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THE LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH  
COMMUNITY

Edgar Duchin

Interviewed by Jennifer Wingate

C410/049

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**Interview Summary Sheet**

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**Tape 1 Side A [Track 1]**

*This is the first tape, and the first side of the interview with Edgar Duchin, on the 8th of March 1988.*

I was born on the 3rd of September 1909, in Sutherland Avenue, Paddington. I believe the house I was born in was a boarding house run by a Miss Solomon, but I've never checked that. From what I remember, it was to this boarding house that my parents went before they had a house at 44 Maida Vale. My mother's name was Blanche Barnett, and she had married my father, Charles Duschinsky [ph], and as I will say later I think it was an arranged marriage. I'll deal first with my mother's family, and again first with her mother, her mother's side of the family. My grandmother was Sophie Barnett, nee Isaacs. Can you stop? [break in recording]

My grandmother Sophie was born Sophie Isaacs, and came from Sunderland. The Isaacs family was a well known family in Sunderland, and for some years one of my grandmother's brothers was a jeweller and pawnbroker in the centre of Sunderland. Another brother was called Sol[ph] Isaacs, and my grandmother said - or somebody else told me - that he had been the first solicitor to the Durham Miners' Federation, though I've again never checked that. Also the Isaacs family's original name had been Karo, and was reputed to be descended from the famous Rabbi Isaac Karo, who...

[Inaud]

No, I mean, Joseph Karo, who was the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*.

*Could you spell that.*

That's spelt SHULCHAN, that's one word, and ARUCH, that's the next word. And to quote the Jewish Encyclopaedia of Hyamsons, it was the...it's become the most authoritative code of Jewish law. Full stop. Full stop! I...[laughs]

*Here comes the solicitor.*

Here comes the solicitor, yes, yes.

*Can I just ask you one question. You mention your family in Sunderland. Were they part of the Jewish community?*

Oh yes.

*Yes. Religious?*

Oh yes. Oh, in those days, after all it was long before Zionism, you were either a religious Jew or you weren't.

*Yes. Yes. Or nothing, you mean.*

Yes.

*Yes.*

I mean, that was my mother's belief. I mean I remember having a quarrel with my mother. I'd just sort of - I think I'd come down from Oxford for a holiday, and I'd become a Zionist, and I tried to - or I think, no, before then, I was under the influence of David Goitein, before I went up to Oxford. I remember - funny you can remember these things - I was wandering down Goldhurst Terrace where we lived...not on is it?

*Yes. [break in recording]*

And, I said we're Jewish, and she said "Oh, I think we're English". And she got quite offended in the sense that I'd tried to argue with her about it. And I didn't take the matter further.[break in recording] The name Karo was respected so much that a cousin of my grandmother's, Horace Isaacs, in life changed his name to Horace Karo, although he wasn't in fact a very conforming Jew or indeed took any part of the Jewish community.

Horace became a big man in the coal world, and was either Mayor or Deputy Mayor of Westminster. In the thirties he became famous or notorious for horsewhipping a man who had either seduced or made love to his daughter. The daughter in fact was a very pretty red-headed girl who became very fond of my late brother; but I didn't keep in touch with them. At one time Horace wanted to take me up and advance my career, but nothing came of it. He was a very flamboyant man, and I became quite fond of him; I think he married two or three times, but I lost touch with him. To return to my grandmother, Sophie, she was a very lovely woman of an extremely gentle character, and we always loved to see her, and meet her. And I found Saturday afternoons - I remember them at a very early age, and then after the war as well - very restful and wonderful to be there. Before the war, we lived at - I mean the great war - we lived at 44 Maida Vale, which was half of a handsome Edwardian house which was later pulled down for a block of flats. So that it was quite easy then for, even as a young boy, to go from Maida Vale to 46 Portsdown Road which is now Randolph Avenue, where my grandmother and grandfather and their family lived for 46 years. It was in this house that I read after lunch, a number of volumes of Dickens because there was the whole edition, big edition of Dickens. Of my...my grandparents had four daughters and one son; one of the daughters, Minnie, was...had a liking for literature, well on...well, all her life. And it was probably through her that I was encouraged to read. We were indeed very fond of my grandmother. I remember later in life, when I was about, when we were about 14 or 15, my parents would go on holiday abroad, and leave us in the charge of one or other of the nannies, probably Nurse Wright. And I remember once we were at, I think it was Eastbourne or Brighton, and the nanny said she had a surprise for us. And she wouldn't tell us what it was. But we were delighted when the surprise was the appearance of our grandmother from the train; and then she took us out to lunch and bought us chocolates. But I remember there was a real warmth of her, which persisted all her life. One other thing I remember about her was that very much later in life, when I'd married out of the faith, for a time she wouldn't see my grandchildren...my children... is it going?

*Yes.*

But eventually one of my two maiden aunts, I think it was Ruth, said I should bring them to see my grandmother, and she was very nice to them, they were, my three older

children were then about 7 or 8...younger...the elder daughter was younger, and she was very nice to them and gave them each half a Crown. And she died about 2 or 3 years later, quite old. Some time in the Twenties, my grandparents moved from Portsdown Road to Finchley Road, where they had a very large house opposite what used to be then Lord's, St. John's Wood station, and I remember they had two mulberry trees in the garden. That house has now been pulled down, I think it's where the school is.

[inaud]

The house, 46 Portsdown Road, which is still existent, was a very tall terraced house, of about I think 4 or 5 stories with a basement. The remarkable thing about it was that on the mezzanine floor, that's to say when you went up from the ground floor and then to the first floor, there was a small synagogue.

*That's unusual.*

With benches and an Ark, and the...

*How many people would that seat?*

And there was a sliding roof, so that for tabernacle, succah, the roof was moved out on joists out over the garden, and the synagogue became a succah. I'll talk more about that when I come to my grandfather. I'm not quite certain from where the Isaac family came, I believe it was Poland, but I've not checked. My grandmother, apart from the two brothers I mentioned, had 3 sisters whom I did meet; there was Emma who lived in Manchester, and who was very fond of me, and I went to stay with her once or twice; there was Blanche who lived also in Manchester, Withington, whose husband Jack was quite a well-known businessman there - I can't I think remember the surname; and then there was Nellie, who married a man called Rubens, and Cary[ph] Rubens, my cousin, is still alive, and married a man called Davis, who is a patron of Glyndebourne in the sense that he does all the - or did - his company did all the cabling for the productions. I think they were fairly typical middle class Anglo-Jewish families, not very orthodox but conforming, and a fairly easy attitude to life. One thing I particularly remember was their

peculiar pronunciation of Hebrew; especially my aunt's, had a kind of cockney pronunciation. "Berra hatoe adanigh el a highnu, mili havavlon"(??), which is in contrast to the rather more, I suppose I could say more refined Hungarian German pronunciation, "Bora Hatoe adanoile heno enahavalon"(??), to which I was brought up. I've rather exaggerated the cockney of this, it wasn't quite as ugly as that, but nevertheless it had that kind of slant. Whether it was due to their Hebrew teacher or classes or what I don't know. The only other person I remember who had a slight touch of it was the Reverend Price, who was the minister of St. John's Wood synagogue in my youth; not notorious for his scholarship, he was a very good bridge player with his congregation. But more of that later. To return to 46 Portsdown Road, the basement was the domain of the cook, Mrs. Jones, and her daughter Ivy. They were with my grandparents for a number of years. Mrs. Jones was especially a favourite of mine, because I was reputed, I don't know why, to be bad tempered, but Mrs. Jones, I remember even now, saying "Oh, they don't understand him, he's a lovely boy" or words to that effect. The daughter Ivy stayed on until she went out and got married in New Zealand. I think she had an introduction to my grandfather's sister, again more of that later. One of the things I remember of course was the wages that were paid, because I remember my aunt Minnie who I think ran the house, being indignant that Ivy wanted five shillings more a week I think it was, and it was terrible. But there was a very happy relationship between the servants and my grandparents, and after my grandparents died, because I remember Ivy would come in and say "It's time to light the candles Mrs. Barnett." On the first floor, there was a very fine drawing room, with chintz furniture. Now what I particularly remember was a very fine...was a very fine French type of table with a glass top, with a space underneath, and in this space were...in this table, a kind of display, were a very fine silver ornaments which I was allowed on special occasions to take out. There was the Lord Mayor's coach and horses, there was a particular snuff box, there were little tables and chairs, all of silver. But unfortunately they were all destroyed when the warehouse where they were stored was bombed during the war. As was also a large portrait of my uncle, Monty Barnett, in a sailor's suit as a child, and a very fine wild landscape after the style of Landseer. The bedrooms were on the floors above, and I must have stayed in one of them, but I don't remember the details. And of course of the top floor was where the servants slept. And going down to the ground floor I remember there was a very handsome dining room with handsome Sheraton type chairs, which at one time were in



my parents' house. And in the...at the back was a kind of sitting room with a bureau; and my memory may play me false, but I've always imagined that it was from the window of the...the aureole window on the side, that I looked out during the early part of the war and saw a Zeppelin coming down in flames. But certainly I remember I was staying with my grandmother at the time the Zeppelin raids came. And turning now to my grandfather, who had the peculiar name of Pyza, PYZA. which I think was an English variation of Payzach[ph] Barnett, he was a different type from my grandmother, in that he was very withdrawn and could be severe. But he was very respected in his occupation; he was a property dealer, and I remember that later in life I talked to a Mr. Dean of Dron & Wright who did a lot of work for him, and he said "Oh, one thing I remember about Pyza was that if he said something, you could rely on it, his word was his bond." First of all, however, I should say that I remember Pyza's father, my great grandfather, who lived round the corner in Randolph Crescent; his name was Abraham Barnett, and there are full details of him in the family tree, which has been prepared by my brother-in-law, Harold[ph] Oppenheimer and more particularly David Hyman, my cousin. Abraham Barnett, when I remember him, had a white beard, but he was known familiarly as 'Schwarzer Barnett' or Black Barnett, because at one time of course his beard was black. My particular memory of him is that he wore a fairly long coat, and having attended minyan on Saturday morning in the synagogue at my grandfather's house, I would stand at the bottom of the stairs and he would give me a blessing. He was rather the black sheep I gather of the family, because he was supposed to have left a wife at home in Poland, and not really been divorced to her, when he married my great grandmother. Though I never knew my great grandmother. When at the time I became conscious of him, he was living with or married to a lady who was known in the family as Margentine[ph] [interference] for fairly obvious reasons. Any rate, I did go once round to his house or flat in Randolph Crescent, and he had his own Succah tabernacle there, and I remember it had coloured balls in the ceiling, which gave me great delight. My recollection of him was a nice mild old gentleman. He also made some of his money in property, but the legend given to me by my...again by my cousin Davy Goitein, was that he started to make money when he lived in Brick Lane, where most of my aunts were born. When he lived in Brick Lane he had a back yard, and he used to encourage the neighbours to throw their discarded glass into the yard, and he apparently had perfected a way of recycling the glass. I was never able to check this, but any rate this was the story

from David, that he made his money out of recycled glass, and then had enough money to move uptown and go into property.

*You never found out what became of the glass to recycle?*

No. Oh, yes, I believe he sold it as sheet glass. Yes, I do remember that. But, again that's something over the years I've not been able to check. Any rate, Pyza Barnett was not frightfully keen on my father...is it going? And the dislike was mutual for reasons which I will come to later. But my grandfather Pyza was certainly a...was born in Brick Lane... Oh, to do my great grandfather justice, I find from looking at the family tree that he did in fact marry a third wife, the lady called Esther, of whom there were no children. Looking at the family tree, I see that my grandmother's family were...had been in England quite a long time. Her parents, Hymanya Credula[ph] and Sarah Emanuel, having married in Sunderland on the 14th of November 1858. [break in recording] So that they had been in England for quite some time. And I see again from the family tree, that my great grandfather on my grandfather's side, namely Black Barnett, Abraham, is stated to have been born in 1834, in Warsaw, and presumably he came to England at least within the next 15 years, because the daughter...he...the two daughters, he had two daughters by his first wife Cilla[ph], and his elder daughter by his...his eldest daughter by his second marriage, to Rosa Hyams, is stated to have been born in about 1831 in Dorset Place, which was where my grandfather was born off Brick lane; but Dorset Place or Street seems to have been destroyed during the war. I see also that the story about my great grandfather and glass is substantiated to some extent by his description on certain certificates in 1857, 1861, as a glazier. And in 1868 he was still a glass merchant. And he then went on to become a builder, and finally in 1881 he was described in the census as a house and landowner, which was a remarkable achievement. The whole list is set out in the family tree. Shall I dictate it in there? And it's a remarkable thing, you see, how he developed, from nothing.

*Yes, you could read that, yes, that's really very interesting. In quite a short period really.*

Indeed, having looked at the family tree, it seems best that I should set out the descriptions of Abraham Barnett. He came from the Warsaw district, naturalized British

in 1861, and again in 1868. He called himself, 1857 a glazier (on Miriam's birth certificate); 1861 glazier (on naturalization papers); 1865 picture dealer (on Moses' birth certificate); 1868 glass merchant (on naturalization papers); 1870 a builder (on James[ph] marriage certificate); 1871 dry salter (on Harris' birth certificate); 1874 no business (on Sarah's marriage certificate); 1875 out of business (on Miriam's marriage certificate); 1895 of independent means (on wife's death certificate); 1881 house and landowner (census particulars). So this is a perhaps fairly typical, but any rate, an example of the improvement in financial status, and presumably social status, which a Jewish immigrant from Poland achieved between 1857 and 1874.

*That's extremely interesting.*

Turning now to my grandfather Pyza, he was at one time warden of Bayswater Synagogue. I suppose either I stayed the night, or I may even have walked from Gooldhurst Terrace, but probably stayed the night, Friday night, and on the Saturday...Sabbath morning, I would walk to Bayswater Synagogue, and I remember seeing my grandfather in the warden's box with the top hat.

[End of tape 1 side A]

## **Tape 1 Side B [Track 2]**

And, several things I remember about Bayswater Synagogue, which unfortunately was pulled down to make way for the motorway. My grandfather showed me, there were steps to the left of the doorway, and there was a ring above it, and he told me that that was where Sir Stuart Samuel, who lived south of the park, used to hitch his horse to. Sir Stuart would come over for early prayers, I don't know whether every day, but certainly on the special days of Mondays and Thursdays when special prayers were made according to the orthodox ritual, leave his horse outside, go into prayers, and then ride back across the park.

*Who was Sir Stuart?*

Sir Stuart Samuel, I think, at one time was Lord Mayor of London. Hold on, I might be able to find out for you. Sorry, can I turn it off for you? [break in recording] My memory is that it was Sir Stuart Samuel, but it might have been Sir Marcus who became (inaud) later Lord Mayor of London, but I'll check that. Other things I remember about the, about the synagogue was that the minister then was Herman Gollancz, who later became Sir Herman Golancz, and wrote I think a book on...no, that was Disraeli who wrote 'Curiosities...British Literature, but I think he wrote something on British literature. And I remember one or two other things. First of all with the Golancz's, I remember sitting behind a little man with a very bald head, and I remember that he had a remarkable, well it looked like a scar down the centre of his skull. Now I remember two things now. My grandfather could be unkind, and he never lied the Gollancz's - in fact I think later he had a quarrel with Sir Herman, when he moved to Finchley Road he didn't stay long at Bayswater, and moved to St. John's Wood. But, I remember when I talked about this gentleman who was sat in front of me, "Oh," he said, "Crackpot Gollancz", which was unkind, and this links up of course with Victor Gollancz, whom I knew later in life. Victor was fairly, in his autobiography, 'Letters to Timothy', is very movesome, somewhat moving about his father, for whom he had a great respect, and he describes how the two...his father had the misfortunate that the two pieces of his skull never properly joined together, which is apparently a rare condition.

*It didn't affect him?*

I don't think it affected him, no. There's more about him of course in the book which I haven't looked up, but the two things joined together...I mean the two - that's an unfortunate phrase, I mean the two reminiscences link up.

*Why was he called Crackpot Gollancz? Why did your grandfather...*

Well, because my grandfather knew about his...well, pot is a Yiddish name for head, and..

*Oh, I see.*

And to be a crackpot of course, is to be a...is to be a bit crackers, to use the phrase - that's where it comes from I suppose. And my grandfather, who didn't like the Gollancz's very much, [inaud] him the kind of deprecating way.

*Why didn't he like them?*

I don't know, I don't really know. I can't even find out now, because none of my aunts are alive. But I know that there was some, some - in fact I don't think that there's anybody alive now who could tell. There was some argument. There was also an argument I think that the, in order to provide more seating, the Almema[ph], which is the piece from which the law is read, was moved from the front of the...from the middle of the synagogue to before the Ark, and that was against strict orthodox practice. And I think also, there was a move to introduce a ladies' choir, which again went against my grandfather's orthodox principles. My grandfather was by no means as orthodox as my own father, but he had a sort of sense of what orthodoxy should be, according to the tenets of the United Synagogue. The...my grandfather's contemp...well, lateral genealogy is quite interesting. According to the family tree, the first wife of Abraham Barnett, who would have been my grand...well, no relation except step-mother, but she died I suppose before he was born, was a relation of the Snowman family, Jack Snowman and of course Kenneth Snowman who I know now, who's the authority on Faberge[ph]. And, for a

long time, I think the Snowmans would claim relationship to us, and my aunt Minnie would never admit it. And I couldn't make out why. But now it seems to me that quite possibly the truth was that Abraham Barnett never got a proper divorce from his first wife, so that technically I suppose all the descendents of the second marriage were illegitimate. However, as Minnie...as we tried to get the truth out of Minnie and Ruth, they wouldn't speak, so that's only a surmise. On the other side, well, not on the other side, there was a very interesting link with New Zealand through my grandfather's elder sister, Miriam, I think that's her. Can I just stop for a moment. Miriam married Herbert Von...I think it's Herbert...Herman HERMAN Van Staveren STAVEREN, and the marriage...don't know. And he got a post, he obtained a post as, it was entitled I think Chief Rabbi of New Zealand. And he went out to New Zealand, and again I think it was the Goiteins who told me, that apparently they went between about the 1870s in a, what was to all intents and purposes an open boat...

*From England.*

From England. The voyage took about six weeks, and they took a supply of salt kosher beef, and kept kosher all the way. Now, the Van Staverens had 13 children. And several of them came over to England, because Barend, who was the...BAREND, and his brother Isaac, founded a...is it going?

*Mhm.*

...founded a wholesale depot in Wellington, and that flourished for a long time, and Barend used to come over here because they had the agency for Gillette and Dunlop, and he used to come over on business. I remember a vague memory of seeing Morris in uniform during the First World War. And Barend had a nice sense of humour, a very jolly man, and my aunt Ruth, the youngest of the Barnett children, I think had a passion for him, which never got anywhere, but they used to flirt. But, Morris taught me my...helped to teach me my Bar-Mitzvah as confirmation portion[ph]. And it was always quite an excitement for one or other of the Van Staveren children to come over; there was Rouy[ph] who came with her son, who went to Palestine, or Israel I think it was, was then Israel, and he got killed out there by an accident. There was Addy, Abigail

Adelaide, who married a man called Philip Myers, and became I think an opera singer, certainly she had a very fine voice. And I remember she attended a Passover, a seder, at either my father or my grandfather's house, and suddenly leapt forth, I remember it now, with an enormous, very powerful voice, singing one of the prayers. And it was very beautiful, she was a very good singer. So we've kept in touch, and even the third generation of the Van Staverens I think still keep in touch with my cousins the Barnetts. However, there are two or three stories about old Herman, which...one of which doesn't resound to his credit. There's still a connection between me and Herman Van Staveren, as follows. Herman Van Staveren had a...was the patient of a dentist in New Zealand called Lindo Levien, LEVIEN. And when Lindo Levien decided to come to England from New Zealand, he came with a recommendation from Herman. And so Lindo Levien set up in Wimpole Street, and in turn he was the dentist of my grandparents, my mother, my sister and my brother and myself, my wife and I think the eldest of my children. But when he retired, he handed over his practice to Brian Chilvers, who is still our dentist. And so there's a connection going back a hundred years. And...I mean if you think of it that Van Staveren went out there in 1870. And Lindo Levien then went back to New Zealand, but kept in touch.

