

NATIONAL

# Life stories

**LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH  
COMMUNITY**

**Mary Roslyn**

Interviewed by Jennifer Wingate

C410/185/01-06

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**INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET**

**Title Page**

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F8054 Side A

*This is tape one in the interview with Mary Roslyn on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1998.*

*Interviewer, Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Would you like to tell me what's the earliest thing you remember?*

The first...my first memory?

*Yes.*

I've given it quite a bit of thought, and it seems to start, my memory seems to recall just one incident, of a family outing. It was just at that time, my sister Millie and I, that was before my younger sister, Sue, was born, we were having a day's outing with Mum and Dad in Epping Forest where they had a large lake there, and boating. And my dad took a boat out, with a friend fortunately, and the children and Mother was left, and he went off on the boat, and the boat somersaulted, and he was thrown into the lake of course. And we were watching all this going on, and we started screaming and howling, my God! he's going to drown. But then, he was rescued. They had guards and people around there in case of accidents, and he was brought to shore, dripping wet of course, but I can't recall where he was dried off before he came home. That's one of my first memories.

*Was this on a family holiday?*

I can't...it was...

*Was this on a family holiday?*

It wasn't a holiday, it was a day's outing. And in those days you were able to hire a brake, that was a horse-drawn thing with a brake. They're still used I think

somewhere, on some occasions and places. And it would accommodate about ten people. It was a day's outing that was organised. And, I recall us doing that perhaps twice, perhaps more, but I can't recall more than just the two occasions. The second one was accident-free fortunately. And...

*But who organised them?*

Mm?

*Who organised them?*

Amongst themselves, as we would perhaps take a coach trip, there were places where you booked it and you just paid what was necessary, and it would accommodate about eight people; perhaps you didn't know them all, but we did it as a family, and, perhaps there might have been one friend who attached themselves to it.

*Was this a covered, like a covered van, this brake?*

That's right, yes, with a, like a Surrey[??] on top, you know that song in *Oklahoma!* Oh it was a great thrill. Of course we all dressed up to the nines, and to our young minds it was terrific.

*What were you wearing?*

Oh, in those days it was sort of frilly frocks they used to go in for. And that's what we used to wear for school, we used to wear aprons with frills that had to be starched, and, I think the term is yofferred[ph].

*Goffered?*

Yes.

*Goffer.*

Pardon?

*Goffer.*

Goffered, yes goffered. And all...Mother was very very particular about that. How she found the time to do it all. She worked very hard, looking back on it. I think she was a martyr. A wonderful woman, my mother. A typical, shall we say, Jewish mother, who just lived for the children, see they were properly fed and properly nurtured; that was the only reward they ever wanted or expected. She didn't always get it.

*When you had these outings, was it fun on the outings? I mean how were your...?*

Yes. Oh very happy days really. We were young, we were a very tight unit, devoted parents. Within their limits they did what they could for us. But...

*Can you describe what your father was like? What was his name?*

My father was a...he wasn't tall, average height, I would roughly guess that, 5ft.8ins., 5ft.9ins., well built, quite handsome really. He was a redhead, and had a temper to go with it, but he was a good man. He had his faults; who hasn't? And he had a good singing voice. He would sometimes take part in the local theatre, fill in for a part, if there was a singing part he would do it. He had a deep base voice, and, very intelligent. Came over to Britain, to the U.K., at the turn of the century. I was never quite sure whether he met my mother here, although they came from the same town, Lodz in Poland, whether they... We never got round to finding the finer details of their past; life was too busy working hard to think back. But children need to know.

*You were telling me once about what you knew that he did when he was still in Poland. You said he was a teacher when he was in Poland.*

Dad... I think... You never can be quite sure. I mean I've mentioned this to Jennifer the fact that as a family we never got around to sitting round the table and discussing things, just little things that slipped out through the years. But you still couldn't form

a pattern. But we gathered that Dad taught in a Yeshiva. And the reason for them coming to the U.K. was never established, whether to avoid the army, whether to avoid pogroms, or whatever. But they came, as I said, at the turn of the century, and it's amazing how they settled into things and established themselves. Of course they had to survive, and they did it very well; some got on better than others.

*Did you ever know why, how it was they came to the East End?*

Because they would naturally go where there were people they knew and understood, of the same religion; as is happening now with the Asians, they always go where there are people of their kind. They have something in common. They didn't have the language one must remember, so they had to sort of settle down where they would be understood. And force of circumstances, they established themselves, worked very very hard, and made a life for themselves. And then got into groups and established themselves, and... And very supportive of anybody else who came over and needed somewhere to stay; whether they knew them or not, they would stay there, and they treated as members of the family until they established themselves. And the pattern was that once they established themselves, they brought over their families, and that's how the Jewish community in the East End established and got a very very big hold over the whole area, because as the Jews moved in, the gentiles moved out; that happens over and over again.

*But do you know how it was that your father started up this hotel, kosher restaurant, how it came about in the beginning?*

Well he started... I don't know if he had any training, I don't think he had any training, any work at all; he was, as I said before, he was a Yeshiva teacher. So he had to learn a trade, so the only thing they would go into was the tailoring, which the Jewish community established very strongly in the East End, and they were very good at that. And once they'd established themselves in the East End, they broadened out and they moved into other areas, and as they...they just...

*They became a success. But your father, he didn't go into tailoring to begin with.*

Well I suppose he got...I should imagine it started like this. As... You see, as I've mentioned, we can only surmise, we weren't told, we had to glean what we could from the circumstances around us, and what...they opened up a small restaurant. It was a necessity, they needed a place for the people coming over and they started work, somewhere where they could have a meal. They had no family, they were not established as a family. So it just built up from that. And that increased, it snowballed, as these things normally would, and moved into bigger premises, and the demand was for greater than that, so that's how they established themselves in what they did. But it was very hard work, and the rearing of a family, and running the private home and also the business, it was...my mother worked very very hard.

*Can you describe what the, I call it a hotel, I don't know if it was a hotel, but can you describe where it was and what it was like?*

The area, you mean the area?

*No, the hotel itself.*

Call it a hotel. It was in the Whitechapel Road, immediately opposite the London Hospital, which is there now, as we know. And there were some Jewish students there, and they would come over and have a meal with us. There were some parents whose children went to school, but they couldn't go home for lunch because, various reasons, their parents were either working or they were travelling or whatever, and they would come and have a meal with us. So it just built up and sort of got bigger and bigger, until we had to call in staff, waiters at table, all sorts of things. It was...it was a very unusual set-up. Very interesting, for the different sort of people that came along. And it was more of, shall we say a family attitude. I mean Dad was there all the time, and he would...he knew most of the people, or he knew the parents of most of the people, and it was just an amalgamation of a family altogether; that in itself made it quite pleasant really. But then as the years... [ADJUSTING MIC] Well, I mean, this is all so difficult. I really should have spent quite a lot of time, more time, thinking about what I was going to say, but, Jennifer bless her is so insistent, and I would do anything to please her of course.

*How was it, you've told me many times that many of the people who came over were theatrical people; can you explain how that came about?*

We'll go on for those early days now all that's been established. And, we were now three girls, there's my sister Millie, my younger sister Sue, and of course myself, Mary. In those days I was known as Minnie, I was known as Mickey, and... What was your question?

*Well first of all, tell me, when was Auntie Millie born? You were born in 1904, so Auntie Millie was born in 1902?*

Oh gosh, I can't remember dates.

*Something like that.*

She was eighteen months older than me, eighteen months.

*And your birthday was April the 11<sup>th</sup> 1904.*

Yes. Yes.

*So your parents were married... You still don't know if they were married in Lodz or...?*

No no no, they were married in England, I'm almost certain of that. Oh yes.

*Yes, I've seen their...*

Because I've seen...yes, we've got the marriage certificate.

Yes.

Yes. And...

*What does it say, on the marriage certificate what does it say for your father's profession, can you remember?*

Did we find it in the...?

*I think so.*

Yes.

*Oh we'll look, we'll look later.*

I don't think there was any mention of that. They didn't bother with it then, in those days. No.

*Now, I was asking you before, how was it that you had so many theatrical people coming to stay? Because you've told me about that.*

Oh that's right, that's right. We lived close, or just about a block from the local Jewish Theatre. It was a large theatre, and it had an international reputation, and often, frequently had American actors of a very high reputation in America, New York, and they would come over for a season and play some of the international plays, *The Dybbuk* was one of them, and, even by today's standards... I'm trying to think of the Greek names.

*Aeschylus?*

Mm?

*Aeschylus? Oedipus?*

No no no. No. Anyway, there was this international company, there was Paul Mooney, who is still sometimes, some of his films came on; there was Sophie Tucker, who was a very big name in her day over in America and she came over here for seasons; there were the Adlers, Luther Adler and, I think it was Sarah Adler. And

then there were the English company, it was headed by Mr and Mrs Blumenthal, who had a son, David, who was my first love, and she being the wife of the producer would get all the leading parts, and she wasn't always suitable for it, she was a very big woman, very overbearing. Crumbs! You see, once you start this lark, it certainly opens up. I mean Jennifer's so insistent, I'm almost afraid of what she'll bring to the surface.

*That's the idea.*

Oh I don't know dear. No, well, as it happened, they had a part, they needed a young boy to take the part, it was in a play, I think it was *The Dybbuk*, and they asked my younger sister, who was very boyish in appearance, whether she would take the part dressed up as a boy. Of course it was all in Yiddish, the whole theatre was run in Yiddish, and we were all quite fluent in that, because our parents used it a lot in the home. And she took the part, and was very very good in it, and that opened up the idea of her being in the theatre permanently, which she relished, and she was...one didn't realise how good she was. And she kept on getting other parts and other parts, until she was established as a Jewish actress. Travelled abroad with them, France, South Africa, and she didn't give it up until she married, her husband was insistent that she doesn't act any more. I don't know if she was sorry to give it up or not, but, she never did any more after that.

*We'd better just say what...her stage name was Souri Lando?*

Sourì, must have been.

*And you once told me that you and she learnt to read and write Yiddish together.*

Yes, well she was having a tutor on it to make her more fluent in the language, and I asked my dad whether I could join in the sessions, and study with her. He was only too pleased to do that, and I did that, and became quite good at it, good enough to correspond in Yiddish if I was away with my dad, and also when eventually I married I would write in Yiddish to my father-in-law. But the Yiddish I was taught was of a more modern type than the one my father-in-law was used to, so I don't think he fully

appreciated that, my... Anyway I had a very good relationship with my in-laws, they were wonderful people.

*So you learnt...you learnt to read and write Yiddish with Sue. Did your parents speak only Yiddish in the home?*

Mainly. They spoke mainly in Yiddish, and, even with the visitors who came to the house, it was always Yiddish, because a lot of them, when they came over, knew no English at all, and then it evolved into broken English, and... I mean, necessity is the mother of invention, right? So they had to learn English, and they applied themselves to it, and they...they went ahead with it.

*But did your...*

It's a matter of survival, isn't it.

*Did you're parents learn English?*

Picked it up; never learnt it, never had any schooling.

*But they spoke it?*

Yes, spoke it eventually. My mother's expression, sometimes she would get, if we pestered her too much, I mean she was always taken advantage of, and she would say, 'Don't drive my head.'

*What's that in Yiddish?*

Oh she was a dear soul, dear soul. She deserved better than she got.

*What's that in Yiddish?*

What?

*What you just said.*

Don't drive my soul? Don't drive my mind.

*What is it in Yiddish? Because she said it in Yiddish.*

No no no. No, she said it in English.

*Because it was a translation from the Yiddish?*

Yes, that's right, yes.

*What is it in Yiddish then?*

Because looking back on it, I'm sure my mother had suffered from a high blood pressure, and I'm not surprised with the way things were. And, she was never treated, never thought of going to the doctor and given them tablets one is given these days to control your blood pressure. So if things got too much for her, and she felt she couldn't cope, you know, she would say, 'Don't drive my head.'

*But what is that in Yiddish?*

*Dreh mir nicht auf den Kopf*, something like that. That's not a true translation.

*I'm just trying...*

I've sort of forgotten most of my Yiddish. I could understand it if anybody spoke it, but I find it very difficult now to speak it myself.

*Just to work out when we're talking about, so, Sue is how many years younger than you?*

Four.

*Four years. So she was born in, say 1908?*

Mm.

*So when she went on the stage, it was probably something like 1926. No, probably earlier. How old would she have been when she went on the stage first?*

Under 20 I would say. Oh definitely. She might have been about fourteen, fifteen, something like that.

*So just after the war really.*

After the '14-18 War.

*If she was born in 1908, so it could have been, after the war.*

Mm.

*Do you remember the war years, the First World War?*

Certain aspects of it very well. I was at school, and...that's right, I was at school, Fairclough Street School, it was a newly-built school, it had every facility. It was a wonderful school, even by today's standards. And, it was during the '14-18 War, and there would be an air raid alarm, and we were told to duck under the desks, and wait for the all-clear. And if there was a warning in the evening or even at night, during the night, the warning sirens would sound and everybody started running to their adjacent shelters, wherever they were allocated. There was one particular one which was a brewery, and we used to run, it took us about four, five minutes, and everybody was running, the mothers dragging the children along. I think I, I would have been about eight years old, something like that.

*Well you would have been ten at the beginning of the war.*

Mm. I would have been about that. And there we all huddled there until the all-clear, and then we ran back again. But one incident I remember very clearly, and that was on a Wednesday morning about ten o'clock, when I think it was the Graf Zeppelin came over, and we dashed to the window and we saw it in the sky, and then we saw it burst into flames, and we stood there watching it burn. Crowds crying, moaning, and I heard one voice shouting, in Yiddish, '*Menschen brennen dorten*', 'people are burning there.' Horrible sight. It's so vivid. It's not something you can forget. OK.

*So, what did your parents do during the war to make things easier for you? I mean, you must all have been rather worried, because there was a lot going on. I mean obviously, your father didn't go off and fight or anything.*

No. Well, it's not very vivid in my memory, but I do remember my mother had a younger brother, the youngest, he was in the Army, and he was invalided out. He had contracted tuberculosis. And I can still see him as I recall, I can see him, he was, must have been about 20, and a good-looking boy, tall, slim, and he would come to Mum's for his meals often. He was so nice. Never really got to know him. And then he died shortly afterwards.

*What was his name?*

Pardon?

*What was his name?*

I don't remember. I don't remember his name. You see, the background of it all, Jennifer, as I've told you often enough, we didn't have a normal upbringing in that respect. We did not have an established family as you've got. It is so important. And I miss not knowing the details of what brought our parents over, how they felt about it. There was no family discussion. There were lots of hugs and kisses. Dad was very fond of his three daughters, although he was very disappointed when Sue, the youngest, was born and she wasn't a boy; as with most Jewish men, [INAUDIBLE], they need a son, they look upon the son as their, what's the expression? To say the prayers for them when they die, that's important to them. And, for days he wouldn't

look at the baby. But then they became very attached, and the very fact that Sue went into the theatre, which Dad was very involved with, brought them very close together. But I mean, there's no disputing, I want you to bear that in mind, that we had wonderful parents; they were the victims of their destiny, that's all I can say, and they made the best of it.

*Would you like to...before we carry on, or maybe you would like to stop soon, just can you tell me your parents' full names? Because I'd like you to record it.*

Well my mother was Dvora Bisgold. My father was Herschel, that is Harry or Harold, Lange. His name has sometimes got confused and he was called, and in some documents, Lando, L-A-N-D-O; sometimes Lander, L-A-N-D-E-R. But I can only assume.....

End of F8054 Side A

F8054 Side B

....when asked their name, the authorities would put down what they thought they said, and very often it wasn't what they originally were born with. There's that famous story of an immigrant coming over, and he was told that when they ask his name, he should say what his name is, and they gave him a name to tell them. When he got to the authorities and they asked him, 'What is your name?' so the poor fellow stops and thinks, and he says, '*schon vergessen*', he forgot the name they gave him, so they put down, Saun Ferguson. And that happened repeatedly. So you never know what name you were born with.

*What made you....how did you know it was Lange?*

How did I...?

*How did you know it was Lange, and not Lando?*

Evolution all I can say. I couldn't tell you how. Do you know, I really think that...I'd get somebody to do the writing, there's certainly a book there. Because it would be born of the times. I mean what's going on now with people coming over here, calling themselves...oh, coming over here to...now what's the word?

*Immigrate.*

Immigrate.

*Immigrants, yes.*

Immigrate, calling themselves... No. They come over here and...

*Refugees.*

Refugees. No, no no no no no. Asylum seekers.

Yes.

They come over here and call themselves, and most of them are not, they just want to get away from their own environment and find something better.

*Well that's the whole...*

Going through the same things that our parents went through.

*Now your father came over with no family, I think you said. He didn't come over with...*

No.

*But your mother came over with her parents...*

Her parents.

*And her brother?*

Yes. Three brothers.

*Three brothers?*

Oh yes. Yes, three brothers.

*Did you know them?*

They married, one inter-married, and the family broke up my dear, you would see them occasionally but... There was no family life as one can say established family life, it was all so fleeting, and, a very sad period, a very sad period. But some established themselves very well. I knew some families who lived quite near, they all went into the tailoring and they did extremely well, expanded, and became quite, comfortable is not the word, almost wealthy, and brought up their families and sent

them to good schools, and became the upper echeloners you could call it. But not all of them attained that.

*Just before we pass on, there was a story you once told me, you remember I was reading a book by Isaac Beshevis Singer, My Friend Kafka, and you read that first short story, and it mentioned somebody in there who you said, an actress, who you said came to your parents' hotel. Do you remember that?*

An American actress?

Yes.

Yes.

*Because you read the short story and you said, 'Yes, I know her'.*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT]

*I could look it up at home.*

I can't recall that dear.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Can you remember...*

[INAUDIBLE]

*Yes, I was just going to say, do you remember the names of the other brothers, your mother's other brothers?*

Oh Christ! I know there was one brother... You see they came over here and, away from the environment that they knew and thrust into one totally different, and they met people who, sometimes they were sympathetic to them. One uncle in particular,

my mother's brother, married a woman, she wasn't Jewish, and she had three children, and of course my mother was shocked and so was my father, but, one can understand that they came over here with nothing, and they just take what they can get. It's a very tragic thing to happen to any of them. I mean nowadays when refugees come over here, asylum seekers, there are so many institutions that support them, and to an extent make things easy for them, even give them money until they establish themselves. That didn't exist in those days. They had to live either by their wits, or by any means they could find. I have a much greater understanding of that as I get older, and my sympathies are with them, and admiration above everything else, how some of them survived, and fought to exist. And quite a lot of them, perhaps most of them, found happiness. But they all had high standards of living, they knew what was right and wrong, they knew how they wanted to bring up their children, had the highest hopes for them.

*Did you have cousins, did you know cousins?*

Well I suppose there were some, but the others... Oh, the other, there was that one who inter-married, married this woman, she was... Oh Christ! We saw her once, and that was enough. But...

*Why, what do you mean?*

I told you, she was a big woman with a big bosom, and in those days one wore corsets and this corset threw her bust out. What he saw in her! We were shocked. Anyway the other one married an awfully nice woman, they were very happy, but they never had any children, you see. And then there was the one, the soldier boy, there weren't any others. Because my mother was a real good sister, she cared for them, she would have them for meals, and do what she could for them, and she was devoted to her parents.

*Well yes, you were saying that she came over with her brothers and her parents. And you knew her parents, you knew your grandparents.*

Oh yes, I knew my grandparents.

*Well tell me about those, tell me about them.*

He was a shoe repairer, he worked in the house.

*Which house?*

The house, they had a house, not very far from where we lived, and, my grandmother was a real Jewish grandmother, warm, loving, kind. There was an incident where I had to go into hospital to have my, tonsillitis, my tonsils removed, and Mum couldn't look after me properly because the business took up most of her time, and I was sent to Grandma's to recuperate for a week or so. And one thing stands in my memory, is, going to bed, I had to climb onto a box of some sort, because the beds were so high, and it had this Continental, what is called an *iberdeck*, but it really was a type of...

*Duvet.*

Yes, a duvet.

*A feather-filled mattress.*

Yes, feather-filled, goose feather, as light as a feather and as warm as anything. And huge square pillows, like they use on the Continent. Whether they brought them over here with them, which I doubt, or acquired them here. Because there was...when they came over I think there was quite an established Jewish community already that went back a number of years, and this community had set up an organisation to support the immigrants as they came along, and see them establish. Because there wasn't a lot of money to support that, but it was supported amongst the Jews already there.

*What was their names?*

Because one of their tenets was always, you never refuse what is known as a *Nadova*. You know what a *Nadova* is? Giving money.

*Oh, a mitzvah.*

*A mitzvah. It's a mitzvah. Whether it's a good one or an established one, you always give. That has been upheld all the time. So I mean it's still... Well... I keep on fingering this. Yes dear.*

*What was their names, your grandparents' names?*

Pardon?

*What was your grandparents' names?*

Bisgold.

*Well their first names.*

Grandpa. Grandma. I don't know their names. But they were real grandparents.

*Did you call them Buba?*

Yes, we used to call them Buba, yes, it was Buba.

*Buba and...?*

Zaida.

*Zaida. Can you remember, can you remember the house, can you describe their house?*

You mean my grandparents' house? It was one up a storey. It was a terraced house. It was in a cul-de-sac. All Jewish people in all the cul-de-sac, it was like a little community, more like a little *stetl* in there. And Grandpa had his workroom on the ground floor and it had a large window and he would do his work there, and you could walk past and see him working.

*What about, did they have any servants?*

Servants? Well I suppose, they would have somebody to come in on Saturdays to switch on the lights, or to light the fire.

A Shabbas goy.

Yes, a *Shabbas goy*. Yes, I remember that quite well.

*What about bathroom, did they have a bathroom?*

How did they bath? I can't recall that at all. How did they wash? Ah. Yes it would be local baths, local baths. And every...well, the Jewish women had to go the *Mitzvah*[ph].

Mikvah.

