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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Robert PoolYear of Birth: 1955Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: The 13th of June 2023Interviewer: Rachel KellyRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: Yes (Number of: 50 plus )Length of Interview: 1 hour, 37 minutes and 14 seconds.Location of Interview: Robert’s home in ClydebankRecording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 0.35 | Respondent was born in his parental grandparent’s house in Knightswood in Glasgow. |  |
| 0.49 | Interviewer asks the respondent when he first remembers Glasgow’s high streets. |  |
| 0.50 | Mainly the 1970s as he started work in 1971 in Washington Street. Went for walks on lunch break. Learned names of streets and where the shops were. |  |
|  | “I can remember going away back to when Virgin actually had a record shop just at the corner of Argyle Street and Waterloo Street. Nobody can remember that, funnily enough, but I remember it being there.” | 1.19-1.29 |
| 1.40 | Mentions Bow’s on the Highstreet, Lewis, Woolworths, Dixon’s.  |  |
| 2.15 | Lewis’s took over The Royal Polytechnic. |  |
| 2.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe the inside of Lewis’s. |  |
| 2.43 | Typical department store when all said and done. |  |
| 3.01 | Worked for largest distributor of electrical, radio and records. In and out all the big stores. Chains like Lewis’s and Arnott’s all identical inside. Was Scottish representative for JVC Audio and Video at one time. |  |
|  | “I remember my mother taking us to Lewis’s. I’ve got a photograph actually of myself my two broth…Sorry, my three brothers and my sister at the…They used to have this thing. What was it called? Muffin the Mule. It was a thing for kids. And, again, it was a thing at Christmas. They would take your photograph with it. And each Christmas or each year they would simply change the day. And I know this was 1964 simply going by the age of my sister. You know, when she was born. So I remember that and I remember the badges. Not just the colourful badges. The- I visited Santa badges. It was like yesterday. I can still remember the staff badges which was the green and gold badges. So, yeah, I’ve got good memories of my mother taking us through there. And, again, you see the bikes and you think, oh, I’d really like a bike for my Christmas and the bike turns out to be a Subuteo with one guy with a broken leg and no substitute. You know [laughs].” | 3.47-4.43 |
| 4.44 | Mentions how great Lewis’s window displays were. Also states that he has the 1937 Lewis’s handbook. |  |
| 5.13 | Interviewer asks the respondent about the customer service. |  |
| 5.20 | Had representatives in Lewis’s and Arnott’s to demonstrate JVC goods. Would go in and do staff training. |  |
| 6.43 | Talks about queuing for a T Rex record.  |  |
|  | “Menzies had them. They had them. I’m trying to think who else had them….Biggars. They had something…I think they advertised it one time. They had seventeen listening booths. Do you know? So, it was that type of experience you got that you just don’t get now. And the staff were always helpful. Do you know what I mean? Because not only were they trying to sell you the record that you wanted. They were trying to sell you records that were in the same kind of genre but, you know, they thought you might like.” | 7.54-8.16 |
| 8.50 | Interviewer asks the respondent about Lewis’s at Christmas. |  |
| 8.53 | Big tree in Lewis’s. Only other he had seen like that was in a church in the Calton. |  |
| 10.56 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there are any other particular shops or stores that stick out from his childhood. |  |
|  | “My Aunt May, she would take us into Partick sometimes. And she would always take us to Birss and buy us a toy. And I always remember my brother got this thing called a Swapit. And it was like a…It was like a kind of soldier thing. You could swap the head, swap the body, swap the legs. So you could have different armour on it and all this kind of stuff. And I probably ended up with just a jigsaw or something like that, you know [laughs}. But he always got Swapits so he did. Again, I loved going into Birss. It wasn’t one.. really a big, big shop. You know, toy shops for kids in Partick. But, that was the one to go to. Plus, there was stuff in there….Although, it wasn’t actually a toy shop. They did do other things. Aunt May was going into buy for…whatever she was going into buy at the particular time. But, aye, that’s the one that stands out there.” | 11.31-12.14 |
| 12.19 | Remembers Philip Wilson’s of Trongate. Mother worked there. Mother and gran went in for hats. |  |
| 13.09 | Talks about Woolworths pick and mix. FW Woolworths and Woolworths. Broken biscuits. |  |
| 15.15 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any parades or processions or carnivals on the streets of Glasgow. |  |
|  | “Only the wind up of the trams. ‘62/’63. I remember that. My granny took us. And she pushed everybody out the road. My granny wasn’t one for messing about. So, this is my granny-‘The weans are here, the weans are here, I need to see the trams.’ And all this kind of stuff. I remember that.” | 15.26-15.59 |
| 16.00 | Talks about tram tickets in his collection. |  |
| 16.13 | Has vague memory of the Queen going down Maryhill road in the ‘60s. |  |
| 17.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent about his mum getting him the job at Clyde Factors. |  |
| 18.00 | Talks about his apprenticeship at the warehouse at Clyde Factors. Got moved up to the sales office. Was promoted to Scottish sales rep in 1979 till 1984 for JVC audio and video. Then ran aftercare service. Mentions Johnny Stepeck. Describes move of Clyde Factors business into old GPO building a Broomielaw. Went into administration. Lewis’s shut, Bow’s shut, Bremner’s shut. |  |
| 25.31 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there are any particular stores that he visited during his working life that really stand out to him. |  |
| 25.37 | Talks about film showing of film with JVC product placement. Talks about Johnny Stepeck. |  |
| 29.04 | Talks about Rio Stakis. |  |
