

THEATRE ARCHIVE PROJECT

<http://sounds.bl.uk>

Philip Morgan – interview transcript

Interviewer: Cristina Irving

26 February 2005

Talks of his father's extensive diary/scrapbook of theatre visits/personal reviews of London and Bristol productions 1945-68, including *Separate Tables*.

CI: First question that I want to ask, was it part of your father's upbringing to go to the theatre? Did he always enjoy theatre?

PM: As long as, as far back as I can remember him telling about stories about the theatre yes. He was brought up in Pontypridd which was in the Taff Valley about 12 miles up from Cardiff .

CI: I noticed that a lot of the places that he went to see theatre were in Cardiff .

PM: Yes. He was part of an amateur dramatic group there. He fought in the First World War and when he got back and qualified as a lawyer and was working in Cardiff , living in Pontypridd as a young adult. He was part of an amateur dramatic group called, I think, the Quidnuncs. I think there's some background about that name as well.[...] I mean it's a Latin word. I've got a feeling that there may have been a national theatre party called the Quidnuncs. They put this Pontypridd group, named themselves after that. They used to produce plays, at one time I remember reading a script that Dad had written.

CI: Really?

PM: But that's gone I'm afraid!

CI: What was you father's full name?

PM: Trevor Morgan.

CI: Trevor Morgan.

PM: And so my memory goes back, of theatregoing, goes back to his taking part in theatre in the 1920s as a young man. His father was a baker in Pontypridd and ran a big bakery. I'm not sure they had much time to go to the theatre themselves when they were children. But Dad was also involved in BBC Radio Wales. My Aunt, who was perhaps a slightly more forceful character than Dad, got to know a drama producer in BBC Wales and they wanted some other very small speaking parts done and it was entirely amateur, it seems to us now, pretty serious at the time I think. And Dad went into do two or three small speaking parts. And the story he used to tell is that, Arthur Philips who was the producer at that time, said, "For heaven's sake Trevor. Stop sounding so much like yourself." [Both laugh]

So I think that brought Dad's acting career to an end. He and Mum were married by then, this is in the 1930s. And then when war broke out he was doing a job in Bristol

and later back in Cardiff, which meant he had to go to London every so often for conferences with other people at the same level. And that I think is when he started going to the theatre fairly seriously; in the middle of the war and that's when the book starts.

CI: I was going to ask you that, why he kept it? I found it was a mixture of a journal and a scrapbook. But it was really interesting, has he always kept one? So it's since London then?

PM: Yes, he used to write about important events.

CI: Like the Coronation?

PM: Yes, personal, family and national, certainly the Coronation. Actually we all happened to be there in London, so we were lucky. The first note I've got is about 1920 when he was a young budding lawyer it was his first appearance in court, in London. The person he was working with, his boss, had to be in another court and suddenly it became apparent that Dad might have to say something, in court, introducing the case and he felt totally inadequate. His mouth went dry; he felt he could hardly stutter out even his name. Then his superior reappeared and all was well. I suppose a lawyer, is in a sense, on the stage and he perhaps felt that and became more familiar with that obviously and enjoyed being a lawyer.

CI: Is it a more personal reason? Something he enjoyed doing, keeping records and things?

PM: Very much so, very much. The notebooks were the accounts of war-time Christmases, important visits, meeting people during the war and afterwards my brother and I growing up. He obviously enjoyed keeping an account of all that.

CI: Another thing I wanted to ask: He always sticks a programme in, the date, where he went to see it and who he went with. I don't know obviously who these people are and I was just wondering if you could tell me because it gives me an idea of who people went with? The most frequent names that came up were Leslie.

PM: That's my Mum.

CI: I thought it might be. Peggy?

PM: Dad's sister, another sister, not the acting one who lived in London. And so, very often when they were in London and perhaps Mum didn't want to go to theatre, she wasn't quite as keen as Dad, or Dad was there on his own he would take Peggy; dearly loved sister.

CI: Then there was Peter and Josephine?

PM: Now, Peter Morgan was Dad's nephew and Josephine his wife. And Josephine is the daughter of Ben Travers, the great farce writer of the twenties and thirties.

CI: Well, you could say it runs in the family?

PM: Well, on the other side. In fact I've been in touch with Andrew, their son, telling him about the project and suggesting if you want to have a look at the Ben Travers archive, you might find it worth getting in touch with Andrew.

CI: Then there's Richard?