*Mikvah*. Oh yes, they went every Friday night. Yes. Oh there were these public baths established all over. I think there's still one in Wandsworth. Yes.

*Stanford Hill I'm sure there is.*

Yes.

*What about Shabbat, did your grandparents go to synagogue?*

I think they must have. I know Mum used to go. Particularly on the high holidays, because Mum was brought up on that, going to synagogue, regular synagogue-goers and all that. Dad never went, he was an atheist, a self-confessed atheist. And he didn't believe in fasting for Yom Kippur or anything like that. He was a bit of a rebel I suppose. I wish I knew more about his background.

*Did your mother take you, take you girls to synagogue?*

Mm?

*Did your mother take you girls to synagogue?*

I remember, no, not...I don't think...Mum would very occasionally go for Sabbath, but she always went for Yom Kippur, and as was customary, the family, the children would go in and visit in the synagogue during the day, see how Mum's fairing, and it was quite a lot of fun. They'd go in, they'd go out, they'd go in again, it was free entrance. We always went in to see Mum, and waited for the Shofar to blow so that we could go back and eat, because we, Millie and I, I can't remember about Sue, we fasted, and Dad was always doing his best to try to make us eat, because he didn't believe in the fasting, he just didn't believe in it. He was a committed atheist.

Because I would have liked to have known his reasons; never knew that. Never knew what happened to my father's parents. So I can understand the longing for children who have been adopted. It's almost unbearable not to know where they stemmed from, who their parents were, the longing to know. Sometimes it's best if they don't know. Opens up a whole avenue. Yes.

*Because he could have been influenced by what was going on in Russia you see.*

I...you went with the crowd, sort of thing. There was the...just as... Dad must have been here, he was married at the time, and I think, I'm not sure whether the two older girls, that's Millie and I, were born; I know there must have been one, Millie. I think we were both here, when there was this emigration to America, they were offered very very reduced passages, and Dad took advantage of that, and he went with quite a few of his contemporaries, and he went to New York. I can't recall how long he stayed there, and I don't know why, whether things were not working out, but he became very homesick and he just came back. Which I've always regretted, because I have a thing about America, that I would have liked to have been born and bred there.

*You're talking about before the First World War probably aren't you?*

Yes. So, there you are. But we had no training for anything, but then most of them didn't have, did they? They just had to find their feet and slog away. And hope for a big of luck to set them on the right trail.

*But you don't know if he had family in New York?*

I don't think so. I don't know.

*Do you know how he travelled, do you know what ship he went on?*

No. [PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] Ship? They probably came by train I should think.

*What, to America?*

Oh, to America. Oh no. No. No, I don't know what, I don't know the circumstances. I don't know how I've got that little bit of knowledge, it must have seeped through through the years.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Right. Can you...we've been talking about your mother quite a lot, and she was Dvora. Your father called her Dvora?*

Dvora, yes, Dvora.

*But her name was Dora? Her name was Dora.*

That's right.

*Can you describe her?*

Yes, I certainly can. Of course you never forget your mother, and she was such a wonderful, warm, typical mother, just lived for the children. She was really a butterball, she was petite and plump, a very cuddly person. She wasn't over-

demonstrative with us, but her devotion, we were three girls, was apparent, and you can tell.

*Can you describe what she looked like?*

Well she was small and plump, long-haired, dark-haired. She was just Mother, in the full sense of the word. We just took her for granted. She was always there. And if you didn't like what was prepared for lunch when you came home from school, you got real crotchety, and poor Mum got the worst of it, but she was very...she was very sweet, and she wouldn't take much notice, and you couldn't...you couldn't rattle her, she just accepted everything that was dished out to her. And looking back on it, I wish I'd been sweeter with her. Although there were occasional, not many cuddles, she wasn't that sort, we were always too busy, too much to do. Three young children.

*Did she wear her hair up?*

No, those were the days... She never bobbed her hair, although I'm surprised that we three girls didn't induce her to do that. She always wore it with a, at the nape of her neck, you know, the old traditional style.

*In a bun?*

In a bun, yes.

*Yes? And what...*

The fact that she was never interested in improving her appearance, she didn't have the time or the inclination.

*What did she wear?*

She was very fond...as far as what she would wear, very simple. She couldn't really afford much, so she couldn't go to town on what she was going to wear. But she had a little local dressmaker. And she loved scallops on her neckline of her frocks, and

she always insisted on that, and we never liked it, we never thought we... Well she certainly didn't do herself justice. She wasn't into that sort of thing.

*But were the clothes she wore, did you feel they were English clothes, or Polish clothes? Do you think they were clothes that felt English, or did they feel as though they were the sort of clothes that a Polish woman...?*

No, just ordinary, just ordinary. They had no style. Because she didn't really have a figure that you could dress up with stylish clothes. She had to wear sort of, loose-fitting things. As long as it had the scallops round the neck, she was happy.

*What colours?*

A very simple soul, a very simple soul, my mother was. I mean as I've mentioned before, she was illiterate. She was the only daughter with three, two older brothers and one younger brother, and she was expected to stay home and help rear the boys, which she did happily, she was devoted to her parents. She was a wonderful daughter. She didn't get the...she didn't get what she deserved really, she was taken too much for granted. She was not the sort of person to assert herself, she just took what was dished out for her. It makes you wish you had your time over again, so that you could show her how much you really loved her. What's the point of loving them after you've lost them? Show it whilst they're there. I do remember, when my father died on the Wednesday, and Mum died on the following Saturday. After Dad's funeral, Mum came to live with Millie, that's my older sister, and we went to Sabbath synagogue to say prayers for him, and some of the last words my mother said that has lived in our memory, we always thought we failed them, as Mum said to we three girls, 'What a pity that he has to leave such wonderful children.' That's literally what she said. She said it in Yiddish, but that's a loose translation.

*What did she say, can you remember what she said in Yiddish?*

Yes. '*Iber zu losen zelicher kinder.*' And then on the Saturday, the following Saturday, just let me see, Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday, four days after we buried Daddy, she was staying actually with David and me, and she had a heart attack.

Called the ambulance, she was taken to the South London Hospital for Women, and David was there, and Aunt Esther was there, because she had been staying with us too, and we spent the night there wondering whether Mum would die or whether she would recover, but she died. And with hindsight you can say, it was a blessing, because one of Mum's quotes of life with Daddy, 'Bad with him, worse without him.' He was a wonderful father, but he had his failings. He was a committed gambler; everything that you can think of, he had to do. It's actually, it's an embedded Jewish trait, gambling, just like the Chinese are very fond of gambling.

*What sort of gambling did he go in for?*

Pardon?

*What sort of gambling did he go in for?*

What sort of gambling? You name it, he did it. Racehorse gambling, betting on the racehorses, going down to the various racecourses, Newmarket, Epsom of course. And as I said we were three girls, and he would take one each time, one different each time, and accompany them. Newmarket was the peak. And when it was my turn to go there, to Newmarket with Dad, we travelled down by car. I refused to go unless I was given a new hat, because Newmarket was noted for the hat parade, and Dad wanted to keep all the money for betting on the horses there, and I said, 'Well I'm not going.' And he had to buy me a new hat; in fact there's a photograph of it somewhere, I really must look out, and I'm wearing that hat.

*What was it like?*

It was the fashion of the time, it was a small, choke[??] like thing. But, I was always a hat person, and have been to this day, and it looked good on me, it was very nice. I must look out that photograph and show it to Jennifer.

*Do you know, you've never told me that story about the racecourse before.*

Really?

*No. To go back a little bit, because we're jumping, what year did your parents die?*

Oh crumbs, I'm so bad at dates.

*Well, I remember, I think it was something like 1951 or '52.*

Was it during the... Oh of course, they went through the war years. They had their premises blitzed, and they had to go into supported residence. They lost everything. Their home got a direct hit. It was immediately opposite the Royal London Hospital, which was known then as the London Hospital. And then they went to live with Millie and Sam, and they lived there for about two years I think. They were re-housed in the East End.

*Was that in the flat?*

No, it was an upstairs and a downstairs, they had the upstairs. It was a...

*That was their last home?*

Yes.

*I remember that.*

Yes. Well in those days I was driving, and we would go down, pick up Millie and sometimes Sue, and we made frequent visits down there of course. And sometimes... Well in the meantime Dad suffered a stroke. He made a partial recovery, he never recovered his speech, but he was very mobile, and he would make the journey from the East End to Streatham quite frequently. Sometimes, very seldom Mum went with him. I don't think he encouraged her, he couldn't be bothered. He just was a person who always wanted to do things his own way. But he was a good father, a devoted father.

*In what way did he show his devotion?*

What dear?

*In what way did he show his devotion and his love?*

Well, he would caress us, and he was never so happy as when he bought us things, a coat or anything, or give us money to buy that, if he had any to spare. But looking back, we were never short of anything. I wouldn't say we were poor. But to this day I don't know how he managed all he did. And then of course after the '14-18 War, when he got this urge to go back to Poland, the town of Lodz where his only sister lived, and he wanted to go and visit, he managed to contact them, I don't know how, there must have been avenues for that, and I was the one that went with him. Well you know all that story don't you.

*Well I'd love you to tell me. This was about 1920...?*

Well it was after 19...oh crumbs. It could have been two years after 1918.

*As early as that?*

Well it would have been after the war, wouldn't it.

*I always thought it was something like 1928. No?*

What makes you think that?

*I don't know, but that's the impression I got from talking to you about it before, but you think it was much sooner, before...?*

Your guess could be as good as mine dear.

*Well it's not a guess, it's just an impression I got from you talking about it before.*

End of F8054 Side B

F8055 Side A

*This is tape two in the interview with Mary Roslyn, on May the 10<sup>th</sup> 1998.  
Interviewer her daughter, Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Roughly how old do you think you were when you went?*

I would have been about 20.

*Ah well then it was, could have been 1924.*

Yes.

*Right. So, what happened, how did you travel?*

Well, Dad decided to make a sort of grand tour of it, and we stopped over in Berlin, because Dad had some friends there, and I remember one incident where this friend, I'm trying to remember his name, oh he must have been in his sixties, took us to the Adlon Hotel for lunch, which was then the prime hotel in Germany, it was Unter den Linden. And this, I still can't remember his name, persuaded me to try shrimps, which I had never tasted before. Well I took a bite of it, and I was revolted. Oh no, I don't like that, couldn't eat that. And to this day I'm not fond of shellfish; whether I can say it's because of that incident or not, I don't know, but I don't like shrimps and I don't like shellfish. And that was a wonderful trip in Germany, and from Germany we went on to Poland.

*How were you travelling?*

By train, you didn't fly in those days.

*I wondered if you'd got a car.*

No, Dad didn't drive. When we went down to Newmarket it was a hired car.

*A hired car?*

Sure. Oh you would club together, there were other people going with us, so it was a car-full; it was Dad and I and I think another two people, and it was shared.

*Where did your father get the money for the presents he gave you for this trip? Was it the hotel was making money, or was it his gambling?*

Yes, it must have done. Well he couldn't do it on gambling. You've got to have something coming in before it goes out. And to this day we're puzzled how he coped. Because, yes, there was one room... Of course, we lived on the premises. You can't call it a hotel, it was a guesthouse I would say, and mostly actors and recommendations from that sphere of society. And, there was one room, which was the only private room for the family, where they held nightly gambling sessions. I'm beginning to wonder whether I should be telling you all this.

*Oh yes.*

And they would play *chemin de fer*. There was a roulette wheel.

*Poker?*

Mm?

*Poker?*

Oh definitely poker. All gambling things.

*And bridge I think you said.*

Bridge, bridge was played every day downstairs, in the afternoons you would have sessions, and certainly in the evenings there was always one large table, two or three

tables of bridge. And of course there were refreshments, they had to be catered for, and I had to take part in that. I was taking... That's why I had very little free time for myself. But at the time, going through it, it sounds awful, it sounds now, looking back on it, I was really frustrated, and I wanted to carry on with education. I used to go to evening classes, and I was very keen on improving my French, and I took classes on that, and sometimes I wasn't allowed to go, because I was needed at home, and sometimes my darling sister would say, 'You go, I'll stand in for you.'

*That was Millie?*

Yes. One thing I want to emphasise, and very very strongly, and that is, me and my two sisters really did have a very happy childhood. We had loving parents. It was just the condition in which they were forced to live, being first-year immigrants, that coloured the whole thing. And looking back on it, hindsight gives a totally different impression of it, it changes it completely, because it seems so different from what it really was. It was a happy childhood with constraints. Loving parents, they did the best for us that they could, within their limits. And fundamentally we didn't suffer by it. Frustrated, yes; but not unhappy.

*These evenings, was it every evening, your father had friends in?*

Every evening. Because gambling in those days was illicit, oh yes, and you were liable to be raided at any time. So I know for a fact that my father had to bribe the police to keep them away. They did, they would come monthly for their stipend, and you were not molested, because that went on all the time, it's still going on, yes.

*And your mother would have to give them things to eat, and look after them all the evening?*

Well, there was always food on the...not in the upstairs gambling room, that was solely, that was solely for gambling. I don't think there was much food served up there. But downstairs in the evenings, which was the bridge session, there was always refreshments going all the time. At the weekends, the favourite was potato pancakes.

*Latkes?*

Latkes. And many a time I had to make them, and, oh crumbs yes, because Mum would like to sit down and play rummy, that was her relaxation, and she loved that. She had a bit of the gambling spirit in her too, she used to play the horses, and quite successfully. Oh yes. Although she was illiterate, she had her favourites who would read out the forecasts, and she would go into it in detail, what is their previous record, had they won, had they come first or second. She knew a lot about it. Oh she was a pet.

*Did your father take her with him to the races?*

Never. No.

*Why, because that would have meant closing down the restaurant?*

I don't know. No, what Mum did have once, and that sort of made up for everything she didn't have, when our younger sister, who was on the stage, she was going with a company to Paris, to play there, and as a chaperone either my sister or I, or my mother would go with her. My mother went once, that was a treat that she had never had before, and the next time my sister went. It never came to my turn for that. Not that I felt deprived, I was happy to see them go. But for my mother, who never expected anything for life, that was the pinnacle.

*How long was she away?*

Pardon?

*How long was she away?*

Oh I suppose about a week, ten days, that's all. It certainly sparked off memories. That's the credit of the interviewer, how they probe, by the right question, and that seems to spark off the memory. Sometimes you wanted to forget it, but it's there. The brain I've always said, and I know everybody would agree, that the brain is a

computer, and what you feed it through the years is there all the time, it just needs a spark to set it going. And it can sometimes open a Pandora's box.

*Indeed.*

I hope I haven't done that.

*So, the relationship between your mother and your father, how could you describe that?*

The relationship between Mum and Dad could be very stormy; most of the time it was very affectionate. But it was very volatile, very...my father, who as younger was a redhead, and they're supposed to have the fiery temperament, and I really think he had it. But, one must appreciate the pressures under which he lived. To be uprooted from his birthplace, from whatever family he had there, we never found out, apart from a sister, what his family consisted of. That is the greatest tragedy of all. Poor Dad. A fight for existence, that's what it was, a fight for existence.

*Did either of your parents talk about their home life before they left Poland?*

Never. Never. Snippets would come out but it never amounted to anything. No, they never talked about that.

*Because I was wondering, all the cooking your mother did, she must have learnt it from her mother.*

Yes. But there were times when the business was doing so well, that we had to have help in the kitchen, and also in the front, waiting at table and all that sort of thing. Those were in the days when things were flourishing.

*And this was all kosher?*

Oh yes, strictly kosher. Strictly kosher. And we had to employ sometimes a qualified cook, and my mother learnt a lot from them. Oh some of my mother's baking, her

yeast baking in particular, her cheesecakes, I still dream about it. I mean when...she prepared it all, and it had to be taken to the local baker's for his oven, it was baked at the ovens there.

*Because of the quantity, or because you needed a special oven?*

The quantity, and the oven, a controllable oven. The quantity, you never thought of baking, everybody took their cakes to the baker's for baking. And sometimes he would get so much, and he couldn't get it all in in time, and some of the yeast cakes, little cheesecakes in particular, would have risen too high, and then they came out, they weren't as they should be, and my poor mother would get into such a tizzy. She would even use some horrible words. There are some marvellous swear words in Jewish, which I wouldn't dream of repeating.

*Oh please, please.*

No I couldn't.

*Oh you've got to.*

Oh she would lose her temper with the baker, because... But it was still very edible and very enjoyable.

*What would she say? You've got to, tell me, tell me.*

*Er sollt verbrennt werden* was one of them, 'he should get burnt'. Oh, she would carry on. It was so important to her. Of course looking back on it, it was extremely funny.

*What else would she say?*

Oh, I honestly can't remember dear. I honestly can't remember.

*Can you tell me more about the other food, some more things that were cooked then?*

Oh no, the classical Jewish Continental cooking. Did use herbs in those days, oh they used...there was plenty of onions. Can't recall much garlic; in those days garlic was frowned on because of the...David said it's anti-social, that's why I was never allowed to use it in cooking. But I will say, once he left us, I went to town on garlic. Well of course it's become more popular and everybody uses it.

*But you've told me over the years some wonderful recipes, I'd just love you remind me, like stuffed neck and...*

Oh, well people don't eat it that way now. Stuffed neck, known as gefilte helzel, stuffed neck. That was done with chicken fat. My God! well, you know that, don't you. Oh, we wouldn't dream of using anything like that.

*What other things were cooked?*

Oh, you name it, she cooked it. Well of course, Fridays and Saturdays, it was the classical chicken soup and boiled chicken, and vermicelli soup, that was traditional, that was available every Saturday. And of course there was the famous tcholent, that was baked in the oven overnight, because on the Sabbath you don't cook. And, I can't remember how, whether my mum kept the Sabbath free of... I know Saturday was a much easier day. But, no, it was all the stuff that...the clientele, which was mostly European, were getting the things they were used to back at home, and that's all they wanted or expected.

*And you were the only daughter to help in the cooking?*

Yes.

*Why, because Millie was out at work?*

Oh well Millie, Millie won a bursary for higher education, and Dad wanted her, once she passed her exam, or the equivalent of the...

*High school? High school?*

The equivalent of the what?

*High school?*

Yes. Yes. And, Dad wanted to have her come home and help at home. Well Millie was very unhappy about that, she wanted to continue studying, and she won a free place to Cable Street Central, and the headmaster got in touch with Dad and said it would be a pity to take her away, she has possibilities. And she wants to continue studying. So Dad consented of course. So she carried on there, and she learnt shorthand and typing there, and when she left she got a very good job as private secretary to the head of a newspaper. The headquarters were in the Midlands, and the London office was in Cannon Street Road. And her boss there was an alcoholic. He never made any undue things to her, but, she enjoyed her job, and she worked there. She worked there for quite a few years.

*What was the name of the paper?*

Paper manufacturing. Yes, paper manufacturing. Mills, paper mills. She loved her work. She always was academically inclined. It was a great pity, in those days getting to university was out of the question, not that they could have afforded to have sent her there, but she always had possibilities. She loved using her brain, right to the very end of her life. She loved it. She was very dedicated to her work. Perhaps too much so. Things had to be perfect as far as she was concerned. Whatever she did had to be done properly, whereas I would sort of make do, and particularly if it came to needlework, with which she was very good, I would, if it doesn't work out one way, I would make it make out another, but not Millie. It had to be done properly, and the end result was perfect. Have I shown you a different side to Millie?

*I think I knew all that before. I think so.*

Mm. Such an unselfish person.

*Oh yes.*

For herself, she wanted nothing; it's those around her. It was a privilege to have had her as a sister.

*Well she felt that about you.*

It was a mutual admiration, both of us. One of our lovely outings, because we were more than sisters, we were great friends, we would go everywhere together, we would go to theatre together, we would stay up all night queuing for first nights, we both enjoyed that, until she married, then I would go on my own. But Friday night was our peek. I always waited for her outside the office, and we would go to the Stoll Theatre, which was then a cinema, it was a cinema in those days, and they served afternoon tea and biscuits, and then we'd go there, and the films were usually very good ones, of a high standard. And they did lovely ice-creams too, beautiful ice-creams, with strong almond flavour. Oh crumbs, it's all coming back. Yes we had our happy days.

*How was the ice-cream served?*

In a container, with a wooden spoon I think.

*A glass container?*

Metal, a metal container, as far as I remember it was a metal container.

*But this was home-made ice-cream.*

It tasted like it. Not like the Wall's of today.

*So this would be...*

It tasted like real ice-cream. Creamy, nutty.

*So you're actually talking still about just after the First World War, aren't you? Yes, yes.*

It wouldn't be, wouldn't it.

*Yes. Or even during. Well Auntie was born in 1902, so, she was working during the war.*

Yes.

*No, she would have left school at eighteen? Yes, no, so, she would have left school about 1920 then.*

Aha.

*Yes, so this is the early...*

You see, you're going for dates here, at which I am absolutely hopeless.

*The exact date isn't important.*

I can't even remember people's birthdays, I have to look up a list. I'm amazed I remember my own birthday, when I'd like to forget it.

*Can you remember anything you saw in the cinema?*

Oh no, I can't remember that. They were mainly English films, weren't they, in those days they were English films.

*Charlie Chaplin?*

It would be, yes.

*Clara Bow?*

And those were the days when they had an organ, and you would have short films in front of it, animated ones or whatever, and the organ would play. There was music combined with the films. It was quite, a very pleasant outing.

*Did you see Rudolph Valentino?*

Yes, would have. Can't remember what we saw there, because there were two cinemas in the Commercial Road, there was films there. Oh yes, there's that story of me going to a cinema just a few doors away from where we were living. What were we doing there? I can't remember. Yes, that's a period, I don't remember anything there. And I had to go to that cinema and sit and sit and see the film over and over again, until my parents had to send out somebody to bring me home. I can't remember that period at all.

*Did you mind that Millie was staying at school and you weren't?*

No. Our relationship, Millie and I, was always very close.

*But would you have liked to have stayed on at school?*

I don't think I ever accepted that. I don't think I ever had a preference. I knew I had to stay at home. I don't know that it ever came up.

