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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**Respondent: Marjorie MacDonaldYear of Birth: 1942Age: Connection to project: RespondentDate of Interview: 14th of September 2023Interviewer: Janet PryorRecording Agreement: YesInformation & Consent: YesPhotographic Images: No (Number of: )Length of Interview: 59 minutes and 14 secondsLocation of Interview: Marjorie’s home in Glasgow.Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | **Glasgow Story Collective** |
| Time(from: mins/secs) | Description | Transcribed Extract(from- to:mins/secs) |
| 1.21 | Interviewer asks the respondent when her earliest memories of Glasgow’s Highstreets are from. |  |
| 1.31 | 1950s. Loved going round the big shops with her aunt. Mentions Daly’s and Pettigrew and Stephens, Copland & Lye and Muirhead’s and Treron’s. Marks and Spencer’s. Shoe shops Saxone, Mansfield’s. C & A. Tearooms.  |  |
| 3.25 | Worked in Muirhead’s for a couple of months when she left school. Emptied cash from tubes. |  |
|  | “My very, very. Very first job was at Muirhead’s. Was in one of these shops. I took a job when I first left school for a couple of months in one of them And that was called Muirhead’s And, I used to go about… And you know how they put money in…and it goes and it goes to a cash…Emptying them. I worked in the bit that emptied all these. Cash out and things like that.” | 3.27-3.56 |
| 4.06 | She was always a Sauchiehall St shopper but not nowadays as there is little there. Mentions Argyle St shops. Lewis’s, Wood and Selby’s and small privately owned shops. Grafton’s and Page’s made good clothes for women. |  |
| 5.19 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the centre of town looked like in the 1950s and 1960s. |  |
| 5.23 | Was so busy on Sauchiehall St years ago that you could not move. Thinks of past in black and white. Has pictures of old shops etc. |  |
|  | “You’d The Empire Theatre in Sauchiehall Street as well. And all the staff that used to be there and that. I mean, I remember, I’d maybe be about fifteen going to see Cliff Richard there when…the first time he came to Glasgow. The first time he ever came to Glasgow I remember going to see Cliff Richard there. They were all screaming. I remember they took photographs. And, hear, the next day I was in the paper.”  | 7.38-8.07 |
| 9.12 | Talks about how families lived closer together in the past. |  |
| 9.53 | Mentions that her husband was a musician.  |  |
|  | “He [Her late husband David MacDonald] played in all the big dancehalls in Glasgow…Tenor Sax. He had the first electric guitar in Glasgow. And that would be in the 1950s. And his uncle had brought him this acoustic guitar back from America. And here they associated, at that time, guitars with cowboys. And there used to be a big shop in town called McCormack’s Music Shop. And the chap....I don’t know whether it was…I think it was John McCormack. He was the son of the people who owned the shop. He made an electric pick up for this acoustic guitar. And that’s when David started playing the guitar. But he had the first electric guitar in Glasgow... And he played in all the dance bands all over the place.” | 10.24-11.21 |
|  | “When you think on it. At half past six on a Saturday night if you wanted to go to the dancing at St Andrew’s Halls… This is when I was sixteen/seventeen. You had to start queuing up to get in at half past six at night. Or else you wouldn’t get in. I mean if you came there at the back of seven there was no way you were getting in there. But, Of course, they closed earlier. They closed at ten. Everything shut down at ten o clock. Everything shut down. So, you went to the dancing. But even when I was at school I remember…I went to school in Alexandra Parade. And running from school to Charing Cross to The Locarno Ballroom in my dinner hour. Because they’d a dance to records at…in the lunch time. And then back. And going to the dancing all the time. It was just…Life was magical, I think, these days.” | 11.24-12.30 |
| 12.33 | Interviewer asks the respondent if that’s when she met her husband. |  |
| 12.35 | Met him at a party through his cousin whom she worked with. |  |
|  | “And then there was all the cafes. People in Glasgow often went to cafes…There used to be a café on Sauchiehall Street called La Ronde [?]. It was for adults not children. It was an adult sort of café. Didn’t sell alcohol. It was soft drinks and things like that. It was a busy place for teenagers.” | 13.29-13.54 |
| 15.03 | Interviewer asks the respondent about a typical Friday or Saturday night for her in the past. |  |
| 15.09 | Would be out all the time. Changed a bit when she met David as he was playing in dance halls. Family was church orientated. Describes single end. Had bath at Granny’s as she had a bigger house. |  |
|  | “The Locarno Ballroom was my favourite place. That was my favourite place. And then there was The Majestic Ballroom. Which, David [Her late husband David MacDonald] had a band in it at one time…And then he felt as though…He had a daytime job as well and it was getting too much. So, he decided that the band job would go. Cause he knew he would get plenty work other places…And, as I say, he got married. And things change when you get married don’t they?” | 17.44-18.32 |
| 19.18 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers any of the purchases that she made. |  |
| 19.25 | Remembers her mum bought her a fur coat. Grandmother made a lot of their clothes. Glasgow looks like an empty shell to her compared to what it used to be. |  |
| 20.45 | Had a Saturday job in Woolworths. Thinks Glasgow misses Woolworths but also thinks the whole country misses it too. There used to be six big stores on Sauchiehall Street.  |  |
| 21.27 | Interviewer asks the respondent about her job in Woolworths. |  |
|  | Worked selling cut price jewellery. Popular with teens. Was kept in wooden and glass cabinets. | 21.33-23.25 |
| 23.26 | Interviewer asks what things they sold in Woolworths. |  |
| 23.29 | Woolworths sold everything. Bathroom, kitchen, makeup. Shoes at one time. |  |
|  | “And that was the big, big Locarno Ballroom. And there was a private club next to there for…And high-class folk went to. Cause I mean it was…the waiters had tails. The waiters had tails on them…Cause I think it was the likes of bookies and businessmen and people like that that used it. I mean, the dancing wasn’t licensed in these days.” | 24.39-25.10 |