*What was the initial reason for him to go to New Zealand?*

Who? Van Staveren? He was offered the post of Sir Rabbi.

*Oh, I see, he went there...*

Yes, he went to take up the post you see. Other little things about Van Staveren - again, not this time - other little things about Van Staveren, this time not so good. He...Lindo Levien described how he had the terrible business of looking after Van Staveren's teeth, mouth, because he said he'd never seen anything like it, that absolutely all the teeth had been worn down to blackened gums, and he had to build him a whole set of new teeth, which was quite something in those days. But the thing that shocked me was, that at my club, the Saville Club, about ten years ago, I met a man whose name I think was, it might have been either Mikeson[ph] or Friedland[ph]. At any rate...no, it'll come back to me, something beginning with M, who told me that he was no longer Jewish, he'd become

Christian, and one of the reasons was that his experiences as a child, when he had come into contact with Herman Van Staveren, who was an exceedingly nasty man, and that he would be unkind physically to him. And he said he remembered once that Van Staveren had a habit of putting his fingers inside little boys' mouths and squeezing; or, when they had a loose tooth, of yanking it out. And he's particularly remembered one occasion when this...when he had a loose tooth, and Herman promised that he wouldn't do anything if he showed it him, and Herman then promptly yanked the tooth out. Which was not a very nice story, and he said as Herman Van Staveren was in charge of my religious education I thought this wasn't the religion for me. But I must say though, that other people seemed to have held Van Staveren in quite high regard, so what a man is in private life and what he is in public life may not always match up. But certainly he had 13 children, and they none of them ever spoke ill in my appearance of their father, their parents. There were other siblings of my grandfather; one was Hyman...was...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, that's right, 9 children, and they had 9 children... And, the...2 of the grandchildren are the brothers...Robin Hyman, who is now a very successful publisher, and David Hyman the stockbroker with whom I'm in touch. But the most interesting marriage of the siblings was that of Elizabeth, Pyza's sister, who married Kalman, KALMAN, Goitein, GOITEIN. And there has been a very close connection between my...certainly between my family and the Goiltein family ever since. The position is that my grandfather's sister, sister Elizabeth, married a man called Kalman Goitein. Now Kalman Goitein came from Hungary, and he met Elizabeth Barnett in England, and married. Whether it was an arranged marriage or not I don't know. But the story as I have it is that he then of course met his brother-in-law Pyza, and sent back word to Hungary where Kalman's sister had married a Duschinsky, Michael, that there were in England a nice family with marriageable daughters, and that if another Duschinsky wanted to come over, there could be a good marriage, and my father, who was at that time a rabbi, would probably obtain a post as a rabbi in England. And so it was, as I understand it, that because of Kalman's marriage to Elizabeth, Aunt Lizzie as she was known, my father came to England and married my mother. But of that more later. As far as the Goiteins were concerned, my youth was very much bound up with them. Unfortunately, Kalman died young, leaving Elizabeth to cope, and, with 3 boys and 1 daughter, and not much to live on, except as I understand it the rents of certain probably slum properties, which my grandfather, or even my great grandfather, had given to



Kalman. And to digress a moment, I remember that Hynda[ph], the younger...the daughter, at a very young age had to go collecting rents for her mother which went much against the grain. I'll deal with the development of the Goiteins later, but the memories of that period were, that the Goiteins were all, all the Goitein children were very tall, and we used...I used to like going to them because they were very cultured and civilized, and although my, for some reason my grandfather was rather intolerant of them, I think he didn't approve of his sister's marriage, but...

*Where did they live?*

They lived in a very large and comfortable house, which is now worth a lot of money, at the corner of Warwick Avenue and...no, not Warwick Avenue, in Blenheim Crescent I think it is. Any rate, it's at the corner by the bridge, it is corner of Warwick Avenue and the road by Regents Canal. A large...

*Little Venice.*

Well, it's just outside, well, it is Little Venice, it's just by the bridge, a very handsome Edwardian house, with a nice garden. And I used to go from my grandfather's to them, and we would then all four walk across the bridge, and then down to Bayswater Synagogue. And it was quite a sight I believe, because the three Goitein boys wore top hats, and I wore a bowler hat, and I was getting on when, that went on 'til quite late, I was about 5ft and they were all over 6ft, and there we were, all four of us in our Saturday best, walking to the synagogue.

*How old would you have been then?*

I suppose any time between 11 and 16, 17. I kept very friendly with the Goiteins, as I will recount later, because this is a later generation, but my early memories of when my grandfather was alive, and we all walked over to Bayswater Synagogue.

*Which was Orthodox.*

United Synagogue.

*Yes.*

Yes, it was the United Synagogue. It had Sir Herman Gollancz as its preacher, and then it had somebody quite well known later on. I'm not certain whether it was somebody who became a chief rabbi or not, but it was quite a well known...is it on?

*Yes.*

It was quite a well known preacher, and a respected reverend. Who was it? Well, one can easily find out by looking up. So I suppose that's the most I can remember about... There are other things I remember about my grandparents. Oh yes, one of the things I remember about my grandfather was that he and his son, Montague, Monty as he was known, Uncle Monty, had offices in the City, where they managed their properties - my grandfather was in property, they were both in property. And they were in Coleman Street...Basinghall Street and Coleman Street. And it was one of the treats, was to go down to my grandfather's office with my sister, I think, or my brother; you'd go on Lord Mayor's Day, because either we would go out in the street, but I think Coleman Street was one of the streets in those days which the Lord Mayor's Procession used to pass. Anyway, we used to see the Lord Mayor's Show with my grandfather. And, after that, the great treat was to be taken by my grandfather to the kosher restaurant, Plarto's[ph] kosher restaurant, where all the Jewish businessmen used to go for their lunch. It was very, everybody knew everybody else, and it was managed by Mrs. Plarto[ph], a plump lady with very brawny arms, who managed everybody very efficiently I remember, very briskly, and she would yell out "Mr. Barnett's kidneys" or words to that effect. And there I had a great taste for sweetbreads, because they used to do them beautifully.

*What sort of food did they sell?*

Oh, they served all kosher food.

*[inaud] of course, salt beef, was this...*

You could get salt beef, but it was mainly a pretty good, cooked meal.

*Yes.*

I always remember sweetbreads. I think kidneys would be wrong, it would be Mr Barnett's...anyway, some other dish, it wasn't kidneys.

*Was this before Bloom's?*

Oh, long before Bloom's. This was, this was probably in the Twenties, I suppose; let me see, yes, it would be when I was at prep school, it would be between 1918 and '24. Yes, that's...I can't think it would have been before the war, because a) I don't suppose there was all that food, and I was only 5 when the war started. No, it was probably when I was at prep school, when I would be about 9, would be 1918, and between 9 and 14, 15. And it was really marvellous.

*I suppose there'd be chicken soup and that sort of thing.*

Oh yes, all that sort of thing, yes. Oh yes, and, well, again as we talk about food, my grandmother used to prepare barley and bean soup, which was a great dish. And also she used to cook for us, and we'd take home shubbers[ph] cake. I'm not...pastry cooks, I don't know quite what it was, it was kind of crisp spongy, with I think jam on top, but it was certainly very good, shubbers cake[ph], which was grandmother's speciality.

*Did you have meals together, with your parents and your grandparents and the grandchildren; did you often eat together?*

Not, I can't remember often. For some unknown reason my father didn't like...I don't know; there was some kind of strain between my grandparents and my father.

*Family matters or political...*

Oh, I could go into that in detail. Rather intimate. But any rate, I'll come to that when I talk about my parents' married life, which is different. But I'm trying to keep to my grandparents, because they were very good individuals. My grandfather left about £70,000 when he died in '36, so that was quite something in those days. I think I'll stop for the moment because...One other thing I remember, my grandfather was very...was quite a generous man to me at any rate. I remember they were very pleased when I got a scholarship to Oxford. They came down and saw me in the summer, and my grandfather was very pleased, because he said he'd been to Oxford some years back, and he remembered that there had been a shop called Tyler Jew. And he remembered where it was, and we went to it, it was just in the street from Worcester College down to the station, and there sure enough, on the lefthand side, was the name plate Tyler Jew. I never knew what Tyler Jew was, but there it was, and he remembered it.

*Spelt Jew...*

TYLER Jew, JEW. What the business of Tyler Jew was I never discovered, and maybe I could, but they were very pleased to come. And my grandfather was exceedingly pleased at that. And then another thing...generosity I remember: my mother died while I was at Oxford, and I was very upset naturally, and although I had a holiday in Italy, when I came back I was still pretty upset, and so my grandfather paid for me to have another holiday in...to do a study holiday in England.

*What did your mother die of?*

Cancer. I'll come to that when I come to my parents.

[End of tape 1 side B]

**Tape 2 Side A [Track 3]**

*This is Tape Two, side A, of the interview with Edgar Duchin, commencing the 8th of March 1988.*

Well coming back to memories of those early days, there are certain things I remember. It must have been before the Great War, I went for a walk one Saturday afternoon, and when I came...I remember I walked I think down the Edgeware Road to Praed Street, and I saw a sight I've never forgotten, which was two drunk, and I think they were Irishwomen, but certainly they were Irish women, fighting with hatpins. And you know in those days they had those bonnets and enormous hatpins. And I remember the blood flowing. The terrible poverty round the Praed Street, Harrow Road area. And my Aunt Minnie said "Oh, you should never go there," she said, "policemen always go in pairs." So that when Mrs. Thatcher talks about the good old Victorian values and the days, I remember these women fighting with hatpins.

*This was in the twenties, yes.*

Yup. I also remember of course there were...the traffic was horse drawn; whether that was before the war or after, but I remember that the, some of the carthers[ph] were very savage and flogged their horses badly, as I found out when I read Black Beauty. And, the other thing, then I remember too bits of the Great War. I remember when we were in Maida Vale, the long line of soldiers marching down towards Victoria Station. I didn't know what was happening really, except that from time to time the column would stop, and the house...ladies and other people would bring out cups of tea and refreshments to them. And I suppose I saw the...they'd probably come from barracks in Hendon, but they would march and march, and I remember the long line, and I suppose I saw that those...most of them never came back. I think my grandparents stayed in London. Then there was another contemporary of my grandmother, another contemporary, rather a relative of my grandmother, who is worth recording. This is after the war, but my grandmother had a cousin called Bertha. I don't know exactly what the relationship was, but I think it was a cousin. At any rate, she married a man called Michaelson, Adolph Michaelson. And they lived in a house in Finchley Road, just near Swiss Cottage,

opposite what was then a clergymen's college built in the Norman style, and now on the site of a shopping parade, but they were very nice houses, and it was next to the school I went to, which was Peterborough Lodge, and also next to the dentist which I had before Lindo Levien, a man called Briault, BRIAULT. As far as Briault was concerned, he was a very sweet man, and somewhat ironically the lure of being, to go to the dentist and put up with being dealt with was that at the end of it, Briault always brought out a bar of chocolate which he gave to the children. [laughs] Not, I suppose, realise that he was...not I suppose realising at that stage that he was building up a further clientele for himself. But the Michaelsons lived between Peterborough Lodge and the dentist. Now Adolph Michaelson, the story was, he had made a fortune in South Africa, in Johannesburg, in the gold rush, in the '80s or '90s, he had, rather like the Van Staverens I suppose, he had opened a store and prospered enormously. But he had then decided to retire, and he spent the rest of I think a fairly unhappy life, voyaging between South Africa and England, so as not to spend more than six months in either country, so as to avoid tax. He was a rather intolerant man, whereas his wife Bertha was very sweet and very like my grandmother, they had much in common. I suppose I'll just deal with the Michaelson family. They had 3 daughters, one was called Pearl, who never married, but eventually became a Christian, and one called Dorothy - I think there may have been 2 daughters, one called Dorothy, oh yes, and one called Grace, yes. Dorothy married a man called Levi and went to live in South Africa, and I met her once or twice, quite nice. But Grace was the scandal of the Barnett-Michaelson family. Grace married a man called Michel Oppenheimer, who was a butcher in Smithfield. And Michel used to get up at what, 4 or 5 in the morning, to go to Smithfield Market. And the story I had, I don't know where I got the story from, but Grace got fed up with this, and eventually eloped with the best man, leaving her children behind, and went to South Africa. And Adolph wouldn't allow her name to be mentioned in the house. Years later they came back and I met her. But, the two children, Lesley and Gordon, were brought up by their father, Michel, with the aid of a housekeeper, and another cousin called Blanche Isaacs, the mother of Horace, whom I mentioned earlier, another cousin. And I used to go out to...Blanche Isaacs would take us to Mascaline[ph] and Divance[ph], and I was very fond of Lesley. Gordon became a doctor, but then got multiple/muscular sclerosis; he fought it and became a radiologist, married a nurse who looked after him very well, but died. Lesley married a specialist at I think St. George's Hospital, Jacobi, and only, well four years ago, I

answered an advertisement in the Law Society's Gazette, saying anybody who had knowledge of Adolph Michaelson would they get in touch, and I found that it was the Jacobi son who was a solicitor in Cornwall who had put the advertisement in, and I renewed contact with Lesley, who is a great pillar of the Women's Institute. And we went and stayed, we went and had lunch with them in the country, and that was before I got my stroke. But so the connection between the Barnett/Michaelson family carried on. Michel never remarried, was never a very observant Jew in any way, but by some quirk, exactly which I don't know, he became for many years, Chairman of the Jewish Chronicle Company. Perhaps he was a friend of the editor, Greenberg, I don't know. But he was a prosperous businessman, and many people in the market remembered him for many years. He was well respected. And Kessler[ph] the editor...the Chairman, the subsequent Chairman, remembers him well too. And I remember him a tall, very English looking gentleman. I think I went with him to Lords once. Any rate, that was that generation which was...they were all individuals.

*Did you ever go to Smithfield Market, yourself, at that stage?*

Not at that stage, no. No, I never did, no. Yes, what did I do? Let me see... As to conditions in the London of that time, I remember of course there were stables for horses just by, just south of the bridge over the canal in the Edgeware Road, and I think if you go into the mews there, you can see there was a ramp where the horses went up on the first floor too, the stables being on the first floor. I've got a correction to make about the Goiteins' house. When I first knew them, they lived in the extension of Portsdown Road towards the canal, just on the other side of the road from my grandfather's house, in quite a large house nearer the canal. It was later they moved to the house at the corner of Warwick Avenue. So when I first knew them it was at this other house just across the road from my grandparents. And having now talked about my grandfather, I can now talk about the synagogue, the 'minyan' in his house. It had about 4 or 5 rows of hard, light coloured wood; quite handsome, polished, and a handsome Ark. And I think I made a mistake about the roof of the synagogue going out. It was the...downstairs there was an alcove in my, in my grandparents' sitting room where the roof was pushed out on girders to form a Succah. Not the synagogue, which would have been too big. But the congregants[ph] of the synagogue were quite interesting. I mean the people who used to

come. There was a man called...I man I think called Simon, no, a man called Hyams, who wrote Jewish fairy tales for children, Myers, Myers, that's his name, a very nice man called Myers; there were two brothers called Gerald and Joshua Levy, who were real gentlemen; and either Gerald, I think it was, I met Gerald very late in life, I remember that he had a very good voice, and he had pretensions to take up singing as a career. But I remember one of the minor tragedies of that circle was that poor Gerald got an audition and in fact was allowed to sing at one of Madam Patty's concerts. But he was very short-sighted, and I gather that when he got on the platform he was so nervous he really couldn't see the music, and the performance was a catastrophe. And everybody was very sorry because he was such a nice man. But he used to come too, and sing at seder, and I remember that. The two Levy brothers; and others were quite distinguished members of the Jewish local community. My recollection of my grandfather, my grandparents' house is of a very warm and very affectionate background, and I remember my grandmother lighting the candles. And there was a warm glow about the place. And there was really none of the fanatical orthodoxy of my father's house, that was the main thing. My grandfather was a much more tolerant man in some ways, and that as I'll say later led to friction.

*Did you have prayers after dinner as well?*

Oh yes, yes, well I mean we did, I learned benching and prayers before and after the... all that, and singing shara malas and the pre...the psalm before the meal, and all that sort of thing. But I don't remember it very much, it's just the atmosphere of being able to be welcomed by my grandmother, who was always pleased to see me, and not being shouted at; and the food was always very good, I remember; and just a general air of...and then being able to read and do what I liked on Saturday afternoons. There was a comfortable atmosphere at my grandmother's house.

*You stayed overnight.*

I must have done, I've said that before. You see, I don't think I could have walked from Goldhurst Terrace.



*And you'd have cousins there?*

Oh yes, yes.

*Would there be a lot of discussion at the table, political discussion, for example?*

No, I don't there was anything like that.

*What would you talk about? Literature, or, what amused you, what you did at school?*

My... It was generally I think family gossip, to be quite honest. I, they were none of them very intellectual. I mean Minnie read, and my mother had pretensions to draw, and I think she played the piano, I don't know. But the atmosphere...I'm not taking, I'm not putting this down, or should I? Oh, it is going. Oh, alright. But in the atmosphere of those times, I mean the great thing was the girls should get married and two of them did and two of them didn't. I can't remember any political discussions. Oh, I do remember my grandfather being very intolerant, though, in some ways. I mean, he probably was quite a reasonable landlord, but when it was suggested that some of his properties needed improving, I do remember him saying "What's the good, they'll only put coals in the bath?" I actually heard him say that. And I know that when he died, some of the streets, some of the houses he did possess were real slums. I remember one in a street called Kirk Street I went to have a look at once. And I think he had property in Hoxton and so on.

*But this was all in the London area.*

It was all in the London area, yes, yes. Oh yes.