*And Souri was of course on the stage.*

Somebody had to stay at home. That was before Souri's arrival. Souri is four years younger than me.

*Well it wasn't before her arrival, but before she went on the stage, before she was old enough.*

Definitely.

*So, she would have left school also at fourteen?*

I would think so, because she never had any...she didn't have the gift of study or anything, other than she was interested in that. I mean, she never read anything. Millie and I were always avid readers, but Sue no. She would read a *Peg's Paper*, if that means anything to you, but, never interested in that.

*What's a Peg's Paper?*

*Peg's Paper* was one of these juvenile periodicals which, how can I equate it with...?

Woman's Own?

Not even as high as that.

*Oh sort of a teenage mag?*

Even younger than that.

*So what sort of things were you and Millie reading?*

Well we were always reading something.

*Novels?*

Oh well mainly it would be the classics. I'm just trying to think. We were reading *Mill on the Floss* at school, that sort of book. And sometimes I'd take a book to bed with me, and, Mum or Dad would come up to see us settled in, and when they went, out would come the book and we'd read it under the... We were avid readers, read anything really, and it stayed with both of us all through the years, Millie too.

*Did you get books from the library?*

Yes. Because we never had any money to buy books.

*But your father was a well educated man. Did he encourage you to go to night school and read?*

Well the little we know about his...he taught in a Yeshiva I think it was. That's one thing I would have longed to know. I wouldn't expect any interesting information from my mother's side, because her father was a shoe repairer, worked from home, but Dad I think was a different kettle of fish. I never got to understand why and how. He was a tall, good-looking man, very good-looking.

*But I think you said they never talked about what life was like in Poland, they never really talked about...*

No, because there wasn't the time. The only time... Now take for instance your background. A united family, meal times you're all sat down together. That's when you start chatting about things. We never had that. Had we have had that experience, we would now know more about their background. So you can say, we feel deprived. Millie and I often discussed that, and regretted the little we know of Dad's background. Because I think he was intellectually superior to Mum. Dad had the American papers regularly. I don't think he had them sent from America, but there was a distribution locally and he got it from them. He read the American newspapers every time he got hold of them.

*Would this be in English or in Yiddish?*

In Yiddish. *The Jewish Forwards*, that's what it was in those days, *The Forwards*. And he was the first, because as you know America were the first to blazen on the front page about the Duke of Windsor and, what's her name.

*Wallace Simpson.*

Wallace Simpson. And the papers here made no mention of it at all. He was the first to come out with that. He was the first to come out with dieting things that were bad for you and how you should eat, and he came out with that, and he adopted a lot of

them, less fat and all that. Dad was more intelligent and more aware of things, because he was reading, he was literate. I don't think he could write English, but he could certainly write Yiddish.

*Could he read English?*

The English papers, yes.

*But at home, would you only speak in Yiddish?*

No, we all spoke in English, and they would answer in English, broken English, even Mum. 'Don't drive my head.' Mum's phrase, 'Don't drive my head.' That was when you were pressuring her when she wanted...she came in, 'Get off my back,' I would say.....

End of F8055 Side A

F8055 Side B

*You began to talk before about your trip with your father, and I'd love to go back where we left off. You went to Berlin, you said you stayed at the Adlon, and you were travelling by train. Then we came back to England. So, what else happened, after Berlin, where did you go after?*

We went straight...

*Or can you remember anything else in Berlin?*

I'm sure if there was anything interesting I would remember it. I think we must have spent just a couple of days. I can't remember doing any detailed sightseeing or anything like that.

*What was the purpose of the visit?*

To Germany? Just because... Schaffer, to see Mr Schaffer. Of course they, he and Dad...Mr Schaffer lived in London for a long time, and then I don't know what took him to Berlin, he went to Berlin, and he kept in touch with Dad. So, maybe there was some reason Dad wanted to see him. Mr Schaffer.

*Do you think it was business?*

It could have been. It could have been. Whether Dad was representing him over here, Dad was his contact, or whatever, I don't know what that was. Nothing sinister I don't think, it was all open and above.

*Did you have a passport?*

Of course. You couldn't go without it in those days. Yes. And then we went straight into Lodz, I can't remember where we stayed.

*Didn't you tell me you...*

Oh yes.

*Didn't you tell me you went to Budapest?*

No, Warsaw.

*Warsaw. You didn't go to Hungary?*

No, no, no.

*Or Czechoslovakia?*

No, I went to Vienna when Millie was there, that's years later.

*Ah that was another time.*

Yes, that was another time.

*So then you went to Lodz.*

We went to Lodz. And then, he had this writer, Segalovich, Segalovich, a tall lankee fellow, he had come over here for some reason, I don't know what, and Dad made a point of going to Warsaw, and he was taken over to the Writers' Union, spent a day there, it was all very interesting. To me it was water off a duck's back, but it was the highlight of the trip for Dad. And, then there was the reunion with his sister, that was before we went to Warsaw of course, and, she was a big woman, a hefty woman. And it was a very tearful reunion as you can imagine, after all these years. Yes, I can recall that, even I was emotional.

*What was her name?*

I don't know. I did know then but I don't know now, I can't remember that.

*Well if you remember you'll tell me. Did she have a husband and children?*

She was widowed. She had children, we met them.

*Can you remember who they were?*

Because they were under the impression that, Dad coming over there, he was wealthy. Couldn't have been further from the truth. How he managed it, to this day, I'll never know. I've often wondered.

*Who were the children, were they your age, what were they like?*

No, they were younger. I mean, his sister's children, they were in their early thirties, and they had younger children. I don't know much about them dear.

*You can't remember the sexes and how many and...?*

No, I can't remember. There's so much left unsaid.

*But how long were you in Lodz?*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] You remember that story, Saun Ferguson? *Schon vergessen*. [laughs] It's upsetting.

*Did you stay with her?*

No, we didn't stay with them. I don't know where we stayed. No recollection of it dear.

*Have you got any recollection of what her house was like, or what Lodz was like?*

*Fiddler on the Roof*. No no, not as...not as...not as agricultural as that. It was... Bashevis Singer, I had a book from you, all stories of the *stetl*, that was it.

*It was like an old stetl? But it was a big city.*

Lodz? Not in those days it wasn't.

*But the roads were paved, there was tarmac on the road, there was paving?*

I can recall mud pavings, mud roads. Yes. Not paved.

*Were there cars?*

Was it what?

*Were there cars, motorcars?*

My advice is not to question too much of that period, because whether it's wilful banishing from my mind, I don't know, but I just cannot bring anything forward of that period. What stands out is the emotional reunion with his sister, and her family gathered around, hoping I don't know what, for miracles, which weren't forthcoming. I think it would have been better if he hadn't have gone really. If you can't go and change life for them, it's best to keep away.

*Did any of them want to come to England?*

I should imagine they would have grabbed at the chance. But that's only the imagination. No, the way I look at it, it wasn't such a success story. He felt he had to see his sister, but sometimes it's best left alone. If you can't do anything tangible, it leaves more questions to be answered.

*Did he keep in touch after that?*

No. Oh no, he used to send money, yes he used to send money, when he could. Oh yes. I mean, I know David's father sent money regularly home. Well you mustn't forget, he was here with two brothers, David's father and two brothers, the three of them. And I think they were all peddlers, that's how a lot of them started. But they

were sent money regularly. Well that if you ask me is a success story. Not for my Dad. No, what I wondered is, how did his parents die? We've never known that.

*But his...your father's parents, of course you didn't meet them. They weren't there.*

They weren't there. Where were they?

*Well they would have died. But what must have...*

Well did they die in a pogrom? Did they die of an epidemic? Well I'm not going to torture myself over that at this late date.

*But then, his sister, your aunt, and all her family, presumably perished in the war, they would have been taken to the Lodz ghetto and then to Auschwitz.*

That's right. And Mr Segal, the one that gave me the cut-glass vase, he came from Lodz. He was a dear, he was a pet.

*Segalovich?*

No no, that's Segal. Segalovich was the writer, he was a poet.

*Well who was Mr Segal?*

He was a businessman, he used to come over here for business, and because of the language I went around with him, and went out evenings, entertainments. I don't know, can't remember what entertainment I took him to. I can't remember what I did in general to help him. All I know is, I used to go out with him. He was a perky little fellow.

*Was he courting you?*

No. Nothing like that.

*But did your father ever talk about the fate of his sister, after the war did you ever discuss it with him?*

No, there was never any discussion. If Dad had a job, that's the crux of it, if he had a job, eight in the morning, six, even seven o'clock at night and he was working, he would come home in the evening and there was just the family, it would have been a different story altogether. But there was never any privacy, and that I underline. The crux of the whole affair is, there was no privacy, and we three girls, Millie and I in particular, Sue being so much younger, I don't think she was affected so much by it, but Millie and I were so frustrated, so...

*You had a room on your own, you two girls?*

In the top there was, I shared a bed with Sue and Millie had a bed on her own in the one room, it was one large room, with a sloping roof, and the window overlooked immediately the London Hospital. And if we were undressing, you had to be aware that you were being watched; sometimes we disregarded that. So, even no privacy there.

*And you shared...*

Could you have lived without that privacy? It's very important to you.

*That's probably why you value your privacy so much now.*

Could be, could be. I mean I've mentioned this before, sometimes I've been longing to go to bed at twelve o'clock at night, just longing, and I couldn't, because they were coming out of the theatre after the performance and expect to be fed. Boy, did I hate that session. That's now, as you say, I very...I go to bed and I often think of it to this day, I go to bed when I feel like it, and wallow in the sensation. That freedom of movement, my God! Bringing all this out, it doesn't make me unhappy.

*I hope not.*

No no no. At the bottom of it is you see, my attitude to most things are, I put myself in the position of the other party, and I realise what my mum and dad had to survive, coming over from Poland, and had to establish themselves. It meant hard work and putting everything they had into it. And the fact that they had children, although Dad was so disappointed that he didn't have one of us a son. Incidentally, I watched the Eurovision last night, and I thought the Israeli should come out on top, and they did. A transvestite. So...

*So you... A transsexual? Transsexual. It's a man turned into a woman.*

That's...she won the...

*Dana.*

Dana.

*Yes. So you shared a room with your two sisters until, Souri was the first to marry wasn't she.*

I think Millie was. I'm sure it was Millie. Millie was, then Sue.

*Well Millie was six years older than Sue.*

I think she was in her mid-twenties.

*But you say you called Sue Sourele.*

Sourele. I always called her Sue, to this day when I refer to her, mention her, it's always Sue, but she was always called Sourele at home, and when her name had to go up on the billboards, it was Souri.

*Souri Lando?*

Yes.

*So you shared...you shared a room all the time?*

Pardon?

*You shared, you girls shared a room all the time.*

Yes.

*Then Millie got married to Sam.*

That's right.

*In what, mid-twenties? No, how old was Auntie?*

She might have been 23, 4.

*Very young.*

Yes, she was quite young. Yes, because among the visitors that came up in the evenings, because they would bring their wives with them, it was like a club. There was the local butcher, Jewish butcher, and his wife. Now she... Oh it's amazing how they got to know each other, all of them. She knew Sam's family, who lived all the other way into Streatham. Well where...she was in the East End. I don't know how they got together. And Sam had been widowed rather tragically. He was very happily married and he had one daughter, and his wife wanted another child and she was advised not to have it because she had a heart condition. And she became pregnant, and it killed her. I think he was very happily married, but, he had a horrible father.

*Father.*

Yes, a horrible father. And, he had a big house in which his sister and her husband lived, and his father lived, and his mother lived until she died, it was a big corner

house in Streatham, a lovely house. And when Millie married Sam, she fell in love with him, he was a lovely person, we got on extremely well with him too, and she married, and she moved in there and took charge of the whole house. She had no experience in running a home, she certainly had no experience of cooking, but she was just too marvellous. Entertained, her Christmas parties I remember to this day, wonderful. She got on very well with her sister-in-law and her husband, and...

*What were their names? Was that Harry?*

No no, that was his brother. That was his brother. That's a story in itself. Harry died eventually. He married.

*What was the sister-in-law's name then?*

Bessie, Bessie Taylor her surname. Does that ring a bell with you, Bessie?

*Yes I knew their daughter.*

They had no children.

*Well who was that little girl I used to go singing with?*

No, Bessie had no...what was her husband's name? He was an ethnic.

*What does that mean?*

Oh he was a foreigner, broken English, he spoke English with an accent, a strong accent. Nice enough chap.

*But where from?*

Oh I don't know.

*Europe?*

I didn't delve into that at all. Europe, it would be Europe, yes. Well, after a couple of years Bessie opened up a shop dealing with lingerie, very successful. Because she didn't get much financial help from her husband, I forget what he did, he never had a sort of permanent job, and she devoted herself to the business, and she was very successful at it. She was a good person.

*So you're saying that Auntie ran the house for all these grown-up people?*

That's right.

*Why?*

Because that was the situation. Well Bessie helped I suppose.

*Oh but she was working, I see, and Auntie gave up work.*

That was before she had opened this shop, they were working very harmoniously in the... I mean Millie would get on with everybody. Of course she would subjugate herself for others' convenience, and it usually works out well when you do that. Although Bessie was not that sort of person.

*Well of course she had Edna there, her stepdaughter.*

Who? What?

*Edna was there as a little girl.*

That's right. Yes. Such a pretty little girl. There's a photograph there of her, there's quite a few of them. She was lovely. Beautiful figure, lovely arms, hair. Nicknamed Bubbles, she was a real bubbles when she was younger. Well she fell ill with meningitis, and we are convinced that it affected her mentally. Although she wasn't...she wasn't in any way...

*Impaired.*

No.

*She had a very very good job, I remember, didn't she?*

What?

*Didn't she have an important job?*

Oh the Civil Service.

*Yes.*

She was Civil Service. All she did was the filing and... Millie got her...oh Millie spent a lot of time and patience trying to get her established, and she got her to take training in hairdressing, which she did for a while, and then it sort of petered out, she didn't like that. And then how she... Would it be during the war she got this job in the Civil Service? And that was a marvellous break for her, because she had a pension right up until she died, the state pension and the Civil Service pension, which was updated every year.

*This house...*

Rural Way, number 1 Rural Way.

*Oh this was Rural Way?*

Yes.

*So what happened? How long was Auntie looking after all these people?*

Well the old man died eventually, and she was left eventually with just herself, Sam and Edna. Then along comes the war.

*Well wait a minute, when was Laurie born? Well Laurie was born about...*

Two years after she married, about two years after she married.

*Yes. Now wait a minute. Laurie is twelve years older than me? That's... Laurie is twelve years older than me I think, or is it sixteen? No twelve I think. Something like that. '30, '32. Laurie was born...*

[INAUDIBLE].

*Laurie was born in about 1932.*

Well you could always phone her up and ask her.

*Yes.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Let's go back...let's go back a little bit. Did the guesthouse, which you are calling it, did it have a special name?*

Lando's Hotel it was called.

*Was the name outside?*

Yes, in white figures, you know, Lando's Hotel.

*And that was L-A-N-D-O? Right.*

Yes. Yes that, that spelling was used more than any other, although it did vary, as you've seen yourself, certain documents.

*To go back to your school years a bit, you said it was a nice new school and it was very bright and cheerful. Did you have a uniform?*

No. No.

*Can you remember what you wore to school?*

Oh, very difficult. As I told you, we used to...was it during that time I wonder, we used to wear aprons, that Mum used to wash and starch? No, we were always neatly dressed. I can't remember whether it was jumpers or blouses. It's completely obliterated.

*But long dresses?*

No, no, knee-length, a skirt.

*But this was before...*

You see, not having pictures of that era...

*Yes. Well, but this was before the First World War; we're talking about 1910 really aren't we, when you were six. You went to school when you were six, five or six?*

Yes, about when I was five I went to school.

*So in those days...*

I started in the infants and then went up. Stayed in the same school all my years of study.

*So you probably did wear quite long skirts, or quite long dresses, with pinafores on top, do you think?*

Something like that I would think, yes. Cardigan in the colder weather, and... No visual memory there at all of what I looked like. I know the walk from home to school was, we were then in Cannon Street Road, and you walked through the market, round there through the market, right outside the market, but then you weed your way round a couple of turnings to the school.

*And you always came home for lunch?*

Oh yes. And walking home I would think to myself, I hope Mum's made kreplach for lunch. And you would come home and she hadn't. Why wasn't there kreplach for lunch? I really got stropky, real stropky. She was soon [INAUDIBLE].

*So what would she say, 'Kreplach tomorrow'?*

And next day there was kreplach.

*Ah.*

Cheese kreplach. Ever tasted them?

*I don't think so.*

Oh I loved that. Like blinzes, but done with a dough; blinzes is done with an egg pancake. I used to be very good at blinzes. That's right, Roger used to enjoy them, yes.

*I remember. Packaged calories.*

Oh boy! The stuff they did.

*So at school, you spoke English?*

Always.

*The other girls, and boys as well?*

Yes, it was a mixed school. [PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] I think it was a girls' school.

Yes, it was a girls' school, but the boys were a completely different building on the site, they were separated.

*Yes, that was very, very usual.*

Oh and I remember the teachers we had. The headmistress was a terrifically handsome woman, a statuesque figure. She wore blouses and skirts and a belt which showed up her figure, it was like Lady Godiva. And there was, as we got older there was something going on with her and the headmaster with the boys' school. Now how did that come back to me? She was a handsome woman.

*You don't remember her name?*

No.

*What did you call your teachers?*

Oh, Miss so-and-so. Morning prayers, and you sang your hymns.

*Was it a Jewish school?*

No.

*But was it mostly Jewish children?*

Mixed, very mixed. Yes.

*Did you all get on well together?*

Pardon?

*Did the Jewish and non-Jewish children get on well?*

Yes, yes.

*They did?*

I couldn't answer that.

*But, did you have friends from school?*

I can't recall any. I had my sister.

*She was in the same school?*

She was in the same school, but higher up, being that much older. Only a year older, a few months.

*So when you went to school, could you already speak English?*

Who, me?

Yes.

I always spoke English.

*Because your parents spoke English to you at school?*

Yes.

*I mean at home.*

Yes, both were Jewish. Grew up with it.

*Did you have an accent?*

No.

*How did you avoid an accent, either a Yiddish or a Polish, or an East End accent?*

It was inherent, I just spoke the way it came out.

*Because you and Millie have nice voices, but Auntie Sue has a slight East End accent.*

Still has? Yes. How strange. There must be a valid reason but I can't think of one.  
I'm fascinated when I see those two together.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*You said your father sang very well, he had a lovely singing voice.*

Deep baritone.

*Did he sing at home with you girls?*

No. But when he sang on stage, once or twice he went on for some reason, some part, we heard him there. It was a shame we didn't hear more of him vocalising.

*Because you've talked...*

Do you know what's just sprung to the fore of my memory, and I don't want it on there.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Because you've told me you went to see a lot of films, and you went to the Yiddish theatre; did you ever go to other theatres, or music halls or concerts and things like that?*

Oh, it depends on what age you're talking about. We were, Millie and I were very keen theatre-goers, we followed it up in the press, and if there was a first night coming up, we'd make an effort to go. We went a great deal. Concerts.

*To the West End?*

Oh yes. There was...depends where we were living. Because transport was always so good.

*Well I'm talking about before you married, I'm talking about when you were in the East End, still living at home.*

That's right.

*But how did you get the money? Did your father pay you?*

No.

*He didn't pay you for all the work you did in the guesthouse?*

No. If I wanted anything, I asked for it and I usually got it.

*Because...*

That's right, where did I get the money from to go to the theatre? Well it was very cheap in those days, it's true, but... Where did I get the money to go to the theatre and flaunt up on my own to the West End? I was never aware of being short of money. The crux of it is, I don't know how my father managed it.

End of D8055 Side B

F8056 Side A

*Tape three in the interview with Mary Roslyn, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1998. Interviewer, her daughter Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Right. You've mentioned the synagogue that your mother went to a lot, and you and Millie used to meet her there. Do you remember the name of it?*

Say that again?

*The synagogue that you used to...*

Ah yes. The name of the synagogue. Well it was the Whitechapel Synagogue, it was in Whitechapel. It was a theatre way back that had...

*No, the synagogue.*

Yes, it was...

*Yes, sorry.*

That theatre was used as a synagogue for the Holy Days, the for holy holidays. It wasn't a synagogue all the year round, it was just for the High Days and holidays.

*What was the name of the theatre when it wasn't a synagogue?*

Oh. I can't remember the name of the theatre dear. I can't remember.

*Was it the theatre, the Yiddish theatre where Sue played?*

Mainly, mainly a Jewish theatre. As far as I can recall no other theatre played there. There was another cinema further up the road, but you see I can't remember the name

of that one either, and they would sometimes put on plays. That would be in English. It had quite a reputation, it was very well known. It was all in the Whitechapel Road, the Jewish theatre, and this other. And then in latter years this other cinema became a music hall, and it gave birth to quite internationally a reputation of comedians, who eventually made the big time. There again it was so long ago I can't remember the names of some of them.

*But you don't...*

Switch off for a minute.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*So that the synagogue that was a theatre, except on High Holy Days...*

That's right.

*And this was...It wasn't every Shabbat then, that it became a synagogue? [PAUSE]  
You wouldn't know because your mother only went on High Holy Days?*

No, no, Mum didn't go...I think it was used as a synagogue. Switch off.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

American companies came over and took over for six weeks or so, did a season there. What happened... I think when the theatre, when the American theatre came over, and they took over the Whitechapel Theatre, they had a temporary synagogue house nearby.

*But can you remember the place you're talking about, that was sometimes a synagogue but then was a theatre, most of the time, was that where Sue acted?*

Always, Sue acted there.

*Right. And what was it called, do you remember the name of the theatre?*

Oh crumbs.

*That I could find out, because...*

From Sue?

*No, from the work that the Jewish Museum did. The London Museum of the East End did a...*

That's right, I've got the booklet that you passed on, you could refer to that.

*Yes. Yes it would be in that. It would.*

Do you want me to look it up?