PM: Is my brother.

CI: And Marjorie?

PM: Mum's sister, who also lived in London.

CI: So was London theatre then?

PM: Yes. Absolutely. As I said it started with these war-time meetings and when the theatres were open Dad would go. As the meetings continued after the war Dad would continue to go to the theatre. And then they used to have holidays in London and would go, as you will have seen, two or three days in a row.

CI: Yes, I think in one week they went to see two Terence Rattigans. He quite liked Terence Rattigan, from what I can get from that. Do you know how he chose what he went to see?

PM: That's more difficult to know. They read The Times and The Telegraph every day and The Spectator every week. So they knew, they got the reviews of what was on. They knew well in advance when they were going to be in London and they would then look at the reviews and decide what to go to.

CI: So it was a very 'thought about' process?

PM: It was, yes. They would never have dreamt thinking at lunch-time, what shall we go see tonight? They would always have it worked out before. In a sense I think time was too valuable to risk that sort of thing.

CI: You just answered another one of questions. [Laughs.] I was going to ask if they read reviews but you've just told me that they did. Do you have any idea what the attraction was behind it? The thing is he sees many different playwrights, the genre is very wide, like he'll go to see things like cabaret, opera, he even went to see an Indian dance company. Is it the location or the theatre company? He has seen quite a lot in Cardiff with the particular Cardiff players. I was just wondering if he particularly liked those, if there was a main thing that attracted him?

PM: After, we went to live in Swansea in 1950 but he'd still be going back to Cardiff for meetings of various kinds and that's how he would have remained interested in what was on at the theatre in Cardiff. My instant reaction from reading quite a lot generally about the war and the period after the war is that life became incredibly drab and was pretty hard-going, even for those who were very definitely on the home front; Dad was too old to be in the Forces in the second war. Everything became an effort and they were very very weary by 1945 and then things didn't get much better. I mean you know bread was rationed after the war and not during the war. And I think they looked to the theatre for brightening things up, entertainment. I don't think you would have found any Greek plays on the list. [Both laugh.]

CI: A bit too death-orientated!

PM: They wouldn't have gone to examine life in its total roundness, in its tragic aspect. They probably reckoned they'd seen enough of that in what was going on in life for them professionally and personally and looking on at how things were for friends. They went for entertainment; but Dad was as you say, I mean I hadn't thought of that, he was, what's the word? I mean he was Catholic in his taste, wasn't he? I mean anything went, if it happened to be on and he was in Cardiff he'd go.

CI: I was very surprised by how much he went to see, obviously that period, I think Indian dancing? I was really surprised by that! That was just one of the examples but he also went to see Spanish ballet.

PM: Yes that's right, I think he just liked anything that was happening on stage and would give it a go if he happened to be in the right place at the right time. Because we were away at school our relationship, the same with my brother, was really by letters so he would report on things he had seen he and Mum or he and Aunty Peggy and so on.

We never had a general discussion about why they went to the theatre or how they enjoyed that kind of play against this kind of play.

CI: Do you remember any particular productions? I remember reading 1066 And All That was that your first trip to London?

PM: Yes you're absolutely right; your memory is astonishing! Well, laugh, I nearly died. [Laughs.] I mean that was a brilliant performance. Was that the one with Leslie Henson as the little man?

CI: Let's have a look. I think it was more of a variety performance.

PM: It was a review wasn't it? It was review sketches, as indeed the book is sketches. 1947.

CI: Oh, here we go, Palace Theatre.

PM: Yes, thank you. Yes it is Leslie Henson. He was kind of the little man as the narrator. There were some brilliant asides, actually do you mind? Let me go and get the notebook that refers to this particular holiday, there might be a quote in it.

CI: That's fine. I'll just stop the tape. [Mini-Disc switched on then off]. So are these additions to the other notebook?

PM: They are additions but this is not theatrical. This includes my first experience in court, the one I was just telling you about, the dry throat.

CI: Is it a diary?

PM: No it's not a diary; it's a sort of written scrapbook.

CI: That's the impression I got from this.

PM: Well, now if we look up here, Philip's first visit to London .

CI: And he numbers all the pages!

PM: Yes, you've got to have numbers on the pages! Oh no, I numbered those pages I think?

CI: Did you?

PM: I wanted to be able to track things down as there wasn't an index.

CI: Is that your doodling?

