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| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**  Respondent: Ann Wallace  Year of Birth: 1947  Age:  Connection to project: Respondent  Date of Interview: The 8th of June 2023 Interviewer: Rachel Kelly  Recording Agreement: Yes  Information & Consent: Yes  Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 1 )  Length of Interview: 1 hour, 12 minutes and 20 seconds.  Location of Interview: Ann’s home Kilwinning  Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | | **Glasgow Story Collective** | |
| Time  (from: mins/secs) | Description | | Transcribed Extract  (from- to:  mins/secs) |
| 0.45 | Interviewer asks the respondent during which era she first remembers Glasgow’s Highstreets. | |  |
| 0.46 | Early 1950s. | |  |
| 0.55 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe her early memories of the Highstreets. | |  |
|  | “Very, very busy. Looking up at tall buildings. Looking at the different colours of sandstone and red stone and things like that. And the lights all twinkling when it got…started to get dark. In the shops. They were always full of models or statues with beautiful clothes on and nice winter coats. And I used to go into town a lot with my mum. She was a great person at shopping. And she worked in town. So, we were always in and out of the city centre. And I could really con her into buying me lots of things [Laughs]…. And, you know, Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street,., At Christmas time going to see the lights and things like that. Going to the theatre with my parents. Always going to, you know, The Pavilion and The King’s Theatre. The Alhambra. And, all these memories are just flooding back. Going for tea in town. And, we used to quite often, my mother and I, go for high tea in Arnott Simpson’s. Or, we would go to afternoon tea in Fraser’s. And loved to go round the perfume departments and things like that. And have looks at them. Yes, a fabulous city, which, I tell people now, you know-Don’t visit Edinburgh, people from all over the world. Don’t visit Edinburgh come to Glasgow. It’s a beautiful city.” | | 0.58-2.26 |
| 2.27 | Parks, Bellahouston Park. The Bluebell woods, picked bluebells. Small park in Kinning Park with a bowling green and lots of swings. Went into city and underground brought you back home. | |  |
| 2.57 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe the Fraser’s tearoom. | |  |
| 3.03 | Round tables and square tables with white linen covers on. Nice cupas and saucers. Aunt and respondent met Mrs McGarrity every month. Had to leave the meringue for Mrs McGarrity as it was her favourite. Mrs McGarrity had big hands. Children had to sit and listen to the adults in those days. | |  |
|  | “And when I was fifteen. Underage; which was an admission. My friend’s father took her and I into The Rogano. We had no alcohol. We had lemonade. But, it was…It was…then went on from that. It was a great place of meeting. Everyone. And, my husband comes from Greenock originally but I introduced him to The Rogano. And we met in the Whitehall [?] in Renfield Street; which was another great place to go.” | | 4.28-4.56 |
| 4.57 | Mentions Treron’s and Marks and Spencer’s and also Fraser’s and Lewis’s. Roamed all the shops. Still loves going up to Glasgow. Not as vibrant as it used to be. Glasgow still has great memories for her. | |  |
| 5.43 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe Lewis’s Department Store. | |  |
|  | “When you went to Lewis’s door. The front door. Depending which entrance you went into. You got…If it was the side of the delicatessen. You smelled the cooked ham and the cheeses [Inhales] and oh, the beautiful breads and all sorts of things. And mum and I used to come home with bags full of all the lovely things and we always had a picky tea.” | | 5.43-6.06 |
| 6.07 | Cosmetics and perfumes. Describes what was on different floors. All the floors busy. Lots of noise and chatting. | |  |
|  | “All the floors were busy[In Lewis’s]. There was so much noise and people chatting and everyone stopping and talking. Or saying-‘Excuse me. Do you know where Fraser’s is on Buchanan Street?’ For example. And then that went on to a half hour conversation. About where do you come from and what do you do and all sorts of things. You know. Great meeting places for people. And of course Boot’s corner at Union Street was a meeting place for all the couples. We used to meet the boyfriends we met at…at the dancing.” | | 6.58-7.27 |
| 8.06 | Mentions Italian and Indian Restaurants. Possibly one of the first cocktail bars was on Byres Road. The Safari diagonally across from University Avenue. | |  |