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*I mean I was going to ask you also about the music hall and concerts or museums and things like that that you went to, anything in that line that you remember going to.*

You mean personally, what interested me?

*Mm. Well things that you went to. Because you told me you went to the theatre and the cinema with Millie.*

Music didn't come into... You see it was such a busy household dear, that you...you didn't need outside stimulation. It wasn't there to be had really. Yes. Oh Christ! I'm not functioning Jennifer dear. You see if I could remember the names of these places, in Aldgate there was a Sephardic synagogue there, which is, it's still being used now I think. All the top Jewish, and they were mainly Sephardic Jews, they were members of that synagogue. It's a very well known one.

*Was that Bevis Marks?*

That's right.

*Yes.*

Yes. I doubt if it still functions now, because almost...

*Yes.*

Yes.

*Yes it does. Did you go, did you ever go there?*

Well we weren't Sephardic, we didn't go there, no. No, we were Ashkenazi. But you see, Dad, my father, was completely anti-religious, he didn't believe in any thing. I don't know whether it was perhaps his childhood or whether he was bereft of anything, but not knowing Dad's background I can't pin it down as to why. But, I don't know if I've mentioned this before, when it came to fasting for Yom Kippur, and both my sister and I felt compulsive to fast, we wanted to, and Dad would do his best to try and get us to eat, because he didn't believe in it. But, we actually enjoyed the fast, because we were so ready for the meal that followed it.

*What did you break your fast on?*

Oh, it was traditional to break your fast on salt herring.

*Schmaltz herring?*

Schmaltz herring, yes. And then you followed that with, usually fish, gefilte fish, fried gefilte fish, and...

*But you used to do that, when we broke our fast you used to serve schmaltz herring too.*

That's right, yes. I mean when we married we belonged to the Orthodox as you know, and David, whose parents were very religious, and at the same time very broadminded, but, we kept, as you know, Friday night, and we went to synagogue Friday night, and Saturday morning.

*Who's 'we', sorry, who do you mean?*

Dad and I, your father and I.

*When?*

When we...when we attended the Orthodox, that was in Brixton. We used to...

*When? When you first married?*

When we were first married.

*Oh I didn't know that.*

Oh yes. Well he owed it to his parents. He did it because of his parents. When his parents came down on the visits, our home was absolutely kosher, we'd only buy at the Jewish butcher's, or that, we wouldn't dream of doing anything else for them. But David got disillusioned with the ultra Orthodox, and it was very hypocritical, as we still think, and we switched to the Liberal.

*But tell me, we're jumping ahead now, but while we're on the subject, you went to the Brixton Synagogue?*

Aha.

*Where were you married?*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] It must have been the Brixton. It would be in our marriage lines, wouldn't it? Good God! You'd think that that would stay in your memory absolutely.

*I always thought you were married in Glasgow, isn't that funny.*

In Glasgow? No.

*I don't know why I should think that.*

All the family came down to London for the... And the family was very large in those days, the extended family. A lot of the aunts and the uncles came down.

*You must have been, it must have been in the East End then.*

Yes. Isn't it awful not to remember things like that.

*As you say, it will be in your marriage certificate. We'll look at those things later. But let's go back. You know you told me that Auntie Millie went with Sue to Paris, to chaperone her, but Sue went to other places including South Africa. Did anybody go with her there to chaperone her?*

No, nobody went with her to South Africa. There was the...

*Why, because she was older?*

Well there was the expense of the trip, paying for it.

*How old was she?*

Could have been, bordered on 20, early twenties. Mhm. I can't remember how long the season lasted there, how long she was away. It was a wonderful experience for her. Because she usually played boys' parts, little Yeshiva boys, because of her stature, she was petite, and she looked very boyish. She took to it like a duck to

water. Whereas when they approached me and wanted me to take part in a play, I was horrified, the thought of facing up to an audience, I would dry up. You can understand that. I never had any call there.

*But how did you three girls get on together? You told me you all shared a room, and I know how intimately close you were to Millie.*

We got on very well indeed. Millie and I were very close together, we were almost like a twin, there was just the difference of eighteen months. Sue, well she was young, and very different from Millie and I. I think she felt that, she felt the difference, and she had totally... And then of course, she got tied up with the theatre and that took up quite a lot of her time. By that time Millie had a very good job as private secretary to the manager of a paper mill, and she was more or less, although she lived at home she was more or less independent, and, we used to do everything together. We would take evening classes together, we would take afternoon classes together, we were always taking classes of some sort.

*But what relationship did you have with Sue? When she was little for example.*

Nothing outstanding we could think of. As three sisters, we got on extremely well, there was no friction, no differences. But you are quite right, there's that passage of years when Sue was born, and before she went into the theatre, which was about 20 years, what relationship was there then? I can't recall anything tangible.

*Did you do things with her?*

No.

*All three of you?*

No.

*So did she have her own friends?*

I can't recall any that came to the house. She went to school of course.

*The same school?*

It was rather a bleak period, looking back on it, but we weren't aware of that then. Of course she went, don't forget she went to school every day, except weekends.

*Was it the same school?*

Yes, she went to Fairclough. I mean looking back on it, the Sue period seems a different entity altogether, I can recall very little about that. And then the estrangement, that happened after she married.

*A long time after.*

She must...I should imagine that Sue felt the closeness between Millie and I, and she always felt out of it. But, Millie and I were voracious readers, we always had our nose in a book; Sue never did any reading at all, she was a *Peg's Paper* sort of person. So there was no mental there...

*Similarity.*

Yes.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*I wanted to ask you about this short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer, A Friend of Kafka. You said that you knew one of the characters in the story.*

Yes. Mrs Tchissik. Mrs Tchissik, I can visualise, and her daughter, both of them. She used to play mother parts. She was quite slim, a very intelligent woman. And her daughter must have been in her mid-twenties, and for a couple of years she gave me piano lessons, and I was making quite good advance, and she used to play the piano, was in the orchestra at the theatre, so she was the pianist there. There's another

character that recalls to mind, I'm trying to think of his name. He was the musical director, he used to write the music, was very knowledgeable, and he had a marvellous deep baritone voice, and he used to sing in the choir there. And, he was a lovely, lovely character, quite a youngish man, and he used to write little poems, and one of them was addressed to my sisters and I, 'Millie, Minnie, Winkie, 1, 2, 3.' He used to say that occasionally when he used to come up here, 'Millie, Minni, Winkie, 1, 2, 3.' Isn't that funny? Stupid. [laughs]

*Lovely.*

Oh he was so nice, he was so nice.

*Is he in that story too?*

I haven't re-read it, I don't know, he might be. Did you come across any other names? This Cohen you mentioned.

*Yes.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*It says in the book, in the story, that Kafka fell madly in love with a ham actress, Madame Tchissik, and Singer writes, 'When I think that Kafka loved this creature, dreamed about her, I am ashamed for man and his illusions. Well, immortality is not choosy.' But then, you were going to say something about that. You said you are not surprised that he fell...*

Well she was very intelligent, and she was...she wasn't beautiful, but, I can understand anybody falling for her mentally and having a rapport with her. I don't know where, what happened to her husband, what, under what circumstances she joined the Jewish Theatre; that would be a story in itself. It raises more questions than it answers.

*Do you remember her first name?*

I did know it, but I can't recall it.

*You say she had a child?*

The pianist, the girl who played the piano?

Yes.

Yes. She was about, she could have been just bordering on 20, a hefty looking girl.

*But when are you talking about? Are you talking about after the First World War, or before?*

After. Definitely. After. Well I was still at school in the First World War wasn't I.

Yes.

No this was after.

*So you took lessons, piano lessons, after you left school?*

Mm, aha.

*Where was the piano?*

The piano was in the dining-room. It was an upright.

*I remember it, it was in the flat, your parents' flat.*

Oh no, that wasn't that piano from the house. The piano, the one you learnt on?

*No, no your parents' flat. There was a piano in that little flat.*

Definitely not, never. No piano there dear. They wouldn't have had...they didn't...they didn't manage to take anything from the house, it had almost a direct hit. No.

*So when...it had a direct hit, in the First War?*

That's the First War, yes.

*Yes. So, was that then the end of the guesthouse?*

No no no. The direct hit was not the First World War, it was the second one.

*So they carried on with the guesthouse and everything until what, about 1941 then?*

Yes.

*Then it was bombed. And then they moved.*

And they were re-housed. No they were re-housed. No, when they were bombed they went to stay with Millie and Sam.

*And then they moved to the flat that I remember.*

That's right. I'm trying to think of the name. It doesn't matter.

*Well that was near the market.*

Yes.

*Which market?*

Two markets. There was the market in Commercial Road, and then there was the Lane, Petticoat Lane.

*That I remember.*

Yes. Oh I wouldn't want to go down there now, it's a different kettle of fish entirely.

*But how did they live, how did they support themselves?*

Well, we supported them to an extent. And they were given an allowance, you know, there was plenty of...they came in for some sort of pensions. They weren't short of anything.

*When did your father have his stroke?*

If you want dates, I can't give you..

*Well, was it after they were re-housed?*

After, yes, that happened after they moved, they were re-housed there, that's right. He made a good recovery, he was mobile. He would travel down from the East End to David and I at The High, and sometimes Millie and Sam at their house, until they got bombed, and when they got bombed we managed to get a flat for them in the same block in The High, two floors below us you see; that more or less brings us up to date with you.

*No, Auntie and Uncle Sam went to live in Pendennis Road.*

That's right, yes.

*And not until Sam died did Auntie come to The High.*

Yes, that's right.

*Well that's in my time, that's modern history.*

Yes.

*Again, going back, you talked about your travels with your father, but you didn't talk...you didn't...you talked about Lodz but you didn't talk about Warsaw. You mentioned that you went to Warsaw with your father, but you didn't give me any details.*

Oh as I say, I think, we spent... I don't think, did we stay overnight? I can't recall if we stayed overnight. We may... I think I'm a most unsatisfactory person to be interviewed.

*Not at all.*

I think I'm just too awful, I really do.

*No, on the contrary. On the contrary. Did you...was the family there?*

What family?

*In Warsaw. Was there family to visit there?*

No, we went to Dad's sister's house.

*In Warsaw?*

Oh no no, not in Warsaw.

*In Lodz.*

In Lodz.

*Yes.*

And we met whatever remained of the family there, we met at his sister's house. And I can't remember how long we stayed there, and I also can't remember where we

stayed. Then we went on to Warsaw, to contact certain people David knew. There was one, a Mr Segalovich, he was a writer, he wrote poetry. He was quite well known in his... And he was invited to the union, the authors' union [INAUDIBLE], and he was made quite a fuss of, because they all knew David from London.

*Your father?*

My father. From London. And, I can recall Segalovich coming over here, he stayed at our place, because he had issued a book on his poems and all that sort of thing, and he wanted to sort of get it over here. I can't recall the outcome of that at all. Anyway, there was this trip. Maybe time will trigger off my memory as far as that's concerned. At the moment it's almost a closed book.

*But can you remember what it was like travelling with your father? Was it fun?*

Oh yes. Oh we thoroughly enjoyed it. I was really close to my father, because, when I say I was his favourite, that's really exaggerating it, because Millie had her job, Sue had her theatre work to do, and sometimes she was away with the group acting somewhere else; I was always at home, being supportive, and because of that I think I was closer to my father than either of the two other girls.

*Because, when you talk, as you frequently have, about not sitting down as a family and talking, this was your opportunity to have your father to yourself, to be able to talk. Do you remember that you did have?*

Never talked in depth about anything. [PAUSE] No, of course, in the evenings when one could relax and perhaps do a bit of talking, there was always card-playing, bridge and whatever.

*No, but when you were travelling, it was just the two of you.*

No, we were travelling, we were companions, but there wasn't much talk. No, looking back there was not much talk. Not... As you say, hindsight, that was a time

we could have established what the background was. How do you account, how would you... Peculiar, right?

*No, because...*

Most peculiar.

*You can't put an interpretation on something now for what happened then, you can't, it was different, it was very different. So...*

Sometimes I'm wondering whether we should have started this in the first place, because there's so much I realise now that I've missed out on. It doesn't make me sad, it doesn't make me miserable or anything like that. It's just a pity. We could have established perhaps a closer rapport. It's only by talking to people that you can really get down to basics.

*Sometimes it doesn't though.*

Communication, that's it. That's the trouble with things today, the lack of communication, and that's what was happening at the time with us. As far as Millie's concerned, he was always a bit strict with Millie, and I don't know why. And sometimes he would be, he would pick her up on something and I would...I would cry, if he remonstrated with Millie or said anything to her that was hurtful, and I would cry. And if Dad was horrid to me, she would cry. Which just emphasises how close Millie and I were, and that closeness remained through the years right until her death. She was worth it, she was the most wonderful person. Completely selfless. Next question.

*Yes. You mentioned that you had your tonsils out.*

Had what?

*You had your tonsils out.*

Oh yes, I lost my tonsils.

*I wanted to ask you.*

I lost my tonsils at an early age.

*But where did you have them out, and how?*

Oh the London Hospital.

*But how? I mean there was no anaesthetic then.*

Oh I had an anaesthetic. Yes, a mask over my nose.

*Ether?*

Yes, that's what they used in those days.

*Do you remember it?*

Vaguely.

*How old were you?*

I think I was twelve. I can recall that. And, I was kept in for about two or three days I think, and then sent home, but Mum really couldn't take care of me, so I was palmed off to my grandparents, who lived, well more or less a stone's throw from where we were. And, I enjoyed that session. A wonderful old couple as I can remember them now. I think I've mentioned this before, he was a boot repairer and a shoe repairer. And...

*But can you describe what it was like in the hospital?*

Yes. Now I quite liked it, looking back on it. In those days, the hospitals were wonderful in those days. There was the matron with her frilled headgear floating down at her back, and when she came into the ward, all the nurses stood to attention, then one could sense, looking back you can sense the discipline was there. That's an era I can well remember. And you felt secure. I can't remember what the food was like, but that wasn't important. But it was quite, it was quite an experience I suppose. But then, you were aware of the difficulty in swallowing, and you were given ice-cream, that's one of the, yes, ice-cream, that's one of the things that helps to heal it. I don't think I can remember much more about the hospital then.

*Were you in a ward with other children?*

Oh yes, yes, it was a large ward, roughly speaking twelve, fourteen people. Unisex of course in those days.

End of F8056 Side A

F8056 Side B

Looking back, one could be aware now of the discipline there, particularly knowing what it's like these days. Chalk and cheese.

*Can you remember what...*

Real Florence Nightingale atmosphere.

*Can you remember what uniform the nurses wore? You said the matron had her long...*

Blue gowns with white aprons.

*And big head-dresses, head coverings?*

Yes, they wore caps, they wore caps, starched caps, yes.

*Because they used to be much more elaborate then, than they are now.*

Yes, yes. And more immaculate too.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*I just want to ask you about the markets, you just mentioned the markets. Did they have any specific?*

Well, there was a little market off the Commercial Road, and we lived, we lived then in Cannon Street Road, where Dad and Mum ran a sort of restaurant-cum-café thing, and there was a...

*Wait a minute. Apart from the guesthouse?*

Oh no, that was before we moved to Whitechapel, Cannon Street Road.

*Ah.*

There was this... That's going back isn't it. A bit confusing?

*What, before...so, when would this be, about 1910?*

Let me see, if I was born in '04, about 1912, '13, '14.

*So when did they move to Whitechapel?*

Because you see, I can't give you dates. But...

*Well in relation to the war.*

Yes, because when... Ah, the 1914 War, we were living there when the Zeppelins came through, which we've recorded.

*In Whitechapel?*

No no, this was in Cannon Street Road, when the Zeppelin came over and it got ignited, burning in the sky then; that was on the Wednesday morning at ten o'clock. Funny how that sticks in my mind. And the Zeppelin was burning, and, you've got it recorded it on the other tape, and that woman crying out in Yiddish, 'Menschen brennen dorten', people are burning there. It was very traumatic then. Anyway, going back to the market, there was a little dairy there which had a couple of cows in the back, and we would come with our jug there, and buy our milk there. We'd sometimes get it back with some grass in it. That was before...

*Pasteurisation.*

Yes, before pasteurisation.

*But you never...did you ever milk the cow yourself?*

No. And when you went in there you could smell the farmyard, a lovely smell. And get the warmth of the atmosphere. And then they'd ladle it out and measure it pint-wise and pour it into your jug.

*Sorry, go on.*

Go on. You'd think you were at the pub, buying your beer. Never had to do that.

*But was this an actual farmyard or did they bring the cows in, in the morning?*

They brought the cows in, it wasn't a farmyard, they had a couple of cows and they sold the milk. And it came up from the farm sort of, I suppose a little way out, but it went back and it came back again.

*I suppose they had eggs too, did they have eggs?*

They must have had. I can't recall it, but they must have had some other dairy produce. Oh crumbs.

*So you remember Cannon Street. What else can you remember about Cannon Street?*

It was like a little village. On the right-hand side... Oh yes, that sparks off something. You went into Cannon Street Road, and you walked down a little bit, there was, what was it, a little cinema there, just a little cinema, converted out into a cinema on the right. You went down a little further and there was our set-up, our restaurant-cum-café there. And there that carried on with more houses. It was like a little *stetl*, everybody knew each other. And Mr and Mrs Pizer lived on the big house in the corner there. My God! Sometimes I'm sorry I started. And Mrs Pizer, they were, they were in the tailoring business, and very comfortable. She had a piano, and she could play the piano, and I remember once we used to pop in there sometimes for no reason, and, I forget who I was with, it could have been Sue, and she stood there and she watched Mrs Pizer playing the piano, and she turned round to me and said, 'A

mother can also play the piano?' She was only used to children learning the piano. She sees a grown-up woman playing a piano. What do you make of that?

*Oh that's beautiful.*

A mother can also play the piano. The Pizers. And on the other side of the road there were some very substantial houses, and in one house was the Klinghoffers. Clara Klinghoffer was an artist, quite a...she had a reputation, and she used to exhibit, mostly, what do you call it, not profiles...

*Portraits?*

Portraits. She was very good. And she painted Sue, and she exhibited it. But I've seen...through the years, on two occasions I've seen her name in print, and nothing since. Klinghoffer. Whether she ever made it, I don't know. And next to the Klinghoffers there was, now what was his name? He was also very comfortable, high up in the tailoring business, had his contacts, and was a very, very good-looking man, and a very smart woman. They were very modern, very up-to-date, and they had the money and they showed it around. Well, he was also in with the gambling crowd, and it was he who dragged my father into that circle of gambling. They gambled the horses, and gambling cards, and my father couldn't afford it, whereas the others very well could, so that gave rise to a lot of angst I think the word would be. The Klinghoffers. There was another family that lived there, and the children of the right age were friends with us as children and went to the same school. She had thirteen children.

*Were they very Orthodox?*

Are they religious? Not extreme; they were religious. Synagogue-goers. They were all synagogue-goers. Of course they were very...they were very close as a community. They offered to help each other out or anything, and they were caring. It was like a little village.

*Were they all from Poland?*

Yes, I think they were all Poles. Whether they came, what part of Poland I don't know, but they were Poles. And of course they had a similar language. I never recall hearing my parents saying anything in Polish.

*They all spoke Yiddish?*

Yiddish.

*When you were away with your father, did you speak Yiddish or English?*

English. English, yes.

*That's quite unusual. Among the people I've spoken to, the parents who speak Yiddish as their first language, generally they speak Yiddish to their children. That's unusual.*

Mm. Oh well, Mum and Dad would speak in Yiddish and we would answer in English. Yes.

*Who else, what else can you remember about that...?*

About Cannon Street Road?

Yes.

Continuing off Cannon Street Road, quite a way up there was a school there and I can't remember the name of that. It was for the...those that had passed the 11-plus in those days, and went to higher education, Cable Street, Cable Street School. And that's where Millie went, because she won a bursary, I think we've recorded that already, and, the characteristic of Millie was, as it was right until the day of her, almost her death, she was so meticulous to detail, she just loved study, and...because...I think it's been recorded, no point in repeating of it, but our dad

wanted her to leave school at fourteen, and come into the business, and she wanted to continue studying.

*Yes.*

Which eventually, she appealed to the headmaster, who spoke to Dad, and said she's worth...

*Yes.*

Yes, it's all recorded. You'll erase that I suppose will you?

*No, no I don't erase anything at all.*

Yes. So, that was Cable Street School. And, in Cable Street lived a relative of Dad's. He had I think about six sons and one daughter, and he wanted to marry off one of his sons with Millie. She didn't fancy him.

*What was the name?*

Because that association goes right through to Streatham, because the Needs... Oh Christ! That's running ahead too far. That's running...

*No, no because it connects with...*

So, anyway, he had all these...

*Need?*

No, no never mind the Needs, they come in later. I'm trying to recall the name of this cousin.

*Lewis?*

Pardon?

*Lewis?*

Yes. Lewis. Where did you get that from?

*You've mentioned them before.*

Yes. Lewis. Lewis married one of, the only daughter of that family; the rest were all boys. And I think they were remote cousins of Dad's.

*But you don't remember their name then, all these boys, their surname?*

No. Oh well... No. Oh no, if I ever knew it.

*Because there must be a lot of them around.*

Of course.

*And they're all relations.*

Yes. Esther Need, you know Esther Need, from Streatham?

*No.*

Esther Need was the granddaughter of this relative in Cable Street. The daughter's name, what was her name? She married this Mr Lewis.

*Well that was the name, Need. If all the boys, if they were all boys, and this woman is Need, and she's not Lewis, then that's the name.*

No no no, she married a Need. Her birth name was not Need, she married this Need. He ended up having Alzheimer's. Of course we met up again at the funeral, the shiva

of Len White's wife, May's sister. We met up there. And he was already on the onset of Alzheimer's.

*Right. To go back a little bit to Cable Street. You talk about this family with all those children. In a way that's not a wonder. What is a wonder is the families that didn't have a lot of children. I mean your parents, I mean, what precautions did they take against having more children?*

That I'd like to know. I don't know.

