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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**  Respondent: Catherine Sutherland  Year of Birth: 1943  Age:  Connection to project: Respondent  Date of Interview: 30th of June 2023 Interviewer: Sher Allan  Recording Agreement: Yes  Information & Consent: Yes  Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 2 )  Length of Interview: 27 minutes and 32 seconds  Location of Interview: Catherine’s home  Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | | **Glasgow Story Collective** | |
| Time  (from: mins/secs) | Description | | Transcribed Extract  (from- to:  mins/secs) |
| 1.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent what her earliest memories of the Highstreets are. | |  |
|  | “Overall memory is very busy, very busy in the town. And when you went to town you got dressed. Not like today. You put your best clothes on to go in to town. And the shop windows they were glorious. They were just something else. Especially round about Christmas. When you were transported to another place really. They were always exciting.” | | 1.17-1.46 |
| 1.47 | Remembers Lewis’s-could get anything there. Arnott Simpson’s. C & A, Bremner’s, Gauld’s in the Gallowgate for underwear. Embroidery patterns and threads on the Gallowgate. | |  |
|  | “Embroidery. You could go and get embroidery patterns and threads. You could get anything at all going along Gallowgate. It was the same in most districts. Most districts. You went down to Bridgetown. It was the same there. It was the same when you went up to Alexandra Parade. They were a wee bit snooty but you could get anything you wanted. And what was really good which they don’t have now is shops in the streets where you lived. You could go out at any time really. And there would be a handy store or newsagents where you could get what you wanted. What they’ve got now. You need a car. You need to have transport. It’s advanced but it’s not really advanced. You were more advanced when you had the people round about you. And you could shop. You could go out get something to wear. You could get your gym shoes and that in some of the wee shops on the way along into town. But the ones in the town were…They were a step up. But we don’t even have that step up now because you have to travel. And it’s going back to everything under one roof. Only it’s different franchises. You’ve got that which, to me, isn’t advancement at all. Maybe it’s just because I’m getting old… But I don’t think we’re any better. In fact I think we’re getting worse. Because you buy things online. And one of the things I learned through shopping, and in these big stores, was how to recognise quality. You liked to feel the material and you liked to know that it’s not going to wrinkle. That was one of my pet hates…And you bought that. Now if you send for things online it’s like a pig in a poke. You don’t know what you’re getting. And it could…You might have to return it. And then you would get really fed up. I don’t do online shopping. I don’t like it.” | | 2.54-5.07 |
| 5.09 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she has any stand out memories of Glasgow stores. | |  |
|  | “What I miss about Lewis’s not being there. This is just a simple, simple thing. I used to go in on my way home from work and get a piece of cheese. Walnut cheese. Now I only bought wee teeny bit and I ate it on the bus on the way home. Now I can’t get that anymore [laughs].” | | 5.28-5.47 |
| 5.55 | Didn’t like communal changing rooms. The more upmarket shops did not have this. | |  |
|  | “Lewis’s. For their grotto at Christmas. That was really something else. And you always got a good gift from Lewis’s. You always had this nice gift that was useable. And Goldberg’s used to have a smashing grotto as well. I like the window dressings when you walked along. It was like telling a wee story each of the windows you went to. You didn’t even need to go in and buy anything. It was just being there and being in the atmosphere.” | | 6.20-6.50 |
| 6.54 | Knew every café in town. | |  |
|  | “I did enjoy going into town. But the thing is about…I think you were still a wee bit territorial. Even although you were in the town. My town consisted of Argyle Street. I would go up Buchanan Street. It was years later before I went up to Sauchiehall Street. But, I mean, then you discovered there was other shops other than the ones on Argyle Street. But there was enough to satisfy me at the time. And then when I got a bit older and didn’t…didn’t like the ready to wear things. I don’t like going into a dance hall and somebody have the same thing on as me. I’d walk out. I would go home. That’s just me. So, when I got to that stage I started buying cocktail dresses. More things that you couldn’t really afford and you had to save up you know to get…I would go in and if something caught my eye I’d buy it. You know. I’d know I had enough money to buy it. You could go to House of Frasers. And they had, as I say, different stores within it. I think they were about the first to have the different stores within them. Lewis’s not so much.” | | 7.13-8.34 |
