. St Paul’s Bookshop. |  |
|  | “I remember going into the Art Shop. My sister always was buying art material. And, again, it was amazing. Cause things I wouldn’t see. Wee tins of paint. Wee tubes of oil paint. Big wooden cases with everything in it. Big canvases and easels. And things that she wouldn’t have.” | 49.58-50.19 |
| 50.47 | Went to a record shop in Rutherglen. Her records were obscure and you had to order them in. |  |
| 51.14 | Interviewer asks the respondent who she saw perform in the folk clubs of Glasgow.  |  |
| 51.24 | John Martyn, Billy Connolly. The McCalmans. The Clancy’s. Lots of Irish musicians came over. Archie Fisher. Luke Kelly, Dolores Keane, Sean Keane. Pat McNulty, piper. Accordion player called Jimmy McCue.  |  |
| 55.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent for her memories of the Barras. |  |
| 55.11 | Liked the smells and the patter. Didn’t like the whelks. St Alphonsus a church with a broad range of people in which did work for the needy. Barras have changed now although she still manages to find things there. Father got 78s in the Barras. |  |
| 103.53 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks the highstreets of Glasgow have changed over time. |  |
| 103.56 | All a bit samey. Difficult for people who are not computer literate. Duller now.  |  |
| 1.05 | Talks about West of Scotland Irish culture and going to Ceilidhs. Glasgow a place she went to a lot as a child. Hopes the People’s Palace gets reopened.  |  |
| 1.15.09 | Interviewer asks the respondent when she things Glasgow’s Highstreets began to change. |  |
| 1.15.20 | Not any different from any other city centre. Shops couldn’t compete. Glasgow dirty now. Should be cleaned up. Had visitors who were there during Cop conference and they loved bits of Glasgow but were also shocked by the squalor. |  |
| 1.17.30 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she had the chance what advice would she give Glasgow’s current planners and businesses. |  |
|  | “I’d pedestrianize the whole place. Put in a lot of cycle lanes. I would make little havens of trees and seats. I would…Everything would be free. Tours of the churches, the museums, whatever. I would encourage more cultural activities. Like, I was in Derry a while ago and they had a…All the spaces had live performances. Free. I think…Obviously you can charge for some things. But, I think they need to pay attention to The People’s Palace. And they just missed out on a top up fund. What do they call it? Levelling up funding. They can’t compete so…They just can’t compete with economic forces. Clean the bloody place. That’s what I’d say. Get more people walking about. Mobility’s a problem. Raised…I mean, I couldn’t take my mobility scooter in, because there’s no lowered pavements; and, I mean, that’s quite a simple thing to do…But, George Square’s a lovely place to just sit and people watch. But, then you cast you eye into the multi-million pound houses behind you that people can’t afford to live in unless they’re whatever, you know. Every bit of land seems to be being built upon for housing. Why housing? What about the other amenities that people need and love. Make an ice rink or something that people can enjoy. It’s not going to happen. But…”  | 1.17.41-1.19.31 |
| 1.20.41 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she imagines the future of Glasgow’s Highstreets to be. |  |
| 1.20.47 | Thinks it will become anonymous. I saddened by this as there are no wee nooks and crannies and interesting bits. Even Tam Shepherds has gone. Thinks history of working class should be preserved.  |  |
| 1.22.35 | Thinks Rutherglen was a mini Glasgow when she was growing up. Doesn’t think young people will notice shops are gone as they are online. Mother got corsets in Copland and Lye. |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project. |  |
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