|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project: ‘Glasgow’s Highstreets: An oral history…’**  Respondent: David Doren  Year of Birth: 1959  Age:  Connection to project: Respondent  Date of Interview: The 31st of March 2023 Interviewer: Rachel Kelly  Recording Agreement: Yes  Information & Consent: Yes  Photographic Images: Yes (4 )  Length of Interview: 1 hour, 48 minutes and 55 seconds  Location of Interview: David’s home in Glasgow  Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) | | **Glasgow Story Collective** | |
| Time  (from: mins/secs) | Description | | Transcribed Extract  (from- to:  mins/secs) |
| 0.59 | Interviewer asks the respondent about his first job in a shop. | |  |
| 1.05 | Started at Boots the Chemist in 1975. He and all his siblings started off there as his dad was a chemist there. Talks about the training he was given. Learning a stock manual of the pharmacy for a month. Only stayed 8 months as a student had a nervous breakdown about learning the pharmacy and he thought it might be too much for him. | |  |
| 3.53 | Talks about how he got a job in Victoria Road working in Saxone Shoe Shop. Could only stay until he was eighteen. Then transferred to the city centre. Talks about lady with hygiene problems that would come in to the shop on Victoria Road and buy expensive shoes. | |  |
| 6.40 | Describes when the window dressers came into the Saxone shop. He became the base trimmer and was the only person allowed to go into the window. | |  |
| 8.33 | At eighteen he moved to Saxone in Sauchiehall Street across from the Savoy Centre (as is now). He eventually became a trainer for staff. Describes this process. Part of it was to convince the public to use scotch guard instead of dubbin. Started training in other branches. Then got moved to Renfield Street. | |  |
| 13.15 | Old boss from Victoria Road offered him a job in James Allan and Sons in Gordon Street. | |  |
|  | “There was a TV series about the shop. And you would have Mrs Slocombe, Captain Peacock. Well, that’s what that shop was like (James Allan & Sons). The manager for the gents was a Mr Campbell. He was the manager for the gents department and he was the deputy manager for the whole store. He didn’t serve anybody. He just stood at the front. If a customer came in it would be-‘Good morning madam.’ or ‘good morning sir.’ ‘What is it you’re looking for?’ ‘Oh, such and such will help you.’ So, we were all basically, you know, Mrs Slocombe, Mr Lucas [laughs] Mr Quigley and all the others. And through time a lot of the celebrities in the area would come through. So, you would have…If she was up here doing a concert Lulu would come in for her shoes. Billy Connolly, if he was here he would come in for to get shoes for himself and for his kids. It started off with…Cliff Richard’s manager came in and then Cliff Richard came in looking for a pair of shoes.” | | 14.05-15.27 |
| 15.28 | Describes an encounter in James Allan and Sons unnamed politician who was rude. | |  |
| 20.45 | Stayed with James Allan for a good few years. Went to work in Edinburgh at the shop for a while. Then a year later it went into liquidation. | |  |
|  | “For James Allan [James Allan & Son] the type of shop it was…when new…when it became the new season, new shoes. So, the used to actually have… models would come in. Sometimes we would have to do it. And you would model on a walkway and you would model the shoes…And you would think-Oh, that’s going to be a good seller. So, it was quite fun.” | | 22.00-22.24 |
| 22.25 | Staff were all given a commemorative plate to celebrate an anniversary of James Allan & Son. | |  |
|  | “The shop itself (James Allan & Son), when you came in, it was all, sort of, marble tiling. And when you came through the doors again it was brass doors. The windows had brass frames round them. But we had a cleaner and she would come in every day and clean all the brass work. And when you came in the main door you had a door which would take you down to the basement, which was used for storage and there was the female and male toilets. And then next to that door there was the stairs taking you up to the first floor. And it was also a joint close. Because you had the main entrance from Gordon Street coming up. And it was a lift there. And it was all brass work. And there was parts of it at the top telling you which floor you were going up to. It was an intricate sign was on it. I’m not sure if it would be classed as Art Deco but it was along that sort of lines. Then you would have a couple of steps and that took you on to the main floor of the shop. And there it was all oak panelling all around there. And I used to wonder, you know, where this oak panelling came from. So the only thing I could find online was that before it became James Allan’s it was White’s Restaurant. It was an up to do restaurant.” | | 24.55-26.29 |
| 26.30 | Describes remains of building that housed. White’s Restaurant. The smoking room. The cloakroom. Walk in fireplace. Flat roof accessed by stairs. Was an oil company above them. | |  |