*Did you play games with your cousins?*

No. I used to play chess with my father. I played draughts, yes, I used to play draughts. I used to be a bad loser I remember, with my cousins. Oh yes, of course it was a great meeting point for the, for the cousins; there were 13 cousins, of whom I think 5 are still

alive. And we were all very fond of each other I think. In fact I was, as a young boy I was in love with my cousin Joan Feltenstein, and she was fond of me. I haven't yet come to the second, not even the third generation. But we used to meet, and we used to visit my aunts and uncles. But I'm trying to relate particularly to the grandparents' generation. My grandfather had a brother called Moses, known as Uncle Mo, and this again was a bit of my grandfather's intolerance of anything that didn't come up to his standards. Uncle Mo was not a very successful businessman apparently; he used to batten on my father-in-law...my grandfather I think. And, he, he used to batten on...he used to...any rate, he was always the poor relation, Uncle Mo was. And he had children whom I used to know; one of them, Dolly, committed suicide, but the others were alright, Ezra and so on. And there again, the details of them are in the family tree. Oh, there was another man, I remember now, contemporary of my grandfather, was a man called Woolstone[ph], and Woolstone was a real horror. He lived in...they lived in, he lived in Sutherland Avenue, and looking back now, all my life really I have been struck by the contrast between the outward fervour for religious orthodoxy and sometimes the quite horrible behaviour of the person showing that fervour. Now Woolstone[ph] - I'm sure it did happen - knocked his wife about. And he certainly knocked his son, Adolph Woolstone, who was my contemporary, and others. But he used to come to the minyan. And his son Adolph, nice boy, became a dentist later in life. And he had a daughter called Hilda who was very eccentric, poor dear, she suffered terribly from her father, and was once found stripped I think on Brighton beach and had to be treated; but she recovered, and three years afterwards, I think she went to Israel for a time. But I remember what a horror Woolstone was. I think another literary man came to this minyan, I think his name was called Maurice Jacobs, but I would need to check and look up. One thing I do remember of course, that even though it was not a ghetto, the social circle of my grandparents, my parents of course, and all of them, was almost exclusively Jewish. When I went, as I've said I went to lunch with my grandfather, although no doubt he was respected as he was by non-Jewish competitors and so on, the social contacts were all Jewish. And I...

*Was there a feeling of exclusivity?*

Why it was, I don't...I've got a feeling that, you see, probably I'm guessing, I think they may have felt safer, but, marrying out was at that time still unthought of. And of course,

well perhaps I can tell you, you may not know, but I learned this I think from my father, that my grandfather's generation was only one removed from that of Sir Herman Ardler. Now probably you'll find this elsewhere, but after the emancipation of the Jews in England, and the death of the old rabbi, Herschel[ph], old Chief Rabbi Herschel[ph], Sir Herman Ardler became Chief Rabbi, and the...long before Zionism was thought of in England, or paid much attention to it shall we say, the great thing was that Jews were Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion, Jewish religion, epitomized later on by Bezel[ph] Henriquez, who tried to turn East End little Jewish boys into good English gentlemen. But the climate was, you see, that alright, you had the Catholics, and you had the Protestants and you had the Jews. And in my day I remember it was after Sir Herman, but he was very much as I understand it responsible for the United Synagogue Act, which established the United Synagogue as it were the established church, or the established Jewish church, of England. And I remember of course the Chief Rabbi Hertz wore gaiters, and a top hat with little cockades, imitating as my father later contemptuately[ph] said, imitating the Goim[ph]. But the idea was that the rabbi should be...that the Jewish clergymen should be the equivalent of their Christian brethren. And there was a certain, there was a certain, not...there was a certain dilution of learning, in the sense that the establishment of Reverends came to pass; they didn't have to be Rabbis with any much rabbinical learning, and so I was brought up first at...that's what my...at Bayswater, you see, where you had Sir Herman Gollancz, who was not a Rabbi, and then later on Price and Prince of St. John's Wood, of them more later. And the, I think the wealthy people, the very satisfied middle class Jews, formed a kind of society on their own; they were not very learned, and quite unlike the continent, they didn't have the kind of intense - at least in that circle I grew up in - of intense religious fervour. It was all very mild and civilized.

*Did you get the feeling that they mistrusted their non-Jewish colleagues?*

No, they just had their own traditions. No, I've never...

*They didn't mix socially.*

They didn't mix socially, no, not that I've...generally. I don't think I'd had a non-Jewish friend to the house 'til I was about 23 or 24. Oh yes I did, I had one or two from prep school. But by and large, we jogged along, we were Jews and the others weren't, and I'm sure my...excuse me. Now you just ask me some more, because this prompts me to things.

*Well, on your grandparents' generation, I think...*

You think that's enough. I have a feeling there is something more which... One of the things I remember with great pleasure was going shopping with my grandmother to Whiteleys, which was the probably the nearest store, and I was fascinated because the...they had this marvellous internal cashing system which went on for years, and I think has only fairly recently been abolished, namely that you would, my grandmother would pay the cash, the asistant would take the money, and put it in a metal container, and then put it in a kind of spring, and pull a lever, and it would go up and be carried in a kind of railway to the central cashier's office, above, above the... And it was fascinating. I wondered what on earth it was.

*Do you know where we've seen this? There was a play 'On The Razzle'.*

And, she was, and this was fascinating. Apparently it carried on for quite some time. And then I remember also my grandmother used to take us to Elliott's the shoe shop, which again lasted 'til well into the Fifties. And my grandmother patronised Elliott's, my mother patronised Elliott's, and so did my family, until it closed down.

[End of tape 2 side A]

**Tape 2 Side B [Track 4]**

Indeed it was a great pleasure to me when I took my elder children to Elliott's, to meet a gentleman who had actually served my grandmother, and confirmed that whenever she went to the shops, she always behaved like, and was always treated like a great lady, a grande dame. That's to say she was always extremely pleasant and welcomed. The few other things I remember, I remember for some unknown reason it was an excitement, when you, to come out of the big Whiteleys, to go through a narrow passage which came out in the side road. I can't remember why it was so exciting, but it was; there was a side entrance in the road leading to Bradleys, the fur people. The other things I remember about my grandmother, small points: in the house there was a lift which came up from the kitchen into the dining room, which was a great excitement because, as a very small child I remember getting in it, so that I could go in the lift and being scolded because it was dangerous.

*This was a sort of service lift.*

That's right.

*Yes, yes.*

It, when it was down it was flat, the top was flat against...there was a kind of slab against the floor, and then it would be pulled up on ropes and we could either pull it up or down. And so that when the meals were prepared they were put in this lift and then... The only other I remember like that was years later, at the Petit Club Francais in Great James Street, they had a service lift like that. The...it reminds me that...well no, that's something quite different, forget that, you can cut that out actually. Alright. A few other things. I remember the muffin men coming round in Portsdown Road, and he swang a huge bell, and then we used to go out and buy the muffins.

*Did he have a song?*

Well of course as children, there was [singing] "Do you know the muffin men, the muffin men, the muffin men, do you know the muffin men, who lives down Drury Lane, Oh!" Isn't that a popular song now, among children? Yes.

*Yes, I do know it. But did he have a call, did he call out muffins for sale?*

Yes, yes, as far as I know, but I can't remember that. I do remember the bell, which was a great excitement. And the other thing I remember was the delivery of ice. Horse-drawn cart of course came round, and there were enormous blocks of ice about two feet square, and there were big men who used to ladle it up with enormous pinchers, and I think I remember that the, like coal delivery men later in life, the delivery men wore sacks and these blocks of ice were put on their backs and then they were delivered at our end [ph] to the basement, where of course there were no refrigerators as such these days...as there are these days - but there were these cold boxes and the ices kept the food, the ice blocks, and they were delivered.

*What year would that be do you think, you're talking about?*

Well I think this was probably before the Great War. I mean I was 5 when the war started. So that I think I've got a memory of those early years with my grandmother. Certainly I remember Mrs. Jones as I've already said. In fact I remember now, that in 1912 and '13, we went to Ramsgate, to a, for a holiday, to a Jewish boarding house, I think it was...I think the Miss Solomon of 119 Sutherland Avenue took a Jewish boarding house in the summer so that orthodox Jews could go. And we went to Ramsgate. But in 1914, we were due to go, and I remember that my aunt Elizabeth, known as Lizzie, my aunt Lizzie coming in and saying "You can't go to Ramsgate, the war has started."

*Do you have any recollection of Ramsgate?*

The mention of my grandmother's lifts remind me of another memory of about that time. I went for a walk with my cousin, Percy, Lionel Goitein, in St. John's Wood, up Grove End Road, and I remember he pointed out to me the house where the famous Victorian

painter, Alma Tadimer[ph] used to live, and Percy told me that inside that house Alma Tadimer had a number of contrivances, because he was a great one for domestic comfort of that kind, and if you pressed one button, a cupboard would come out from the wall, or if you pressed another then a lift would come up from the basement. I've never been able to check this, but the mention of my grandmother's lift reminds me. My grandmother was also a very great writer, she used to write to all her grandchildren, and I've still kept a number of letters which she wrote to me when I was at Oxford. And she was a very fluent writer, and she had a very characteristic flowing handwriting, so that you've only got to look at, I've only got to look at an envelope, and know that it was written to me by my grandmother. I found one letter in which she describes, in which she refers to an incident at the relief of Ladysmith, when she said that a Hebrew teacher was so excited that he went out and joined the cheering crowd while in his slippers, and he was so carried away that he carried right down to the East End in his slippers, where he lost one, and had to come back with only one slipper. Those were the sort of things my grandmother was always remembering and writing about to our great delight. But there's one peculiar comment on the... [break in recording] ...the attitude of the time, I believe my mother had a very - well, I know that my mother had a very difficult time during the first world war, because she had married not only a foreigner, but a man who in fact was an enemy alien. And this caused considerable difficulties as I'll mention when I come to talk about my mother and father. And I asked my brother-in-law, Harold Oppenheimer, who was, who is a German refugee, whether he remembered my grandmother, and to my surprise he said "Oh yes, but she never really talked to me, because you see I was a foreigner." So that in a way, the English Jews at times were more English than the English. One other pleasant memory was that occasionally we would go, not to the Bayswater Synagogue, but to the Sephardy Synagogue in Laudadale Road, where the ritual of course is quite different, and I remember being extremely interested in it, because it had a kind of Eastern...they had kind of Eastern chants, and in fact of course the - at that time at any rate - the pronunciation of Hebrew was radically different from that of the Ashkenazy, and especially the kind of cockney Ashkenazy which I've referred to.

*Did you go because you had friends who went, or just out of interest?*

I don't know exactly why we went. I think one or two of the people who attended my grandfather's minyan, which by the way was only for males, there wasn't any room for women... I think on feast days I think the ladies did congregate on the landing outside, but the benches, there wasn't room enough...in an orthodox fashion, to have a gallery or a separate place. But, the...what I remember about the, now about the Sephardy Synagogue were the sermons of the Haham, Dr. Moses Gaster.

*Gaster?*

Gaster. GASTER. The grandfather of Marganita Laski[ph], who also when I spoke to her mentioned and remembered him well. I'm not certain whether it was before or after the war that I heard Gaster preach, but any rate he was a remarkable preacher, with an extraordinary low voice [imitates] and with very sonorous, deep [imitates], but he had a beautiful command of the English language. And he was, later in life, the...descendent of Sir Adolph Tuck, Raphael Tuck who became MP for Watford, who had a great capacity for mimicry, and he used to mimic both Haham[ph] Dr. Gaster and the Chief Rabbi very well. It is recorded elsewhere, but I do remember that such was the xenophobia of the times that Haham[ph] Dr. Gaster was suspected or accused of being pro German, or at least not sufficiently patriotic, and I believe that was the reason, though I've never checked it, that in fact he was demoted from being Haham, and it was said that when he came to the synagogue and found that the high chair on which he sat had been lowered, he burst into tears. Those are sort of recollections that I have.

*Why was it lowered?*

Because he was no longer Haham

*Oh I see.*

Yes. You know, that could be checked, but he definitely was, there was a rift between him and the community, and my recollection was that it was because of his... And of course for a number of Jews who came from the continent, it was a difficult time. For instance, I had, or my father had, a photograph of his brother and nephew in the uniform



of Hungarian army chaplains, while he of course was seeking to fight internment in England. So the question of dual loyalty must have been a very difficult one. One or two further things about my grandfather, he employed a solicitor whom I met as an old man, I think there was a Mr. Woodruff and then a Mr. Willoughby, and when I was in practice on my own in Holborn, I met their clerk, I think it was Willoughby's clerk, a Mr. Robinson, who remembered my grandfather very well, and he said "Well you know your grandfather made a lot of money out of Chelsea Tithes." I've made one or two enquiries as to what Chelsea Tithes could have been, but I have never been able to discover; well there was of course a law passed which enfranchised tithes, and it may be that my grandfather purchased the right to have the tithes, but I've not been able to check what was meant by that.

*You mean tithe?*

TITHE. Yes. So, presumably a search of the ecclesiastical records would find out what was meant by that, but it was a mystery. Any rate, it has always amused me that my grandfather should have, an orthodox Jew should have made money out of ecclesiastical rents.

*Yes, but does that mean he owned property in Chelsea?*

Oh, well it may have been that, yes, it may have been that he owned property in Chelsea to which the tithes were attached. But, at his death there were no, there was no Chelsea property, as far as I remember. Then the other solicitor he had was a man called Riley, of Brighton, who was a very fine man, who rather tragically I think he lost two sons in the...he lost a leg in the First World War and lost two sons I think in the Second World War. But he was a very, he became solicitor to me and also to my nephew. But the, the main thing that I remember about, that I now remember from grandfather is of course the terms of his Will; he made, he got into, somehow got [rustling paper]his way into the clutches of the lawyers, and he made extremely complicated Wills and Settlements, and the...[rustling paper] And he made extremely complicated Wills and Settlements, which provided that his money after certain legacies, his money should be held in trust for various beneficiaries, including his grandchildren, and the...his Estate was not to be

finally distributed until the death of the last survivor of himself, his brother, his sister-in-law, his five children, and then very peculiarly every child or emotive issue of theirs born in my lifetime, and every child or emotive issue born in my lifetime of his late Majesty, King Edward the Seventh. This was, as he didn't...as he made the Will in 1930, but died I think in about 1936, it proved impossible of course to trace all the emotive issues for instance of the descendents...of King Edward the Seventh, so that eventually there was a Deed of Family Arrangement, and we...and the Estate was distributed, and I got small shares. Oh, I got, I got what was in those days not bad sums. But, and he also included a provision that any beneficiary marrying out of the faith should be, should forfeit any entitlement. It was doubtful, in view of certain legal decisions, whether this would have held up, but I'm glad to say that in any event, my cousins, who were by that time the main beneficiaries, agreed not to enforce the clause, so far as I was concerned. And looking back, there was one particular treat I remember, apart from going to Plarto's[ph], it was some years later, but my uncle Montague, known as Monty, took me, after I'd been to his office, to Barnet Salt Beef stall, which was not far away, I think it was in Middlesex Street. But it was a long, heavy, wooden trestle, on which was hot salt beef, and men in white overalls were serving very thick salt beef sandwiches to city, to orthodox Jewish gentlemen who went up there and had their lunch. And they were very good sandwiches indeed; long before Bloom's. And one other little recollection was that there was a dairy, patronised by my grandmother, in a little street called Mimosa Street in the bottom of Warwick Avenue, just behind the church. And when I went there I think about fifty years later, there were, it was still going strong. And I remember the milk churns which were there, and it was a great delight because I used to go with my aunt Minnie to collect the cream and the milk, and they were very friendly ladies serving.

*What did you collect the milk and cream in?*

I can't remember. I can't remember how the milk was collected.

*In urns? Bottles?*

I think they were, not pewter but they were tall milk jugs.

*Not glass?*

I don't think they were glass. I have a feeling they were some kind of metal, but I'm not quite certain.

*What about the butter? Can you remember the butter?*

No. I remember somewhere, but not necessarily there, seeing butter being churned. It may have been there.

*Did you buy butter there?*

Yes.

*From the big slabs?*

Yes, that's right, yes.

*Like Sainsbury's used to sell it.*

Ah. But, I only remember that that was one of the shops that it was nice to go to. As far as the Sephardy Synagogue was concerned, I remember the minister, as opposed to the Haham, was the Reverend Deselo Pinto[ph], who came from a very distinguished Putz[ph], Spanish and Portuguese Jewish family, and was a very handsome man. He looked like the Laughing Cavalier, and always trimmed his beard very meticulously to look trim, very trim and spruce. In those days, Bayswater was a very fashionable area, and the Portsdown Road, Clifton Road, Warwick Avenue, was very respectable, not what it later became after the second war, where it became so disreputable, being populated in the early nineteen...in the late 1940s by a large number of French prostitutes, but the authorities changed its name to Randolph Avenue. The far end of Portsdown Road, towards Kilburn, was not so affluent; it was there that two teachers at Jewish College lived, Dr. Marmorstein and Dr. Hirschfeld. And I have kept in touch with the Marmorstein family ever since. The Hirschfelds had two daughters who lived to a great

age. Round the corner, there was an old Jewish cobbler, a Mr. Kleinman, who had worked in a very small shop in the road leading to Maida Vale, and he kept...he repaired the Barnett family's shoes and all the shoes of the congregation, and worked very hard. I remember he wore rimless, or steelrimmed spectacles, because he spent so much time peering over his boots; but he was a...he worked hand stitching and so on. But I do remember being, even in those days, being very impressed that when Mr. Kleinman came to minyan in my grandfather's house, he was treated as a member of the congregation being called up and treated on an equality in the congregation. And that was the same in other minyans I attended later. There was not much open space in that area, except the recreation ground, which still exists, and which was kept very tidy, and where I used to go for...the recreation ground in the north end of Portsdown Road, where I used to go for walks with the Marmorstein boys on Saturday afternoons; because of course we weren't allowed to do any sport or anything like that, but we did walk. Mr. Kleinman's shop was very small, not much larger than this room, than twelve by twenty, well smaller than that; and I remember it was fairly dark, and that's why he sort of peered and wore glasses. Most of his work was done by hand, but my recollection is also that he had a treddle sewing machine on which he...to which he sewed the soles onto the boots. There were a number of Jewish traders in the district; I remember later, there was a watchmaker called Hoffman in the Edgware Road, just north of...a watchmaker and repairer just north of Praed Street, which we patronized. And he was a very, I think he'd come from Belgium during the war, as a Belgian refugee. But he also sort of treated my, certainly my father, on terms of equality. Other memories, as I said, the Goiteins' houses were very near the Regents Park Canal, the second one in fact overlooking it. And I was fascinated by the barges which went up and down very frequently, drawn by large horses, and I remember also that there were families living on board, I used to see the women and children on them.

*Were they also taking...[break in recording]*

I don't remember exactly what the barges were transporting. I believe, I do remember coal, and timber, but they were commercial, it was a commercial trade in those days.

[End of tape 2 side B]

**Tape 3 Side A [track 5]**

*This is Tape Number Three in the interview with Edgar Duchin on the 14th of March, 1988.*

My memories of my mother are not as clear as those of my father because she died when I was at, in my second year at Oxford. But ... There is a photograph of her with me as a baby, which shows a very handsome and proud mother. And of course there were three of us, of which I am the only survivor; there was myself and my younger...my sister Dorothy, and my younger brother Arthur, with only I think three years separating us; because there was a time when we were...our ages were like 13, 14, 15. My younger brother Arthur was always rather a favourite, he was rather delicate as a young boy, and I...from something that was told to me, I believe his birth was a surprise, because, as I understood it later, my mother had had an operation after Dorothy's birth on her Fallopian tubes, so that it wasn't thought that she could have another child, but she did. And, she...and this must have been quite a strain, to bring up three children so near to each other. I think in some ways my mother had a difficult time; it was an arranged marriage, but nevertheless I think she was very much, very much at one time in love with my father, but there was a strain in the marriage as I'll explain later.

*Could you explain in what way the marriage was arranged? Did you know?*

I did that, didn't I tell you about, didn't I say about Kalman Goitein saying...telling his sister...Kalman Goitein who married Lizzie Goitein, sending a message back to...did I tell you, or did it go on the thing?

*Yes.*

Sending a message back to Hungary, that his brother-in-law Pyza had a marriageable daughter...

*Yes, yes, I recall now. Yes, the introduction made from a distance, wasn't it? Yes, I remember now, yes.*

Oh, I think that's all...I think it's been going on. Our conversation's gone on.