PM: I think I've been doodling there or it's more likely to have been Richard's. We went to Lord's; to the cricket. One of the things one's got to remember about 1947 is it was an absolutely brilliant summer. The sun shone throughout. That's not just memory.

CI: It's recorded.

PM: Yes, the other thing that we beat South Africa at cricket having been thrashed by the Australians the previous winter and Compton, Dennis Compton and Bill Edrich each made over 3000 runs in the season. Now that is an astronomical number of runs to have made. [Mumbles] So I'm just needing to shut up to find... I'm sure there's an account of 1066 And All That . [Turning of pages and long pause]. This is The Crazy Gang which we went to see the following night but it's not the story I'm looking for.

CI: They're together again, which is on the next page.

PM: 'It was a very funny show and we laughed until we ached.' Dad also was a great laugher; he absolutely loved a good joke. 'In the evening we had quite a good meal in a small restaurant of Soho and then went to see 1066 And All That at The Palace with

Leslie Henson. It was very amusing and Philip thoroughly enjoyed it, especially the cricket gags.' You see [laughs.]' In one scene Henry V before the battle of Agincourt asks, "Where's Gloucester?" To which the centery, Leslie Henson replied, "Twenty points below Middlesex." [Laughs.] County championship you see, they were. On another occasion the compère referred to someone as having being awarded the CBE, which he said, "Everyone knows means: caught and bowled Edrich." We felt that the two shows which we had chosen were most suitable for Philip.'

CI: How old were you when you went?

PM: I was 11; just a wonderful time to go and have one's first visit to London. And then we went again, Richard's first visit was a couple of years later and we saw [pauses].

CI: I think it's not very far after.

PM: Ice Fogues, we went to an ice show that time. 'Spectacular. Funny turns especially Richard Hearn.' That perhaps was all on that occasion. So I think you could say I did better than he did. 1066 And All That is a screamingly funny book and it was brilliantly translated for the stage [laughs]. So that would have been, I suppose, the first time that I appear in that book.

CI: Are there any other occasions that you remember?

PM: Well yes, I can remember, in the pretty early days of the Welsh National Opera Company we went to see The Bartered Bride by Smetana, and that was in Swansea, that's a lovely opera; great fun. I went to see a version of it at Covent Garden not long ago with a brilliantly re-written English script... well I can't go into that it's a bit too modern for this period.

CI: That's a bit too modern for this period! [Laughs.] Do you think he introduced you to the opera because he went to see a lot?

PM:: That was the first opera and I think we saw Cav and Pag too in those days and I wouldn't have been to see the opera before that. I perhaps was 16 or 17 at that point.

CI: Because I know he went to see The Magic Flute and he went to see The Barber of Seville and the other really ...

PM: Your memory is astonishing. I can't remember.

CI: I've forgotten what it's called but it's a really really famous one, I think it's by Verdi, but any way quite some big ones that even I recognise and I'm not an opera buff. Was there a special place in his heart for opera?

PM: Yes there was, he thought he thought [Pause] during... Traviata.

CI: That's it. I knew it was famous.

PM: Oh well done. Yes absolutely, one of the immortals. Before he started this book there used to be during the war some really astonishingly good, they would have been oratorios probably. It was called 'The Three Valleys Festival' in the Taff Valley up from Cardiff and a couple of other Welsh valleys and top class people used to come and sing the solos. I mean he heard Heddle Nash sing Gerontius during the war. He was an ethereal tenor – absolutely wonderful voice and one can still get re-mastered CDs of Heddle Nash singing Gerontius and it is stunning, absolutely. So Dad, yes he loved music as well. Concerts also, he's never listed the concerts though in the same way as the theatre.

CI: Not as the opera.

PM: Opera and theatre.

CI: He went to Covent Garden or Cardiff – they were the two places. He also went to the Edinburgh Festival.

PM: I was, he very gallantly took me to that.

CI: I'd love to go The Edinburgh Festival.

PM: Well, it was quite something. I mean I was 18. I don't think I really could understand what T.S. Eliot was about, I mean the levels, but we saw the original production of The Confidential Clerk there and we also saw - I mean a major opera.

CI: There was quite a lot that you went to see – The Bartered Bride.

PM: Rigoletto. 1954, I'd just started National Service.

CI: The 18th , you went within a couple of days. Was it always that intense, your theatre going?

PM: Well, The Welsh National would have been in Swansea for a week.

CI: A different play every night?