|  | “There was a Scottish programme that was filmed at the time called City Lights. It was filmed…I can’t remember. It was a bank that had just closed. So they used that as the bank in the TV series. And then there was a lane by the side of the travel agents. And they would film down this lane. And, of course, some of the time when they were filming it was during bad weather. You’d have sleet and rain and snow. So, because the entrance to our shop was an in shot. You could walk into it. They would normally use, likes of there to shelter. You’d have Elaine C Smith, Gerard Kelly, Jonathan Watson, Andy Gray. They would all shelter in the doorway. So, of course, it used to be quite nice. Just standing at the door watching them. And every now and again because it was quite cold, you know. It used to be the woman, who was out there, who did the all the cleaning work. You know she would go out and ask them if they wanted a cup of tea, cup of coffee. You know, just while they’re standing there before they have to go out and do any filming and stuff. So, they were quite appreciative of that.” | | 28.56-30.24 |
| 30.35 | James Allan & Sons only opened Monday to Saturday even when the other shops started opening seven days a week. Mentions concession in Burton’s with Saxone. Worked in Byres Road and Victoria Road branches of James Allan & Son. | |  |
| 34.16 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he was ever in a trade union in the shoe shops. | |  |
| 34.16 | Respondent said he was not in a trade union at that time. | |  |
| 34.50 | Describes working as a porter in Mearnskirk Hospital at the mortuary. | |  |
| 38.18 | Interviewer asks the respondent to describe his earliest memories of Glasgow’s high streets. | |  |
| 38.25 | Describes being two or three and running alongside his parents | |  |
|  | “Lewis’s at one side which then became Debenhams. That store, oh it was like a treasure trove. When you would go in there you would go down into the basement. And in the basement it was the delicatessen. It had everything down there. All different cheeses. All different hams and other meats. And I used to like just going down there because of all the different smells. Not so much the cheese but of all the different meats and stuff. I used to like the smell going down there. And, of course, you used to have the cream cakes. Cause it just used to be the hands against the front of it. You’re drooling looking at all these cakes. Hoping, you know that your mum and dad would buy it for you. No such luck but, you know, you always lived in hope.” | | 39.04-39.59 |
| 40.00 | Describes the haberdashery in Arnotts. Talks about the canister payment system at James Allan & Sons. Remembers that Arnott’s and Goldberg’s had this too. | |  |
| 41.52 | Has a very good visual memory. Describes his route with his parents through the streets and shops. | |  |
|  | “You had Fraser’s which was really, really expensive. As an older child, when I was at primary school, when I was an older child, at one time, that was the only place I could get my school blazer and stuff. And then we found out the price of it. We got it but never again.” | | 45.02- |
|  | “For me it was usually C& A or Goldberg’s. If it was…You used to get clothes that were classed as Sunday best. For going to church and stuff. So, that had to come out of Goldberg’s. School clothes, your shirts, socks and stuff would come out of the C& A.” | | 46.04-46.28 |
| 46.33 | Describes going to see Santa at various stores. | |  |
| 48.48 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers the Christmas lights. | |  |
| 48.50 | Describes route on the 44 bus to see the Xmas lights. | |  |
| 50.24 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any window displays at Xmas. | |  |
| 50.27 | Describes differences in displays between different shops. | |  |
|  | “Fraser’s was…Everybody was out looking at their windows. Everybody’s standing in Buchanan Street looking at it all. Because the way they were done up. Nowadays you would say it was all bling [laughs].” | | 51.48-52.06 |
| 52.11 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any carnivals or parades. | |  |
| 52.26 | Remembers the orange walk going past when he was very young and tagging on. Remembers scrambles at weddings. | |  |
| 56.38 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he remembers any cinemas or theatres. | |  |
| 56.43 | Remembers the Odeon on Butterbiggins Road. Children’s Saturday club. Was refurbished with an entrance on Victoria Road. Watched Buck Rodgers. Abbott and Costello, Laurel and Hardy, Trigger, The Munsters, The Adam’s Family,. Main feature in colour. Fantasia, Snow White. | |  |
| 59.41 | Describes sweetie and paper shop in Govanhill called McCardle’s. | |  |
| 102.45 | Mentions Danny’s Fish and Chip Shop and a dairy and Landromat owned by a Molly in Govanhill. | |  |
|  | “More into the sev…Seventies. There was a hat shop that was owned by a woman, Millie Mann. And because her name was Millie we just called her Millie the Milliner. In Victoria Road. And it was a hat shop and at the front of the window there was a display of all these hats. And then inside she would have these floor to wall mirrors. Where you would try on the hats and look in the mirror and see whether it was suitable for you. And that was at a stage before you got these mass produced hats. So, if people were looking for a hat. Whatever the occasion was she would actually make the hat from scratch. And it was always fun to see her. She was always dressed in black. She was a small stoutish woman. And she had this…It was… originally it was a wooden chair but she painted some of the chairs in the shop gold and other ones silver. And she always had this silver…One of the silver chairs. She would plank it in the middle of the shop. And that’s where she would just sit all day until somebody would come in.” | | 1.07.15-108.30 |