*Yes, alright.*

[break in recording]

And of course, having married a foreigner, things became very difficult for her during the First World War, because by the legislation of those days, she'd lost her British nationality. And of course my father, as I will say later, was an enemy alien. And there was of course the difference between them that where, that my father had no family over here, whereas my mother had of course all her family. There was the, her brother Montague, Monty, who had married into the Gestetner family, married Elsa Gestetner, that also was an arranged marriage, and her younger sister, Cissy, was married to Julius Feltenstein. And the Gestetners and the Feltensteins were members of very orthodox congregations in north London. At one time I remember, one of my earliest memories was that the - perhaps I've even imagined it - but that there was a reception for Monty's wedding to Elsa in the garden of the house at Lordship Park, with a tent. And I think this must have been somewhere about 1913. And I've not checked, but I think that was the date of marriage. And I remember the wedding...and I remember the wedding. And I also remember that for a time the Feltensteins and the younger Barnetts lives next door to each other in Lordship Park, and there was a door in the fence to which, so that all the cousins used to play together. But I think...and then there were the two maiden aunts, as we knew them later because they were never married, there was Minnie and there was Ruth. Perhaps I should just mention them now, about them. Minnie was the literary one of the family, as I've said, she was a very great reader, and she used to ask me, right to late in life, whether I had read so-and-so, and I would recommend her to read books. In a later generation she would have become a teacher or a, or even a professional lady, but of course at the time that she was born this was very rare, especially for middle class Jewish ladies. Ruth was a very different person; she was very beautiful as young, but she was more English than any of the other members of the family, more English inclined; she was a volunteer in...for soldiers' charities or looking after soldiers in the First World War, and she mixed with quite high up non-Jewish people. And I think my grandfather was always frightened that she would not marry a Jewish gentleman, and in the event she

never married at all. She did become engaged I think to a man called Somon[ph], but the engagement for some unknown reason was broken off. I remember my grandfather referring to him as a "rotter", which was a familiar term for goose in those days. For a time during my grandmother's life, there was hostility between my, those two aunts, but when she died, they became great friends, and to the family's surprise they lived in great amity to a good old age. And a further surprise was that, although Ruth had been, as I say, very pro-English, and sort of patriotic, when she and my aunt went to Israel, they became fascinated by it and liked it, and kept in touch with the members of the family who were living in Israel. But, the Barnetts were always a very sort of close-knit family, and my father must have felt rather isolated. My recollection of my mother is of a very warm and large lady, sort of, she had very hard... I was, in recollection I must have been very close to my mother...I must have been quite close to my mother because although my father insisted upon going to a minyan because the situation was - on Saturdays - because the situation was that, being strictly orthodox, you were supposed to finish your prayers before you had breakfast; whereas the United Synagogue services didn't start 'til 10 or 10.30, this meant that you had to have breakfast before you went there, the local minyans, that's to say the small congregations of more than ten males, used to start at 7.30 or 8, and, as I'll say later, I used to go to these minyans with my father. But, and this was the cause of some dispute between my father and my mother, because for one thing I don't think my father thought the St. John's Wood synagogue was orthodox enough, certainly not when they moved the 'sental bima'[ph], the stand, from the centre of the synagogue to near the Ark, but for another thing it didn't start 'til late. But my mother, who liked the synagogue, used to walk to it on her own, although occasionally my father would go, and indeed later on he went quite frequently. But I used to go with my mother, and walked with her to St. John's Wood synagogue, and later I used to go for walks with her to the country, we used to go on the Metropolitan Line to Rickmansworth or I think even as far as Chalfont, but certainly we both enjoyed those walks. I can't remember unfortunately what we talked about; I know she was very keen on my English education, and was very - and I think she was partly responsible for my getting to Oxford and encouraging me in my studies. Going back in time, when we were in, I remember a certain amount of our first house, which was in Maida Vale, 44 Maida Vale, I remember I had my own bedroom, and got into trouble because I think there were mice in the plaster, and I scabbled away at the plaster, and made a hole in it. I remember we had a

succession of nurses; I remember particularly a very warm Irish girl called Nellie, but there was, either she or another nurse called Nurse Johnson, got into trouble because they, one of them was a fervent Catholic and tried to teach Jesus Christ to me, much to the anger of my parents. But we did have a succession of governesses; two remained with us for a long time. One was with us when, as I say later, we evacuated to Oxford, and the other, a Miss Wright, stayed with us for a number of years until she moved to Southport and got married there. There was a time when my parents were not very well, and I remember - not very well off - and I remember Miss Wright reminding me of this time, describing it as the time, "Well don't you remember when your mother had to wear woollen socks." And this was I think just after the war. Other things I remember about my mother were that she...she went to North London Collegiate School, and she must have had some artistic pretensions, because there was in the morning room of the houses there was a drawing she made when young of a chicken and small chicks in a farmyard, and it was quite well done. But again, she never got, she never got beyond school education. She was well loved by all who knew her, especially by the Goiteins, who found her a very warm and lovable lady, which I'm sure she was. She liked having parties, bridge parties, and she also gave dances for us children. And she was a popular member of the 'Beneborith'[ph]. But she couldn't as it were compare with my father's scholastic bent, well, achievements, and although she was a very gentle lady, and for other reasons, there was, the marriage for some time was not a very happy one. But, she...we had a reasonably comfortable domestic life [interruption]. We certainly had a maid, and I think we had a cook. My mother was a sort of upper class English lady, she was, had a distate for primitive work, a primitive life, because I remember when we went with my father, as I'll say later, to Hungary, she insisted that we stayed in the hotel in Budapest instead of going out to the village of which my uncle was Rabbi, because there was only an outdoor earth closet. One or two corrections I'd like to make. I described my mother as upper class; I think a more correct description would be upper middle class. There's no hint of any connection with the aristocracy, not even the Jewish aristocracy. And one other little memory I have of my grandmother's house, I've mentioned the lift, and I remember now there was a special kind of whistle attached to it, it was a thick corded whistle with a stopper. You took the stopper out and blew down, and the whistle then sounded in the kitchen, and you could then speak into the, into the hollow of the whistle cord, and order tea or, my grandmother would say lunch is ready



Mrs. Jones. Of course we grandchildren took great delight in blowing this whistle, and we were reprimanded. And I was surprised to find that my wife, who lived in Southend, her grandmother had precisely the same kind of whistle.

*Was this in every room, or just...*

I think there was a second whistle in the, what was called the morning room, as well as the dining room where the lift was. There were also a number of bell pulls in the house, and in the kitchen there was a box with an indicator showing which rope or pull or...

*A sash?*

...or sash had been pulled. I've also remembered a few things more about my mother, during the First World War. I remember that one day, when we were walking from Goldhurst Terrace to St. John's Wood Synagogue, which was quite a walk, we used to go down Priory Road to the corner of Abbey Road and then walk along Abbey Road, and I distinctly remember that one Sabbath morning, just as we were outside the church, we looked up, and there were three German aeroplanes above; it was a daylight raid. And then in 19...and then I remember that in 1917, the bombing raids at night got worse, and we used to go to a shelter in the house of a...I think it was a Belgian refugee, a Mr. Goldschmidt, who lived in a large house, which I think was technically in Aberdare Gardens, any rate it was at the junction of Aberdare Gardens and Goldhurst Terrace; he was a very nice Jewish gentleman with a pronounced French accent. He was not at all orthodox, and my father and he used to have arguments, but always very friendly ones, and he was a great friend of the family because he used, later in life he used to come and entertain us children. I'm not certain he didn't during the war, with magic lanterns, slides. And I remember being mystified by the fact that we were given special spectacles to look through; I forget what they're called, they have a special name. One night, early in 1917 we were in the shelter, and there was an enormous explosion, and a bomb had fallen not far away, and demolished the public house at the corner of Belsize Road and Abbey Road; it's now called the Lillie Langtreay, I think it was then called the Belsize Arms. This upset my mother a great deal, and I discovered a letter from Dr. Norwood Brown at 99 Finchley Road, which reads as follows: "I have been... It's February the 8th, 1918" -

oh, it must, it was early in 1918, not 17 - "I have been attending Mrs. Duschinsky and her family since Tuesday. On Monday night a bomb near their residence in Goldhurst Terrace burst and broke the windows in the kitchen. This has completely unnerved Mrs. Duschinsky and they have decided to go to Oxford. Naturally...naturally it would be necessary for Dr. Duschinsky to go with her." So we then moved to Oxford and I'll describe how...what happened then when I come to speak out my father and myself. My father came from a totally different milieu from my mother. He was born in the village of Namesztow, NAMESZTOW, in the Carpathians, which later became part of Czechoslovakia, and I think may even now be part of Russia; I've never managed to get back to it. His father, whose name I think was Ber, BER, Duschinsky, was Rabbi in Namesztow, for many years, and came I believe from a... And his mother also came from a very distinguished line of rabbis, one of them who was known as the 'Hassam Sulfire'[ph], the CHASA, a noted Talmudic scholar. And on my grandmother's side, the Reichs[ph], there were several rabbis, and particularly Uncle Wilhelm, who was Rabbi in Baden-Baden, and visited us several times, and I remember he was a very stately figure, very aristocratic looking. I don't know whether he survived. And there were other Reichs[ph], and there's actually a distant...there are distant cousins still living in England. My father unfortunately never talked much about his background; I remember only two things. First he mentioned that in the winter he would go to school on the sledge, because of being up in the mountains there was plenty, there was always snow; and secondly that his mother, that's to say my grandmother, must have been an educated woman because she taught French to the non Jewish children of the village. I'm not actually certain that this information came from my father: I think it may have come from my cousin, one of my Goitein cousins. But, my father was quite remarkable, I don't know, coming from a village, or even maybe in a small town, because he had a full university education; I have his sealed diploma of doctorate in jurisprudence and social economy from the Claudiopolis[ph], which I suppose was the Hungarian, Austro-Hungarian university. He also studied in Frankfurt, where he made a number of friends, and he I think took his rabbinical degree, or diploma, at Breslau, because later in life he kept corresponding with distinguished Jewish scholars of that period, like Professor Marks[ph], who went to America, and Hoffmann[ph], who was, then became a Rabbi in Frankfurt, and then a Rabbi Horowitz. They were all, it seemed to me, part of a German Jewish intellectual culture. Some years ago there was a lady in the Jewish old people's

home in Nightingale Lane called Inga Pearlless[ph], who said she remembered 'Der Schone Karla'[ph], the handsome Charles. So, my father must have been a very handsome young man. After having his...after...after completing his education, he obtained a post as a young man as a rabbi in a place called Kostel, KOSTEL, and I have documents, mostly in Hungarian language, certifying his position there.

[end of tape 3 Side A]

[tape 3 side B is blank]

**Tape 4 Side A [Track 6]**

*This is Tape Four in the interview with Edgar Duchin, 24th of March 1988.*

My father was a very good scholar. [break in recording]

My father was a very good scholar, and he earned the respect of such persons as my cousin, David Goitein, who was not in sympathy with him religiously, but who always said to me, "Your father knows a great deal." And he entertained scholars at his house, and I remember later in life, the, among the visitors were B.I. Lik[ph], and the great Cabalist scholar, Gersham Scholem, SCHOLEM. And I remember particularly a visit to the house of Dr. Feitlovitz[ph] who's justifiably received acknowledgement very late as the campaigner for the rescue of the Fallashers; he tried to persuade my father that the Fallashers were Jews, and he did obtain some contribution. But he was in those days a lone campaigner. The time I'm speaking of is of course rather later, it was about in the middle Twenties, when he visited our house in Goldhurst Terrace...yes, in Goldhurst Terrace.

*How did he have the evidence that...*

Many of these conversations they had were in German, so that I don't think I remember them clearly. One particular scholar we met was a Professor Guttman, GUTTMAN, who was very good to me in, when we were in Vienna as I'll describe later. And, curiously enough, he gave me I think an early edition of Fenimore Cooper's 'The Last of the Mohicans', which I treasured for many years. One of my father's cousins...I'm not certain, either Reich[ph] or Duschinsky, became a member of the Hungarian Senate. I think it was Duschinsky; there were two representatives of the Jewish community, one orthodox and one reform or liberal, and I remember that one was Duschinsky and the other was Hevizi[ph]. And when I visited Budapest at the first, later in life, I met the, Duschinsky, who was then a very old man, and there was another Duschinsky - Rabbi - who went to Israel and became a leader of the, of one of the orthodox Jewish communities there. I think anti Zionist. But him I didn't meet. My father I think would have been happier had he been able to obtain a senior rabbinical position in Hungary,

because he always said that there were two countries in Europe where there was real Jewish emancipation: Hungary and England. In the event, he came to England. And this happened as follows. My father's brother Michael, had married a Laya[ph] Goitein. And Laya's[ph] brother, Kalman, had married my mother's aunt, Elizabeth Goitein. Now, Kalman kept in touch with his...with the Goitein family and with the Duschinsky family, and he, as I understand it, wrote and said that his brother-in-law, that's to say my grandfather, Pyza Barnett, had marriageable daughters. And I believe he also suggested that if my father came over and married one of these daughters, there was a good prospect of his obtaining a rabbinical post in England. So, I think it must have been about 1904,5, perhaps even later, my father came to London and married my mother, Blanche Barnett. They lived first at 119 Sutherland Avenue, Paddington, where I was born.

[break in recording]

He might have come a little later because I see from the record that they married in June...he married my mother in June 1907 when he was 30, and she was 22. But I think the conditions in England came as a great disappointment to my father. My apprehension of what took place is only a surmise; nevertheless I think there's a great probability about it. There was always a tradition on the continent that rich fathers-in-law who had scholarly sons-in-law would deem it an honour for their sons...for their daughters to marry such sons, and would keep them in sufficient wealth to enable them to study without worry. There are instances of that of course in the writings of Isaac Basheveth[ph] Singer. But this didn't happen in my father's case. I remember him complaining that all my grandfather gave him was some rotten properties, "rotten" in quotes. That can't be quite true, because one of the properties which he gave him, and which was settled by way of marriage, and I've still got the marriage settlement, was 47 Queensbury Terrace, which was a large comodious Edwardian terraced house in Bayswater. However, there was another circumstance which made things difficult for my father. He learnt English very well, and spoke it with only a very slight accent, and he wrote it quite well; when published his book later, his English was good enough to be published by the Oxford University Press. But, he came to England at a time when tradition of scholarship among the Jewish clergy was low. This was because of what had happened in the late nineteenth century. After the death of Solomon Herschel, who... There followed a man called Herman Ardler who was a very emancipated Jew, and

whose idea was to make the Jewish religious establishment a kind of parallel or copy of the Church of England. As I understand it, it was through his influence that the United Synagogue Act was passed. At any rate, about that time, the heads of the various communities were not necessarily rabbis, but reverends, who were noted in my day at any rate, not for their scholarship but for their pastoral abilities. From my own knowledge of them there was the Reverend A.A. Greene of Hampstead, who was an enthusiastic cricketer. There was the Reverend Price[ph] in St. John's Wood who played bridge with his parishioners and was a very popular figure with the richer members of his community. And there was the famous Ifrem[ph] Levene of Bayswater Synagogue who was very much a man for the ladies, but also a very great wit. Digressing a bit, I remember these two gentlemen, the last gentlemen very well. I went with my brother once to Lords and found, we found ourselves sitting next to the Reverend A.A. Greene and we told him who we were, and he then, when lunch came he said "Have some of my sandwich. You can tell your father they were kosher." And, he is reputed to have interrupted a sermon to say that he'd just received information about the test score. I remember one of Ifrem[ph] Levene's best jokes; one of his colleagues who had been at Shepherds Bush had accepted a post in South Africa, and Ifrem's[ph] comment was "Ah, I see a Rav[ph] in the Rand is worth two in the bush." But as I've said, none of these Reverends were noted for their scholarship. And therefore my father was totally out of tune with that kind of atmosphere, and never succeeded in obtaining, as he had hoped, a rabbinical post in England.

*How did he learn his English?*

I don't know. I don't know how he learned his English. He was a very good linguist, all Hungarians are, as far as I know. Later in life I knew both Kaldor[ph] and Bialoff[ph], and they spoke with an accent but they spoke very good English. And Kaldor[ph] of course wrote marvellously in English. But, my father spoke Hungarian, German and English, and he corresponded with his brother over many years in Hebrew, and I have some of the letters. He...he did obtain posts, not as a Rabbi, but I mean he was one of the, on the committee of the Jewish Historical Society, he was a governor of Notting Hill Jewish Day School, and I remember once when he gave the prizes, and he was a governor of Jews College, where he was an ally of Chief Rabbi Hertz against the rather more

reforming spirit of Sir Robert Weyleigh-Cohen[ph], known to everybody as Sir Roiley[ph] because he was, I think head of Shell at the time. And they had great battles. But then...but I do remember meeting Sir Robert, with my father, and Sir Robert obviously had great respect for him.

*He would have been the father of the...*

Sir Robert was the father of the present Lord...yes, the Lord Mayor, yes. Talking about Sir Robert, he lived in a very large house, Caen Towers, CAEN, Towers, off Hampstead Lane, overlooking the Heath, and I remember going to dances there. They were the days of the great Jewish patrons, of aristocracy, some of whom are recounted in Anthony Blond's book, the Arhiam Vermans[ph] book, 'The Family'. But to come back to what I was saying about my father, so that instead of pursuing the life of a scholar, he eventually became a property dealer. And I remember going with him to the property market. [inaud]. Yes. My father was I gather quite good at the property business, because later in life he formed an alliance with a solicitor called Elvy Rab[ph], who trusted his judgement, and if my father bought a property at auction, at the auction market in Victoria Street, Elvy Rab[ph] would finance the conversion or the improvement of it, so that it was then sold at a profit. And my father was very friendly for years with a builder called Rintoul, RINTOUL, who had a great respect for my father and they had a very good relationship between...Rintoul was of the old school cockney builders. But he got on very well with my father. And my father didn't do too badly in property; I remember when, he lost a lot of money through bombing during the war, but he did have about twenty properties including one of which Allan Lane, the founder of Penguin books, was a tenant, whom I went to see once and remembered my father with great affection. In fact my father was probably a better and more popular man in society than he was as a family man, because I think he took his disappointments out on his family. We lived first, as I recollect, at 119 Sutherland Avenue, which I believe was Miss Solomon's boarding house. But then, it must have been about 1912, or even earlier, probably soon after I was born - because I was born in Sutherland Avenue - but soon after I think with my grandfather's help, we moved to a handsome house, 44 Maida Vale. This was one half of a pair of houses which had a pediment. And I remember that years later Number 44 was pulled down to make way for a block of flats, but the other half of the pair

remained standing, very incongruously with the one half of the sloping pedament finishing at the wall of the flats. It was in that house that I saw the soldiers marching towards Victoria Station. It must have been late 1914 or early 1915, I remember a long column of soldiers and people coming out and giving them tea and cakes or fruit; any rate, and cheering them. And I suppose they were the soldiers, most of whom never came back. I also remember that it was in July or August - it must have been July 1914, we had been the previous years to Ramsgate for a holiday, but my aunt Lizzie came to say that we couldn't go to Ramsgate that year, because there was a war starting. This must have been on the 3rd of August, 1914, and I remembered bursting into tears. I was then about, just coming on for 5, so I do remember that. I remember actually the year before, we went to Ramsgate and stayed at Miss Solomons' boarding house. Whether she was the same Miss Solomons who had the boarding house in Sutherland Avenue I'm not certain, but probably.