PM: A different opera. They might have done, well they will be in Southampton at the end of March doing three operas in the week.

CI: Gosh.

PM: It was probably the same thing then. Rigoletto they probably would have done two nights of Rigoletto .

CI: Is that very famous? I don't really know it.

PM: It's another of Verdi's greats. There are a number of famous arias in it.

CI: The thing is, I'd probably recognise the music.

PM: I shouldn't be surprised. Do you remember when they did Musicality?

CI: On TV? Oh, I didn't watch it.

PM: The badly-sighted woman ended up doing the principal part in Rigoletto at one stage. That was good.

CI: That's the one thing that I have noticed from looking at the dates in the journal scrapbook. I don't really know what to call it. It's really quite intense, that's the Spanish Ballet.

PM: We went to the Spanish Ballet. David Baxendore was a great friend and he directed the National Gallery of Scotland.

CI: It is really quite intense and he doesn't go for about three weeks or so and then you see about four in that one week, that's seeing Terence Rattigan twice in one week – he can't quite get enough.

PM: Yes. Well, I suppose it's the case. Well not much used to come to Swansea once we'd moved there. So that when the Welsh National came it was a big do and we would rush off or he would rush off and then in October there was a Swansea music festival and they'd be at concerts every night for a week. And, and thoroughly enjoying that. You see when they went to London they would only go to London on holiday twice or at most three times a year.

CI: So it was a treat to go? Was it expensive to go?

PM: Yes. I mean then, you know they stayed in a very nice hotel which was well placed for the West End and they would do things in style. They would save up.

CI: And really treat themselves?

PM: Yes. And they'd taxi to the theatre and taxi back and go to these nice restaurants and so on. In fact I was thinking last week as Kate and I were huddled under some little bit of awning and rushing from seeing somebody in hospital to going to see Carmen at the Albert Hall.

CI: Oh, I've seen that advertised.

PM: Mum and Dad would have been horrified to think of us eating standing up. [Both laugh.]

CI: So it was a real treat then?

PM: It was a real treat to go.

CI: Was it a whole evening's entertainment. What would normally happen, then, running up to the theatre? Was it the climax of the evening?

PM: Oh, very much so, yes yes. They'd have a nice supper beforehand.

CI: Restaurants?

PM: Yes, probably a restaurant probably quite close to the theatre. Then they'd walk.

CI: Would they buy their tickets first and then go for something to eat?

PM: They'd have had the tickets weeks ahead.

CI: Oh, so they were really prepared?

PM: Oh, yes yes, really prepared.

CI: That's more Rattigan - Separate Tables .

PM: Separate Tables , yes that's one of his great plays, isn't it?

CI: I've read that one. He writes, 'two very interesting and moving short plays, very finely acted and produced.' Do you think he saw himself as a bit of a critic? I don't mean that in a nasty way.

PM: No. I think he saw himself as someone who would have liked to have done more acting.

CI: Because he writes very well about it.

PM: He's got a fluency, hasn't he? I mean he's a good writer and he's not frightened to criticise adversely when he thinks it didn't work.

CI: They went to see two versions of The Cherry Orchard by Chekhov. That first one that they went to see they really liked and the second one he was like, oh no this wasn't as good as the first one, but his comments were very astute and that's why I was wondering ...

PM: I mean, he saw lot of plays didn't he? And he was an intelligent person and I think digested what he saw and felt he was right to comment on them. And so this is obviously an entirely a personal record. It just so happens that we've been lucky in having space to stack away some of the family archive. When I say archive, you're seeing it all, but I mean you can imagine some children whose houses wouldn't have enough space to be able to keep parental notebooks of that kind. We've been lucky to be able to do so. It never crossed my mind to throw this away, but it was for personal reasons, I mean he never, he never reviewed anything for the Western Mail or The Swansea Evening Post, both local things.

CI: So was theatre to him a very personal experience?

PM: Yes, I think it was. The best thing to do was to go with somebody in the family and to be together with them watching a play. As I said, I think it was entertainment. I don't think they would have gone to see David Hare's plays very much. You know it's... they might have seen Alan Bennett and enjoyed them. And in fact *Forty Years On* is an early one now isn't it? I don't think they saw the theatre on the national stage in small 'n' and small 's'. They didn't see it as a ... It was very much part of cultural life, but a compartmented cultural life, I would say.

CI: Playwrights like Brecht - because he really wanted to teach his audience. Your Dad's not documented seeing anything.