|  | “I think. I might be wrong. But, I know I could be corrected. There was…I think there was one of the first cocktail bars there. And it was called The Safari. Just diagonally across from University Avenue. And you went downstairs to it. And, {exclaims} Wow! When we were of age you could go in and get a cocktail. And you felt very sophisticated. I mean it was really quite something. You know. Then we got the underground from Hillhead. And back into town. To go to the dancing. I didn’t go to the Locarno cause I wasn’t, kind of, allowed to go there. But, we used to out to the Plaza, you know, on the Southside of Glasgow. Meeting people. And we used to go to The Star Bar [laughs]. When we weren’t supposed to be in The Star Bar. But that’s another story. And, you know, back into town. Either on a Friday or a Saturday night, as I say, going into George Square. It was all the activity and the sounds. And the smells of food and everything like that. You know. And just talking to somebody that you hadn’t met before and you end up with a pal.” | | 8.25-9.30 |
|  | “But, you know, it’s always been such a friendly city. You know. And you would go into a shop and the girls who served behind the counters and the men. You know. They got to know you and they would chat to you. And they would say-‘Oh, how did you get on at that wedding you were at?’ Or how… you know. Or my name’s Betty or my names…So they came to know you first by your Christian name. You know.” | | 9.37-9.56 |
| 9.57 | Arnott Simpson’s did a high tea and afternoon tea. Was youngest so was always in town with her mum. Went to Rogano sometimes where her mum would have a sherry. | |  |
|  | “I was in the Barrows at one time. I think we went on a Christmas Eve. Now that was great excitement. That was…Absolutely…I still remember that. And my mum said-‘It’s not Christmas yet. But…’ And I got this enormous big doll. Because I used to sing with a group called The Kinning Park Ramblers. And because we’d done so well. We worked for charity. I did a lot of gigs in, like, the St Andrew’s Halls with Duncan MacRae, doing the wee cock sparra that sat on the edge of a barra. And the Alexander Brothers and Calum Kennedy etc. And we performed in The Odeon Cinema on Renfield Street. And it’s a shame all these places have gone now. It’s such a shame.” | | 10.48-11.36 |
| 11.37 | Experiences of Glasgow are never ending. Still talk about them with Glaswegian friends down in Ayrshire. Lived there till 23 and then went off to the Merchant Navy with her husband for four years. | |  |
| 13.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent what the customer service was like in the shops. | |  |
|  | “You used to get some of the grumpy ones. They were usually dressed in suits. You know. They’d had on, as ladies would say in those days, costumes, you know. And my mother was a tailoress. And she worked… Originally she trained at the Co-operative on Paterson Street. And she was always very fastidious and she’d say-‘Look at the state of her in that costume.’ But like that…And you would see these ladies and I would have always, you know, said things like-‘Mum, her hair’s a funny colour today.’ Because they used to have their hair dyed. You know. Like really bright auburn colours or bright blondes and things like that. And they were all…They were like show girls. And their counter was their stage. You know. That was the front of their stage and they did all their chatting. And, you know, they would bring everything out for you. You know, they would spend half and hour...” | | 13.31-14.44 |
| 14.45 | Talks about about going into Goldbergs to get dresses to sing in and ‘clattery’ shoes. Beautiful Crystal in Bremner’s. | |  |
| 16.40 | Interviewer asks about Trerons. | |  |
|  | Went to Trerons with a former teacher for afternoon tea. Went to lots of hat shop with her mother. | |  |
| 18.29 | Talks about the small shops there were in the past. | |  |
| 18.41 | Talks about shopping with her older sister Moira. Littlewoods and Marks and Spencer’s. | |  |
| 19.23 | There was an apothecary which sold teething powders which may well still be there. | |  |
| 20.30 | Jewellery shops in the Argyll Arcades. | |  |
| 21.23 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers Copland & Lye and Pettigrew & Stephens. | |  |
| 21.38 | Her mother loved Sauchiehall Street. They used to get the tram up there. | |  |
|  | “I went to school over on the West side..End of Glasgow. So, from I was six I used to travel on my own. And, of course, everybody got to know all the wee girls. And we used to travel and there was this man. And I don’t know his name but we all called him Hector the Inspector and he used to march up and down the underground. Subway. As though he was in the army. I think he may have been. Ex-army, you know. And he used to tell the boys off if they were annoying the girls or You know…And he’d say-‘You leave that wee lassie alone.’ And-‘Don’t you be upsetting her.’ And all this, you know.” | | 22.09-23.02 |