*Do you remember anything about Ramsgate?*

I don't remember Ramsgate; in fact when I went there many years later, I couldn't identify anything. I remember, as I've said, a great deal about my grandparents' house, but not much of my early years in Maida Vale. It must have been during the war that we moved from 44 Maida Vale to 257 Goldhurst Terrace, it was then known as Ruby Villa. It was a very comodious house with a nice garden, and I had a room of my own. And so... but my...and my sister had a room - and brother - had rooms on the floor above.

*Did you all have separate rooms?*

We all had separate rooms as far as I remember. And my parents had the front bedroom, just across the landing from my room. There was a front garden, well still is, and when you went in, on the left was a fair sized dining room which had a very handsome polished, I think it was mahogany table, and high-backed chairs, with one armchair - I think they were Sheraton type; they were very handsome, and I think, unfortunately I think my step-mother got them later. There was a small morning room on the right, I think, and there was a drawing room leading out into the garden. When you went through the hall and turned to the right, there was a spacious kitchen and pantry at the



rear. On the first floor, in the front was my parents' bedroom, but the large room at the rear was my father's library; he had a large library of Judaica, some, I should think some seven or eight thousand books, and he was very proud of the fact that he had some pre-1942. He was a knowledgeable book collector, and he used to go to Hodgsons' sale at the bottom of Chancery Lane; I used to go with him I remember. And the...it was later taken over by Sotherby's. At the outbreak of war my father of course was an enemy alien, and was...as was my mother, although I think as a British born, she wasn't so severely affected, although I know that it caused her great...it caused great sorry, that she'd lost her British nationality. I have kept some of the papers of that time, the first is a note from the Metropolitan Police telling him that his application for internment, for exemption from internment to be considered by the Secretary of State, and had not been granted, and that he would have to be prepared for internment at an early date. That's dated the 1st of August, 1915. And then there's an undated letter following that, saying that it is intended to intern him as a prisoner of war on the 27th of September 1915, and he should present himself on that date.

*Why prisoner of war, rather than enemy alien?*

I don't know.

*Because that sounds as though he'd been fighting.*

Well the heading is 'Notice of Intend[ph] Internment of an Alien Enemy'. So I don't think there was anything rises out of that. Well, the story I heard from, I think my mother or my aunt was, that following upon that, my father walked down to Whitehall and interviewed Sir Herbert Samuel, who was then - he'd walked down on a Saturday, and he walked from Hamstead to Whitehall to appeal in person to Sir Herbert Samuel. I've also got the original, the copy in his handwriting of the submission he made to the advisory committee, and 14, paragraph 14 says "I am qualified as a Jewish Rabbi, possessing the Rabbinical Diploma of the Pressburg Theological Semitry[ph]. I practiced as a Rabbi for three years at Kostel in Moravia, immediately before settling in London. As a Rabbi I am exempt from military service. I married a natural born, natural British subject." There is however a mystery about the situation, because I also found a

letter in which he applies for leave to...for a permit to leave the United Kingdom, quote  
"To take a position as Rabbi in Hungary."

[end of tape 4 Side A]

[tape 4 Side B is blank]

**Tape 5 Side A [Track 7]**

*This is Tape Five in the interview with Edgar Duchin on the 29th of March, 1988.*

However, he must have been pretty desperate, because he went to all sorts of people to gain assistance. He had a firm of solicitors in Dejay[ph] Levy & Sons, of Fenchurch Street, and Mr. Levy sent him a form to fill up claiming exemption from internment. There's also a letter that...there's also a letter from the American Embassy, Austro-Hungarian Division, in which the Secretary of the Embassy presented his compliments to Dr. Duschinsky, and begged to inform him that quote, "The Embassy's making an application to the Home Office, in order that he may obtain exemption from internment, in view of the fact that he is a Rabbi." And at the same time a cousin, Hetti[ph] Landstein[ph], told him to apply to the Czech Society. However, whatever, in the result, the...there was success because there's a letter finally dated the 7th of December 1915 from the Home Office, informing him that "The Secretary of State on the report of the advisory committee, had decided to exempt him from internment for the present." So until we moved to Oxford, we continued to live at Goldhurst Terrace, and I think I must have continued to attend Miss Chatterway's school, which was in Belsize Road - I'll mention this later. My father, I think, was supported by my grandfather, but he must have had some work to do with either his own or Grandfather's properties. On the other hand, he managed to continue his scholarship work, because I've discovered a Notice of a meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of England, which was held on Monday July the 3rd, 1916, and the Agenda, the second item on the Agenda is "Paper by Dr. Charles Duschinsky, the Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue from 1756 to 1842." It may be that he had been working on this subject for which he later published a book, and had been travelling to Oxford, to go to the Bodleian Library, and that's why we decided to go to Oxford; but that I don't know. Any rate, early in 1918, we moved to a house in Divinity Road, Oxford, which was a very small terraced house on two floors, and I remember it had belonged, or belonged to some very devout Christians, because round one of the walls was the inscription "He is listening to every word you say." I'll deal with my own experiences at Oxford later on. So far as my father is concerned, he used to travel up to London fairly frequently, and I remember he was cross with me once because I was...I must have been very fond of him because I would go down from the house in Divinity

Road, to meet him at the corner of Cowley[ph] Road, and I didn't carry his suitcase properly. Another thing I remember was that when...we were still there, when Succahs, tabernacles came. And the only way my father could make a tabernacle was, there was a very very small shed at the bottom of the garden, with, well it was really I think a discarded loo, it had, it was a shed with one side open. And so my father, to my mother's consternation, my father made a cover, the proper cover for a Succah on this shed, and he would go and, there was only room for him to sit in it. And he would sit in it, and I remember Mother being very cross because he would, he went once when it was pouring with rain, to have the prescribed bread and wine in this Succah.

*But he was the only one who went to it, during...*

Well there was not room for any...we perhaps, we came down and went one...but I don't remember. I just remember that incident of it being a very small shed, as compared to the normally good Succah we had.

*You said a moment ago that you didn't carry his suitcase properly. What did you mean?*

Oh, attache case or something. I dropped it or something, and you know, he got cross. Yes. I don't know whether it was a suitcase, but probably his papers, case with his papers. Relating to that time, I've still...my father obviously had difficulties. While he was in London, that was to say in June 196...on the 13th of June 196...on the 13th June 1916, there's a permit issued by the Metropolitan Police, "Permit to an alien enemy to be absent from his registered address between the hours of nine p.m. and five a.m." And he was described as of an Austrian nationality, registered at Albany Street, and he was permitted to be absent from his residence on each night from the 13th of June 1916 to the 12th of July 1916, for the purpose of attending lectures at University College Gower Street, and Portsdown Road Maida Vale, for photos. He was described as holder of an identity book. When he got to Oxford, there is a notice dated the 23rd of February 1918, informing him - it was from the Chief Constable - "I have to inform you that while you are a resident of this city you must remain at your registered address between the hours of nine p.m. and six a.m. Later, on the 27th of April 1918, he was given permission to remain out of doors until ten-thirty p.m. during the period of summer time.

*What checks were made, to make sure that he stuck to that?*

I don't know. But obviously there was some relaxation, because on the 23rd of September 1918 there was no objection to his being out of doors until 10.30 p.m. during the winter months. I thought there was one allowing him to travel. You can start it again. The house we lived at Oxford was Woodside, 107 Divinity Road. But obviously the situation was easing; I think Hungary having entered the war late, surrendered early, because my father applied for permission for employment. And there's a letter dated the 28th of March from the Ministry of Labour, "With reference to the enclosed copy of a Home Office Notice linked to the employment of male enemy aliens, I have to request that you will attend at the above address, which is the Employment Exchange, 6 Catherine Street Aldwych, on Thursday the 4th of April at 1.45 for the purpose of an interview."

*That was what year?*

That was in March 1918. After we were in Oxford; but nevertheless he was... Oh, and this was after he had somehow cleared it with the Austro-Hungarian government; because there's a letter dated May the 23rd 1917, from the Swedish Legation, Austro-Hungarian Division, informing that "According to a notification just received from Vienna, received from Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian government states that Austrian and Hungarian subjects may seek employment in any work not connected with the manufacture of war material or war requisites of any sort or kind, and are therefore free to sign the printed form for National Service. If it bears the restriction they will not be compelled to work on war materials, or war requisites of any sort and kind." We must have returned to London before the end...before the Armistice, because I remember I was in Goldhurst Terrace when the sirens went, I was coming back from school between 12 and 1, and I remember the sirens. And it was the Armistice. But the restrictions on my father apparently continued, not as an enemy alien, but as an alien, because here's a letter of the 8th of August 1919, from the Chief Constable's office in the Borough of Hove[ph], informing him that "If you are in possession of an alien's identity book, permission is given you to visit this Borough from the 21st instant to the 18th prox." And he was

asked to present the letter at the Police Station at the district in which he was applying for a travel permit. And he had to produce an identity book and a photograph. So presumably he wanted either to visit relatives or to go on a holiday in August. Now, the permits for my father to be absent at night...in the evenings, was renewed no less than 19 times between the 14th of July 1916 and the 1st of December 1918. So that he had to attend each time at the West Hampstead Police Station for this purpose. And the, the photograph is no longer attached to the permit, but it obviously had been there, and there was printed on it, on the form, quote "Photograph of permit holder must be attached here, or left thumb mark taken according to fingerprint system." But there obviously had been a photograph which my father later removed. But obviously life was not at all easy. But my father must have continued studying, because there's a further card dated the 7th of July 1918, "Notice of a Meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of England, to be held on the Monday, July 21st, 1919", and the second item is "Paper by Dr. C. Duschinsky, correspondent of Rabbi Solomon Herschel." And it's interesting that the Honorary Secretary at that time was M. Epstein, who presumably was Mordecai Epstein, who later became the editor for many years of The Statesmen's Yearbook, and was a great friend of the family. My father must have felt separation from his family and parents particularly, very hard, because I don't know whether he had ever been back to Hungary since his marriage to my mother. I know that his brother, Max, had visited us before the war; I have a vague recollection of him. He was a very jolly man, who was later in life - and I met him when I went to Budapest - was a doctor on the Hungarian railways. Is it going alright? Sorry. And, but I don't think that my father went back to Hungary before the war, and my recollection is that either... (BANGING NOISE) My recollection is that shortly after the war my father received information that his mother had died. And I remember, even now, the sort of almost bellow of despair that he gave, that he uttered. He must have been very fond of his mother. And what had happened, how he, I think we heard it through the Swiss Legation or, any rate, through some independent communication, that after the war there had been a pogrom in Namesztow and in that area, because of course Hungary had lost the war and bands of what would later be called Fascists were roaming about and persecuting the Jews, and my grandfather and grandmother had to leave the village where they'd lived all their lives, and on going down the mountains - I presume it was the Carpathian Mountains toward Budapest, my grandmother slipped and broke her hip, and I believe died in Budapest. And I do

remember that it was my first experience of deep grief, and of course my father sat shiva, the 7 days of mourning, and all the friends and neighbours came to the services. It was a very impressive...it impressed upon me what real grief was. I'll intervene here to say that since I last spoke to you, I have found some...a number of papers which my father kept, relating to his early years, in Hungarian and German, but this shows that he was studying either at Breslau or enrolled at the Breslau Jewish Seminary from 1902 to 1904. In December 1903 there was an advertisement for the post of a rabbi at Kostel, and he applied for that and obtained it, and he was at Kostel from 1904 to 1907, and therefore...and as the marriage to my mother took place in June 1907, he must have come straight from Hungary to marry my mother, and stayed in England thereafter. I don't know whether he ever went back to Hungary between 1907 and 1914, but it seems unlikely. At any rate, he obviously had a difficult time during the war. And... I remember that he, we had in the house a picture of his brother, my uncle Michael, and his elder son, Hirsch, HIRSCH, in the uniform of chaplains in the Hungarian army. So that there was, there must have been some division of loyalties.

*Not Jewish chaplain.*

Yes. There were of course Jewish chaplains. Which bears out what my father said about the position of Jews in Hungary prior to 1918, which would explain the document to which I've already referred, that at one time he even thought of going back to Hungary during the war. At any rate, there he had been separated from his parents and his Hungarian family for the whole period of the war, and his fear was that if - must have been - that if he went back to Hungary while he was still an enemy alien, he might not be allowed back into England, even though he had an English born wife and three English born children. So he, from the documents, what happened, it seems clear, he found that Namesztow, where he had been born, by the Treaty of Versailles, had been incorporated into the newly created Republic of Czechoslovakia, and therefore he had the option of choosing either Hungarian or Czechoslovak passport, and in order to...and so that he could travel, he applied and was granted Czechoslovak citizenship, and I still have the Czechoslovak passports granted to the family. My own passport is dated the 11th of July 1921. To return to my father's relationship with his family, he obviously corresponded with them as much as he could, and in 19...in September and December 1920 he arranged

through a lawyer, Naftaly[ph] M. Levy of Belgrade, a complicated transaction by which he was able to arrange for funds to be remitted to his brother, who was then a rabbi in Budapest. There's a letter dated the 1st of September 1920 in which my father guaranteed shipment of goods up to the value of £1,000. ...[looking through papers] In August, my father arranged for us to go to Budapest, but to have a holiday first in Harzburg in the Harz Mountains, and I still have very vivid recollection of that whole journey. We were...we must have been reasonably well off in those days, we travelled certainly second class if not first. We went by boat from Dover to Ostend; I remember that journey quite vividly for two reasons. First I remember seeing...we passed the Mole[ph] at Zeebrugge where a British ship had sunk to block the harbour, and then when we got to Ostend there was no cover...no roof, or anything, just bare open platforms.

*Sorry, where?*

At Ostend, which had been destroyed during the war. And the irony of history was that when, in 1948, 48 I think it was, may have been '46, any rate immediately after the last war my wife and I took a holiday in Switzerland; when we came to Ostend there again were just the bare platforms, the roof of the station having been bombed in the Second World War. I remember the...I kept a diary of the journey through Belgium to...and through Germany to Harzburg; it was a marvellous experience. I remember how surprised I was at the height of the continental trains, but they were very comfortable. But it was quite hot in August, and we, my brother, sister and I were very excited; we were given little press fans, which I think are unobtainable now, but they had a...there was a wheel which operated by pressing from below, a button, a lever from below, and we were very pleased with them. It was there in that journey that I first found that I could almost go to sleep at will, and I curled up on the seat and went to sleep when I felt like it. I don't remember the journey through Germany, but I remember Harzburg very well. We stayed at a Kosher Jewish hotel or boarding house which seemed in recollection to be full of fairly prosperous German Jews.

*Can you tell me, where is Harzburg?*



Harzburg is in the Harz Mountains. It's now I think in East Germany. My father and mother must have been very happy there. There was an entertainment one evening and I remember I was very cross I couldn't understand the comedian's jokes, but my father laughed very heartily; my mother and I would go walking and we climbed the local mountain called the Molcanal[ph], and funny little things. I remember meeting a little German boy and going on the see-saw with him and his father being very annoyed because I let him down with a bang. After all these years I can still remember that kind of thing. I remember too being astonished going out one morning and find the chickens being ritually slaughtered by the 'shohet', and being astonished to find that after their necks had been cut, they still...the chickens still walked round the yard until they flopped. And my mother forbade me to go again. But it was quite astonishing that. We also went a rather splendid journey by coach and train to Gozlar, which was a mediaeval town which is still untouched...

[end of tape 5 side A]

**Tape 5 Side B [Track 8]**

...exciting journey by coach or charabanc, and train to the mediaeval town of Goslar, which I think was still untouched in the last war, and, although I was not very conscious of architecture, I still remember the marvellous mechanical clock which is, I think must have been of Middle Age manufacture, with angels coming out and warriors striking the hours in the museum there. Either on that journey or another one into the country, there was great excitement because the coach was full and we were allowed to travel stretched out flat on the roof. How we were not brushed off I don't know, but that's what we did. And I think, yes, on the Goslar journey the last part of it was made by train, and there were two young men, one of whose name was Schwarzschild, who were very fond of my mother, and they were supposed to come with us on the train, but they missed it, and they appeared - it must have been a car, but I thought it was a horse drey - but they appeared suddenly on the station when we arrived, they were so keen to join us that they ran[ph]. My mother must have been quite a popular young woman then. The...I still remember the pine forests and the smell of them where we used to walk. And we then travelled to Vienna, and my memories of this are extremely vivid because I had probably drunk from a mountain stream or... Any rate I caught some bug, and my throat swelled up enormously, so that I had to stay in bed; we stayed in great luxury at the Imperial Hotel, Vienna, which was later first Hitler's headquarters and then the headquarters of the Allied Command. It was a splendid hotel. But I had a huge room, and my father of course was extremely impatient and cross with me, because he wanted to get down to Budapest where his family was. So, we...he called in the doctor, a specialist, and the specialist's idea of getting the swelling down was that I was wrapped in cold wet sheets from head to foot, which did the trick, but which I hated of course because the shock of the cold sheets, was nasty, and...but it did the trick. I had visitors, I had Professor Guttman[ph] and my cousin Auriel[ph], who later emigrated to England. And I'm not certain whether it was this...on this trip or whether we went to Vienna again the next year, but either one or the other we - I think it was this one, it was this one - I remember the maimed beggars in the streets; there was terrible poverty; and there's a short story by an English authoress who very well described this period of Vienna after the war. Because of course, from having been the centre of an empire, it had now become just the head of a truncated small state. We were all... On the other hand we were visited by another

cousin of my father's who took us out in his motor car to the Schonbren[ph] Castle, and another cousin was a dentist who - a lady dentist - who had a flat overlooking the Donau Canal, who we visited, and I visited later in life, oh, some twelve years later. I remember also we went to synagogue in Vienna which was something I had never...unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was a real synagoga, that's to say while the service went on, everybody in the, all the men - because the women were in the gallery - all the men chattered and discussed, it was just like a market place. And the other thing I remember was of course the honours of being called up to the Law or Holding the Scrolls, or binding them, were auctioned. Cards were held up showing them the number of kronen, and the man who bid most got the honour, and of course then contributed to the amount he'd offered during the week. Of course it is more politely done in the United Synagogue, when prayers are recited after the reading of the law for, in memory of the deceased's relatives, or to celebrate a Bar-Mitzvah, and the amount of the contributions are recited in the prayers. So it's really the same way of collecting money for the synagogue or the community, but I remember being quite surprised at the more open way it was done, which apparently was standard practice on the continent then. I remember also my cousin Auriel[ph], Auriel Lundstein, who I say came to England later and was a doctor, was a doctor then but came and lived in Bournemouth; his widow's still alive. He took me and my sister and my brother, and I forgot to mention - it shows that we were quite affluent because our governess Miss Wright came with us as well. And he took us all to the Prarta[ph], the large fun-fair, and we went up on the big wheel. And it was an event which I still remember with excitement and pleasure after all these years. And I've come across a letter I wrote to him - a copy of a letter I sent to him, thanking him, which I've kept. Well then came the journey to Budapest, and this too was an adventure, because although we thought it was a good idea, and my father thought it was a good idea, and indeed it was, the scenery was marvellous and we went in the steamer close under castles before we went out into the open plain, I think it's Pressburg or Bratislava that looks down over the river, but one of the towns, one of the cities is just on the bend of the Danube. But unfortunately I hadn't fully recovered from my illness, and also there was no food at all on board, except that we were able to, my father was able to buy fruit at one of the stops. And we hadn't bargained for that, we thought that we were able to have bread and cheese or wine on board, or something like that. Any rate there wasn't any, and I got quite ill. And then my father pulled rank, to explain... I don't know, I can't

vouch for the accuracy of it, but I've always believed to be true, that my father discovered that the shipping line belonged to the Esterhauerses[ph], and I think he told me later, a distant cousin of the family was the opera singer Geritza[ph], who had been the mistress of Count Esterhauersee[ph], and so my father introduced himself to the captain as a relative of Geritza[ph], and I was for the latter half of the voyage, ensconced in the captain's cabin. There's a post-note to this. Years later I met Philip Hope-Wallace, the Fleet Street gossip writer, and I told him this story, and he said to me "Ach my dear, I was at the wedding", meaning the wedding of Geritza[ph] and Esterhauersee[ph]. And I remember Lottie Leyman[ph] saying to me about a young girl there, "She says she's her adopted daughter, but we know better." But how much truth one can place on Philip Hope-Wallace's sometime fantasies I don't know, but it was a nice postscript. Well then we eventually reached Budapest and I still remember there we were met by two young men, and my father immediately lost his temper because they didn't help him enough with the luggage and he wrenched his shoulder, and complained for years afterwards that his arm ached because of what had happened. However, we then stayed in a very fine hotel in Budapest, and I can understand my mother had refused to go to the village. The next day we went I think by train to the suburb where my grandfather was staying with his son the local rabbi, and I saw a little old man whom I thought at first was a servant until my sister said "No, you know, that's Grandfather." He had become very...the pictures show that he had at one time been a fine upright figure, but he was a little wizened old man. However...