PM: No, I think they would not have found Brecht rather, that would certainly not have rated as entertainment and so it was off the list. Brecht plays were off the list.

CI: So entertainment was the main criterion?

PM: Yes. As I said I think it was early on in the late 40s one of the few bits of entertainment it was possible to get that and going to the cinema and these concerts and they stuck with that. But just going to have a look at the ... back to Edinburgh. The Spanish Ballet – you see I've got a very distant memory of that. I can't remember the Hamlet at all. Although you see Michael Horden was Polonius and Robert Hardy Laertes.

CI: Richard Burton. Do you reckon that was the Richard Burton?

PM: Oh yes. Oh yes, no shadow of doubt. Claire Bloom: Ophelia. Wonderful cast, but I wasn't up to Hamlet. Idomeneo. You see that's a famous Mozart opera... Jennifer Vivian, Richard Lewis – quite a small cast isn't it? I mean I've seen a performance of Idomeneo since, in adult life and enjoyed it a great deal more.

CI: It says here Ilya, a Trojan princess. Priam. So is this her nationality?

PM: Why they did that I don't know.

CI: It doesn't really make any difference, does it?

PM: No quite. It's interesting isn't it how you'd never find that now. There's no point is there? You see even Dad says 'a very fine artistic performance but I find it rather tedious in parts. Too much recitative, not enough work for the chorus'. I think Dad liked the works with a big cast on stage with opera and musicals. Do you remember when he first saw *Oklahoma!*

CI: I remember because *Oklahoma!* was a landmark musical as well because it was just ... Well the thing is though that it wasn't just one woman singing on the stage Oh what a beautiful morning, oh what a beautiful day. Can we just stop there actually? You know you were saying they hardly ever went to see anything spontaneously, I think *The Thracian Horses* was possibly the one example that I found of them quite spontaneously going to. Do you remember this?

PM: No, not this. We knew nothing about this play before we went to the theatre except I'd seen in Bristol that it was to be produced there by a company of four. It was very witty and amusing.

CI: Does that look up his street, though?

PM: Well, he'd have picked that up because he'd seen, he'd read something about it. 1946 he was working in Cardiff then, we were in Cardiff. I was away at school. It would have been in April, just. It does look as if, that must have been one of the things, one of the events on at the theatres and he would have said, 'Come on we've got to go and see this.' You see Phyllis, David and Jonathan, Phyllis was the aunt who lived in Wales –

the acting one, her husband and her son. So he got a little party together to go. You see I'd never have been able to follow this up...the never-to-be forgotten Amphitruon of '38 – I've no idea what that was. That name means nothing to me at all.

CI: In 1938, perhaps.

PM: A play that was put on in '38.

CI: It's not famous, really is it? So he went to a lot of contemporary stuff.

PM: Yes.

CI: The Guinea Pig .

PM: Well, The Guinea Pig. But Chetham-Strode was quite a well known playwright wasn't he of that period?

CI: Well, this is '46. It's just kind of into the period.

PM: Yes, just in.

CI: It's not anybody in particular that I've studied but I recognise HM Tennent, the Production Company .

PM: Cecil Parker and Denholm Elliott were famous names later. Denholm Elliott was a very fine actor and Joan Hickson was Miss Marple.

CI: Miss Marple?

PM: Miss Marple, yes. She'd have been a young woman. There's a further relation, there's a further thing to say about The Guinea Pig. When it was filmed under the school to which I was about to go, in Dorset, so I went to see the film and Richard Attenborough was the poor chap who'd come from a secondary school into a public school and had a rather hard time. Let me just see. Oklahoma ! he absolutely loved.

CI : I think it's a bit after this.

PM : Do you think so? Yes, perhaps it was '48, a bit later than I thought.

CI : Well, that's Rattigan again, a whole page for The Winslow Boy .

Together : There we are!

PM : You're right. April 19th 1948 , with Peggy. He must have been up for meetings and went with Aunty Peggy, 'Tuneful, lively production very good dancing and singing. The only drawback was the dialogue; the American accent was so strong I failed to understand a great deal.' [Laughs]. 'For the first twenty minutes I understood nothing.' That was interesting because one of his great friends from The Great War, was an American doctor who came and served in the regiment he was in.

CI : Regional accents weren't that common at this point really were they?