| 26.57 | Interviewer asks the respondent how the dance halls were decorated. |  |
|  | “Oh yes, it was all done in red and gold [interior of the dance halls] you know. They’d balconies and, I think, chandeliers and crystal and funny lights in the wall. Things like that.” | 27.09-27.25 |
| 27.27 | Says the theatres did a lot in Glasgow. Lots of shows that went on for more than a week. Mentions the Empire, The Alhambra, The Kings and The Theatre Royal as well as smaller theatres in areas such as St George’s Cross. |  |
| 28.16 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the flooring was like in the dancehalls.  |  |
| 28.18 | They were sprung floors.  |  |
|  | “It was called the Majestic but Glasgow people called it the magic stick. And David had a band. There was a big band and then there was a small band. David had a small band in there. The day we got married we came from my granny’s to go get ma… to go to get married. And there was his name was up in lights above the door. The David MacDonald Quartet it said. That would be in 1960 maybe two. 1962. He had the band in there. And then he was going to leave it. And then one night. We were married by this time. And one night the door went. That door out there went and I went to open the door cause David was, sort of, asleep in there. And this man in a dinner suit and white shirt and bow tie and all that… It was a guy called Victor Sylvester. He used to be a…All dance halls and a big orchestra, great. And he came to see David. Because David had handed in his notice at the danc…He was coming out and he was going to put somebody else in and he came to try and coax David to stay. And David said-‘No, I’ve got a wife now and she’s pregnant. It doesn’t suit my life anymore.” | 28.41-30.15 |
| 30.34 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she used to feel safe on the high streets at night. |  |
| 30.41 | Always felt safe getting off bus on Edinburgh Rd to home. Same in city centre. Might be that she was innocent but she doesn’t think so. When she was a kid used to run into pubs with friend and get swept out with a broom. Were bits of Glasgow that were rough. |  |
| 34.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent where she went shopping in Possil Park. |  |
| 34.09 | The front street. Mentions McCafferty’s sweet shop and the Co-op. |  |
| 37.03 | Interviewer asks the respondent when she thinks the high streets started to change.  |  |
| 37.08 | Thinks into the early seventies maybe the sixties. When lots of people moved out of Glasgow.  |  |
| 38.12 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she ever goes into Glasgow now. |  |
| 38.15 | Goes in in her wheelchair as can’t walk now. |  |
| 39.45 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there is anything more about the nightlife that she would like to share. |  |
|  | “There used to be a night club where there was a fire…someplace on Sauchiehall Street. And there was a building and there was a Chinese restaurant and there was a night club on top of it. And years and years ago David [Her late husband David MacDonald] was playing in that nightclub. And Matt Munro, the singer…And he was playing in there when Da… He became a big star. And he was playing in there and David was in the band…Because David and him became good friends…When I first met David he used to take me out and go into to pubs and everybody knew him.”  | 40.33-41.46 |
| 45.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent about night clubs. |  |
| 45.10 | Were exclusive then and sold alcohol. Were quite a few private clubs in the centre of Glasgow at one time. Most will not have known about them. One was called the Chevalier Club. Peggy O’Keefe band in there. Got in with her husband. |  |
| 48.17 | Interviewer asks the respondent if her mother minded her going to dance halls. |  |
|  | “That’s what you did in those days. Went to the dancing. That was natural. Glasgow was a dancing mad city. Really dancing mad. I mean the dancehalls there was in Glasgow. I mean a lot of people liked a dancehall called Barrowland. But I never liked that Barrowland. I was in it once but it wasn’t for me. You might of got your face slashed in it. It was a bit rough and ready.”  | 48.26-49.03 |
| 51.27 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she still felt safe after the murders. |  |
| 51.30 | Felt safe as not near that area. |  |
| 52.34 | Interviewer asks the respondent what advice she would give to Glasgow’s planners if she had the chance. |  |
|  | “Ask the people what they want. I mean they’re talking about taking The Buchanan Galleries away now. It’s supposed to be for housing development. Where is people like me that don’t drive… Don’t have a car. How am I supposed to go to all these shopping places outside Glasgow? What have I to do? There’s nothing. It’s a waste of time going to Sauchiehall Street now. Marks & Spencer’s has been taken away. There’s nothing. There’s nothing. Unless you’re…Unless you’re looking at these, what I call penny geggie shops. These are cheap shops.” | 52.45-53.36 |
| 54.34 | Says that she would go into Sauchiehall Street at night herself now. Used to travel at night from Possil to Garthamlock. |  |
| 55.35 | Interviewer asks the respondent what sort of outfits people wore to the dancing. |  |
| 55.50 | A skirt and a blouse or a dress. Makeup and big hairstyles.  |  |
| 57.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent if there are any other memories of Glasgow’s Highstreets that she would like to share. |  |
|  | “I’d just mention all the dance halls you had in Glasgow. I mean, you had The Locarno, you had The Majestic, you had Barrowlands. You had the Plaza…And then you had borough halls. There was dances in borough halls. And each district had a borough hall. And they’d have a dance there. Possibly on a Saturday night. You know. Just different. I mean in the fifties and sixties in Glasgow I think that’s…that was the big thing for people was going to the dancing. Everybody went to the dancing. And you’d meet a guy. Well, you’d hope to meet a guy. Mr Millionaire or somebody. But no.” | 57.52-58.47 |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project. |  |
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