IMPORTANT

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NATIONAL LIFE STORY COLLECTION

Artists' Lives

LYNN CHADWICK

interviewed by Cathy Courtney

F4555 Side A

Interview with Lynn Chadwick on April 4th, 1995

To begin absolutely at the beginning, where and when were you born?

When? I was born in November, 1914, in a place which was then almost a suburb of London, called Barnes. And it had a Common and horse traffic, I Remember that.

In terms of carriages, or what?

Carriages? Oh yes. You see, that only ... well, ... everything was horse-driven then. There were only just a few lorries and they usually had solid tyres too, they made a terrible noise. And there were also polo ponies that used to go backwards and forwards, because there was Roehampton and Ranelagh there, polo grounds, and so you could hear all these horses going past. And it was, it wasn't a village, but it was much more removed from London, in those days, than it is now.

Were you actually born at home, do you know?

I was born at home, yes. Number 66 Station Road.

And did you know either sets of grandparents? Did you know your grandparents, on either side?

No, because two of them were dead, and the other one, my Chadwick grandfather, was not in England. In fact, he was just passing through on his way to New Zealand, so that's the only time I ever saw him.

Do you know anything about his life?

No.

Did you get told stories?

Not really, no. No, I don't really know about my grandfather. The other Grandfather, my mother's father, I know a little bit about him. He was a curious man, because he was, in a way, a craftsman, as he had a joinery firm and made furniture. And, on the other hand, he was well-known as a sort of ... not a naturalist, but an antiquarian, he used to collect objects. And he was also slightly interested in the political scene, inasmuch as he was a political agent for somebody.

In which party?

That's what I don't know, really. I know that it was for someone called Trevelyan, but I don't know what, what Party he was.

Is that the famous Trevelyan family, do you think, or not?

Well, it's a big family, so I don't really know which side of the family it was. I mean it's a Welsh, it's a Cornish name, isn't it - Trevelyan.

And where did your mother grow up? Was she a Londoner?

No. She was born, I think, in Galashiels in Scotland. And she went to school in Edinburgh, Edinburgh High School. She was brought up in a place called Galashiels, that's where they lived, in Selkirkshire. And she, when she left school, she became a governess, or a school teacher, or something. She was both a school teacher and a governess, that's right.

And had she thought that she would go on having a career, or was it something to do before getting married? Have you any idea?

Well, you know, I don't know how it was in those days. In any case, you know, the trouble with all women, not the trouble, but the ... what the, what the history of all women is, that they set out on a career, and they get side-racked, so they don't continue it. Anyway, my mother was a school mistress, or something like that, in Ireland for a while. Then she got married and went with her husband to Portugal, where they lived in Portugal for a while, I don't know how long they lived, and then I think my mother's first husband died.

And she had no children with him?

She had no children by him, no. No.

And did she ever talk about him? Was he a shadowy figure in your life?

He was a shadowy sort of ... no, no, I didn't hear about him at all, but his brother lived near here, and so that's how I first came to this part of the country, because my mother's brother-in-law lived here, and we used to come to see him.

Where did he actually live?

Well, I think it was somewhere near ... Sheepscombe. I think it was.

And would you come and stay with him, or would you come for the day, or what?

No, no, no. No, no. We used to rent a cottage near here, and used to come for summer holidays. For two summer holidays, anyway, I remember two summer holidays, roundabout 1920/21.

And did they make very strong impressions on you? Have you got vivid memories of those holidays?

Of?

Of those two holidays.

Yes. They were really, they were ... it's a sort of formative period, you see, too, and it was marvellous being in the country and being able to wander about barefoot. Yes, it was very good.

Mmm. And what about the lie of the land, did it make any impression?

A little bit. Not much. But the biggest impression was, of course, quite a different thing, because this cottage we used to rent was near this place called Whiteway Colony, which was still inhabited by almost the original settlers who were sort of, if not Russian, there were some Russians, but they were still sort of people who were looking for an alternative way of life.

And did you visit them?

Well, we were right next to it, and we used to go there to get, to get the bread and things, yes.

And what was it like, what was the atmosphere?