PM : No, no that's right, that's right. And My Fair Lady , I think there are records of three performances of that over the years. I mean these big sort of set piece dos he loved. But they were one of lots of different types.

CI : Kind of in the same vein of Oklahoma ! is Annie Get Your Gun and he went to see that as well, and he liked that.

PM : And I can remember he took me to see Billy Worth .

CI : What's that? Is that a musical?

PM : Yes, we had gone to London because I had to have an operation on my mouth and it was going to be done in London and not South Wales . [Pages turning]. And we went to see, here we are, Kiss Me Kate . August 3 rd '51 .

CI : Do you think musicals were one of his favourites?

PM : They stood high because they were combining sort of the best of everything. Sorry no, it's not Billy Worth, she was in The Hostess with the Mostess , another great American musical of those times. But I mean that was Cole Porter, I mean Kiss Me Kate comes up again now doesn't it, still in the repertoire? The difficulty is, once we isolate those biggies we then look on another page, and as you say, we find two Rattigan's one after the other. And the small scale plays by people like Rattigan and Hunter are part of what he enjoyed very much too.

CI : Because musicals, the music element, the spectacle of the dance and you said that he liked the big cast and everything. I would have thought, very stereotypical view of course, that opera you can't like musicals you know it's lowering the tone almost to go and see a musical. He seems to strike the balance very well. Was that a family trait? Did all of your family go see lots of different types of theatre?

PM : Yes we did. We took what chances we'd got and made some others. Greek Tragedy is the latest conversion. My earlier conversion was to Wagner about fifteen years ago. In almost every Wagner opera you can here some film music and I think that these things get connected in a way, you think of Wagner, gosh four hours! But you don't realise that the music is very often taken up by other people and not just classical composers like Elgar, but writers of film music fifty years later, still producing sounds that Wagner did, at some point. So I think that there's a lot more cross over than one normally thinks between opera and musicals and between reviews and small cast plays.

CI : Yes, yes. I did find that, that really struck me, the variety. That's why I keep banging on about it! [They laugh]. I was really surprised.

PM : They just grabbed opportunities, didn't they? I mean they wouldn't go to London because X was on, they'd fix to go to London because that was the right time for them to go and then they would see what was on.

CI : Would they go if it was a particular star? Oh, I don't know like we saw Richard Burton in Hamlet ?

PM : No, I don't think they were quite so star minded in that generation. I mean they enjoyed the front runners. You can tell from Dad's comments. But I don't think stars featured quite so largely then as they do now, didn't command quite so much as space.

CI : Do you think then the variety is a reflection of his personality? Or of the times that everybody went to see everything? Or it was just...

PM : I could only say that it was personal. We went spent twenty years in Hertfordshire and went to London I expect less often than they did from Swansea . But I think our taste, which I got from him, was a fairly personal one; what you like to be at. And in our case there wasn't a great deal of time for experiment, because I was doing a job that needed to be in post in the evenings a lot so couldn't escape to the West End. It was the same for Dad, for a different reason, that they were a long way away from London . And it would be interesting to analyse the book to see what straight plays they saw in Swansea .

CI : I don't think they saw any.

PM : It was just the opera.

CI : It was the opera, the dance. The programmes change so I get confused because I remember the layout. This is how they start off and then they come to they get things like this. I think this was more or less what they went to see. He went to see Chekov as well and Shakespeare and things like that.

PM : Yes, yes well those sort of great classical playwrights would give them the opportunity which we would say would reckon would be fairly hard work.

CI : I would say so.

PM : But they may have seen a really good review.

CI : Do you really think that's what drove them then, the reviews?

PM : I think they would have relied a lot on. They also read The Sunday Times and this is pre-Tynan obviously. I've lost it Archie Mortimer used to review the books in The Sunday Times, he was a very famous book critic, literary critic. I can't remember the theatre. Hobson, Harold Hobson I think.

CI : Hobson, there was Hobson and Tynan. But one of them was The Observer and one of them was The Times and I get confused!

PM : I think they would have paid attention to what Hobson said by dint of having read his reviews over a long period. And if he recommended a Chekov, and they were going to be in London during the run they might take his advice and go to it.

CI : Do you think he had a particular favourite playwright?

PM : No I don't really. He never talked about one in particular. [Pause]. I think he was a serial lover of playwrights. [Laughs].

CI : What about a production? Is there a production that you think...

PM : No, I don't think so. As I say most of the recollection would have been through letters. And I can't remember him saying this is the best thing I've ever seen. Just that such and such was very good and we enjoyed it a great deal.