| 1.08.31 | Talks a little more about Millie the Milliner. | |  |
|  | “There used to be a café called The Bungalow [On Victoria Road]. And, again, that was a favourite haunt for us because it was the only place roughly you could get a really good square sausage in a roll with onions. Nowadays people would call that a greasy spoon. But at that time we didn’t care. Nothing to do with fat or anything. If it tasted nice we were having it.” | | 1.10.34-1.11.00 |
| 1.13.55 | Talks about trying out all the local churches for a Sunday school. The Strathbungo Church, corner of Dixon Avenue and Langside Road. Church at corner of Ardberg Street. Describes playing in the old army buildings. | |  |
| 1.21.10 | Describes seeing the Army, the marines, the territorials and the RAF marching in the lane behind his house. | |  |
| 1.21.57 | Interviewer asks the respondent about Queen’s Park. | |  |
| 1.22.00 | States that the Queen’s Park was totally different from today. Park wardens and gardeners. Bowling greens. Pitch and put. Tennis courts. Big pond with paddle and rowing boats. Had goldfish and butterflies in Glasshouse. Had chairs at glasshouse. Had Clydesdale horses. Went on donkeys round the park. Fire engines came and army assault courses and tanks. Had an actual bandstand with plays, bands, Punch and Judy. Had foldable seats. Fished for sticklebacks. Pond froze over and ice skating happened. | |  |
|  | “They had stables for two working horses, as I called them [At Queen’s Park]. And they would take the carts around if it was going to be earth and stuff. Whatever the…had to be done round the park. They would take these carts around with whatever it was needed to be…Oh, Clydesdale horses, that’s what they called them. So they had two of them, I think, and they would take them around. And they used to have in the summertime a fete. And it used to be you would have your…We called it pony trekking but it was just donkeys.” | | 1.24.23-124.57 |
| 1.29.25 | Interviewer asks the respondent if the high streets have changed over the time that he has known them, | |  |
|  | “Yeah, and for me I look at it as being for the worse. Ok, times do change for people. But compared to the city centre in the sixties. What it is going to be like now. Now, Union Street that was a busy thoroughfare. Now it’s a ghost town. You’ll see more tumbleweed going down that street than you will actual people. Because all of the businesses have closed bar for a handful. And that’s all because the council decided to make it into a bus and taxi zone. And it’s going to get worse from June when they make it an LEZ Zone. That’s the finish of the city centre. Cause why should people…You know, businesses spend a million pounds for to pay for rates and they’ve got no customers. Cause people turn round and say-Well. What’s the point of going into town when, in our own time, we can drive out to Silverburn, Braehead, East Kilbride. Although, East Kilbride you’ve got to pay now…The Fort. You don’t have to pay and they’ve got all these places there for us. So, that’s going to be the end for the city centre. And then for the Buchanan Galleries. As far as I can gather that’s going to be demolished. Some shops will be kept there but it’s going to be turned into houses. Again, nothing to do with affordable housing. It’s all going to be for people who can afford to pay a million pounds for a house. The same is also going to happen to The St Enoch’s Centre. It’s going to be demolished. And it’s going to be turned into an avenue for shops and housing. Again, it’s not going to be social housing. So, the council might say it’s going to be social housing. Yeah, maybe one or two. But if they’re going to build two hundred odd flats, it’s not for the social housing which is what the city desperately needs. And for the city centre. The city centre needs life put into it. Not life taken out of it.” | | 1.29.30-1.32.05 |
| 1.32.31 | Interviewer asks the respondent if he had the chance what advice would he give to Glasgow’s current planners and businesses. | |  |
| 1.32.35 | Has been on forums. Advocate for greater Govanhill. Wants money spread fairly. | |  |
| 1.35.30 | Describes kids’ street games of the past. Hurdy gurdy and song-one two three a leery. Chinese ropes. Skipping. Double Dutch skipping. Making tents. | |  |
| 1.39.00 | Interviewer asks the respondent what he imagines the future of Glasgow’s high streets might be. | |  |
| 1.39.05 | Thinks they will be non-existent due to high business rates. Uses example of Debenhams. Mentions the golden mile. Compares and contrasts with what he’s seen in the USA and Canada. Describes boutique shops in Canada. | |  |
| 1.44.55 | Talks about proposal for George Square and previous changes. | |  |
|  | Interviewer thanks the respondent very much for sharing his memories with the project. | |  |
|  | | | |