|  | “Well. You had Rio Stakis who ran it all. And he built the business up. I mean, we’re talking about high street shops. I mean the steak houses…Stakis steakhouses were everywhere. Every…In fact, it didn’t matter. It wasn’t just Glasgow. They were everywhere…I miss them as well because he totally changed the way a Glaswegian male would eat. You know, a normal family. And it used to be you could go to a restaurant if you didn’t mind spending the money. You know, you could go to The Grosvenor whatever. But he came along made it affordable. Made the place you went into really nice and bright and friendly.” | 29.32-30.26 |
| 30.27 | Talks about Stakis’s other business including his employment in a bar of theirs and what he feels were the good conditions there. |  |
| 33.29 | Interviewer asks the respondent about grand stores such as Copeland and Lye. |  |
| 33.32 | Respondent describes some of his collection of Glasgow memorabilia. |  |
| 39.57 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers Paisleys |  |
| 39.58 | Talks about Paisley’s memorabilia that he has. Says it was a shop for people with money. Also did military and navy wear. |  |
| 40.59- | Interviewer asks the respondent if he went into Fraser’s in his work capacity. |  |
| 41.30 | Mentions Chanel counter. Talks about commission made there and in Arnotts.  |  |
| 43.02 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he went out and watched bands in Glasgow. |  |
|  | “Originally I went to Green’s Playhouse and saw bands like T-Rex there. And, again, when it became the Apollo…Again, I photographed Sparks and I photographed Golden Earring…Golden Earring’s support band was a band called Lynyrd Skynyrd who at that time nobody had heard of and they were brilliant. And the thing was I only went with one roll of film and I never photographed any Lynyrd Skynyrd. It was all Golden Earring…So, yeah I loved the rock bands. Saw Led Zeppelin there. December of ’72 I think it was I went to see them. They were brilliant.”  | 43.10-44.26 |
| 47.06 | Talks about going to see Status Quo and saw a huge queue for tickets for the Osmonds. |  |
|  | “The Golden Garter where they used to transmit live…Live music from. Live cabaret acts. That was part of The Hill’s Hotel. It was all part of the same building. So, I’d go there. And my other favourite place to go to was The Jamaica Inn. And I loved The Jamaica Inn because it had just such a wide variety of people and ages…It always had a great atmosphere.” | 48.57-49.32 |
| 50.00 | Mentions a nightclub he liked on the left hand side of Union Street towards the Broomielaw. Mentions going to the Volcano, Cardinal Follies, The Volcano, The Oasis in Clydebank |  |
|  | “The Savoy. That was mobbed. God that was mobbed that place. Do you know what I mean. I don’t know how anybody ever danced. [laughs] The dancefloor just… Literally, I don’t think I’ve ever been on a dancefloor like that in my life.” | 52.40-52.56 |
| 53.26 | Describes seeing Southern rock at Oran Mor. |  |
| 53.52 | Interviewer asks the respondent how he felt when he was walking the high streets at night. |  |
|  | “Well, it’s funny. I felt safe enough. I don’t think, you know, threats were ever something that crossed my mind. It just didn’t seem to be about as much as what it is now. Again, maybe it’s just me being naïve or just not realising at the time. But that’s the way it came to me. I mean, I could walk through Glasgow no problem. I would never even think about getting jumped or something like that. I think it was because it was so big and wide and, you know, it was so open. Nobody would be so stupid. These days anything can happen. But, back then, when I was a teenager. Never crossed my mind. Never crossed my mind.”  | 53.53-54.27 |
| 54.45 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he had a trade union when he worked for the electrical supplier Clyde Factors. |  |
| 54.47 | They did not have a trades union. Was a family business. Describes the history. |  |
| 55.36 | Best thing about working for Clyde Factors. It was a family business. The boss used to say hello to everyone every morning. Describes the Wilson family business further. |  |
| 58.35 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he is in touch with any former colleagues from Clyde Factors.  |  |
| 58.39 | He is in touch with some. Mentions the late Nora King who knew everything about the records. Karen Anderson, Linda Kerswick and also Michael Wilson up until a few years ago. The late Ian MacDonald. Mark Pitman. |  |
| 1.02.12 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he thinks that the high streets have changed over time. |  |
|  | “Absolutely, there’s absolutely no question of that. Rates and that are playing a big part in that. You know the amount of money paid in rates. I think Glasgow has one of the highest rate, you know per shop, in the whole of Britain. And we’re probably paying more in Glasgow than what they do in London. It’s horrendous. I mean, Sauchiehall Street’s suffering really bad just now. You know what I mean. It’s just one thing after another with Sauchiehall Street. It used to be a great place to go. And it doesn’t really help matters either when you start shutting half of it off to traffic. I know that sounds kind of weird. You know, you want to keep pollution out of the city centres and all this. But when you stop…When you stop to…When you stop people going somewhere…Well, we’ll go to some other shops somewhere else…And people want to use their car for shopping. Make no mistake. They do not want to be humphing bags back on a bus or a train. That’s why they bought a car in the first place.” | 1.02.15-103.11 |
| 1.08.03 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he had the chance what advice would he give to Glasgow’s current planners and businesses. |  |
| 1.08.11 | Says stop preventing people from coming into the city centre. Not keen on pedestrianized streets |  |
| 1.12.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent to talk about his collection of Glasgow memorabilia with a focus on the highstreets. |  |
| 1.12.41 | Respondent talks about his Glasgow collection and some of the businesses connected with that. His Glasgow record collection. Mentions where copies will be available in the future and how to contact him now. |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for his contribution to the project. |  |
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