| 23.03 | Talks about the fogs in Glasgow. Feels it was almost part of Glasgow with its steaminess. In some ways it was creepy. You could still see all the lights and the bustle. | |  |
| 23.43 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe the inside of Copland & Lye. | |  |
|  | There was lots of wood. Big high wooden counters. Very high when you were small. Dark wood, Carvings. Beautiful sparkley lights. | |  |
| 25.03 | Describes queuing to see Santa at Lewis’s. Rain could be running off you and you still stood there. Getting ice cream floats and biscuits. Went Xmas shopping with her mum. Had to remember not to tell everyone what their presents were. | |  |
| 25.55 | Talks about going for a fish tea at Arnott Simpsons with her brother and his girlfriend, Maureen Grogan [?]. | |  |
| 26.30 | Always went to the carnival and the art galleries in the West End. Still likes to drive through the West End. | |  |
| 27.35 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she remembers the window displays at Christmas. | |  |
|  | “Oooh, yes, they were fantastic. Oh, yes. I mean these people who worked…and these window dressers. My mother did know one or two of them because, as I say, she was in the tailoring business. And I mean, it was so fabulous and all these vibrant red colours. You just wanted to wear… you know, if they had children with their red velvet jackets. And I remember having a red velvet dress. We were doing a Christmas show. You know, and I had a red velvet dress with white fur round the bottom. And a cape on it and everything. And singing all the Christmas songs. And I mean it was just fabulous and they’d sleighs. It was so realistic. You know. And they’d little houses and things. And as a child you would look in, and you just thought this was the ideal Christmas situation. And it was so realistic. And the work and the skills of these people was absolutely fabulous…” | | 27.38-28.45 |
| 28.47 | Talks about how a lot of the shops now are like junk stores. Talks about the different departments there used to be in shops. Children not allowed to touch things in shops. | |  |
|  | “Oh, I remember going to the hairdresser that was…I think it was on the corner of Union Street. Oh the man. What was his name? And I’ve got very, very blonde hair. And it was very long and thing. Oh, it was an Italian name. It will come back to me. He was quite fa…He was quite famous. My mother took me to have my hair cut, trimmed when I think I was about eighteen. Oh, and that was such a great thing. And , you know, getting a head massage. And, you know, you weren’t going to the hairdressers just down the road sort of thing. This was a special treat to go with him.” | | 30.44-31.14 |
| 31.22 | Interviewer asks the respondent how the shops she saw on her travels with the Merchant Navy compared to those in Glasgow. | |  |
| 31.34 | Talks about the shops in the Gulf in the early ‘70s. A lot were like American malls. Glasgow shops better in her opinion. Shop assistants in Glasgow were good at giving an honest opinion. Giving you options. | |  |
| 33.00 | Interviewer asks about the respondent’s time in The Kinning Park Ramblers. | |  |
| 33.05 | Was in the Kinning Park Ramblers with Lesley Harvey the brother of Alex Harvey and others. Did folk music, rock and roll and skiffle. Her father taught them their stage technique. | |  |
| 34.29 | Says that maiden name was Wilson. Talks about the signet ring that her dad bought her for her birthday. AW to AW when she got married. | |  |
| 35.45 | Interviewer asks the respondent about the folk scene in Glasgow. | |  |
| 35.52 | Used to go to the Western Hotel on Great Western Road. Great scene. Also went to the Albany Hotel on Bothwell Street.. Billy Connolly lit up a room. Went to Helensburgh too. | |  |
| 37.40 | Interviewer asks the respondent to tell her about going to theatres. | |  |
| 37.43 | Wore posh clothes. Camel coats and leather gloves. Shoes and nice socks. Party dress. Saw Francie and Josie. Pavilion, The Kings. Musicals at The Alhambra. | |  |
| 39.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent about her Dad’s singing. | |  |
| 39.06 | Respondent describes her Dad’s singing and singing parties at her house. | |  |
| 42.31 | Interviewer asks the respondent about going to the cinema. | |  |
|  | Odeon, Lorne Cinema, Capitol Cinema, Saturday club. | |  |
| 44.42 | Her father William Wilson was quite a well-known singer. Her mother, Ann Wilson’s family had a general store off Govan Road at Blackburn Street. Open till the 1960s. | |  |
| 45.43 | Talks about her mother’s memories of Govan during the war. | |  |
| 47.03 | Interviewer asks the respondent about the fruit shop owners that she knew. | |  |
| 47.06 | Respondent talks about the Coyle family of fruit merchants. | |  |
| 47.58 | Mentions some of the shops on Paisley Rd West. Lot of shops. Curtains, shoes, Gents outfitters. Gaulds [?] one of them. | |  |