| 8.35 | Went to Lewis’s hairdressers once and would never go back again. You would go to town during the day and then go home and get ready to go to the dancing. | |  |
| 9.07 | Interviewer asks the respondent about the dancing that she went to. | |  |
|  | “I went to Barrowlands the Palais, the Melba[?], the Majestic…Flamingo. I don’t think there was any I didn’t go to. I went to The Irish Club… But there was a reason for that. Because you couldn’t afford clothing the way you can afford it now. Right, so, I would buy an outfit. Uh, ha. I would buy an outfit and then I would go round all the different dance halls. Because you felt as if-this is a new outfit. And then you’d start over again. So, it seems crazy but that’s what I did. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the clothes. It was more glamorous then. It was a lot more glamorous then.” | | 9.15-10.05 |
| 10.06 | Interviewer asks during which era this was. | |  |
| 10.07 | During the 1960s. | |  |
| 11.20 | Had job in the Locarno Ballroom. Couldn’t dance with clientele. Uniform not glamorous. Took tickets from people as they came in. Was supposed to look for drink in bags but didn’t find it so to speak. After door went to the cloakroom. There was a bouncer for every woman on the door. No hostesses. Left after transport strike when not paid for the night she had to go home early. Several others resigned. | |  |
| 15.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she worked anywhere else on the highstreets. | |  |
|  | “I liked working in the grocer’s stores because it wasn’t like nowadays where you’ve got computers and things. You tallied the whole thing up in your head. Nobody questioned you. Nobody questioned. Because you were always right. It was what you did. I mean mental arithmetic you did at school. It was like playing a wee game. I worked in Curley’s before I should of. I actually started in Curley’s when I was about thirteen…The grocers. A grocers place. I came in…I did…ah, this is going to sound really crazy now. I did my delivery boy by foot. I stayed off The Gallowgate. Now, houses we delivered to were up on Duke Street. They were bigger houses. Some of the houses were lovely inside. But I’d to carry these groceries and walk up to the place and back down. But they discovered very early that I could use scales. I had peas, beans, lentils into bags. Wee brown bags. Dab hand at that. I could do that. Sugar. I made the patties of butter up. I did potatoes. I bagged potatoes. This all helped the girls. Because it was one of these stores where you went in…Speed…You needed the speed to work in it for a start. So, if you went out and put so many bags under each of the girl’s counters… I wasn’t seen. Put it that way. And I swept out afterwards. But, I wasn’t seen. I was there but I wasn’t there. I got paid. They didn’t take my wages off me (laughs). So, I quite enjoyed doing that. As I say, I did that and then I went and did it while I was working as a carpet weaver. To get extra money. I did that on a Saturday. Cause that was their busiest day.” | | 15.45-17.50 |
| 17.56 | Talks about dancing with a person who was deaf at The Flamingo. Mentions you had to be careful turning someone down and then accepting a dance with someone else. | |  |
| 19.12 | Interviewer asks the respondent is she used her extra money to buy a holiday wardrobe. | |  |
| 19.20 | Respondent say it was for a holiday wardrobe and for spending money on holiday. Bought new dresses and shorts etc. | |  |
| 21.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any parades on the highstreets. | |  |
| 21.14 | Mentions the orange walks. From Protestant and Catholic background. Went to see holy communion too. None of either event meant anything to her. | |  |
|  | “What I do remember that I liked. But it wasn’t a parade. It wasn’t anything to do…They used to come round the streets. Buskers is all I can say they were. And they had music and they had a clown. And they sat the kids along the pavement. And when you sat along the pavement… I think it was thru pence they charged you. But it was great. I mean they sang and they danced. This stupid clown kept kicking the hat and it would go further away. Which we thought was…This was entertainment. They had a set of drums and an accordion. And I followed them round… And then down Comleypark Street and into Comleypark Place. Now that was me seen it four times but I didn’t pay another thru pence.” | | 23.03-23.53 |
| 25.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent what she feels about the future of Glasgow’s high streets. | |  |
| 25.11 | Reiterates what she said about online shopping, lack of choice and inability to check quality. | |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project. | |  |
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