*He was quite old.*

He was quite. 1921, yes, he must have been quite old. He must have been at least 70 at that time. There was one or two things I remember about the...about the village: the houses were of wood, the lavatory was an earth closet in the garden. For the first time in my life I saw maize, which are now called corn on the cob, growing in the garden, and also enormous sunflowers, and I also remember the non Jewish servant girl stuffing the geese for pate de fois gras. I didn't understand why it was being done, but I remembered that that's what she did. It was then that I formed a friendship with a cousin who was slightly younger called Jeano, JEANO, which lasted right through his life, which wasn't a very happy one. But, and we must have seen a bit of Budapest, but I don't, I've no

memory really of it then, because I went back years later and remember it much better then. We then went I think straight home without stopping on the Orient Express. But I do remember that the permanent[ph] way must have been still rather faulty because there were long delays, and my father was very apprehensive the last burst that we would miss the boat, but it did in fact wait for us. We had travelled very comfortably, I suppose partly because my father must have been more prosperous then, but also because of course this was the time when the pound was at its premium, I still have a million Mark note, and English currency could get you anywhere, and do anything in Budapest, in Vienna, in Harzburg. And...

*Where did the train go to? Where did you get off the train, the Orient Express?*

I think we got on at Budapest and went straight through Vienna, Frankfurt - I'm not certain.

*You don't remember where you got off?*

I don't remember, no, it was a long journey that's all I remember, and I think we had a sleeper. But after 60 years I can't really remember. I think there was even a buffet car but I can't remember. Oh I do remember one incident which was amusing. When we - yes, it must have been on the way down to Vienna - at the border of Passau the train stopped and a little boy walked up and down selling beer, calling out beer, and my father ordered a beer which was handed to him in a mug. And he was drinking it when the train started. And I remember the little boy being, almost crying and my father just giving him money to compensate him, and keeping the mug, and I still have the mug titled 'Bahnhof Passau'. Do you want to see it? It's quite a handsome grey clay mug. My father's Czech citizenship didn't last long. He applied for, through solicitor Mr. Alexander Rubens for British naturalization, and this was granted on the 22nd of January 1922, and correspondence dated May and July 1922 with the Czechoslovak Legation in London, terminates with a letter of the 1st of July from the Attache saying that quote "You and all your family have been stuck off the registry of Czechoslovak citizens." This enables us to make a further journey the following year so that my father was able to go to Budapest. I don't think the children went. All that happened was, we went and had a

holiday with Miss Wright in Wildebard[ph] in the Black Forest, and this was again in memory a very very pleasant holiday. We stayed at a Jewish boarding house there, and one thing I remember was that, for the first time, we met a family of liberal Jews from America. And curious how things remain with one, but I remember how very liberal they were, because they referred to their synagogues as temple, and their services were held on Sundays. Nevertheless they were Jewish and some of the service was in Hebrew. But over all these years I remember sort of my father being quite friendly with the family and, perhaps because they were English speaking, but any rate, we had a very pleasant time with this totally different family. The other thing that I would comment about those journeys was that I have no recollection of any kind of anti-Semitism at all. Then I think my father and mother went on to Vienna and Budapest and Miss Wright took us back to England. We didn't go abroad again for a long time, I think I didn't go abroad again until I went to Oxford. But my parents did because I've got here a letter dated the 10th of August 1923 which my mother wrote to us from Bad Reichenhal in...from the Grand Hotel Buchert in Bad Reichenhal, and both my mother and my father wrote, in which they went on to Semmering in Austria, then they were going on to Vienna. "In Budapest we shall probably stay at the Ritz Hotel" said my father, wrote my father. The rest of my father's life was rather chequered; as I've said he never became a rabbi. He did achieve fame though. When we were in Oxford as I've described, he did a lot of research at the Bodleian Library, and he also made full use of Elkan Adler's library; Elkan Adler was the brother of Herman Adler who had a marvellous library to which I went...he lived in Bayswater, and he gave me a book which I've still got from my Bar-Mitzvah - not a Jewish one, somebody's poems. And he was a bit cross with my father, he accused him of publishing without his authority. Any rate, my father - that was something else, not my father's books, some other pamphlet or other - but he published a book called 'The Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue, London from 1756 to 1842'; I have a copy which he gave me, it was published by Humphrey Milford of the then Oxford University Press, in 1921, and the copy I have states "This issue is one of only 250 copies, of which this book is No. 3." It was a very learned book and well received I think. My father was working on it throughout the war, because in this book I find there's a letter from a bookseller, R. Mazin[ph], dated the 11th of February 1918, and says "Dear Dr. Duschinsky, you can go ahead with your book now, it is passed by censor. Please let me have two copies for

copyright purposes the moment they are issued for reference purposes, one of the British Museum and One for Edinburgh." That's interesting isn't it?

Very much so.

So presumably Mr. Mazin[ph] must have been a great help to my father in getting the book published. The book was, I believe, well received, and has certainly taken its place in the standard works on the subject of the Jewish community in England, and in 1971 it was republished by Greg International Publishers Limited, with a new biographical note by Ruth E. Leyman[ph]. And my father was very well respected by other historians for this work. However, perhaps the needs of a growing family compelled him, but the only things he published after that were some monographs which appeared in the proceedings in the proceedings of the Jewish Historical Society and elsewhere on such things as, 'A life of Alexander Kohout[ph] and such odd topics as 'Could a woman be a ritual slaughterer?' But he had to earn his living more and more by dealing in the property market, and he must have done quite well at it. My mother died while I was at Oxford, at the second year when I was at Oxford in 1930. My father was very unhappy immediately after her death, but then subsequently remarried twice. The first...the second [sic] marriage was a total disaster, it was an arranged marriage with a lady from a very rabbinical family from Austria, but she proved totally unsuitable, and there were eventually nullity proceedings after she'd gone back to Vienna. But my father's final marriage was to a lady from the Sephardi Community, one of two sisters who'd lived near us in Priory Road, and he married Brenda Pinto, and they had a very happy marriage until the war. At the outbreak of war my father was in America, and tried to get a position as lecturing in America, but this failed. But then remarkably, he and my step mother in early 1940 came back to the South of France, spent a holiday in Nice, and then came back to England. When the bombs fell they evacuated to Wheatley near Oxford, and my father then subsequently had a very severe stroke and lingered on for three years. Turning back to my early childhood - can this be restricted? Yes. It probably was happier than I subsequently remembered it, because only the highlights of unhappiness seem to linger for a time. My father could be a very violent man, his one idea was that we should grow up to be orthodox Jews, and if my brother and I for instance were late in arriving home on Saturday afternoon, he would either threaten or actually hit us with a

stick, with a walking stick, so that we took refuge in the lavatory. And he also found himself at odds with my mother in later years, and there were quarrels over various things, and he was abusive about her family. These were probably isolated incidents.

[End of tape 5 Side B]



**Tape 6 Side A [Track 9]**

*This is Tape Six in the interview with Edgar Duchin on the 28th of March 1988.*

But they've stuck in my memory such as for instance an occasion when my father lost his temper with my mother after some quarrel and lifted up a bottle, which he didn't throw at her. I've no doubt she provoked him, but these were unhappy incidents. On the other hand I remember when they went to the wedding of one of my sister's friends, he was very jolly and I remember that he must have drunk too much because he was singing on the platform at South Kensington Station. So there obviously wasn't all gloom. But one of the memories I have is of his insistence, as I've stated, upon going to minyan on Saturday mornings, on Sabbath mornings, instead of going to synagogue, because a) it enabled him to fulfil the precept that you should pray before eating, so that we then had breakfast after the termination of the service, and secondly, it enabled him to teach me Hebrew and the scriptures. We didn't actually learn anything after the five books, but...the Mishna and the Talmud, and I learned a great deal from him, so that...because he was a learned man. The other thing about the minyan that I remember was having to get up at special times of the year for I think it's called Salihas[ph], it is called Salihas[ph], and I would have to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, very cold, and go to these minyan for a service; that I didn't like. And the other thing I really didn't like was the kind of dichotomy both of my father's behaviour and of other people's behaviour, the kind of inconsistency between this meticulous observance of the Jewish commandments and ritual which was supposed to make you good Jews, and the actual behaviour, thus the division between my father's piety and violence. And there was, in the minyans there were several near Priory Road, private houses, there was one amusing one where we went to finally, Mr. Jacobsen in Compayne Gardens, because sometimes there weren't ten men available, and so Mr. Jacobsen would go to the foot of the stairs and shout out "Sammy, come down and make minyan." And the sleepy Sammy would come down in his pyjamas and stay for part of the service and then go up again, so that the service could proceed, and we'd got ten. But, to return to this division, there were a number of very pious men who wore long white gowns on the Day of Atonement, and swede with large tallasium[ph] over their heads. But during the course of the day...and they would stand

the whole day; I remember one man, I can't remember his name now...anyway, there was a Mr. Bornstein who stood the whole day. But there was a quarrel as to whether the windows should be open or shut. And, of course later in life, I grew rather disgusted with the way in which the orthodox would simply denigrate those who were less orthodox. The one or two other incidents I remember of going with my father: One of his idols was Rabbi Schonfeld who founded a very orthodox community in North London, and, it was quite picturesque on one occasion because Schonfeld had his, under his jurisdiction, a kosher bakery, and so my father took me over to North London where we saw these special kind of butzers[ph] being prepared in a special kind of oven, so that my father was able to bring these special nutsers[ph] home, those in the shops not being quite good enough.

*Can you describe them a little bit more? The bakery and what the natsers[ph] were like.*

All I remember was there was a large rectangular opening with a furnace and thongs and men with, of course orthodox caps on, bringing these, what they call 'Shamura Mutzers'[ph] with thongs out from the furnace.

*What shape were they?*

They were circular, as far as I remember.

*Large?*

Fairly large, yes. They're still made in North London. My brother-in-law still has 'Shamora Mutzers'[ph]

*Stanford Hill, I suppose.*

Standord Hill, yes, oh yes.

*What do they taste like?*

I think it's...they're special because I think the flour I think comes from wheatfields which have been under supervision right from the beginning of the corn growing. I think it's that sort of thing.

*Do they taste very different from ordinary flour?*

They're a bit tougher. But, that wasn't why they were bought. They were so that one could be more orthodox than anybody else. And Schonfeld was always the idol of my father. It's interesting of course that one of his sons, Andrew Schonfeld became quite assimilated and died fairly young, but was a well known economist, whereas the other was the...who became head of a Jewish school and quarrelled with a number of his contemporaries. He married the daughter of Chief Rabbi Hertz but it wasn't I understand a very happy marriage.

*Would you just like to explain the reason why there are ten men in a minyan?*

The 'minyan' means number, which is the number ten, and which according to Jewish law is the minimum number at which certain services can be conducted, and which the...and the Talmud says that when ten are present, the spirit of the Lord is among them. So, but that's...it's from time immemorial that's the minimum required for a helder[ph] service. Hence the call for Sammy! More of that later, and my own experiences. So it was probably in this kind of atmosphere that my eventual distaste for orthodoxy arose, though there were other reasons I'll come to later. For instance, when we were in Goldhurst Terrace, one of our neighbours, a gentleman called Kohen[ph] who was a distant relative, was quite an ignorant man, but much admired my father, but was also a very violent man towards his children. And then there was...where we lived in Goldhurst Terrace it was quite a remarkable street, from the Jewish point of view. Two doors up there was the Principal of Jews College, Rabbi Dr. Biekhler[ph], who was an even more learned man than my father. He had a photographic memory and it was said that he could tell you where any passage was, on which page, of all 24 volumes of the Talmud. But he also was a very unpleasant family man; he had a very downtrodden wife, he had 3...3 or 4 sons and a daughter who had an unhappy life. The elder son, Martin, was a sort of bruiser; the youngest, Francis, was an avid stamp collector. But none of them really

were very happy in life. Then opposite us was a very orthodox family called the Bornsteins. A little further down were the Schwabs with which family I'm still friendly, and Mrs Hanna Schwab was a great official in the Jewish Refugee's[ph] Committee later on. But that's another story. But then further on there was a German origin family called Hummel[ph]; there was a family called Blaeburg[ph], connected with the antique business and also one of whom became an actuary; and then right at the other end of the road was a nice gentle family, Marmorstein, who was also a teacher at Jews College, and with whose family I was very friendly. Perhaps I might just mention, Emiel[ph] Marmorstein went to Cambridge and became head of the Arabic section of the BBC; the second son, Bruno, is still alive and prominent in Jewish affairs; and the third son, Cecil, was killed as an officer in Italy; and there was a daughter who married a rabbi. So we were a very, as it were almost a ghetto community, even though I went to a non Jewish school. I should mention that after my mother's death my mother's relatives were indeed extremely kind to my father, particularly the uncle and aunt Montague and Elsa, nee Gestetner, with whom he never had really got on, but they went out of their way to invite us and were very kind indeed. And Elsa was kind through the whole of her life; I mean when I was ill after I got married she came to see me. And, the family was...there was first of all my mother's sister Cissy who married a very orthodox man called Julius Feltenstein, who was a pillar of the Sabbath Preservation Society. But he also was a rather embittered man; he had 4 daughters and his wife was a rather, quite a tough lady, but she always wanted to see her daughters married. Three did, but they died young. The most... In retrospect, I think the Barnett brother, my mother's brother's family, were the most remarkable. Elsa Gestetner was one of, I think it was 11 children, of the founder of the Gestetner copying machine. He got into trouble once for income tax and did 6 months in jail, which the family like to forget; and in contrast to old Feltenstein, who was a reputable fur trader. But Gestetner had won...he told me once, a battle with Roneo, and had won it, in the courts, so he was able to establish his own business.

*Is that a patent battle?*

Yes, a patent battle, yes. Monty went into property with his father, Pyza, and I remember going to the office in Coleman Street where they sat on each side of a large desk, and Montague was quite a good businessman, but he went into business with the head of the

Gestetner family, Sigmund Gestetner who succeeded the old man, and Sigman[ph] was a very far-sighted man because they employed Lubetkin, and my uncle put some in, and between they built High Point, where a lot of the Gestetners did and still live. So that that was a curious combination of a Jewish...a German Jewish family continuing the Bauhaus tradition in England. Another Gestetner sister married unhappily a man called Krarmer[ph], but then there was a divorce and she married a man called Feibusch, who was a refugee from Germany and a very distinguished painter of the South German expressionist school. He is still alive, and doing sculpture at the age of 90. He was...his paintings were of a religious nature, a fisherman and fishes, and he had murals and paintings in churches in Brighton - there's one on the church in Brighton which is threatened with demolition, and there's one in Chichester Cathedral. He only took to sculpture when his eyesight began to fade. A very remarkable man. I mention all this to show how, from the kind of nucleus of an orthodox Jewish family, there's a spread into all sorts of fields, like my cousin Goitein who became Ambassador to the United Nations for Israel, and then head of the Supreme Court in Jerusalem; and then Feibusch, not related but by marriage; and then another Goitein is now a professor in the famous Institute in Boston. And in various fields, from this narrow orthodox beginning, there's been this spread into various cultures. One final example of the dichotomy that there was, was the fact that through his publications my father became very friendly with a clergyman, the Reverend Simpson, who was fluent in Hebrew, and I think was eventually a professor at Oxford; and they used to correspond in the most friendly fashion. And there was also a man called Taylor, who translated the work known as 'The Sayings of the Fathers'. On the other hand my father was very narrow, he wouldn't let me read the New Testament, or even such a thing as 'the Golden Bough'[ph], a phraser[ph] which I had to read in the lavatory. And I had absolutely no knowledge of Christianity, beyond the fact that the crucifixes were described in opprobrious terms as "the tooler"[ph], namely the hanging man. And my father's narrowness was such that he disapproved of the emphasis which my cousin Goitein later encouraged, namely the study of Hebrew as a language and poetry, and of the prophets and kings as literature, which was quite different from the approach that my father had made, which was to study the five books of Moses and much more important, the Mishna and the Talmud. I remember a walk I had with my father, which I've never forgotten because it showed the thing he really believed in. He said that the - and I believe orthodox people do believe today - that the

law was to be found, not only in the five books of Moses, but in what was called the 'Oral law', that which had been handed down from Moses on Sinai, from generation to generation, and expanded, and which had been written down in the Shulhan Aruch, the 640 Precincts - I think it's 640. But it was this oral law which orthodox Jews had to keep. And there was secondly this, to me now, quite bizarre concept of a fence around the law, namely that in order to be absolutely certain that you preserved the fundamental law, you went further. The example that I remember he gave was, that in the Bible there is this prohibition against I suppose an idolatry's practice, a certain humanity in it, "You shall bathe a kid in its mother's milk", in other words you shouldn't slaughter a kid and then cook it in the mother's milk. Well, in awe of that, my father said, was the foundation of the prohibition against eating milk dishes and meat dishes together, so that you shouldn't conceivably bathe...cook a kid in its mother's milk. It was that kind of extravagance of thought which somehow my father took quite...normal, and tried to inculcate in me. For a time he did, because for a time I was very orthodox. But as I'll later, it didn't last. I'll probably remember further things about my father as I go on with my own history. But, as I said, there were 3 of us, myself, my sister and my brother, and my earliest memory must have been before the war, and possibly when we...possibly into the war itself, when I attended a kindergarten run by a Miss Chatterway in a large house in Belsize Road, near the corner of Abbey Road. There was a large proportion of Jewish children in that school, including the children of Chief Rabbi Herz. And as I've written recently to the Jewish Chronicle, we were allowed to sing 'Oh God I hope the age is past' and 'He ploughs the fields and scatter' because these had been approved by the Chief Rabbi as fit to be sung by Jewish children. It was a fairly happy school I think, there was a Miss Meakin I remember who was very kind; and Miss Chatterway herself was a large Victorian lady I remember who mainly dressed in black. There was one incident I remember which upset me: we had cooking lessons, and I was very proud and took back a roll which I'd cooked, but I wasn't allowed to eat the crust, because that might have come into contact with non kosher material, but I was allowed to eat the inside. In, as I've said, in... well as far as I remember all my friends at that time, were Jewish; there were the Kahns in Fairfax Gardens, the Schwabs, the Marmorsteins, and others.