| 48.28 | Talks about Paisley’s and the shoes she got for her school uniform there. Got metal bits put on her shoes so she could clatter down the underground steps. | |  |
| 49.26 | Talks about going to the Co-op when older and the scary manageress called Bessie. Mrs Digny’s Fish shop. Mrs Howden bought fish for her cat. Then for her husband Mr Crompton when the cat died unbeknownst to the fishmonger. | |  |
| 51.44 | Talks about George Chisholm the trombonist who lived close to her. | |  |
|  | “And the Kenco…The Kenco shop was opened. The first one in Scotland. On Buchanan Street. In Buchanan Street and it was called The Kenco Coffee House. And Marina Reid, was the manager…And she opened this Kenco shop, the coffee shop in Buchanan Street. So, we frequented that a lot. We used to go in for coffee into the Kenco shop and things. Met quite…some nice boys in there too. We used to chat up. And Brown’s Tearoom was in Sauchiehall Street. Up at the top going towards Charing Cross. And we used to come in from the West End and get off the bus there and have our tea. And then go to the Cinema as well. The girls. You know, when we had girly nights out and things like that.” | | 55.21-56.24 |
| 56.26 | Talks a bit about the West End. Catherine’s of Partick,. Dress shop next to subway in Partick. Got bright yellow dress there with pleats. | |  |
|  | “And my mother used to be involved in fashion shows. You know, when they did them in Fraser’s and that sort of thing. And I sometimes got some of the things. You know, when caped suits were out in the ‘60s. And you know, it was like an A-line skirt with the tweed cape over the top. And ooh…Just wonderful. Thought I was the queen bee in that.” | | 57.35-57.58 |
| 57.59 | Talks about going to her friend Louise’s mum’s house in Ruthven Street. | |  |
| 58.35 | Inteviewer asks the respondent about Bremner’s store. | |  |
| 58.36 | Talks about the automated money system there and in other shops. | |  |
|  | “Bremners, yes, we liked there too. And we knew a girl. My mother got to know her. In the fashion department. And like that, I used to come out with four and five dresses. I mean I really…My mother used to think-oh, here we go again. And we hid them in the wardrobe. Because my dad…He would never say a word. But my mother used to hide them. Just in case he got a bit…You know…Anst, Anstey about it…” | | 59.23-59.47 |
| 1.01.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent about Goldberg’s. | |  |
| 1.01.09 | Big shiny tiles. Bright lights. Good tearoom, Mother in Law bought her things there once. Tells the story of when she worked in social work and boy blue was found outside Goldberg’s. | |  |
| 1.03.25 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she thinks the highstreets have changed over time. | |  |
| 1.03.29 | Charity shops. Online shopping has killed the business. | |  |
| 1.05.05 | Interviewer asks the respondent if she had the chance what advice would she give to Glasgow’s current planners and businesses. | |  |
| 1.05.13 | Finds it a difficult question as she thinks shopping needs have changed. | |  |
|  | “Unfortunately, I’m a bit pessimistic about it. I don’t know that…I think there’s just going to be continuous closures of the shops. And I don’t know what the city centre’s going to become like. I mean it’s full of restaurants. And I know it’s busy at the weekends. And the young people… Even around us in Ayrshire, they’re all going up to Glasgow. And-‘Oh, we’re going out for a day in Glasgow!’ But, you know, it’s the restaurants and the pubs they’re going to. And even that’s suffering. You know, nowadays, with the economic situation. But, I fear for Glasgow City Centre. I really do. As I say, what we’ve lost. I mean, the likes of The Rogano. Not that everybody has to be a drinker. I don’t mean that Rachel. But, it was a place a lot of people went to. It was always busy. You know. And that was a landmark in the city for an awful lot of people and it’s gone. It just closed down. Nothing. It’s never come back. And they’ve got The Ivy now. And my son Stewart [?] took me there for Mother’s Day. And it was lovely. But it didn’t have the atmosphere of the likes of The Rogano with the old wood and, you know, the things on the wall and everything and the old style. They had the girls and the boys in waistcoats and white aprons as they did in The Rogano. But, it didn’t have that wee thing about it. You know.” | | 1.06.50-1.08.05 |
| 1.08.06 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe The Rogano Restaurant. | |  |
| 1.08.09 | Talks about trips to The Rogano. Booths., Could go in on your own as a lady. Went in with friends. Could sit all day if you wanted to. Wonderful days. Celebrity would come in once and a while. Jim Wilson was a friend. | |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for her contribution to the project. | |  |
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