*You don't know what the precautions would have been in those days?*

Well it certainly wouldn't have been any Mum would have taken, she wouldn't have known...she wouldn't have known about it. I think it must have been withdrawal, the only safe thing they knew. I think Mum could have had a few misses.

*There were some very antiquated condoms in those days.*

Yes. Yes. Never came across one.

*I saw one once.*

What?

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Last time you told me reluctantly but it was very nice, about your mother swearing when she, when things had gone wrong at the bakery. It wasn't much of a swearing, but you said she often did. Can you remember anything else she used to say?*

Gosh Jennifer. When there used to be arguments amongst the frequenters of the place there, it could be religious arguments, it could be political arguments, and Mum's got nothing to do with that, it was Dad and the people he was arguing with. My God! Some of the things... I don't want that recorded, I'm sorry, I refuse.

*Oh come on, this is what it's all about.*

No, not vulgar.

*Yes, oh come on.*

[laughs] Why did I start this in the first place Jennifer?

*Oh come on. Because, so that you could tell me this. Come on. Nothing's vulgar these days.*

Instinct... No, there's nothing vulgar. Any vulgar word my father would clamp down on, but, he was very particular what was said in front of the girls, or other people, he didn't allow anything like that. But he could come out with it. He was quite a character I suppose looking back, dear old Dad.

*Well you've got to...you've got to immortalise him by telling me.*

Oh he's immortalised without that dear.

*Come on, tell me.*

[laughs] Oh I don't know Jennifer, let's call it a day dear.

*Oh go on. Just one.*

Sometimes you spark off something that's best left alone.

*Oh go on, oh go on, it's a gem. It's only for us.*

I wouldn't want my father to go into posterity with that sort of thing around. My father was a very intelligent man. God knows he had plenty of hardships in his time, and to crown it all he had to be a compulsive gambler, that didn't make things easier.

*Go on, what are you laughing about?*

Oh! If I don't laugh I'll cry. No, because it conjures up, and you see the situation.

Oh I suppose I ought to have a drink really. Call it a day Jennifer dear.

*Because you know we were talking last time about, you didn't know where your father got his money from, but it must have been from his successful gambling.*

Oh well he got a little profit from the business dear, I mean he didn't do it gratis.

And, with gambling, I don't think you're ever on top, I don't think he was.

*Yes, but he was...he was...*

There were some things I would say to you but I wouldn't allow you to record.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*You were going to tell me about other holidays that you had.*

I can remember the Polegate one distinctly.

*You went with...who did you go with?*

With Millie and I, and Stella Swede.

*Who is Stella Swede?*

Stella Swede was a school friend of hers who, well it's a story in itself. Who emigrated to America, then she took her sister out, and she was planning to bring her parents out. Oh yes, and her brother came out.

*From where? You mean out from where?*

From the East End. They were adult at the time. And one brother drowned, he was on holiday in Devonshire somewhere, he drowned there. And they were on the verge of bringing their parents out, because the other son and the two girls, Stella and, I forget her other name, she got...the younger sister got Alzheimer's at a very early age, must have been in her thirties, she died. And before she could bring her parents out, the war broke out, the last war, so that put paid to that. And they were left here all on their own.

*There's one big subject I want to talk to you about.*

The what?

*There's one big subject I wanted to talk to you about in the East End, and that's what you remember about what it was like during the war, and Oswald Mosley – well, before the war. Can you remember?*

What would you like, during the war?

*No no no, really before, with Oswald Mosley. You must have been aware of him.*

Ah, oh yes definitely. I never saw any demonstrations, just what you got over the radio, or in the news. And a lot of talk about it of course. Did Harold Halperin come into that era? Because I know he used to take part in some anti-Mosley demonstrations.

*Would he have been old enough?*

Would it have been? Yes, he could be. He could be in that era.

*He was born, I can tell you when he was born.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Yes, he was born in 1925. No then he couldn't really. He could have been active just before the war, but...*

Mm.

*No, he couldn't have been active in the early Thirties.*

Because I know he was always very interested in these causes, wasn't he. Did he want to go out to the Civil War in...didn't he want to try out with that? I know he wanted to be into something.

*What, do you mean in Spain?*

Yes.

*Well if he was born in 1925, he would have been too young; he would only have been eleven in 1936.*

No.

*No, he was...he was...he was active, it was later.*

Ah, I know, he wanted to be active in Israel.

*Yes. No, he did do, he was part of a vigilante group against anti-Semitic thugs.*

Yes.

*But it can't have been till the war.*

No, no that's true, yes, he was too young, yes.

*But what...you never saw Mosley?*

No, I never saw him. I never saw actually any demonstrations. Well, how could I? I wouldn't have been allowed to join in anything like that. Dad was very strict.

*Yes, but if it were in the street, outside.*

No, there were no demonstrations locally that we, that I ever saw or was aware of.

*What do you remember people saying?*

I have no memory of that. It hasn't been jogged yet. You haven't jogged that part of the memory. The computer, the software's there, but it hasn't activated.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Why does it seem so much more dramatic now? It was all so ordinary in those days.

*Well, it wasn't, was it? Because look at what it led up to.*

Yes, but, I think now when there's been so much of injustices world-wide, one feels more moved, horrified by it.

*Well certainly hindsight puts it into perspective.*

I always say that hindsight tends to glamorise things. When you're going through it, it was just happening. Looking back on it, we realise it's history-making.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Last time I was asking you about Oswald Mosley, and I think you said you didn't, weren't really aware of him. But what were you aware of, of what was going on in Europe, in Germany et cetera?*

Well, one always listened to the news, and knew what was going on at the time. In the Thirties there was all this fascism and... There was very little that leaked through

in the English press, but quite a bit from the American, of which my father would get the news through the, I'm just trying to think of the name of the paper he read. I can't recall the name.

*I think you said it was in Yiddish, he read.*

Yes. Yes it was in Yiddish. And, in the...you're talking of the Thirties, are you?

*Well, yes generally, and maybe specifically in '33 when Hitler was elected Chancellor.*

I can't recall anything. All I can remember is leading up to the '36/7, when the Duke of Windsor and...

*Wallace Simpson.*

Wallace Simpson, hit the news, and we didn't get much of that here, but that's, my father got that through his American...*The Jewish Forwards, The Forwards*. And also, I can't think of anything relevant at the moment.

*Do you remember...do you remember Munich, do you remember what you felt?*

No, was that when... You see my memory is so wretched.

*That's when Chamberlain...*

Chamberlain, I remember that distinctly, when he came back, but what year would that have been?

*Well that was '36.*

Yes, '35, '34, '35, '36.

*Or '37. Think that was the year you married.*

'37 was when the Duke of Windsor and Wallace Simpson reached its peak, and it came out on the English newspapers. And then of course, they married the year David and I did, '37, practically on the same day I think. It was a Sunday.

*What did you think about it, what they did, what they decided to do, what the King decided to do, to abdicate?*

Well, one had an opinion, that... Well you see in those days there was so much tradition, that things weren't done because it wasn't traditional. Now it's a totally different thing, it's more accepted. There's a greater tolerance isn't there. But, about that period of course the English papers were blazoned, front-page news in big print, and everybody got caught up in it. But, it was wrong for the Duke of Windsor to expect her to be the next Queen. I personally, even in those days, and a lot of people like me, thought it would be wrong for her to have that position, and the very fact that he was born into that... As they said, happy is the head that wears a crown, and it certainly fits that period with Windsor. And right up to this very day, with Charles, although it's different now with Charles because Camilla comes of a good family, the fact that she's divorced is immaterial, but at the same time I wouldn't like to see her crowned Queen. I always favoured a morganatic marriage. But, reading the paper now, she's coming to the fore, and there was a photograph of her in the Sunday paper, I don't know if you saw it, she's quite attractive, or maybe the photograph flattered her. But, he should, Charles should now be allowed to marry her, and as they said in the article, it was worth reading, she should be his private companion, not his...

*Yes, not his recognised Queen.*

No.

*So you think it would be all right...*

Not his public...she shouldn't...she shouldn't be on his public visits, or portraits. An entirely private life he should have with her.

*So you think it's all right for him to marry her, but you didn't think it was right for the Duke of Windsor to marry Wallace?*

Yes. No, I wouldn't...I wouldn't have objected to him marrying Wallace if she was kept in the background, as his morganatic wife. He wanted her to be the Queen, and that was going too far. As he was born into that, there are sacrifices that have to be made. He always had the opportunity to, what's the word, to object...

*To abdicate?*

Abdicate.

Yes.

And Charles could abdicate if he wants a full public life with his wife, but if he wants her to be the future Queen, he's got to abide by the rules. That's my private thinking; whether most people would go along with that...

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Let me just ask you, you were telling me about things your father did, and you said he sang. But did he also write? For instance did he write poetry?*

He did a bit of writing, yes, but nothing... You see I repeat again, over and over again, that as a family it was most unusual by present-day standards, there was never a real get-together.

*Yes, but you just told me that he wrote poetry.*

Yes.

*In Yiddish?*

Yes.

*What happened to it?*

You see their home was blitzed dear, they had to leave everything as it was there. I can recall there was...it was a house we took over from people who.....

End of F8056 Side B

F8057 Side A

*This is tape four in the interview with Mary Roslyn, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1998.*

*Interviewer, her daughter Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*OK.*

It was a house that belonged to pawnbrokers.

*What was...where was this, in Whitechapel?*

Whitechapel High Street. Immediately opposite the London Hospital, the Royal London Hospital. It wasn't called the Royal then, it was just the London Hospital.

*And so it was a pawnbroker?*

It was a pawnbroker's. They had the shop next door, there was an alleyway next to it, and there was our house. And that alleyway, this is important, I think I've mentioned it before, that alleyway was supposed to be associated with, what was the name of that murderer?

*Jack the Ripper?*

Jack the Ripper. Have I mentioned that before?

*No.*

I must have. And there was always talk, and there must be some grounds for it, that that's where he used to operate, in that area.

*When did you know that?*

Well I've always known it dear.

*Yes, but...*

But it was never really established.

*But when you moved in...*

We didn't know anything about that.

*What...roughly what year did you move in?*

Oh Christ!

*No wait a minute. This was...*

You're asking me about years.

*Well this was after the First War, when you moved into Whitechapel.*

I think it was before.

*Before. So, when was he operating? Much earlier.*

Oh he wasn't operating then.

*It was finished.*

It was already...remember, Churchill used to go to the East End and, of course he was...they were trying to track him down, and they were on his tail or something. I don't know any details about it. I'm just talking of the rumours that existed when we moved in there.

*But that was all over, Jack the Ripper was finished.*

That was all over, it was in the past, yes. And having been an ex-pawnbroker's house, they had some very... When they left it, I think he died, there were quite a few things which by today's standards would have been valuable, some ormolu clocks, and various things. There was...oh what's that...with a roller and then music comes out of it, and, you have to wind...

*Oh, an old phonograph?*

Not an old phonograph darling. It's...

*A musical box?*

A musical box, yes.

*Oh.*

It's a musical box. You see, it was... But what...

*So what happened to it?*

Well I'm telling you darling, I'm telling you. It was left dear. We couldn't take it anywhere.

*No wait a minute. When you said, when you moved in, this stuff was there.*

Yes.

*So, what do you mean, you couldn't take it anywhere?*

Oh well, talking after the house was blitzed. There was an enormous painting in the hall, I think it stretched at least as big as that, and it was a very old one.

*What, about ten feet long?*

It was a very...took up all of that wall. And it was heavily varnished, and it was old, but there were animals painted on it. I often wondered its value. We couldn't take that anywhere.

*But, I'm sorry, where were you supposed to take it? You'd just moved in.*

Oh, no. It was left there. We didn't take it anywhere, it was left there. Only when the house was blitzed.

*Oh later, oh I see, in the Second War. No in the First War.*

No no no, the Second War was a different story altogether.

*Right. The First, of course the First War, yes.*

The First World War.

*Yes. Ah.*

I don't think I'm a very satisfactory...

*Yes you are, you're wonderful, you're wonderful, believe me.*

Well I can't remember dates and I can't remember...

*That's not important, it really isn't. I mean, it all goes back a long way.*

Yes.

*Yes.*

So, well you see you've got a gem there with Jack the Ripper.

*That's incredible. But were you frightened, when you heard that rumour that he had killed people there?*

I don't recall being frightened. It was just a rumour that went around, there was no tangible evidence.

*But you were quite young. Did you go up that alleyway?*

Yes, I think, then, I might have been twelve, thirteen, fourteen, something like that.

*Well didn't you frighten each other by sort of going up and play games?*

No, I can't recall us ever doing that.

No.

I mean it was rumoured, and we accepted the rumour and dismissed it. It must have been quite a few years after that. Because they never caught him did they? Of course there was a rumour that it could have been the Duke of Clarence.

*But did you, while we're on the subject, did you play games, did you have friends who you met outside and played games with them, or did you play games indoors with your friends, or what?*

No, I was always very close to my sister, and, we had some visitors, but there was no privacy, there was no privacy to have anything. You're trying to fathom how we spent the time. Of course we read. Oh and there was school of course.

*But you didn't play games? Well did you play cards with Millie?*

No.

*There were a lot of cards around.*

No, didn't play cards with Millie. Watched a lot of card-playing, because as you know there was a lot of card-playing there, a lot of gambling, that sort of thing. It all sounds perhaps seedy, but it wasn't. I mean we didn't know anything else, it was a way of life for us.

*What about songs, do you remember singing? You said your father used to sing. Do you remember what he sang? Yiddish songs?*

I never recall him singing around the house. We only heard him once on stage, on the Pavilion stage, because when they had plays my dear we used to go in there without paying for it, because there was a close relationship with the actors and...

*But what did he sing, do you remember?*

There's a song... You're prodding. There was a song that was sung, and I don't know if Dad sang it, about the house where they laugh and they cry. Where there's the people downstairs celebrating something, celebrate; the people upstairs are crying over a death. It's the house where they're laughing and they're crying. Well that was set to music.

*In Yiddish?*

Of course.

*So how would that be in Yiddish?*

*'In der Haus wie Man lacht und Man waint.'* Does that translate to you?

*Yes. Yes. Oh, wonderful.*

I suppose if I could remember more detail, you would find it fascinating, because it's an era that has completely gone.

*Well that's the point, that's the point, and I'm just hoping that by asking, more things will come bubbling up you see.*

Well it has, hasn't it?

*Mm, oh yes, a lot.*

But there must be a lot there hidden.

*Well I think so. I ought to hypnotise you.*

Oh yes, did you read that case of hypnotism?

*Anyway, you mentioned, just a line you threw away, that you said that your mother might have had miscarriages.*

I think so, yes.

*What made you think that?*

Well, with hindsight, when she wasn't well, and one wondered about that. But, of course my, I think my father was quite highly sexed, I think, and I think some of their quarrels stemmed from that, you know. The headache syndrome, you know. Of course sometimes Dad, I can picture it now, Dad standing in the kitchen, Mum at the cooker, and me hovering in between, and he shouting at her, calling her some names, it was very... I wasn't going to mention those things, because I still find them hurtful.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*I know that you took a trip to Vienna with Millie.*

Yes, Millie went out there with Sam for him to have some medical treatment, and he was in a clinic taking his treatment, and she stayed with a German family, a German Jewish family.

*What year was this?*

Oh darling!

*Roughly. Before '33?*

Oh definitely.

*Mid-Twenties?*

I was... I could have been about eighteen, nineteen, twenty, something like that. And she wrote back saying, could I come out to keep her company, she's so lonely. She was with a lovely family, and... Oh yes, and I went out there, and, Vienna is a wonderful town, a wonderful town. And, there was a daughter in the house who was very friendly with Millie, and they would go out together. And she couldn't, this daughter couldn't speak English, and Millie and she had to converse in Yiddish, and when I came out there, we naturally carried on that same way. So one day she was taking us sightseeing, and before we left she said to me, 'Don't speak in Yiddish, it's very tricky here.' So, we refrained from discussing things. And I stayed there, I think it could have been three weeks, a month, and then of course I had to come home.

*Can you remember what you saw in Vienna?*

Well we did a little general sightseeing, and when Millie went to visit Sam, if I didn't go with her, I would go to the local park, the Wiener...

*The Wienerwald. The Wienerwald?*

No.

*Oh the Prater?*

The Prater. You've been there haven't you?

*Yes.*

Yes. And so I would go and sit in the park and take some reading, have a wander through. And, I was sitting there one day reading when I was approached by an attractive-looking, I told you this I think, an attractive-looking young man who chatted me up. And, of course... I'm trying to think, he couldn't speak in English... I think we conversed in English, because I didn't...I did have to say that...I didn't have to speak in what I would call German, but what is really Yiddish. And he chatted, and then he suggested we go for a walk, because it was near there, there was lots of trees and what, take a walk through the forest. But I had the common sense then to say, 'No thank you, I'm all right here,' that sort of thing. I would have been murdered, I'm convinced of it.

*You might have had an interesting experience.*

No, instinctively you sort of feel that it's not right. Didn't know the fellow. So, I can't say it was a very... Oh yes, we used to go to, now that Millie had a companion in me, we would go out together, and do little trips, not far out of town, and we would go to certain of these Viennese cafés and have their coffee, *mit Schlag ober*.

*With cream.*

And a bit of chocolate on top of it. Brings back memories?

*Did you go to Sacher, that's the famous café there?*

Yes.

*That's where the Sachertorte...*

Yes, that Sachertorte, yes. Oh yes, we went there.

*We've been there.*

Mm?

*We were there, the whole family.*

Oh yes, have to pay a visit there.

*Did you visit...*

A lovely café, a large café, and, oh crumbs yes.

*It probably hasn't changed since you were there.*

Shouldn't be surprised. It would be a pity to change it. It's very Continental, very...

*Did you visit Schönbrunn, the palace?*

Yes. Yes, saw the palace. That's in the town isn't it?

*It's not far out, yes, it's...*

Mm.

*A short way.*

Oh we did our little trips.

*And Mozart's house?*

That I can't recall.

*What about the opera, did you get to the opera?*

No. I don't think we were too well off for cash. And, it's strange, I mean it was a landmark in my life then, but it was so long ago. I wish I could remember more, because it really was a most enjoyable trip. Millie was heartbroken when I had to go back, but she remained another couple of weeks and then she came back with Sam.

*So how long was she away altogether?*

Who?

*Millie.*

Could have been about, I don't think three months.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Now, more personal questions, as though they haven't been personal enough already.  
How you met Daddy, how did that all happen?*

Oh, I have found, looking back, and I've got a long way to look back, that I really have been very fortunate, and I have always felt that the Almighty is looking out for me. I've always had that feeling. That's why to this day everything seems to have fallen into my lap, and yet the darned Lottery will not turn up. That's asking for too much. What I've had out of life, is more than a lot of people get. I started with a lot of experience. And... You see, it starts off a lot of memories. So, how I met Dad. So, after a second broken romance, I wanted to leave home to get away from the environment, and I was invited by Millie and Sam to come and stay with them. It was supposed to be on a temporary basis, but it lasted. Then Sam suggested that I come into the practice as a receptionist, he needed one, and if that suited me, that would be wonderful. Which I did. And after being there, it was a job I thoroughly enjoyed, I got on very well with Sam, who was very easy to get on with, and a lovely person, a wonderful brother-in-law, and, Sam decided he wanted to take things a little more easily so he advertised for an optician to come into the practice, just as an employee, nothing more. And amongst the applicants was David Roslyn. I can recall his coming the first day. It was raining heavily, and there was this chap with a hat, a

trilby was worn in those days, almost covered his face, and a raincoat that reached down to his ankles. And of course he had an umbrella. He looked quite funny as a matter of fact. Anyway he had this interview, and he was engaged, and he was fixed to start on a certain date, which he did, and that's how we first met. We were both very friendly, and we carried on, he was employed, living in digs in Balham. And, we weren't certain whether he was Jewish. Sam didn't feel he could ask him outright, but he was with the practice for about six months when it was a Jewish holiday and he wanted to go home for it, that's to Glasgow, and he asked Sam for leave, and that's when he found out he was Jewish. Which really pleased us. Yes. And he went home for a week or so, and then he came back, and the situation was somewhat changed then. Millie felt, he's a Jewish boy living in digs, which is a pity, and he was invited home for meals, for Friday night, and a closer relationship occurred. Then, David and I got on extremely well, and chatted, there was nothing much there, and one day he suggested we go to a film locally, and it built up from there, we would go to a film, and then we started going to the Proms. And we, on Saturday night we would go into town. The Lyons Corner House then was a very popular place, there was always music and song. And we had, we would have regular goings-out together, with nothing further in mind. But as with most things it develops. And then one day I was in the front, and David came behind me; on the wall was a whole vast amount of, the patients' thingummies, all the patients...

*The records?*

Records. All the records. And he was standing behind there, and I was sitting in front, and he said to me, 'One day I'm going to kiss you.' And I can't recall, I've mentioned this before I think, and I can't recall what my answer was. What I should have said was, 'Why wait?' But I don't think I did.

*But did you find him attractive?*

I liked him, yes. I didn't know how much I liked him.

*He was very good-looking.*

I don't think so really. I mean that photograph of David and I taken, on the board, well he looks extremely handsome there. He always retained his looks; of course, then he filled out a bit. Oh he was very thin and weedy in those days, very thin. And... Then we would go to the films, and of course what happens in the films, he puts his arm round you, and then you, you get the closeness. It built up gradually, that's how it happened. And then...

*So he finally kissed you?*

I can't remember the first kiss. No, what I do remember is, there was a lapse between patients, and he was waiting for his next appointment when he comes out the front and drags me back in to the... Are you recording that? And drags me into his consulting room for a hug. Which could have gone further if I hadn't stopped it. There, that's the build-up to your mother and father's romance.

*Then?*

It was romantic. It was lovely.