*This was as a young boy.*

Yes, as a young child, yes, yes. The change came when, as I've stated, as I've...stated is the wrong word, as I've told, we were evacuated to Oxford in 19...the early part of 1918. Where I went to school between 1914 and 1918 is, I'm afraid, a total blank. Presumably I continued at Miss Chattaway, but I thought it was only a Kindergarten, and therefore where I went between the ages of 5 and 8 I don't know. However, when we got to Oxford I was only 8, but my father enrolled me in Magdalen College School. I was the youngest boy in the school, and I have vivid memories of it. The school was then in what is now the library of Magdalen College. It was staffed of course by people who didn't go to the war; there was a kindly clergyman, a young man I think who was physically unfit, and there was a Frenchman, about him more later. The accommodation was unsatisfactory because the classes were in this large hall, which is as I say now the library, which was a big mediaeval hall, and they were divided only by curtains, so we could hear - or we had to strain - to listen to our own teacher, because of the noise from the other classes up and down. I think there were perhaps four classes in this one hall, separated by curtains. I don't think I was unhappy there, except for certain incidents. The headmaster, a man called Brownrigg, was indeed a sadist. School day started with prayers, from which I think I was excused - although I think I just sat at the back. At the end of prayers Brownrigg - or the beginning of prayers - Brownrigg would say "I want to see so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so, after prayers." And after prayers, the named culprits would go up and be savagely beaten.

*In front of the school?*

Yes. I think in front of the school. Certainly in front of the sixth form I think.

*On the hand or...*

No no, on the bottom, with a cane on the bottom. I'll come to that. Yup. Now I was very young, but...

[End of tape 6 Side A]

**Tape 6 Side B [Track 10]**

In fact I was the youngest boy in the school. But, to my astonishment, one day I heard my name included in those summoned after prayers. So I went up and Brownrigg said to me, "Did you call Fisher a dirty little Roman Catholic?" And before...I was going to say yes, but that was because he called me a dirty little Jew, I was bent over, and savagely beaten. There was sympathy for me by my form mates, but I had cried out. And I remember though, that I think her name was Miss Wright, but we had this marvellous governess with us at Oxford, and she saw the weals on my bottom in the bath, and she called my father. And, he...and I told him what had happened, and I gather he went up and made a row with Brownrigg. Certainly something must have happened, because I then got a call from Mrs. Fisher, asking me to come to tea, with Fisher, and young Fisher and I became firm friends. But there's an irony about this, because years later, in the 1930s, I had a very dear girlfriend who's dead now, called Helena Sharp, and I found that Brownrigg was either her uncle, or any rate a relative, and he had spanked her with the bristle side of a hairbrush. So we had that in common. There was...

*Can I just ask you, were you the only Jewish boy?*

I think I was the only Jewish boy in the school. But I remember that Fisher and I had been having just arguments, and I don't think he, he was a Roman Catholic and I suppose he'd been taught that Jews had killed Christ or something, but I mean he called me a dirty little Jew, I called him a dirty little Roman Catholic, and of course we quarrelled. We didn't know what it meant. But Brownrigg had behaved so badly. There were two further incidents with Brownrigg. It was a very hot summer, and one day I was walking home - because it was quite a walk from the school, across Magdalen Bridge, along Divinity Road, it was about a mile - and I was about a hundred yards from the school...I think I had a bicycle, no, I don't think, no. Any rate, I fainted. And the next thing I knew I was waking up in a bed, very warm, I remember it now, a very nice, warm, soft bed, downy bed, softer than my usual one; and I was in the bed of Mrs. Brownrigg. Somebody had taken me to their house, the headmaster's house, which was on the other side of Magdalen Bridge, I think it's now part of St. Hugh's College; and I was nicely looked after by her, and the doctor was called, and I was at home for some time. And, so



she at any rate was a very different sort of women, sort of person from her husband. But the final revenge I had was that when I was at Oxford, or I think when I went up for my scholarship...any rate, I went and called to see Brownrigg, because apparently, although I bore no malice then, I just wanted to see what he looked like. And a rather shuffly old man came to the door with cream or milk from his whiskers. And, I just introduced myself, and that was that. The other two things I remember about the school was there was a boy called Clapperton who was head of the...I think head of the school, and was very nice to me. And so when he became I think stroke of Oxford eight years on I sent him a postcard, but I never got a reply. The other thing was that it was a very wartime school. There was of course the OTC drilling, and even though I was only 8, I was given a sham wooden musket and had to parade. The other thing that I remember was, that one of the teachers as I said, was a French boy. He was...I think he must have been a refugee, but he was abominably treated by the big boys. He used to be known as Froggy, and I remember once he was debagged by the big boys, because he found it impossible to keep order. But the clergyman, I can't remember his name, he was a very kind man, and I think he taught Latin, early Latin, and I remember I did meet him some time later, but I can't remember when. Life at Oxford must have been difficult for my father, I've shown all the permits; but he became friendly with a Mr. Morris, who had a garage in Long Wall, which was just where Magdalen College School was, and very often I would be taken to school on the back of Mr. Morris' motorbike. Mr. Morris of course later became Lord Nuffield. And I've always regretted that I never wrote to Lord Nuffield to remind him of this, it might have done me some good. I remember even now, he had a great respect for my father as a learned man.

*And all this time your father was giving you your religious instruction.*

Oh yes, oh yes. There must have been a synagogue at Oxford - I think there may have been. There was in my time when I was at the university. Whether there was during the war I don't know. I've mentioned the Succah.

Without a minyan, without a synagogue, how would your father have prayed?

Well he just prayed by himself, oh yes. I mean, it's only prayers and certain ceremonies that can't take place without a minyan. But we were there I suppose from...well I've said, the letter from Dr. Brown said it, and we must have come back in about...before the war ended, September I think. One other thing I do remember, that I had my first experience of the countryside - I mean living in the country; because at the back of Divinity Road were then woods and fields, and I still remember going for a walk one evening with Miss Wright, or Nanny somebody-or-other, and a large flock of birds, they were either geese or swan, flying overhead, which I'd never seen before; there was geese I think. It was very remarkable. Oh, one other thing I remember, Mr. Goldschmidt came up to Oxford to visit us, and it must have been, I think, you know, I've probably overdone the unhappy part of it, because my father and Mr. Goldschmidt took me and I think my brother in a punt on the River Cherwell. But then my father insisted upon changing ends, and the punt tipped over; and we were rescued, but it was, I can remember my father being terribly cross, and we being scared that we might have drowned, which we all might well have. But luckily it was near the bank.

*You couldn't swim?*

I doubt...I don't know. But, we were in clothes, and either way, and I was only 8. So, it was a very alarming experience. [break in recording] No, well it's over 60 years ago, so I don't think...there must have been other events in Oxford which have now dimmed with the passing of time. At any rate we came back to London in September or October 1918. Oh I do remember one thing I've just mentioned, that there was food shortage in England in the summers of 1917 to '18, and I do remember that instead of potatoes we had swedes which had a kind of sickly taste to them which has lingered with me to this day. But there were also food parcels, I think from America, which helped. And there were some special foods which we grew to like, but at this stage I can't remember what they were, though contemporary records would show it. Any rate, we came back to London, and we had by that time moved to 257 Goldhurst Terrace. And I went to school at Peterborough Lodge, which was in Finchley Road, where the row of shops now is, I think it's called Harben[ph] Parade, somewhere where Smiths is now, or Boots, and opposite was the Sham[ph] Norman building, which housed a, I think it was a seminar for Methodist clergymen. There're old photographs show it; it was a very handsome building. And as

I've already said, the school was next to a), the cousins the Michaelsons, and secondly Briault the dentist. I used to walk along Goldhurst Terrace and up Belsize Road, which you went straight up to Swiss Cottage, or up Fairfax Road, it didn't matter. And the school was remarkable because it had its own playing field at the back; you went down the steps into the playground, and then from the playground into this field where we played football, and where there were sports...where Sports Day was held. I think I was very happy at that school.

*Did you walk on your own to school?*

There was I think...there was a boy called Maitland at the school who lived 2 doors up, one of the few non Jewish, well one of the non Jewish families. And there were...no, the Marmorsteins went to a school run by...called Warwick House, which had no facilities for play, but was a very good scholarship school run by a German called Fritsch or Fritz, to which also the Schwabs went. And other...there was a number of preparatory schools in Hampstead, there was The Hall, and there was Tenterden Hall, and we used to play football against them, or cricket. I remember The Hall, because they had a clergyman who'd been there for years, and was on a very informal basis with his boys; I remember one of them would jump on his back and shout "The Owl! The Owl!" because he looked like an owl. And I disgraced myself when we went to play cricket there because I said something which was held to be rude. However, they were incidents. But, there were a number of Jewish boys at the school, never any discrimination as far as I remember; but the curious thing was that the headmaster, A. Howard Lindford[ph], was, in retrospect I'm sure an atheist or an agnostic, and the two headmasters who've influenced me most have both been...oh, the two masters who've influenced me greatly, were a) Howard Lindford[ph] and then one of the classics masters from St. Pauls, Lesley Matthews, who also was a confirmed atheist or agnostic. And it always seemed to be curious that orthodox Jewish children were entrusted by their innocent parents to the care of these two powerful men. I became very friendly with a boy called Smith, who was a mathematician; we both studied for scholarships for public schools; I think Smith got into Westminster, he was very clever. Though what I remember about him was that he was very keen on the wireless, and he had a crystal set, and I used to go to his house and we would listen in to, I think it was LO2; very primitive, you could just hear with...it was

a cat's whisker and a crystal. And, on one occasion Smith neglected his homework, and Lindford[ph] could be a bit rough, and he, rather too roughly, banged his keys on poor Smith's head - made him cry I think - and said "Don't waste your time with such rubbish!" [laughs]

*Did he make the radio himself?*

I think he made have made some of it himself; he certainly, you know, showed an early interest in it. And I think he got a scholarship into Cambridge later, Smith. I was very happy at Peterborough Lodge, which had a fair number of Jewish boys. But we were never of any conscious of any discrimination; I think Howard Lindford[ph] was very proud of his scholarship successes, and with justice. The only time that I...well the first time I began to be conscious perhaps of the disadvantages in some ways of being an orthodox Jew, was the annual Sports Day, because although my parents came to the Sports Day, which was in a field which existed then at the back of the houses in Finchley Road, and now been built on, but it was a great privilege to have this field, but the Sports Day was on a Saturday, and I had the mortification of seeing all my friends competing and so on, and I just had to stand and watch because it was against my father's tenets that I should engage in competition on a Saturday. Two small incidents: one, at first I was very much bullied by a boy of German origin whose name I still remember called Shubler[ph], but I was eventually protected by two...a pair of twins called Fenton, who achieved some eminence I think in the property world later; any rate they were very nice and I was grateful to them. The other thing was that I showed some talent for drawing, even then I remember I used to copy little sketches of Greek temples and so on, and I was encouraged by a very nice woman called Miss Walker. And unfortunately this was not followed up, and it was only many years later that I managed to take up this competence that I found I had; I always look back on that as a great pity. Peterborough Lodge was one of a number of very good preparatory schools in Hampstead; there was The Hall, and then there was Tenterden Hall, and there was also a very small school, Warwick House, which was run by a particularly eccentric German man called Frisch[ph], and if you were an orthodox Jew and you didn't go to Peterborough Lodge or the others, then you went to Warwick House, where it was a kind of intellectually forcing school which had an even better record in scholarships than the others. But it was very low on games, and I think

we rather looked down on it. But, there were some very eminent people like Emiel[ph] Marmorstein who was head of the Arabic section of the BBC later, and Walter Schwab who was Secretary of the Jewish Historical Society, they went to Warwick House. Peterborough Lodge has long I think since disappeared, but there was another school run remarkably by Howard Lindford[ph] at Leatherhead, and I think Lindford's grandson still runs that school. Well in due course I sat for and obtained a scholarship to St. Paul's, and we were then living in Goldhurst Terrace, and I had to take the train from South Hampstead, change at Willesden Junction, and then to a lower train down to Addison Road, and then walk from Addison Road via Olympia to St. Paul's. And that was quite a do, but one really didn't think much of it, I did it every day from 1924 to '28. There was of course a sizeable Jewish element in St. Paul's, a lot of clever Jewish boys, as at the time of Victor Gollancz; and if you read Victor Gollancz' 'Letters to Timothy' he describes there how he had to leave early on Fridays and walk back to Nottinghill Gate. Well, I and the other orthodox Jewish boys had to leave early on Fridays to catch our trains home, even earlier you see. And it was awkward, but as far as I remember only one master, who was a nice man, but made rather nasty comments on it, making the boys feel awkward. But otherwise we just did it.

*How many Jewish boys were there?*

I can't remember now, there were about 630 boys in the school; I suppose there were about 150 Jewish boys: I think so, many of them scholarship ones. And the other thing was of course that again, I was not able to play games on Saturday, so although I showed great promise as a rugby forward, it all came to nothing, as it did later when I went to Oxford. And that was a great disappointment. I did eventually box for St. Paul's as a light-heavyweight because most of the boxing matches took place during the week, and I boxed against Bradfield and other schools, boarding schools, and was astonished at the different atmosphere which in those days was very rough and slightly obscene in the minor English public schools.

*Can you tell me more...[break in recording]*

But as to obscenity, I was astonished to find that none of the lavatory doors locked, and they were sort of wooden slats with...so that one could be looked at. And I was very innocent in those days, but looking back it was because I gather homosexual practices were rife, and bullying, and there had to be a watch kept on the boys. This is looking back over 60 years, but that's...other boys...actually I was fairly innocent, but more sophisticated boys at St. Paul's explained this to me. St. Paul's was, then, at the premises which later became Montgomery's headquarters in Kensington, on the south side, towards Baron's Court. It was curiously built, there were some marvellously stained glass windows, which were later removed to Barnes, but the odd thing was that the corridor off which the classrooms led, was on the south side, looking over the playing fields, so that all the classrooms faced north, which was a crazy business because the...the floors were all of stone, and it could be quite cold, although there were radiators all the way along.

*Was it to stop you looking out the window?*

The headmaster for most of the time I was there was a man called Hillard, the Reverend Hillard, who was noted as the joint author of Hillard and Botting Latin Primer or Greek Primer, I can't...Greek Primer, yes. He was a rather remote individual; all the masters wore gowns, he wore a special impressive gown. The one bad thing at the time was, that although there was not much of it, there was corporal punishment, which was quite a ritual. Nothing like as bad as at Magdalen College School, but the stories were that if there was a bad offence then the culprit was hoisted on the back of the school porter, while the headmaster inflicted punishments with cane.

*Where?*

Oh, on his bottom?

*There, not there.*

No, no, no, not there, no no. At least I don't think so, no no.

*In front of the school?*

No, it was done...I think it was done in private, but what...the effect was that there was a kind of pervasive feeling that there was this corporal punishment always available. And one or two masters also used it, though not very often. When I went to the school I was welcomed and in my first form, it was the Lower Fifth, the master was a very very nice man called the Reverend Ivor Mavor[ph], who was the brother of Mavor[ph] who wrote novels under the name of Kronin. I don't think the punishments were ever for bad work, they were for indiscipline and other things. But it was only the headmaster's flogging that was the fearsome thing; there was one master who was rumoured used to like it a little, because he used to put two boys back to back and bring his cane down, and it was a chance which was hit.

*What was the punishment for bad work?*

I don't want to give the impression there was any frequency of corporal punishment; the most, half a dozen times a year, and occasionally by the lower masters.

[End of tape 6 Side B]

**Tape 7 Side A [Track 11]**

I'll come back to the staff in a minute, but perhaps I'd add something about how the school was organised. It had a large playing field at the back, so that we had a break every day, which was very nice, from 1 'til 3, which gave time enough for cricket matches to be played, and rugby games. And there were very good facilities; there were fives court, there was a shooting range, and there was a swimming bath. I remember the swimming bath was rather extraordinary, which I don't think would be permitted these days, because it mainly consisted of a trough running round all four sides of the building; and what would happen would be that when we had to change from our ruggie clothes, all run in and there was a sort of mass of naked boys piled into this trough. I was very innocent until a very late age, but there were obviously others who were not so, and there were remarks made which I didn't understand at the time. (LAUGHING) But my recollection is of this mass of naked boys of all ages, plunging into this... And of course the water would then become filthy and be let out and then refilled again.

*You say it was on four sides of the building, it would be like a moat.*

No, inside, inside; and then round the sides of the wall were this...a kind of hollowed-out, you know, channel all the way round. About 3 feet wide.

*So there was floor or ground in the centre.*

Yes, and you go out and change or sit on benches and change in the centre. And the washing was round the side. There were showers, but I can't remember them. But these facilities were very good. I did actually manage to lead, to become captain of one of the teams, and although I didn't even play on Saturday, but to a certain extent that I walked, but cheated a bit, I think I rode a bit, from Hampstead to Gunnersbury where the school...where the other school playing fields were.

*You were meant to walk.*



You were meant to walk, yes, on Saturday. This was Saturday. I also achieved some notoriety by boxing with a very nice man called I.M.B. Stuart[ph] who had been an international rugby man, was a very nice Irish teacher of English, and he sparred with me, and I hit him too hard and he had a black eye for some days afterwards. He was very nice about it. "Och" he said, "Duschinsky did this!" [laughs] and I achieved some fame for that. There was also a debating society called the Chesterton Society, and I remember after I left the school we would...I was invited back and I've still got the programme somewhere, because G.K.Chesterton himself came down, his anti-Semitism was not then noted, and I remember he had a wheezy voice, and he wore a cummerbund, a purple cummerbund he was so fat. But he was extraordinarily nice to us. And we used to have quite good standards of debate. The other features in the school were, and it was quite well built I think, there was a chapel which of course we didn't go to, and...we Jews didn't go to...and then there was an enormous hall, and one of the arrangements was that, instead of going to chapel, Jewish boys would either stay in hall or in the art room; well of the art room more in a moment, but in hall also you could go and do your prep, and I when I became senior boy was able to sit at the head and watch all the other boys down, and I then discovered that I had a pretty nice voice which I used later in life, when I stood for parliament, so that I could throw my voice to the back of hall and would suddenly say "Smith Minor, sit down!" to Smith Minor's very great astonishment. And I enjoyed that. I was an unlikely prefect, but I was made one. As regards Jewish boys, one of the ironies was that scholarship boys wore a silver fish, which they still do, and you can buy one. Any rate, and the school was founded by Dean Collett for the education of all races and nations. I at one time thought it said all creeds, but it didn't. But Collett was a very enlightened scholar, he was rumoured to have been...well he was, a friend of Erasmus. And then of course, we were conscious of the history of the school: John Milton was there, and I think Malborough was. Any rate, there were some very eminent people. And finally of course, General Montgomery was - that was after my time...although, yes, I think it was after my time.

*What was the silver...[break in recording]*

With regard to the silver fish, it was...the fish was the symbol of scholars because...and there were 100, because I think there were 134 scholars, and the irony was that this

number was the number of fish which had been drawn by Jesus out of the Sea of Galilee; but of course the Jewish boys were quite unconscious of this.

*Was this a badge?*

We wore the fish on our watch chains.