CI : What about you? Any that really stick in your mind?

PM : [Pauses then laughs]. I can remember 1066 And All That better than things I saw five years ago. [Both laugh]. Well, Single Spies stands out in my mind, by Alan Bennett. About that awful man Burgess and then about the Keeper of the Queen's Pictures, Blunt . That's a brilliant play; we saw that and enjoyed it enormously. And of the operas; that's very difficult, very difficult.

CI : What about favourite location? Did he prefer it in London ? Did he enjoy it, that it was a treat to go to London or the fact that he could go in Cardiff and enjoyed that closer to home?

PM : [Pauses]. Once. [Pauses]. Well apart from those two operas in Swansea . I think that the opportunities I had, of being invited by Dad to go to the theatre with them were all in London . And we had a wonderful time part of the way through my national service when I sort of leapt from one rank to another, and was about to go off to Germany , abroad for the first time. I'd better just check this because I can't remember exactly [pages turning]. January '55, we all stayed in this lovely hotel in Dover Street . There it is: it was Separate Tables and I thought we saw something else, An Evening with Beatrice Lily . A favourite artist of theirs, but she happened to be in London that January, which was fixed as the time I was going to be on leave. Those are two, two magnificent

evenings to have at the theatre in London . And then later I became a clergyman and my first post was in London so in 1961 I was there. But that's when the memories begin to get concertinaed together. Apart from My Fair Lady one Boxing Day, I can't remember going to the theatre with them in the later sixties. I was working then it was different, busy.

CI : Do you think he's influenced your taste then?

PM : [Pauses]. No I don't think so, because we, in a sense, went our separate ways. He had almost lived and worked in Wales . I never worked in Wales . But was lucky enough after we were in London we went to Norfolk , we were then within reach of Norwich , which has a great dramatic tradition of its own. And also got the touring companies, because that's where I saw Don Carlos and Domineo , and I think it was Welsh National. And I can remember going with Dad, there's a tremendous triennial festival in Norwich , and I went with Dad to see King Arthur by Purcell. An absolutely riveting production, with one marvellously chivalry scene, in the ice and snow, and I can still remember the impact of the music. And Belshazzar's Feast also in the same, in that great Walton piece, which we went to together. I think that was '72 or 3 and Dad died in '76 so that would have been the last time we went together to anything. But fortunately we were in a place where we could take up what was on. I don't think Dad influenced me. We just took what we could on free evenings and enjoyed what we saw.

CI : I don't have any more questions. Is there anything that'd you would like to add?

PM : Well, you've been very generous with time Cristina.

CI : Oh no!

PM : I think we've covered everything I wanted to say. Can we just turn that off while I just cogitate?

CI : Of course. That's fine. [Mini-Disc switched on then off]. Okay, so you were just saying that your brother Richard got a bit left out because he wasn't working in London .

PM : That's right so he doesn't feature in the book as much as I did and I was lucky to be able to go as much as I did with them. It's clear that Mum's interests were really much more with the theatre than with opera. Dad went on, I can't remember when they last went to London , but it would be after the period of the project in fact.

CI : I did actually mean to ask. I don't want to be rude by asking this but why did he stop? Is there another volume to this that just isn't part of the project? I noticed that it conveniently ended in '68 and I thought that perhaps you'd only sent this volume. I just thought that is it because he just didn't enjoy theatre after that? Or I don't know. Or he passed away?

PM : '68. I thought there was an Alan Bennett in here? I think that by 1970, he was 78 and it's possible that they didn't go to London much after that. And they certainly weren't in Cardiff much. Energy levels began to go down and going to the theatre, by nature, in the evening, began to be too much for them. So we could say that the book ran out at a strangely convenient time. [Laughs]

CI : Yes, I did just kind of want to ask without appearing rude.

PM : Not at all, no not at all I understand.

CI : It's almost like a lifetime's...

PM : Well it is isn't it.

CI : ...a lifetime's worth of what he went to see.

PM : Well obviously they did go to the theatre before the War, in fact there is an account in one of the books about them going to Glyndebourne to see *The Marriage of Figaro* in June 1939. But that was, I think, the only theatre event referred to in the other notebooks.

CI : That's everything I think. I'd like to thank you very much again for agreeing to do the interview and for taking the time out to do it.

PM : Pleasure. Pleasure