*So how long were you dating before he proposed?*

Then, of course, after David had been with the practice possibly for about eighteen months, his parents wrote down to say, or phoned, that they had bought a practice for him, borrowed the money, and the previous owner had died and it had been neglected, and all it wanted was building up. They were longing to get him back, you can understand it. So, David had to go up. And, he didn't say he was coming back, he didn't say anything, and I thought that was it, he was gone. Gone out of my life. That's when I realised I loved him, because when I went home for lunch, that's to Millie's house, I broke down and cried on her shoulders. 'I've lost him, and I love him.' I remember that distinctly. I was heartbroken. Then, I got a letter from him, not committing himself to anything. He certainly is, or was, a canny Scot, he would not commit himself. And when he came back... Never got a formal proposal you know, as far as I can remember.

*Well what did the letter say?*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] Jennifer dear, I did not get a letter. I don't think I got a letter from him. He just came back. And he told me that he had spoke to his mother, that he couldn't come up, he said he couldn't live in that...I mean Glasgow in those days was a dead end. He said he couldn't. And apart from that, he told them there was a girl he's interested in. So they said, 'Well why don't you bring her up?' So... I wish I could remember the conversations when he did come back, or how the understanding established itself. Well he came back. I mean that must have been a joyous occasion for me. I can't remember it. So, he came back, and, I think I must have said to him, 'I thought you had gone, I thought...you never said anything, you never... I thought you had gone and you didn't care anything, all that. I can't remember the details Jennifer. But, all I knew, I was heartbroken when he went. So then, he took me up north, meet the family. A lovely family.

*But were you engaged when you went up north?*

Must have been. I can't remember having an engagement party.

*But for you to travel together, that's, unchaperoned?*

Oh no, it wasn't as strict as that, of course not. Chaperoned? Travelled up? Oh we went overnight. We didn't have a car n those days. No, we went up by train, met the family.

*But nothing happened, I mean you weren't...were you lovers?*

No. In those days you didn't do things like that. No, we were both...I told you once before, we were both virgin when we married. Plus, didn't have the opportunity possibly. I mean I was living with Millie at the time, and he would come and have his evening meal with us, and they would go to bed, I would be left there with David, and nothing ever happened. Well, cuddle and that sort of thing, but, there wasn't the time really or the place for it. It might come back to me further, but, it's tucked away right at the back.

*So you went up to Glasgow, and how was that?*

Oh that was lovely. Meeting all the family. Because David was always, the whole family loved him, thought so highly of him. He was also the first male grandchild, the others were all girls. Incredible the amount of females. There was...his mother's one of seven women, the Sherman girls, there were four of those. Bella had two boys and a girl, but David was the first male grandchild, and was made such a fuss of because of that, particularly by the grandparents. And then as they grew old, he grew older, he endeared himself to them more, because, with the parents he had, he couldn't have been any different, they were wonderful, his mum and dad. Oh I'm so glad you knew both of them, his mother in particular. They all remember how you behaved and acted towards them. No, there's been more blessings than anything else, and nobody goes through life without a few of them. It depends how you handle it. But looking back, I've no complaints, and even wishing for things to be different. We were made at the period of the upbringing and the environment and all that, and we weathered it. We thought that's how it had to be. Considering that I was first generation, both my parents came over at the turn of the century from Poland, and I was with my two sisters, I was the first generation British, so things had to be difficult, sort of assimilating yourself to the new environment, and above all to think of making a living. It wasn't easy for them, but they won through.

*So when you went up to Glasgow, you must have gone on the understanding that you were engaged, because...*

Oh yes. Yes. No I can't remember whether I had the ring then. I could have had.

*But there was the understanding that this was...*

Oh yes, yes I was a fixture, there was an understanding, oh yes. Otherwise, he wouldn't have taken me up.

*So you got on with them all, Esther and Rita and...*

Oh yes. But, with hindsight I am struck at the difference between their attitude, which looking back I considered was, although they were all intelligent, good education, there was a small-town atmosphere, everybody knew each other, and if a new member was coming, everybody had to have a look. And, sometimes you would enter a room, I was very conscious of this, and it all shut up from talking, knowing that they were talking about you. I mean Sophie was a very intelligent person, and she.....

End of F8057 Side A

F8057 Side B

*It must have been quite a responsibility for you though, to come into a family like that, knowing that they all adored David, and...*

Never felt that.

*You obviously had a lot of self-confidence then.*

Well I don't think it needed that. I didn't think it needed that. I'm just trying to think how old I was then.

*Well this was '36?*

When I married?

*You married in '37, so was this '36?*

Oh, in the year '36?

*Yes.*

Well probably '35.

*Really? It was a long time before you actually married then after that?*

I think so, I think so. You have to take it broadly, you know, broadly.

*Yes. Yes, so you were 30, 31?*

I think I might have been 32, yes.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*How long were you in Glasgow with Daddy then? And where did you stay?*

Stayed in the house of course.

*In Dundrennan Road?*

Oh yes, they... Ah yes. [PAUSE] I mean Mum and Dad had the bed in the alcove in the kitchen. They had a bedroom. Ah yes, I must have had the bedroom... I'm just trying to think if anybody put me up. No. David might have been put up by an aunt or something like that. Something like that I think. And, as you know they're an interesting family to know. We got to know Hannah, and her brothers, and Bella. Little things that stand out in your mind. We were invited over for supper to Bella's, and she served up fish, baked fish, baked plaice, and when I started I thought, oh my God! it's nothing but salt. She must have put a lot of salt, thinking it was something else. It was awful. But I ate it. Nobody else seemed to complain. It was awful. Over-salted. I remember his mother once did that to his father, and she apologised, his father said, 'It's all right Dorinka, I like it.'

*I was just thinking, Bella might have done that purposely to you, to see if you were well brought up enough not to say anything.*

A test?

*To see if you would be like Esther, who would say, 'I'm not eating this.'*

Yes.

*What was Esther like?*

Esther was in London then, wasn't she, Harry was in London and she was living with them.

*Already?*

Oh yes, Uncle Harry had left, because when David came down to London he stayed with them. When David came down to London...

*I thought you said he was in digs.*

That was...when he came down to London he was working in Newbury, and he asked them for time off, he wanted to go home because of the Jewish holidays, and they said, if they would have known he was Jewish they wouldn't have hired him. No, he said that to them, that, 'I am being...' I can't remember the exact words, David quoted it more than once. 'I'm being persecuted the way Hitler is persecuting the Jews.' So, he left them, and then he applied for the job with Sam.

*And it was in between leaving them and coming down to London that he changed his name, presumably?*

Yes. Well, that doesn't need to go in. You don't need to go in about changing the name. The name is Roslyn.

*No, I think it's important. It was Rosenberg.*

OK, OK then, it was Rosenberg. That's right, he changed his name before he came down to Newbury, yes, that's right.

*Before Newbury?*

Mm?

*Before Newbury?*

Yes, must have been. I mean he wouldn't have applied...he applied for the job in the name of Roslyn, that means he changed it before he came down.

*To Newbury?*

Yes.

*Because I understood from Daddy, I understood from Daddy that he...they told him that they thought he was South African, and if they'd known he wasn't, then he wouldn't have got the job.*

Ah!

*That is when he changed his name. That's what I understood.*

Well you could be right dear. You could be right. Ah yes. Because there was somebody in Germany, amongst the higher up, who was called Rosenberg, Alfred.

*It was a well-known German name.*

Yes. Aha. That's right, yes, that clarifies it.

*Well now... Yes, I mean, yes a lot of names were changed. It turned into Montrose, a lot of people changed it to Montrose.*

Yes.

*Like Battenberg was changed to Mountbatten.*

That's right.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*In the early days in the East End, there were only horse-drawn carriages presumably, I think you said.*

That's more in the Victorian era really.

*Well when you were a little girl, what sort of transport was there in the streets?*

Tram lines, tramways. The beginning, the emerging of buses. And I can't think of anything apart from that. There were buggies about, horse-drawn buggies, but not a great many of those, and as I think we've recorded previously, quite a lot were used for pleasure and outings and groups would hire one for a day's pleasure out in the country or whatever.

*Yes, I remember you saying that.*

Yes.

*But, for example was there a lot of dung in the streets, a lot of dirt in the streets because of the horses, as there had been earlier?*

Yes, yes of course. And there were always police on horseback. And there would be a lot of dropping and turds from the police, and people used to go out and shovel it up and use it for their gardens. Not that there were a great many gardens in the East End in that period, but, I don't know whether they dried it up or whatever, but they did shovel it up and use it.

*But if you wanted to cross the street, was it a problem to avoid the horse dirt?*

I don't know.

*You don't remember, when you needed to cross the road, in the road was there so much horse dung...?*

No, there was the trams. We're talking of...if I was born in '04, my awareness of everything would...ten, twelve, that would be 19... Well the First World War, I remember, I remember that quite vividly, yes I was about twelve and at school and we've recorded that.

*Yes.*

During the air raids, and we were also recording the 1914-18 War, the Zeppelin...

*Yes, you've told me all that.*

We've recorded that.

*Yes.*

And, at that period conveyance and transport were tramcars.

*Trams.*

And buses, which, buses became all the...more of them as time went on.

*Well can I ask you a bit more about your home. How was the laundry done at home?*

We used to send it off to the laundry. When we were living in the Commercial Road there was the Sunlight Laundry just a few doors away, that was no problem, so we would cart it and collect it. The laundry was done outside. Just small odd things were done indoors, but most was sent to the laundry. A lot of laundries operating at that time.

*So all the sheets and all the shirts and that sort of thing would be sent there?*

Yes, all that sort of thing.

*What about things, I've always wanted to know, what about things that needed dry-cleaning, what happened with those things?*

Say that again dear.

*What happened with things that needed dry-cleaning?*

There were cleaners. There were cleaners. Everything more or less, as my mind goes back, is as things are now, but less of it, and there's been, all those years as with everything, and now it's been accelerated so much, so many improvements, that it...in those days we took that in our stride, because it was gradual; not like now with the silicon chip, we're bewildered by it. It's happening so rapidly, we just...we oldies can't keep up, I can't keep up with it.

*You seem to do pretty well.*

It terrifies me.

*The rate of progress is faster, that's true.*

Yes.

*Now there was something else I wanted to ask you. You always told me about your Yiddish teacher, because you went with Sue to learn Yiddish. Can you tell me more about the process of the lessons, where you went and how, what happened?*

You can switch this off, there's one thing that comes to mind. The teacher we had was known by the family, I think he must have been about in his forties, he was teaching Jennifer – Sue, Hebrew, and, in a mild way he molested her, not seriously, but he would touch her and, it wasn't nice. So, Dad had a word with him and made him stop it. You see that was always going on, yes.

*In what way, what did he do?*

Well, molesting, you know how they behave, you may not have experienced it, but you know how they behave. It's just...it's unhealthy, you know, shouldn't be doing that sort of thing.

*But he didn't have his evil way with her, did he?*

No, no, it was...Dad told him off about it. And then of course when Sue was in the theatre, there was one of the actors there, he must have been in his fifties, an imposing figure, beard and all that, he really got nasty with Jennifer.

*With Sue.*

With Sue. And Dad went over and had a fight with him, and he was taken to court.

*Your father was taken to court?*

My father was taken to court, because he attacked him.

*What happened?*

Because he made unnecessary...I don't know whether it was remarks or whether it was actions or whatever, but it was...

*So what happened in court?*

I think Dad was fined.

*But he was justified in taking action.*

Of course he was justified. He was protecting his daughter, that's all. Yes, you see that, I remember that.

*But that, that was...*

He was a paedophile, yes.

*But that was, you say Sue was learning Hebrew?*

Yiddish.

*Yiddish.*

Yiddish.

*Yes. So what happened after that? You had lessons with her, you said?*

I had lessons, I was always in on lessons with her, and I gleaned a little there. I benefited by it.

*But with whom? With the man who molested her?*

No, this was the actor who molested her. And the man who was teaching her just sort of touched her up. I suppose he was a mild paedophile too. I'm just pointing out that it's always going on.

*Oh yes.*

Yes.

*But who taught you Yiddish, was it the man you just mentioned?*

Yes.

*Well where were you when she was being molested?*

Well, perhaps I wasn't there all the time. Not at every lesson. I was never, I never witnessed anything myself, it was just...I can't remember dear.

*Nobody molested you?*

Oh I told you about the one who molested me when I was about four, I told you that, a neighbour's son, a sixteen-year-old.

*Oh yes.*

I told you that, yes. Yes, that's the only claim I have to molestation. But...

*But tell me about your Yiddish lessons.*

What about them?

*Well, what did you learn?*

To read and write. And, I think I mentioned that I used to write letters, later on of course, to David's father. But, he must have had the old Yiddish; I don't think he fully understood all I wrote.

*Well he would have learnt his Yiddish in Dvinsk, in Latvia, which is Latvia.*

That's right.

*And yours would have come via Poland.*

From Germany, from Poland.

*Poland, and Germany probably.*

That's right.

*Because your father's...*

Because, I think I'm right in saying that the Jewish language evolved in Germany.

*Yiddish?*

Yes, Yiddish. And then they moved up to Russia, to Poland, a lot went to Israel. Because Hebrew was the indigenous language, in Hebrew, that's where it started.

*That's how it's written, it's written in Hebrew.*

Yes, that's right. And then it got sort of, perhaps bastardised on the way through.

*Well it is so similar to German that I can speak German to somebody who can speak Yiddish to me, well you and I can.*

That's right.

*And we can understand. Well let's come forward a bit to, you were telling me about Daddy and how you met Daddy and what happened once you found out he was Jewish. And you say he was invited to have Friday nights with...*

Millie and family.

*Yes. Did they do Kiddush?*

Did they what?

*Do Kiddush, light candles and do Kiddush?*

She had the Friday night table, candles, observed the Jewish holidays. I was trying to think, did we go to synagogue? Did Sam go to synagogue? Never [INAUDIBLE] of that. Couldn't have.

*I somehow doubt it, because he was very left-wing wasn't he.*

Yes.

*But I wondered, because of Daddy coming from an Orthodox home, whether you started, whether you did Kiddush when he was there.*

Oh yes, when David's father was... Oh when David was there. No recollection. Possibly not.

*But did Auntie have traditional things, like a cholla and...?*

No, not the way you did it. It wouldn't be fair to Millie and Sam to be explicit on that, because I am not sure, but as you say... There was always candles, I know that, and Millie would say her little prayers, as I always did. But I don't know if Sam, when his father died, did he say Kiddush? I can't even tell you. Laurie could enlighten you there.

*But, you've told me a lot about your home. You didn't have Kiddush either did you, with your parents?*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] Some Jewish holidays, many Jewish holidays were observed. I know my mother lit candles, because I always, I can see her saying her prayers. Start with that you see, and then you do this.

*What, with the hands going round and then covering the face.*

That's right. I remember that. And, I remember, I think I've mentioned this to you, when it came to breaking the fast after Yom Kippur, and we were young, because we were always in bed at six o'clock, that was always the case, never deviated from that. And we were asleep. And the breakfast came about seven o'clock, and David...Dad would bring a table up to the bed, and wake us up, and he'd go through the breakfast, and he would say the prayers. Because he was very knowledgeable, because I...there we go back again, we never knew what he did. And that really haunts me. Because with hindsight, if we would have known with foresight, we would have done something about it. Because I can appreciate and understand and empathise with people who don't know what their roots are and they are longing to find out. It's a torture.

*So your father did fast?*

My father did not fast.

*But he would break his fast, as though he had?*

No, as a matter of fact the day of Yom Kippur Mum would be in synagogue all day, it was held in the Pavilion Theatre in the Whitechapel, which is about a minute's walk from where we were, there was our house, and there was the notorious alley I told you about, and then a short walk up. And there was a lot of people about, because, on Saturdays and Yom Tovim in particular, because it's such a huge Jewish population, they would all be sauntering around, meeting people like they do abroad, it's lovely. And, Mum would be in synagogue, and Dad would be at home with a lot of his cronies who came to be fed, and they played cards. To them it was a holiday.

*And you had to cook I suppose?*

I was too young for that dear. No I didn't have to do anything, Dad did all that. I think at that time we had a resident, a cook, not a resident cook but a cook. There were lots of changes in... Sometimes we had a full staff with waiters, with cook and...and then, when business was flourishing, then it went down, because other places opened up. Bloom's is not very far away, they all made a go for that, so it affected us.

*Do you remember Bloom's opening?*

Oh it was established when I was there, yes.

*So that was before the First War, was it?*

I would...yes, I would think so.

*What sort of...something I've not asked you is, what sort of food did your mother cook?*

Oh, my mother dear, you name it, she did it. Her baking, my God! Her cheese, not only her cheesecakes but her cheese hamantaschen. All done with yeast, those. Her kirchels, oh crumbs!

*What are kirchels?*

Kirchels are like biscuits. Now, I've told you, it all had to go to the local baker's to be baked.

*Yes, you told me that.*

And if they didn't rise properly, *a koleria...*, now we'll come to swear words, because he didn't put it in at the right moment. How could he? But he had so many others. Oh my God! I'm sort of living through it now. I can see it now. And my dear little mother, oh she was heartbroken. I remember one occasion, she had put something in the oven, it was a cake, a pudding of some sort, and it had burnt at the sides and then, oh it was spoilt. I said, 'Mum, that's...that's no good, that's burnt.' 'No no no,' she said, 'it's all right.' And she started scraping everything off until she came down to the basics and, it was still edible, but... I said, 'Mum, throw it away.' 'No no no, it's all right.' She was a dumpling of a woman, cuddly sort of thing.

*But you don't throw anything away now.*

What love?

*You don't throw anything away now.*

No, I cut away the bad bits, that's right.

*You've learnt from her.*

Well my sense of waste, which is, can't stand it to this day. Broke my heart, I had to pour away some soup because it had gone off, just the other day, you know, with the fridge. And ice-cream I had to throw away, when I think I could have eaten it. I could have re-frozen it.

*But did she do things like stuffed neck?*

Oh boy! President Kohl[sic] is very fond of stuffed belly thing...

*Pork belly.*

Yes, yes. No, like a haggis, like a haggis, a German type haggis, that's what it is. Very fond of that. And my mother used to do stuffed intestines. You had the big intestine, was known as the kishke... [laughing] Oh this is killing me. And then there was a small intestine.

*Known as the?*

What?

*What was that known as?*

I can't remember the name of that.

*Kleinekishke?*

Mm? The kleinekishke. Yes. Like, there's an English dish of some sort, not black pudding, but, you have reams, yards of it, you know, because the intestine goes round and round and round doesn't it. And once you start unravelling it, you don't think you'll finish. And all that had to be stuffed.

*With what?*

Stuffed with chicken fat, bread, seasoning, whatever goes with it. Kasha.

*Not meat?*

No, no, no. Flour, mostly flour and fat, and seasoning and whatever. Oh it was heavenly.

*Was it cooked first, was the flour and the fat cooked?*

It's boiled for hours.

*But you don't cook the flour and fat first?*

No. No, and then it's sort of, not steamed, gently cooked for hours until it all cooks through. And so...

*Boiled?*

Yes. Sort of, gently, not... And we had to stuff that; many a time I stuffed that.

*How did you do it, how did you get it right down to the end?*

You push it in.

*Oh, and squeeze it, like a goose's neck?*

Yes. The time it took, my God! Oh yes, and then her...I think the Germans call it *Braten*.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Well, you have this lump of biscuit preferably, and you braise it first in fat, seal it, and then you add seasoning, onions or whatever, and slow cook that, as long as it takes, it depends on the size of the joint you've got. But I don't know what my mother did to make it so marvellous. She didn't have a secret ingredient, of that I know. But, as my memory serves me, I've never tasted anything better. I could never emulate it.

*Do you think it was the amount of fat that she used? Because fat does make it succulent.*

Of course, yes. All the... Of course, a lot of chicken was eaten, so...and then you would buy the chicken and draw it yourself, and always had that enormous amount of chicken fat that was never wasted. It was rendered down and you get the, what are those...?

*Schmaltz?*

And you would get the schmaltz, and you would get the gribenes. What about the gribenes? That's the little bits that are left over after all the fat has been drawn out of it. And those gribenes are put in the stuffing my dear.

*So the gribenes is in the chicken, or that's after it's cooked?*

No, it is taken out of the chicken before it's cooked. When you draw the chicken, you take all the innards out, you take the fat out. This is making me sick! [laughing]

*And sometimes the egg yolks, the unformed eggs.*

Oh yes, lots of those eggs. Never wasted.

*I remember you doing that.*

Mixed up with something or other. Nothing was wasted.

*And so the gribenes, is that like the heart and the kidney?*

No, that's the giblets dear. That's the giblets. The gribenes is what, the little crustations that are left once you've rendered down all the fat which you put into a jar once it's cooled, and you smack the fat on bread with your sandwiches, as one would use marger or whatever now, and it was mixed up with eggs and onions. You put it in everything. No wonder there was a high incidence, always has been, of...

*Diabetes?*

Diabetes.

*Yes.*

Heart. Because of the over-rich food they made, which was gorgeous to eat but you paid for it in the long...

*But it comes from a time when they led very hard lives and they were cold and they needed that sort of food to keep them going. But then the diets have changed...*

So they wouldn't waste anything, they couldn't afford to waste anything. Oh the wandering Jew, my God! how they're still going through it.

*Did your mother make her own cholla?*

Oh, now, I tried to emulate this, the bread mother used to make. She used to make a cholla. To this day I've never tasted anything like it. And although I didn't have a specific recipe for it, I had to rely on my memory, I could never get it up to her standard. It was always enjoyable, it would rise, it was a yeast recipe, it would rise, it would do everything, but it just didn't taste the way Mother made it.

*Was it an egg cholla she made?*

What dear?

*Was it an egg cholla she made?*

Yes, I think an egg was used with it. And of course, I too...I mean even you have experimented making your own bread, which was always much more tasteful than anything you can buy. And, Mother's buns, cheese buns she used to make, and Haman's ears ears, that's...

*Yes, the hamantaschen.*

Yes, the hamantaschen. And she used to.....

End of F8057 Side B

F8058 Side A

*This is tape five in the interview with Mary Roslyn, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1998.*

*Interviewer, Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Cheese sort of...sweet, like you would put in cheesecake, that was the recipe, but, it wasn't a cake, it was the buns. Gorgeous.