*It was a little flat...*

A little fish...I must get one actually, I can buy one, it costs £30 now; but we were all given it when we got our scholarships.

*Did the Jewish boys have Jewish prayers?*

The Jewish boys didn't have Jewish prayers. What they did was, they assembled in the art room while prayers were going on. And this was very bad, because the art room was also known as the detention place. And the art class was run by...or the art department, was run by 2 brothers, I can't..I think their surname was Oldan[ph], but they were commonly known as Foxy and Baby. They were not very popular, especially Foxy, who indulged in sarcasm. And also that was the place you went if you were detained. The punishment was detention if you...you could be detained after school and so on. But of course it was very bad that art should be related to a form of punishment. The only artist I remember who was a contemporary of mine was Claude Rogers, whom I knew in later life. There may have been others, but he certainly was encouraged by Foxy or Baby, to carry on. But, otherwise we were given no art education; one wasn't in those days. There was a man called Latham who encouraged us in music, encouraged the musicians, and for a time I was a member of the choir: I hadn't got a very ear for music, but I can still remember taking part in the Dream of Gerontius and Hiawatha, and I can still sing, rather badly [singing] "In the early summer morning, Hiawatha stood and waited, waited in the purple sunshine" and so on, and it was great fun. Now perhaps as to the masters, I was pleased to find in later life when I got to know Compton Mackenzie slightly, even though he was greatly older than me, that we'd both been taught by the same eccentric master, who was a man called Digby de la Mott, who I think was of Huguenot origin, and wore a

monocle and was very precious. But the...I was a precociously clever child...boy; I leapt from the Lower Fifth to the Upper Sixth, missing 2 forms inbetween, and I then went to the Lower Eighth and the Upper Eighth. And the Upper Eighth was where all the scholarship boys were. We did have, until the Lower Eighth, we did have some general education, I did maths with a man called Beckitt who became Mayor of Hammersmith, a little fat man, and a man called Robinson who was a very good mathematician, and managed to get a number of maths scholarships to the universities. But, such it was that we got...I got as far as I think binomial theorem, and although I would like to have gone further to calculus, you stopped there. And similarly, although you did a certain amount of English history, and possibly a little general history, again when you reached the Lower and Upper Sixth, you specialised in classics. There was a rigid distinction, you were either on the classics side or the history side, or the science side. There was not really much general education. I surprised myself during the summer vacation once by entering into a competition for a general European prize, and I studied Lecky[ph], and I actually won the prize. So I was a clever boy in those days. In the Lower Sixth there was a very nice master called Wainwright who, again, was very tolerant of his Jewish pupils, and made no fuss about their leaving early, and was a solid, very kind man. I can't remember much else about him except that he later became, during the war I think he became Sir Master, which was the name given to the deputy master. And what was notable was the amount of homework one had to do, which increased and increased until in the Upper Eighth, I think I would work until 11 or 12 at night, doing translations from Latin or Greek into English, verse and done[ph]. Eventually I did quite well translating Tassitus into macaulian prose, and vice versa. Because those were the main things which got you scholarships. The two remarkable teachers in the Upper Eighth were Lesley Matthews and something Botting. Matthews was the one for Latin and Botting was the one for Greek. Dealing with Botting first, he worked very very hard to keep his family, I think, and he even coached in the vacation, I went to him with some other boys to be coached in Greek. He was...I liked him; he had one central idea that Homer was written by one man, and he was very dismissive of others like Gilbert Murray, who had the belief in multiple authorship. I was astonished later in life, to find that his private life must have been very different from the life...the way in which he presented himself at school, because his daughter was Antonia White, who in her trilogy, 'Frost in May' gives a very unhappy picture of her father, who was always disappointed that she wasn't...according to

her was always disappointed that she wasn't a boy, and tried to make her compensate for it in various ways. And of course Antonia White herself had a very unhappy life, and her daughters...one of her daughters was Susan Chitty, and another one I met later in life, was married to a friend of mine called... And her sister, who I knew. And there was this odd connection with this funny fat little man who seemed awfully kind to us but slightly dotty, and I never related the two 'til...and I still find it difficult to do so. The concentration of course was on texts and following upon the Victorian idea, I think it was started by Dr. Arnold, I mean, that studies of the classics was good for discipline of the mind. There may be something in it, but I'm never entirely convinced. But we learned nothing of Greek or Roman art or architecture. And very little of the way the Greeks lived, or Romans lived, until, towards the end, there was a study of economics because there was a good book by a man called I think Sonnenschein[ph]. Any rate, we did learn a little of that. The other master, who was the Latin, who was concentrated on Latin, was Lesley Matthews. He was...I got to like him very much. One of the things we did with him was, we had to learn a) I think a lot of - I think it was through him or it may have been through the English master - we had to learn a lot of poems by heart, mainly from the Oxford Book of English Verse, or more probably from the Golden Treasury. At one time I think I knew a lot of Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury' by heart, and still can remember some. But we also had to learn, under Lesley Matthews, chunks of Latin and Greek verse, and under Botting Greek, I suppose. Any rate, I used to know at one time the whole book of 'The Sixth Book of Enid' by heart, and the whole...and I still can remember bits of it...and I used to know the whole of the Uripides book of Io by heart. I can remember [relates a passage in Latin]!

*You're going to give the transcriber a problem there!*

[Laughs]. Shall I do it slowly again?

[Break in recording]

One of the privileges we did have, and I think I went twice, was to go down to the...to be invited to the Greek school at...the Greek drama at Bradfield College, which still goes on, and I'm glad to say I know the classics master at Bradfield is a member of my club now.

But we went down there, that was fun. Oh, and we also, for apposition, we did a Greek play, in Greek, and I remember it was great fun, I was the swineherd in one of Aristophane's plays, the irony of which was not lost upon the audience, who knew me. [laughs] But returning to Lesley Matthews, he was, without being a fanatic, he was a great one for English virtues. [break in recording] ...a great one for English virtues of honesty, straightforwardness and... I think we learned a lot of character from him, especially intellectual honesty. He was a slightly sad man, he was a batchelor, never showed any homosexual tendencies, he had...I think he would have preferred to have been a don; his great idol, who actually liked him quite a lot, was Cyril Bailey, who was a classics don at Balliol, was still there when I went up. There was a slight irony in my relationship with him: one of his favourite pupils was a man called Barnett, who had been a marvellous athlete and also a scholar, and who was killed in the first world war, and Lesley Matthews awarded the Barnett Prize - I forget, it was some sort of essay[ph] or other - and I was the unlikely recipient, which I think slightly dismayed him, because I wasn't the sort of clean English all-rounder that I think that was his idol. But, he congratulated me, and I only felt that I wasn't the right person to get it. But he...I still look back with him with great affection. He retired and then came back and taught at the school during the war, the Second World War. I think that deals... Any rate, there's one thing I do remember about him: as I've said already, he was agnostic, but never imposed it too much, although we realised it. And in one corner of the Upper Eighth - we were there for 2 years - and the second year, it was a fluke, I was second in the school, or second in the Upper Eighth anyway, which was the same as being second in the school, the top boy was a man called Davis, who was rather dour, but was very clever, and was captain of the school, and I often wondered what had happend to him, until only recently I met somebody - and this has now been confirmed - and found that he is now head of the Methodist community church in England, in fact he gave the sermon last Sunday, on the Wesley anniversary. So he kept a steady career, very pie, we always called him pie at school, but he obviously was pious and sincere; he got a scholarship I think to Balliol and then pursued this religious thing. But...

*Was Captain the same as Head Boy?*

As far as I know. He was...

*Does that mean Head Boy?*

He was Head Boy, yes, Captain, that's right, the Head Boy, yes he was Head Boy. He was respected; but he was not colourful, and there were other colourful characters in the school, to which I'll come to in a second. But below Davis the list went as follows: Duschinsky, Berlin, Ettinghausen... no, Berlin, Halpern, Ettinghausen. Isaiah...fluke that I was ahead of Isaiah Berlin, we've remained, not close friends but friends all our lives; followed by Habiram[ph] Halpern, with whom I became great friends, he went up to Exeter College and we used to read B.Alik[ph] together at Oxford; and then when we neither of us got very good degrees, he went into the City as an employee of Oscar Phillips the metalbrokers. And he was half Jewish but brought up as Jewish, his father was a very strong Zionist. He had a very beautiful sister who married a refugee well-known journalist who was drowned in the Arandora[ph] Star. And he had another sister who went out to Israel. But he married one of the Strachey girls, Barbara Strachey, who's still alive, and...after a rather torrid affair with another young woman at Oxford - he was very handsome. And then he volunteered to become a navigator. I couldn't because I hadn't enough eyesight then, and I never thought of it actually. But he did, and then he was killed in an air accident while training in Devon. And I missed him, because of all us four, he was closest to me. Ettinghausen became Eitan[ph] and was the... While he was at school, he was orthodox, he came back from a visit to Germany, describing his amours with a very beautiful cousin. He was not Zionist, but there was a...I'm using the word irony too much, there was a piquance about it; he was very clever, he got a first in languages and became a don at Queen's College, Oxford. During the war he became a strong Zionist, and what was remarkable was of course, that he then became I think the first foreign minister of the new state, and he found himself at the United Nations, either opposing or at least being opposite to, Oliver Franks, the British representative at the United Nations, who had been his either principal or colleague at Queen's College, Oxford. So that was the quartet. And then there was me. And Lesley Matthews was heard to discuss his pupils with somebody once, was overheard; he had a habit of kicking the desk when he wanted to emphasise something, and so it went rather like this: "moi, kick, little, kick, ghetto!" of which he was very proud, because they all got scholarships and so on. I had a bit of difficult time because I overdid it, and was very anxious to get

away from home, and I sat for New College, I was runner-up, I almost got it and my life would have been very different had I been at New College. But, I remember being interviewed by the Warden, H.A.L.Fisher, who was quite nice to me, and said "Well, I liked your essay, what do you think of a painter who paints a haystack green...a haystack blue?" And I said well if he sees it that way, that's what he should. And I thought I'd got the scholarship, but I just missed it. Then I sat for St. John's and I missed that entirely, and so then I had a last go at Brasenose, and I got the scholarship, and formed friendships with people I met at the scholarship exam for life. Apart from my friends in the Upper Eighth, there were also some very colourful people, members in the school; the school was tolerant in kind of encouraging eccentricity. The most eccentric was a man called John Davenport, who became...for a long time was literary critic of Vogue. He was a roundish man, very cheerful, and very brilliant. His parents I think had been glee[ph] singers or something like that, or... And he was noteworthy that he got a, I think he got an organ scholarship to Oxford and an English scholarship to Cambridge, and he chose the Cambridge scholarship.

[End of tape 7 Side A]

**Tape 7 Side B [Track 12]**

...mentioned in several literary works, and I believe he is the original of Kingsley Amis' book, 'One Fat Englishman'. He was quite a rebel, he would turn up on parade, we had...I didn't belong, but most people belonged to the OTC, and he would turn up wearing a bowler hat. And I remember the last term at school, there were still trams in Hammersmith Broadway, and he...I was with John, in Hammersmith Broadway, and as prefects we were allowed to wear straw...as members of the Upper School we wore straw boaters. And John suddenly said something like, a swear word, "bugger this", and took off his straw hat and flung it into the middle of the road, and I can see it now being squashed by a tram.

*Why did he do that?*

Well to throw off the shackles of the school, and the uniforms. He was a very amusing man. And another contemporary was a man called Arthur Caldermarsh, it was Arthur Caldermarsh who wrote one exceptionally good novel called 'About Levy' and has since been quite a figure in the literary world, has done I think film scripts and written other novels, and is the father of Anna Caldermarsh the actress. Then there was a man called Babbage who became a very eminent mathematician; and my close friend at school was a man called Henry Baker, who went up to Brasenose before me, and later became a judge in Israel. The heads of the school were always pretty good; there was a man called Helmore who became principal at the Board of Trade. Another contemporary became head of Sotherby's, and Kit Sawnbars[h] became editor of The Listener. In fact when we went to university it was always said that St. Paul's boys always had some intellectual bag in their pockets. But on the whole I think I had a happy time at St. Paul's, although I was very ignorant about certain things, and was sometimes a figure of fun. And when...we worked so hard that it was noticeable and remarked on at the universities that sometimes St. Paul's scholars didn't fulfill their promise because they had been under such pressure to get to university that they found the heady atmosphere of the universities a bit too much; and this did happen in some cases. But on the whole, it was a tolerant, it was a scholarly school, and I have very good memories of it. Botting retired and was succeeded by a very tall, gangling man called George Bean, who was a



very good tennis player, I think he achieved international rank, and ended up as head of the British school at Athens. Hillard retired, and was succeeded by a man called John Bell, who we liked very much, was very hospitable, but somehow didn't make an impact, and after about 5 or 6 years left to become headmaster of a minor school. He had been a brilliant scholar. We were all fairly proud of the school. I remember that at the time Compton Mackenzie wrote a rather disparaging novel about the school called 'Sinister Street', and I still remember Lesley saying "Aah, fouled his own nest!"

[break in recording]

I would like to pay tribute to two masters, one called Cecil Smith and the other called Inen [Eyenen][ph] Smith. Cecil Smith was the history master, who had a great enthusiasm for the subject, and it was he who encouraged me in history; and another man called Eyenen[ph] Smith, who came to the school I think at about my 4th year, and was a very individual man, and I remember particularly he was stimulating, because he said to us, I think it was the Upper Eighth, "Write essays on whatever subject you think fit." I remember I wrote an essay on fanaticism, having been brought up in a fanatically Jewish household, but when he came to award the...to give out his judgement of the essays which had been submitted, he gave me and others quite good recommendations, said we'd written good essays, but I do remember that he said that by far above all the others was that of Isaiah Berlin. I think he wrote on Chekov, I can't remember now. But it's remarkable that even in that day, Isaiah, with whom I was friendly at the time, stood out from all of us. Both Cecil and Eyenen[ph] were very nice outgoing men, very kind; and the tragedy was...they were the...Cecil Smith was the master and I think Eyenen[ph] lived there, at the boarding part of the school called Collett House, and unfortunately they were both killed by a bomb during the war. But my recollection of them was very kindly indeed. Despite the pressures on our work, and we really worked hard, and the somewhat narrow limitations, I mean we, as I said, I knew the Sixth Book of Enid, and 'I'o' of Euripides by heart, and we had to learn Homer; Botting's idea was that Homer was all written by one man. And we learned a great deal of the classics, looking back, rather to the exclusion of other things. But nevertheless, I did a fair amount of swimming - because we had the swimming bath, which we went to - and I've still got a book I won in a chess competition; we were good chess players, and I won the third prize, which I've

got somewhere, which I still use, it was a very good book. I'll show it to you. Just show you what we did.

[break in recording]

I wonder if the children still do it these days, I'll just show it to you. [break in recording]  
I said I failed at St. John's didn't I? Yup.

*Yes, you said you got a scholarship at Brasenose.*

I did say that, did I? Ah. So... There was some disagreement between my parents. What had happened was that having failed twice, I think my mother realised it was through over... having failed twice to get scholarships, I think my mother realised that I was over anxious, and so she said, or my grandfather said to me, and he could well afford it, that even if you don't get a scholarship, we'll pay for you to go to Oxford, and this I think enabled me to relax, and get the top...what was called the John Watson Scholarship at Brasenose, which was worth a clear 100 a year, which was a lot in those days. I didn't understand the implications of it at the time, but I do remember that the history master, Cecil Smith, was very amusing about it. I still remember to this day his remarks to me. He said to me, "Oh Duschinsky, I hear you've won a scholarship to Brasenose, very good, congratulations. Mind you, bit hearty" he said "I remember when I was up, they shaved a man with butter and a breadknife, but no doubt you'll enjoy it. Congratulations!"

[laughs] Nevertheless, the strain of having to wait until I got the scholarship at the third attempt was such that I really failed that year to get enough marks for Higher Certificate to get a financial award. But I think it didn't make all that difference, but it was a bit of a disappointment to my parents.

*You mean at St. Paul's.*

At St. Paul's, yes, we took Higher Certificates, the same...actually I'd done quite well the earlier year, but the main High Certificate exam was the year when you left, and I got, I think the strain of having wondered whether I'd ever get to Oxford and so on, had done me in. But I was very relieved, and... yes... Oh yes, I know what I haven't done yet. Just

let me collect... The achievement of going to Oxford was the result, I think, of a very great battle between my mother and my father, because my father had always wanted me to be a rabbi in England, whereas I've said he had come with the hopes of being a rabbi - I think I've said this before - and had not managed...and his great ambition was, as with many parents, that I should fulfill the ambitions which he had failed. But my mother, having been brought up in this Anglo-Jewish atmosphere, where as I think I've said they spoke Hebrew with a cockney accent, I mentioned that, didn't I? yes, was equally determined that I should be a success at English education and go to Oxford. And I think it was the encouragement which my mother gave me at that time, which got me there. But, there was a compromise, namely that I should spend the time between leaving school and going up to Oxford at an orthodox Yeshiva. Father had a colleague who was a rabbi in Frankfurt, namely Rabbi Hoffman and he arranged with Hoffman that I should attend Hoffman's Yeshiva between June and September.

*Year?*

In Frankfurt.

*Which year?*

This was 1928. And my mother I think somewhat reluctantly agreed. However, I had a friend at St. Paul's, Henry Eli Baker, whose father was a little Scots money lender, but who had gained a mathematics scholarship to Brasenose; I think that was probably why I chose Brasenose. And Henry was due to study on the continent and so it was arranged that before I went to Frankfurt, Hoffman's Yeshiva, Henry and I should go walking through the Vosges. So after leaving school, Henry and I did a tour of the Vosges, which was very pleasant. I remember that we stayed one night in a monastery, and were somewhat amused to find that we had to sleep under crucifixes above the beds; and another time we found ourselves in... By contrast on another occasion we found ourselves I think it was in Mulhaus[ph], any rate...where we went on Friday evening to synagogue, and we were approached by, or we introduced ourselves to the warden, who then promptly invited us to dinner, and we had a very nice evening here in a Jewish home. We eventually ended up in Frankfurt-am-Main, where my sister was already

staying with cousins Ella and Ernst Frankel[ph]. Do you know them by the way? But it'd been arranged that I should stay with a large widowed lady called Frau Grombacher[ph], and Frau Grombacher had a flat I think in the Friederberger Umlager[ph], and I occupied the room ordinary occupied by her son who was away. And she looked after me like a mother, and the only trouble was that towards the end of the stay, she became very much in love...embarrassingly in love with me, which was embarrassing, and she gave me - I've still got two nice books, one of Bizmark's 'Irridirum'[ph] which she gave me, and she was very fond of me, and she looked after me very well. And there was also a non Jewish maid called Dora...Durna[ph], with whom I became very fond, and with whom I had my first sexual fumbings, which considering I was there to improve my orthodox education, was somewhat ironic. Well, when I arrived in Germany, I knew no German at all, and so...but I was due to attend Hoffman's Yeshiva. At that time in Frankfurt there were I think 4 different congregations; there was the V very orthodox community, run by Isaac Broyer[ph], or run by Broyer, I'm not sure it was Isaac, there was the more liberal but still orthodox community, run by Rabbi Hoffman, and it was to Hoffman's Yeshiva that it was agreed I should attend; and then there was I think a reformed synagogue, and then I know there was a liberal synagogue which I remember was notable for its rather marvellous mosaics and coloured windows, because towards the end of my stay I went and visited all three.

[End of tape 7 Side B]

[Interview incomplete]