*And what about at Pesach, you observed...did you have a Seder?*

Oh yes. Oh yes. That's right darling, it wasn't Yom Kippur when Dad took the table up, it was Passover. He did that for Passover.

*What table?*

No...well we just mentioned, that when it came to break fast, he would...no, it wasn't for break fast, it was for the Seders, and was observed too, yes.

*Ah, right. Really?*

Yes.

*And your father went through the whole of Haggadah?*

And Dad officiated the whole thing.

*Who was there, just the family?*

Just the family I think, yes.

*So the restaurant wasn't open that night?*

No. No. The restaurant was open, and there would be certain people there, customers. Don't forget there were a lot of regular customers, and a few who didn't have anywhere else to go were there, and Dad officiated that evening for people, then he did a separate one for us.

*He would do a Seder for these, the men who had nowhere else to go?*

Customers, yes. They were more than customers, they were friends, but of course they paid for everything, it wasn't sort of...

*So all his customers were Jewish?*

Oh yes. Oh yes. And during the day we would sometimes get some outside businessmen locally who would come up for a meal, because of Mum's home cooking, and...

*Non-Jewish?*

Jewish, all Jewish.

*All.*

Oh the whole of the East End was more or less Jewish. And then, another restaurant, Sterns, opened up not very far away, they drew off quite a lot of custom you see, because it was a larger place, it was well-equipped, it was well staffed, so it drew away a lot of... And then, Dad's place started going down.

*When was that, after the war, after the First War?*

Yes, in between the two wars, yes.

*When it came to Passover...*

We always had a new dress, always had a new outfit. Dad loved buying things for us. Looking back, I don't know where he got the money from. It was a hard life for them, very hard, particularly for Mum. And she had to put up with Dad's vagaries.

*But did she...did she make her own matzoth? Because in the East End there was a system, it's very Orthodox, where they, the religious people take their matzoth to be cooked centrally, and it's called shamura matzoth.*

Yes, I've heard of that, I know.

*She didn't do that?*

No, she never did that. No, we bought it, bought it. She made her own lochsen.

*The way you do?*

Yes.

*With egg?*

Yes. Yes, and we used to fold it, and I used to cut it. Oh I used to do lochsen, it was lovely.

*What else did she make for Passover?*

Traditional dishes, whatever they were. What was the traditional dish?

*Chicken soup with knedlach.*

Oh, oh knedlach. She was a wonder...she was a wonderful cook. You see, not having experience of cooking when she first married, only of home cooking that her mother did, but when they went into the catering business, and they started employing, when things were improving and they increased their clientele, she learnt from them; they

would have a cook, a professional cook come in, and Mum would learn from them, and increase her knowledge and all that.

*So would you have...you would have the hard-boiled egg, and...*

Oh we had...

*Everything.*

Yes.

*Haroset and...*

Everything, everything, yes.

*And you enjoyed it?*

Oh we loved it. All children do, don't they.

*I don't understand why...*

And it gives you a sense of belonging.

*I don't understand why you had to be in bed.*

Because we all went to bed at six o'clock dear.

*Until what age?*

It was routine. I can't tell you exactly how... At least seven, eight. I don't think longer than that. Because the home was combined with the business, and I suppose to get us out the way also we were stuck into bed, which was good for us of course.

*Well was there a room that was kept just for the family?*

Never. Everything was public. No, because as you're talking, my mind is going back, I'm trying to think of the period when we were in Cannon Street Road, that's not far from Cable Street, then we moved to Commercial Road, that's the main street, and, I think it was there when we were in Commercial Road, that's when I first menstruated.

*How old were you?*

Twelve. Didn't know anything about it.

*But Auntie must...*

Shall I tell you something? Not everything one wants to recall; let it go. Because my mother, well you could say was somewhat permissive really. She was...she didn't read, she didn't write, but even to this day some of her sayings come back to me.

*Well via you they've come to me.*

Yes. There's a saying of hers, because, she knew about sex outside marriage, and, I told you the other day, we were talking of somebody, and she was saying, '*Er ist ein grosse Gebrauche*', because he was highly sexed. And, he was sexing around, and I'm sure my father was, and my mother knew that. That's why... Let them rest in peace darling, you don't have to bring back their...they wouldn't like it. Anything I think they wouldn't like, as with Millie I wouldn't.

*I wanted to ask you more about Daddy. Because you said, he stayed with Harry and Sara; when was that?*

Well when he came down from Glasgow, he came down to this job in Newbury, and of course the immediate thing is, you stay with Uncle Harry.

*Well when he came to London?*

When he came to London, yes. That's what you want to know, don't you?

*Yes.*

Yes.

*Right.*

Stayed with Uncle Harry. And he commuted, and then, the reason he changed was, you know the story, he wanted to go home for Passover, for the Jewish holidays, and they didn't know he was Jewish, and they said, if they'd known...

*The place he was working.*

Right.

*Yes. No, but, there's a confusion here, because you say he stayed with Harry and Sara; then why did he come to you for Friday night? Because Harry and Sara...*

Well there you are. When he said he would then go home for Pesach I think it was...

*That was the Newbury people?*

Yes, that's the Newbury people, I forget their name now, they're still operating, he decided to leave. And he scouted around in the opticians' magazine, and Sam was advertising in it for somebody. So he got an interview, and I recall when he came for an interview, because he was very thin in those days...

*Yes. No you've told me this.*

Yes.

*What I'm asking you is, you said he stayed with Uncle Harry and Aunt Sara.*

Yes.

*When?*

In that period.

*But then why did he come to you for Friday nights? Because if he was staying with Harry and Sara, he would stay there for Friday night.*

No. When he took up the job with Sam, he looked for local digs.

*Oh right.*

In Balham.

*Right.*

And he moved there.

*Because it was too far to come from Cricklewood all the way down to Balham.*

That's right. He did it for a while, until he got this place, and he moved there. And when we heard he was Jewish, and he probably, at weekends went back to Uncle Harry's, before we knew he was Jewish, he would commute.

*So he didn't stay with them...*

Sometimes he went up north for the weekend.

*How did he go, by train I suppose?*

Train, overnight.

*So how long was he staying with Harry and Sara?*

Oh, just under a year I would think.

*And was Esther there at the same time?*

Yes. A very close-knit family, all of them.

*Did he talk to you about them?*

Yes, I suppose in conversation it came up.

*When did you first visit them?*

When it was established that we were courting I suppose.

*What, before you went up to Glasgow with him? Because when you went to...*

Would be, definitely it would be, definitely. Of course some of is guesstimation, you can't always recall exactly the timing. But, I remember first going there. Betty was very spoiled, her father doted on her. She was always highly intelligent, and in those days she must have been about twelve, and we could work it back with dates, but I don't think it's necessary. And she was very keen on ballet then, she had the figure for it; she still shows signs of the ballerina in her in her gestures. And we were all sitting at the table once having a meal. There were always visitors, apart from the family; there was Robert, Betty, Esther, sometimes Esther would...oh that came afterwards, and David, me, and sometimes, what's her name... Anyway...

*Cecily?*

Cecily, yes, Cecily. Because when Cecily met George... No, I'm diversing, I'd better not do that. And Betty was going to voice her opinion when somebody interrupted her and Uncle Harry said, 'Just a minute, Betty's going to say something.' Doted on her. And, Betty had her say, I don't know what it was. But...because from an early stage they had trouble with Robert, was always sickly. Then he developed these

hallucinations. Oh they had a rough time of it. So... Then I used to go with him occasionally to Uncle Harry's, at the weekend of course.

*How did you get on with them?*

Well, I was always a little retiring. David was an exceedingly good mixer, always was, and even at The High, he was the popular one, and I, I think they were a little in awe of me, I don't know why; I told you the story of the midnight swimming, and she sort of took her dressing-gown off. 'Oh, but I did it in front of Mary!' I just couldn't understand it.

*Because, you've never struck me as being a prude of any sort.*

No, no, well I matured, I eventually matured, and now I'm too outspoken sometimes. But, anyway... So, Cecily would be there. But during the war when there was evacuation, her firm, she was with a very large conglomeration to deal with underwater pipes and that sort of thing, it's well known, they moved the whole business into Dorking I think it was, right out into the country. and that's where she got close to George. But she never told him she was Jewish. She never brought...she would never bring him to supper with us if it was Friday night, because of the candles, or to Uncle Harry, she kept it a secret. Did I ever tell you this, once when we were having a celebration at Shirley and John's, and he was sitting on the stairs leading up there, I went over and chatted with him, and apropos what were saying he said, 'If I'd have known she was Jewish I would never have married her.' I told you that I think, yes. So she was living that lie all the time, and she always had to be careful that nobody said anything to denote they were Jewish. Oh my God! how can do that? I don't know. But, I couldn't stand her. I felt sorry for her. Oh, I'm fingering... I was wondering what I was fingering. Didn't seem familiar to me. Well I think you're getting your money's worth.

*But I remember when I was a girl, a young girl, going out dating, not necessarily dating, just going out with friends, mixed friends, you would say to me, 'There is no need to tell people you are Jewish.' Because you were trying to protect me.*

Yes.

*Can you explain what it is you felt that I might be exposed to if I did tell people?*

Because even as comparatively recently, which you're speaking, that era, there was a slight withdrawal if they know you're Jewish. I don't think it exists now, no. No, when I meet some of my cronies walking up and down, in my conversation apropos of what I'm saying, I always come out with it, about, I was talking to Jeff the other day, and I was telling him of certain incidents, I said, 'Well I'm emotional, it's typical of my race.' I don't know whether he knows I'm Jewish or not, but it comes into conversation. When I stop and chat with Denis. Got my coterie dear. And, I think I said to him the other day, he said, 'I haven't seen you for a little while; have you been away?' So I said, 'No, it's just, I'm having little problems. I said, 'I don't go away.' I said, 'I really should be in synagogue today.' Let them know.

*No it's true, there's no...*

Yes.

*There's no problem now.*

And that...it all helps to break down the barrier.

*We talked a little bit about the war.*

The last one?

*Yes, the last war. Well I suppose actually I should ask you about what you remember about the First War. I think you've told me actually.*

Yes. There were the air raids.

*The Zeppelin, yes.*

And rushing to the distillery.

*Yes. The distillery I don't remember.*

Well, when we were talking about that, I don't think I could recall it was a distillery.

*This was in the First World War?*

Yes. Yes. And we had to run for about, the Americans would say, three blocks, about three blocks. There's everybody running, dragging their children, panic, because there was overhead shooting, thing. And you made for this distillery, and everybody herded together. That was in the First. In the Second, we were at The High of course. We used to go into the passageways. And then you remember there was under passageways you used to play around in, and we used to go in there for protection. One night there was an enormous bomb that dropped. You remember The High? And there was another large complex of flats, and the big bomb dropped on there, and it was when tramcars were running up and down. That was when I was...I don't know if we recorded this. I was about to stop into the bath, I was going to have a bath, you were in your cot, and this awful sound. I put my dressing-gown on and ran out, and forgot about you. Never told you that? I'm ashamed of it.

*I think that's wonderful.*

Forgot about you. Then I rushed back. Oh my God! You can see how close that bomb was. There's The High, and we were in that block there, in the first block, and there was the bomb.

*So in '44, this is in '44, obviously, because I wasn't born until '44.*

'44. It would be, late '44, because you were in your cot.

*Because I was born during an air raid, wasn't I?*

Pardon?

*Wasn't I born during an air raid as well? Didn't you say I was born during an air raid?*

Yes, in, what's the name of the...?

*Elizabeth Garrett Anderson.*

Elizabeth Garrett, yes. You were born there, and the first night after...have I told you this? Everybody went down to the shelters. Well they said, 'You can walk.' Because I made such a good a recovery. Yes.

*And did you forget me again?*

No, well, David saw to that. Christ! When you stop to think. Have you any recollection of you falling out of your cot? Because it happened.

*You dropped me did you?*

No, no, you were trying to get out.

*When?*

When you were...you were standing at the time, because you got up and you...

*Oh, well all children do that.*

Yes.

*Yes.*

Well some permanently damage themselves.

*Well maybe I did.*

And that's it. The doubt is always there.

*Did I land on my head?*

Well, wherever you landed, it was safe, thank God. Oh do you...? Oh, you would have no recollection of that. We all went into the hall, and there was the...on our floor there was, well, people who you grew up with, you grew up with them there.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

I told you we had nothing, but I had about £50 in the Post Office, that's about all we had.

*Sorry, when you first married?*

When we were first married. So we decided against starting a family, and so, I went to see a female doctor for protection, and she refused to give it to me, because she said, 'I don't believe in it.' She said, 'You have to let nature take its course. Take precautions, but don't have any artificial things.' And in the end I feel convinced, because of the cap I wore, I had the cap, which I could fit myself, and I think that started the trouble, which, when I did conceive, it effected the conception in the fallopian tube. So that gave me the first miscarriage, and after that I had quite a few early miscarriages. And we'd almost given up hope. I've told you all this stuff.

*Yes, but I'd like to record it.*

Are you recording it? Aha. I had almost given up hope, and attended the doctor regularly with any things she suggested, we did that. And the first, the operation, ectopic congestion, ectopic congestion, that's right, burst, and it was an emergency operation, and considered very serious, and recovering in hospital afterwards, when the surgeon who operated had a chat with me, and told me that he doubted if I could ever conceive again. Although he didn't go into detail what the operation was, we didn't leave it at that. We consulted specialists since, who got the information from

the Jewish Hospital in the East End, and they came up with the idea that all I had was half an ovary, and the chances of my conceiving were very remote. But, we continued, we enjoyed continuing, and after all it was sex, it was marriage, we loved each other. And eventually... Ah, then David said to me, 'Darling,' yes he said Darling, 'let's forget it.' We thought of adoption, but we both weren't very happy about it. And of course all in the meantime we were still happily married, with all its connotations. And eventually I did conceive, and went to see a specialist again and he confirmed it, and he said...he didn't say it was a miracle, he said, once the conception was established, he said, 'It will now be a textbook case,' and it was put in a textbook case, because the chances of establishing a pregnancy was so remote that...he didn't use the word miracle, I use the word miracle. Then, I successfully...and I had an amazingly good and happy...

*Pregnancy.*

Pregnancy, all through to full term.

*Did they take special care of you? Did he say, you would have to take special care to make sure you didn't miscarry, because you had...?*

No, I attended my local doctor, who was...she was lovely. And I was given injections to hold the pregnancy, you see. And I carried through a very very normal, enjoyable pregnancy; no hiccups, no bad days; a wee bit sickness at the beginning but that soon wore off. It was really wonderful is the only word for it. And then I was delivered. I was due to go up to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson where I was booked for my confinement just for a check-up, and they decided to keep me in, because they felt...and they were going to, what's the word?

*Induce?*

They were going to induce it.

*Why?*

Never asked, was never told.

*Did you have high blood pressure?*

Not in those days, no.

*Because that's sometimes a reason.*

Well, yes my age. I was about 40. Yes, my age.

*So, did you go to full term?*

I went full term dear. And, when they got me there, they gave me the drink orange juice and, what's that awful oily stuff?

*Cod liver oil?*

Yes, cod liver oil. Which, it wasn't unpleasant, because it was laced with orange juice. And they induced it that way. No epidural, nothing like that. And...

*Did they break your waters as well?*

No, I don't think so, no, I would remember that, no. And, they gave me a mask during delivery, which I didn't need to use. Because you never recall that pain of childbirth. Would you say so?

*Mm.*

You can recall the pain? No.

*There isn't any.*

It's very severe when it happens, you feel your whole innards are coming out. 'Bear down mother.' [laughing] And then out came your curly head. Dark hair.

*Was Daddy there?*

No, because you see, it wasn't expected. They kept me in. And because he was notified. Was Millie with me? Millie might have been with me. Millie, yes, Millie was with me, and she went and told David, yes. And then after when we came home the taxi stopped at the practice, Millie was with me then, and we came in with the baby.

*How long were you in hospital?*

Pardon?

*How long were you in hospital?*

Ten days I think. It's a guesstimation. No, no hiccups, nothing like that. Everything went smoothly. Wonderful. Yes, they got me out of bed immediately, they got me to go down the day after I gave birth. And of course after that we tried for another one, worked very hard at it as a matter of fact, but, we were blessed with one and that was a perfect one. We couldn't have repeated it I don't think, so were happy with the one that we're left with.

*You have to say that, don't you.*

No, well, you know... Jennifer.....

End of F8058 Side A

Tape F8058 Side B

*Right, just to go back a little bit. You talked about Pesach at home, your father would come up to your bedroom and you would have the Seder there.*

Yes.

*Do you remember it, did he go through the whole Haggadah, and did you sing songs? What was it like?*

No, it was simplified. He just did a resumé of it, and we had a little drink, and he said his prayers or whatever. But, he didn't take long, we were too young to assimilate it. I mean we were woken up from our sleep sometimes, sometimes we weren't asleep. I can't remember too many of them really, so I couldn't say whether we had it every year. Quite possibly we did, but I don't have any recollection of that.

*Oh so you don't remember matzoth, the Haroset and everything?*

I don't think we went for that, I don't think we went for that. We had a little meal. It was a simplified version, just to make us aware that it was Passover. But we were always in bed at six to 6.30.

*But do you think it was...he did it because your mother wanted him to do it, rather than him?*

No, I think it was a joint...the children were entitled to know, because Dad was intelligent enough that we need to know our culture. And, although he never, we never knew him go to synagogue, Mum yes but not Dad.

*Who was the disciplinarian at home?*

Well Dad was the head, it all revolved around Dad, and things were done the way he wanted to. I don't think my mother ever questioned anything he decided to do. They were very hard-working. And leisure, I can't say they had a lot of leisure. And there

were always people about, there was no privacy, that was the worst of it. But we weren't aware of the fact at the time. It was very busy, there was always people there, and, it's only as Millie and I grew older that we felt the need for our own room to do the things we wanted; we wanted to start a little bit of amateur dressmaking for ourselves, which we did, and have a place where we could enjoy our own freedom, as apart from the bedroom.

*Did you...did you have that?*

Yes, once we had the room, yes.

*You did?*

Oh yes.

*Where did the room come from?*

Well, he had to give up one of the rooms that would normally be taken with visitors, paying guests sort of things. Oh yes, it was a nice big room, we had a machine.

*He did that willingly?*

Pardon?

*He did that willingly?*

Oh yes, he realised that we needed something like that.

*So that was like a separate sitting-room?*

Yes. Well it was the only sitting-room. All the other was for public use, which was also for personal use. It was the living area, was...was very informal, very, more like a club. Very unusual, difficult to sort of explain.

*How old would you have been when you had that separate room given to you?*

Oh, I think we were in mid-teens. Mid-teens. That's when Millie was working then, she had her job.

*And did you have separate bedrooms then?*

No, it was one big bedroom with two beds, and I shared one bed with Sue and Millie had a bed on her own, a single bed, and the other one was a double bed.

*And that stayed the same until, when?*

Until Millie got married and I left, yes.

*Why couldn't one of you sleep in the room you had been given, the extra room?*

We just didn't. And the bedrooms were at the top of the, it was a sort of attic, and the living-room was on the first floor.

*But did your parents use that room as well, as a living-room?*

No, their leisure was spent down in the, how would one call it? Because at the end of the day, that's when people came in for, to play cards. It was quite a lot of wives came with their husbands, the husbands played bridge and the wives played rummy or whatever, and that's what my mother enjoyed joining in. And, then they had to be fed with sandwiches, and on Sunday it was traditional, potato pancakes. And I, just the other day I remembered, there was one man in particular, he ordered a dozen, and he would be playing bridge and enjoying eating his potato cakes. And bearing in mind, I was the one who made them very often.

*And how would you make them, can you give me the recipe?*

You don't want that recipe.

*Yes, go on.*

God!

*No go on.*

I used to make them when we were married, David and I, and we used to love them.

*Yes.*

Well, the classical Jewish potato cake is grated raw potatoes, grated onion, no fat, and thickened with flour, not motza flour, to the consistency. No egg. And they were fried in oil, pancakes, and served up if you wanted it with cinnamon and sugar sprinkled on it or something like that. But don't go in for potato cakes, they're too fattening, and it's very...

*You said last time that after a while there was competition for the hotel, the restaurant, guesthouse, whatever you call it. What did you call it? You called it the guesthouse?*

I think we had something written on the window, Lando's Restaurant I think. It was primarily a restaurant, and in the evening... I mean the customers were sort of more extension of the family, they would come in in the evening. Well they had nowhere else to go. Just bear in mind who they were. They were just newcomers from...

*The old country.*

That's right.

*So this was when you were opposite the London Hospital?*

Aha.

*In Whitechapel Road.*

Mhm.

*Right. So, you said last time that after a while there was competition from other restaurants, from Bloom's and other restaurants, so how long was it that the family business lasted?*

Right up until the war, but diminishing all the time. They weren't making a living out of it afterwards. And David subsidised them, Millie subsidised them.

*So, at the beginning of the war, sort of '39/40, they sold it?*

No, it was directly bombed. They were out at a shelter, they couldn't go back to it. So, immediately Millie and Sam took them in, and there they remained for a couple of years until they were housed by the local...that was after the war.

*Right, so they were bombed in what, '41 I suppose.*

It would be in the early part of the war, yes.

*And they were re-housed in the flat that I knew, presumably?*

Mhm. I'm trying to think of the name of the street. Was it Berners Street, Berners...it doesn't matter.

*It was very near the market.*

Very near? Mm, well I suppose within walking distance. Oh there was a little market just across the road. You're talking of the Lane?

*Well I don't know. When I was a little girl and we went to visit them, we always walked through a market. I remember the great big tubs, wooden tubs full of herrings and pickled cucumber, and the smell I remember, it was magic.*

Oh you...oh you couldn't forget the smell. Was it a sort of back road?

*I was tiny, everything was above my head.*

No, because there was the Lane...Petticoat Lane.

*Yes.*

Petticoat Lane. And then there was a very extended shopping area behind the main road, which led from Petticoat Lane right the way through to Commercial Road, so there were actually two markets. And the market you recall I think could be the one round the back, not Petticoat Lane itself. Because Petticoat Lane had its herrings, and the back passage had its herrings, so they all had the same smell.

*But presumably Petticoat Lane wasn't big enough for the whole market, that's why it spread, so the whole area was probably referred to as Petticoat Lane, wasn't it?*

Yes, I suppose so.

*You don't remember the name of the road the other market was in?*

No, I couldn't remember it. I'd recognise it if somebody remembered it, but, no, I can't recall that.

*But I do remember the herrings.*

The herring?

*Yes, I just remember the big barrels of herrings, and pickled cucumber.*

And can you recall the woman sitting there, who would sell them? She would have a thick sort of flour-sack apron on her front because of the dripping. Do you remember that?

*Well I don't know, I mean I think I can, but I might have just seen photographs.*

She was there for years..

*Well there must have been more than one.*

Yes, there was...she sat surrounded by her barrels of goodness knows how many varieties of herrings. And then all round the back there was a very large open-fronted shop, higher class, where you got smoked salmon and you got all the special things, expensive things, the wonderful things, and when they closed they just threw down a sort of corrugated, closed it that way. It was an open sort of shop. Oh they had the most marvellous things there.

*You always bought something to take home, didn't you?*

I what?

*You always bought something.*

Oh yes.

*What did you used to buy?*

Schmaltz herrings in particular, and she would skin it and slice it. And, oh, Jewish rye breads in particular, particularly the heavy Russian type. Oh, couldn't enumerate everything you got there. A lot of pulses. Anything you can think of, household needs in their food cupboard. Unique.

*It was just food, was it?*

No, there were lots of stalls that sold everything else. Clothing, you could have a tailored suit made. Everything could be found there. Oh fruit, flowers. It was quite a big area, in fact it was a bit overcrowded really. And as you say, they branched out. But...

*So the people who sold the pickled cucumber, and the herring et cetera, did they make it themselves, or was it imported, or what, where did it come from?*

I think of sauerkraut, you mustn't forget the sauerkraut. Some of them, now that little woman on the barrels of herring, she used to make some of those things. I know she made the sauerkraut. But they had sources, wholesale sources that supplied the retailers, as simple as that.

*And all Jewish I suppose.*

Yes. *Hämische*, all *hämische*. It's a pity one hasn't got pictures of all those places, because that would recall such a lot of incidents that you can't always...

*Well there are pictures, there are books.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*We started to talk about your wedding, and, I think you told me where it was, but you didn't give me the details. I'd like the details of your dress, and the flowers and the bridesmaids.*

That's not important.

*Yes I do.*

No. I don't think I had bridesmaids. It was... Oh crumbs! I think it was under a...it wasn't in a synagogue. It was under a canopy in the place where... Jennifer, I don't remember enough about it. Maybe I don't want to remember, because I didn't enjoy... Are you recording that? I didn't enjoy my wedding, I hated it.

*Why?*

David loved it. I hated, I cannot stand fuss. I cannot stand being the cynosure of everybody looking at you and going through the ceremony. I like everything to be private and personal. I know Jason's like that too.

*Me too.*

He's expressed it.

*I didn't enjoy my wedding. Extraordinary.*

Oh I was longing for it to be over. And when we went away, we caught I think the eleven o'clock train at night to go to Torquay for our honeymoon. Oh boy! I can still recall the relief that that was over. But David enjoyed every minute of it.

*Tell me about your dress.*

[PAUSE] It was taken I think from a picture, it was sort of a heavy satin, which stood stiff, and it had epaulettes, came out there. And I can't remember what we had... Jennifer dear...

*Was it ivory?*

Of course, yes. No I think it was a damask, a damask thing. And, oh I remember having numerous fittings for it.

*Who made it?*

And they did... A local dressmaker, a local dressmaker. And as with most things, it never came out like the picture, and I...so naturally I wasn't very happy about it. But thinking back on it, it was quite nice on its own merits, even if it wasn't like the picture I hoped it would be.

*Well I've seen pictures, it was beautiful. You looked lovely. There's a picture of you with Daddy, you're holding lilies.*

Oh yes.

*It's absolutely lovely. In fact I wonder where that picture is, there's a big one that Grandma and Grandpa had in their living-room.*

Oh yes. Oh, it's got to be around somewhere. I don't put any importance on these things. It's too much. No, I'm at fault, I don't think it's the right...one should...I mean the fact that eventually we were going to get married and have a place of our own and be together without being separated, that in itself, oh it's a wonderful feeling. It's wonderful when you know, everything is behind you, you're now starting out. Oh it's just marvellous. Particularly if you're in love with the person, just, it's one of the most heavenly things there is. But...

*What time of day was the ceremony?*

I would have loved to have eloped. That would have been my ideal, eloped. Because remember David and I were married, and you were the bridesmaids, at, up in Scotland in... There's a picture of that somewhere, I haven't come across it. Do you have it?

*You told me about that, I have no recollection of it.*

You don't remember it? I think you must have been about eight then.

*I don't remember.*

At the Anvil.

*What, at Gretna Green?*

Gretna Green, that's right.

*Finally got married.*

Finally got married at Gretna Green. And the product of our liaison was the bridesmaid.

*Absolutely lovely. But, what time of day was the ceremony?*

It was a luncheon. Ah, that's right, the wedding took place under a canopy in the restaurant, it was somewhere in Covent Garden, somewhere in Covent Garden, because we knew the fellow who was the head waiter there, that's why we had it down there, because we knew him. And, there was a reception afterwards there.

*You don't remember where?*

It was in a hotel, some hotel in Covent Garden, not a large hotel, but...well it's probably not there now. It was over 60 years ago.

*Oh Covent Garden's changed an awful lot.*

Improved I would say. Well especially now they took the food market away and all that.

*Well it's very different. It's very very different.*

Mm.

*So where did you...where did you go on your honeymoon?*

Mm?

*Where did you go on your honeymoon?*

Torquay.

*Torquay.*

Yes, we stayed at the hotel, we had a lovely honeymoon. We've got nice pictures of that somewhere.

*Well it was June, so it was nice weather?*

Yes. Went out for lots of walks, there was lots of adjacent villages, fishing villages. It was lovely.

*Of course we didn't record the date; of course I know it very well. The 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1937.*

I couldn't recall the date. The 6<sup>th</sup> of June, that's right, yes.

*Yes. So how long were you away?*

I think it must have been a fortnight. Yes.

*And no arguments?*

No.

*Because that was...because, you told me before that both of you were virgins when you got married.*

That's right. Yes, I repeat that darling. Not from choice, that's how it happened dear.

*That's unusual these days.*

Mm.

*After you got married, where did you live?*

The High dear. David moved in there before we were married, and that's where we remained until we left.

*What number?*

Number 5. That was the first block that was completed. They were still working on the subsequent blocks. And...

*What was it like then?*

Oh it was wonderful, absolutely wonderful. They had the swimming pool which David enjoyed immediately, and he would go for a swim in the morning. And there was a club house, and there was room for a café, and they hadn't yet got anybody to run it; eventually they did get somebody, so you used to get a lunch there, not that we bothered with that sort of thing, we preferred to do our own, but, it was somewhere to go and sit, and all the people around of course were tenants. There was a games room, and David used to enjoy playing snooker. And it was really ideal. And I think it was wonderful for you, that you were born there, and your early days were there, because you had company, you had relaxation, that's where you learnt to swim, and, I think it gave you a sense of stability.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

I can't even remember his name.

*Well I remember, I remember asking you, you told me a long time ago about a little refugee boy that came to stay. Can you tell me about that?*

Well it was all arranged through local synagogues, and asking the congregation Friday night, Saturday morning, those who were prepared to take refugees into their home, should register. Sam and Millie did.

*What year was this?*

That was before the outbreak of war, wasn't it, because that's when they got them out.

*Would it have been '35?*

I can't enlighten you there.

*You weren't married?*

You have to guess a bit. No.

*No.*

Just a moment. Must have been. Yes, must have been early married, because Millie used to bring him to The High.

*Ah, so it was after 1937.*

That's right. Well outbreak of war was '36 right?

'39.

'39. No, that would be, it was just before the outbreak of war , that's right.

*Yes, so he would have come over on Kindertransport.*

That's right.

*So what can you tell me about it?*

Well he was a lovely looking boy, lovely little boy. Blond, not...light brown hair. I think he must have been about nine, I don't think he was ten. But, I can sort of picture him very timid and, well snatched from his family, and, I don't know how much Millie and Sam knew about him. Anyway there was an immediate correspondence with his family, they were acquainted where he was, and...but they didn't come over until after the war.

*Where was he from?*

I don't know whether it was Berlin or wherever.

*But it was Germany?*

Oh Germany, definitely. Of course yes it was Germany. He was German, yes. And, a loveable little boy. He was greatly fussed by Millie, and by me, and, well you can imagine what our attitude would have been, to make him sort of, try to understand the way he was feeling.

*Could you talk to him?*

Well in Yiddish, yes.

*What did he speak?*

I can't remember.

*Probably German.*

Might have been German, yes. He was old enough to have had some schooling. And, I can't remember...he must have been enrolled in school. Isn't it terrible that I don't remember more about it, when I was part of it. And I would sometimes come down for him to Millie's, and take him back to...because there was a swimming pool, and all that sort of thing. My memory is almost a blank of that period.

*Was he about the same age as Laurie?*

Could be, yes.

*He would be; if he was nine in '37, that's about the same age isn't it I think. No, a little older. A little older than Laurie.*

Anyway, when his parents came down I think they went straight off to America, that family there. And, there might have been one, there might have been one letter after that, but after that, nothing.

*And you don't remember the name? It's funny, I think there's a photograph of him.*

Really? Where?

*Among the photos, no?*

No.

*No.*

No, shame. Well it was a very traumatic period, just before the war and afterwards, it was too much activity going on.

*But when did his parents come for him?*

Oh that was after the Armistice.

*So he was with Millie a long time.*

Yes.

*So from 19...say it was 1937, it could even have been after Kristallnacht, 1938, until what, until '45?*

No, I think...I think it must have been '37.

*Well that's eight years. Was he really there that long?*

[PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] Wasn't...no, definitely not. No, it was a guess, it couldn't have been as long as that. What's the good of guessing all the time? I think it was about four years.

*The parents probably managed to get out then.*

Jennifer, the only one who can give you any information there, because you must remember that, the house was blitzed, Rural Way, but not entirely, it was repairable, so I don't know what happened with all the, what happened with all the papers and books and all the stuff there? The practice got a direct hit, as you know, that was then in Mitcham Road, next to the undertaker's. That I remember vividly. That happened during the night, and it happened during the day. I don't know where we, whether we would have stayed there or gone to a local shelter.

*That was during the day, it was bombed?*

No, at night.

*Well you weren't living there.*

We weren't living there, we were living in Streatham.

*Yes.*

The police phoned, yes.

*So... I wanted to ask you also what else you remember about the war. I mean you were married in 1937, when things were already in a pretty bad way in Europe. Did you guess that war was on the way, did you have the feeling war was on the way?*

Oh we were prepared always of course, with Chamberlain coming back waving his letter, 'We have peace in our time'. Oh yes, of course, and we had the papers and we had the radio, and we were avid listeners and readers. Oh we were certainly part of it, and David was the warden of the whole five blocks.

*But how did you feel when war was declared?*

How would you feel if you are suddenly, if this business with Iraq would have escalated, if we prepared for war, you just accept it and go along with instructions. What else can you do? How did you feel? We were newly married, and you were on the way I think.

*No.*

Oh no you weren't on the way yet.

*Not until '45, not until '44.*

Yes, that's right. So, when a thing is a *fait accompli* you go along with it, what alternative do you have? Are you recording?

*Yes.*

Oh you're recording. With my humming and my haring.

*Well...*

I think I am most unsatisfactory, I really do.

*No you're not, you're wonderful, you remember so much.*

End of F8058 Side B

F8059 Side A

*This is tape six in the interview with Mary Roslyn, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1998.*

*Interviewer Jennifer Wingate.*

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*So war broke out, and, was there any likelihood of Daddy being called up?*

No, because he was in a profession that was needed, and that's why they put him onto the, being air-raid warden for the five separate blocks. And it was his duty when there was a raid on to be on duty, and because with the firebombs, they were dropped on the flat roof of the buildings, all the buildings had a flat roof, and they had to be immediately, checked regularly, and, I don't know what they...whether any firebombs did drop on the roof, must have done. Because when he patrolled, he was never on his own, he always had supporters with him. And there was the area where they had the so-called office sort of thing which he reported at, but once he had done his inspection, reported, then he went back and took up his...to be on the premises, to be there in case of any. Because there was one enormous bomb that was dropped. There was The High, side street, and then there was the main road, and there was the tramlines, and the bomb, a bomb was dropped plonk on the tramlines, as near as that. That was when, we heard the swoosh, and we knew something was coming, and I was about to go into the bath, I told you this, and in the panic of the moment I hurriedly put on a dressing-gown and dashed out and I forgot you were in the crib. I had to go back for you.

*How far did you go before you remembered about me?*

Well, everybody was sleeping in the hallways, you see. Everybody came out of there, and had...because the walls were very thick, and that was the air-raid shelter, and all...

*Just upstairs?*

First floor. Yes. And then a lot of people went down to...because you know they were...you used to play there, the, underneath the arches sort of thing.

*Yes. Yes. Well it was sort of, the foundations.*

That's right.

*Yes.*

Yes, but they were...there were passages underground all there, and people used to store their suitcases there, and anything they couldn't keep in the flat they would store down there.

*But that was late. I mean you must have had bombs before that, because I was born in '44, but there were a lot of...*

That was when the flying-bombs...that was the...

*The doodle-bugs were earlier.*

But that was concentrated more on the city. It's when the doodle-bugs started, and they started affecting the suburbs, that sort of thing.

*So the doodle-bugs weren't till '44? They were.*

Yes, oh definitely. You were born in '44, as you say, and that's when we had to leave London because the doodle-bugs were starting.

*But there were...but London was under bombardment earlier than that.*

Oh yes, there was the Battle of Britain wasn't there.

*Yes.*

But the concentration then, by the enemy, was on strategic areas to disrupt things. They weren't interested so much in the suburbs where there wasn't much material to...they concentrated on barracks, the Palace, and all that sort of thing.

*So when was Daddy appointed warden?*

At the very beginning he was enrolled. I don't know whether he offered his services or they approached him, but... And then...

*Who else was on the, on his team?*

I've got to remember their names. Palmer, do you remember Palmer? Yes, the hairdresser. What's her name's father, your friend.

*Cliff Timms?*

Cliff Timms, Cliff Timms. He was always supportive, very supportive, liked him very much. And...

*Chilvers?*

Who?

*Chilvers?*

No, he was in another block, so he wasn't that available, but there were quite a few in our block, number 5. Oh Sam Garfield of course. Oh, Sam Garfield was in the Army.

*Yes.*

And he was on active service, so he wasn't...

*Well...yes.*

He wasn't in the team.

*Because he was a furrier, wasn't he?*

Well he had to give that up, because it affected his chest, he had to give that up, and, he never found a niche for himself, another one of those.

*Were you worried about Daddy when he went on these...?*

Oh yes, of course.

*He had to go on the roof, did he?*

Yes.

*Not during the raid, surely?*

Well I'm not too sure about that. I think they must have gone up at any time.

*What did he wear?*

A helmet. Apart from that, just clothing to suit the time of day, and comfort. Not a uniform.

*Did he have his gas mask with him?*

Oh everybody had a gas mask, had to carry it with you all the time. But fortunately we never had to use it.

*There's a wonderful photograph of a whole lot of you wearing gas masks.*

That's right.

*Of course it's not possible to know who they were.*

It was a fun thing, it was a fun thing.

*So you laughed about it a lot, did you?*

Oh yes, we were all light-hearted about it, and all that. You know the English spirit, you know, you...stiff upper lip and all that, and.....

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

*Was there ever a time where you were really frightened?*

Quite...I think I'm right in saying, no, never, because, looking back on it, the fact we were living where we were living, was a wonderful thing for us, because we had a lot of, how shall I put it? A lot of support, and a lot of interchange, there was a lot of coming and going, and, you would have people for dinner, and you would have drinks. There was always an intermingling, so that alleviated a lot of anxiety one might have had if you were living in a semi-detached or a detached, and there was something happening, and you were scared, I could understand that. But living there was really a blessing in disguise, on all counts.

*So there were a lot of other young people there?*

Oh yes, a lot of young newly-weds, and...

*Of course, the flats weren't built until 1937, were they?*

Well, number 5 was the first one that was completed.

*Number 5 or number 1? You were number 1.*

No no, we started at number 5 and then we went on to, I think it was 97 when you arrived.

*Oh you mean, it was the first block, but it was number 5 flat?*

That's right, on the first floor.

*Yes. We were at 97 in the fourth block, the third block.*

And the Garfields moved in, I can't remember how soon after we moved. Might have been a year after we moved in, the Garfields moved in to number 4. That was next door. And, there was an immediate friendliness between us, and... Well David got on with everybody. I would hold back a bit, being more reserved, but David was very gregarious, he liked people, and people took to him. Being a Scot, everybody likes the Scots, because they are a wonderful race, and I think they should have self-government, I really do. Their educational system has always been superior to ours. So, you know, in a way one could say, we enjoyed the experience of the war, and that's perfectly true. There was a games room, there was a swimming pool, a snooker room where David would go down and have a game. There was always somebody to talk to, it was really wonderful. And I think it was a blessing for you; being a shy child, you needed companionship forced upon you, because you wouldn't go seeking it yourself. You learnt to swim there. I remember an incident where, what's the name of Vicky's daughter, your friend?

*Vicky.*

Vicky? No, it wasn't Vicky.

*Oh Lesley.*

Lesley. Lesley was paddling, and we were all sitting round the pool, it must have been summer, and her mother, what's her name?

*Joan. No...*

Joan was her sister.

*Yes.*

And, Lesley was...

*Vicky. You said it before, Vicky.*

Vicky was her mother, yes. And, she was just playing on the side of the pool, when she fell into the pool, and her mother, Vicky's reaction was, 'Oh my God!' And turned her face away, she couldn't bear to look. Somebody else had to jump in to save the child.

*That's lovely.*

Strange isn't it.

*Yes. Oh that's lovely.*

And it was only in the shallow end.

*Yes. But, how did you cope with the shortages., the food shortages?*

Never conscious of any deprivation. Our rations were adequate, but there was always the black market. Oh crumbs! And, we didn't even have to resort to that, because David's practice in Tooting was immediately opposite a large marketplace with stalls and shops and everything, and quite a lot of them were patients of David's, and we would get a lot of stuff from them, for which we paid. Meat, butter, anything, enough to pass on to other people.

*You mean off the ration?*

Off the ration.

*Were you paying black market prices then?*

Not excessively, we weren't aware of being overcharged or anything like that. But, nevertheless, it didn't stop entertaining, and sharing it around. It was wonderful.

*And what about entertainment, did you go to the, see the films and things a lot?*

Well, yes, and we would go to films. There was one, two, three large cinemas there at the moment, and, yes, sometimes there would be an air-raid warden, a warning. But we didn't go out if I can remember. Streatham never was troubled a great deal with activity.

*But there was a bomb, wasn't there, because next to the last block was bombed, there was a bomb site there.*

That's right, that's right, the last block to be erected was hit, and next to it was a motor show. Pendennis Road, Millie had a...when her house was bombed in Rural Way, they moved to Pendennis Road.

*And that bomb site stayed there for years and years and years.*

A long time, yes. Yes, those...I can't remember whether that was in the early stages or the latter stages. I suppose there was quite a bit of damage done there. Because there's a place, Thrale Road, does that ring a bell? You used to go there for your music examinations.

*Yes, there's a church there.*

And you passed every exam, and you didn't take the final one.

*Oh I did take the final one.*

You did not.

*Yes I did. I did. Anyway, that's another story, we're not talking about me. Yes. So, rationing lasted until after the war.*

And even after the war, yes, a long time.

*Because...and I remember it. But, you have told me this before, that you did know about the concentration camps. Can you tell me what you remember about... During the war I'm talking about.*

Pardon?

*During the war I'm talking about, the reports in the papers that came out during the war.*

I don't think we knew anything about it during the war Jennifer. I don't think that dribbled out to the general public. It did? During the war?

*Churchill knew, it was also...*

Oh yes, I know. Oh they knew, and shut their eyes to it.

*It was in the papers, it was in the papers. Don't forget people knew about Kristallnacht, which was in 1938, and there were reports but they were never front-page news. I mean there's documentary evidence that...*

I suppose they were muzzled from printing it.

*No, it was in the papers.*

In the American papers, yes.

*No, it was in the papers. But I thought you told me that you did know about the camps, that everybody knew a bit.*

Yes, but I can't pinpoint when I knew. That I don't remember.

*No. But after the war, were you aware of people having come from the camps, did you know anybody who came to England after the war who had been in the concentration camps?*

Once they... No I don't think we ever met up with anybody there.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Oh yes.

*Do you remember the Serafinskis?*

I do indeed. Her husband was a lawyer, and he had a club-foot.

*Because I see her occasionally.*

I know.

*And I saw her the other day, well, a few...*

Really?

*A few months ago, in Hampstead Theatre.*

Did you speak to her?

*Yes. She's a large lady and she was with two other large old ladies, and they were so lovely. And Andrew, her son, who was a lovely boy, he wanted to be a doctor, he's not a doctor, he teaches, and I, I said I'd get in touch but I haven't been.*

What does he do?

*I think he teaches. He was a nice boy, really nice.*

Yes, I remember meeting Mrs, after her husband died, and me...because they had a lot of property there, he had invested in a lot of derelict houses.

*Where were they from? Czechoslovakia?*

He met her when she came over here, when she was brought over here by the authorities. And he met her I think being a solicitor in that capacity.

End of F8059 Side A

End of Interview