Well, you know, I was only six years old, it's difficult to remember exactly how it was, because I, I don't know. No, I don't know from that ... at that age, at that age, I don't really remember.

Have you got any memory of the building and the interior?

This ...

No, the people you were talking about.

No. In those days, they lived in extremely primitive sort of home-built fabrications, really, in those days, in those days, because I'm confusing it slightly when I, because later, when I was 20/21 years old, I used to come back here again, for a different reason, to see the people who were living in the house which we had rented. That's right. So that was much later, that was sort of 1933 or '34. And so that it had changed considerably, and the people had changed, and they had become, shall we say, more bourgeois, the people, the original colonists, because they were, they were, you know, there was a community. They tried to run it as a commune, but it didn't work very well, but anyway, they tried.

And was that idea attractive to you, the idea of simplicity of the commune?

No, no. It didn't really mean anything, really. Not really, because it probably wasn't presented to me in a reasonable way, anyway, by the family.

And, going back to your mother's father, did anything of his collection of objects, or anything he made, get passed down to you? Did any of it filter through?

Not to me, no. No, well, there is ... I've got a chair, mmm. And I've got a curio cabinet, that's what I think, they used to keep objects in. The only thing that I know that he made that exists, were the, the pew ends he made for St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, and these eventually were transferred to some church in Chicago, so I really don't know.

So you've never seen them.

No.

And did you get any idea, from your mother, what sort of personality he had? Was he an easy man for her to have as a father?

Well, no, I don't ... no, my grandfather, I don't know. I didn't hear very many stories about him, except that he did have a rather convenient memory, rather like I'm getting now, and he was able to forget what he was supposed to be doing, quite easily. I mean, for instance, one day my grandmother said to him, "Look, go and wash your hands, because we have someone coming to lunch". So he went off to wash his hands, and he was looking around and thinking, "Now, what did she say I've got to do? Oh, yes. Oh yes, I know. Fishing". And he saw his fishing rod there, "I've got to go fishing". So he went off fishing and came back in two weeks time, you see! Rather like that! I think, I quite understand that now, though. A very convenient form of amnesia.

But did you pick up from your mother that she was fond of him? Did she seem to be easy in her memory?

No, I couldn't tell, no. That was never referred to. But we didn't have intimacies like that, really, almost. It was very remote, all the conversation about the family.

And do you know anything about your mother's mother, at all?

No, except she was a likeable person, apparently. And I don't know what you might call ... really grandmotherly.

And did you mother have brothers and sisters?

My mother, my mother had, I think, three sisters, two sisters and three brothers.

And were any of them part of your life, as you were growing up?

No. Well, we used to go to Scotland for our holidays sometimes, and I used to see my cousins up there, yes. So I was quite used to the, the "Borders", as the country is know up there, the "Borders", and the, the lowland hills, I was used to the scenery, and I used to enjoy it very much.

So they would have been, sort of, more or less outdoor holidays, would they, by the sound of it?

Oh yes.

And did you have a sense of your cousins being linked to you, or were they just people you went to stay with?

No, not really. They were just cousins, but it didn't mean very much to me, no. They were critical of me, in any case, because I was English, you see. That was a suspicious thing.

But your mother's sisters and brothers all stayed in Scotland, did they? Was she the only one that ...

No. One of her sisters married a dentist roundabout there, and he died, well she died too. And then the other one married a sea captain, and she was the, she became the governess to the Maharajah of Sarawak, and he would carry on being a sailor round the world, round the world, and I don't know what happened to him, but, I mean, they didn't part, they were still married, that lot. And she came back to Scotland, in the end, and we used to go to visit her.

And what did the brothers do, do you know?

The brothers? One was ... killed in one of the African wars, before the South African War, I think. And one was killed ... in Canada, I don't know what doing. One stayed in Scotland. One was a great rifle shot, and tried for first prize at Bisley, the Queen's Prize as it was in those days. Otherwise I didn't know much about them, you see, because I only met the one family up there.

When you'd go to Scotland, did you have to go shooting, and things like that?

Oh no, no, no. I was only a child. No, no, there was no question of that, no.

And do you know how your parent's met? How did your mother encounter your father?

No, this I don't know at all, because, you see, my mother was a widow then, and, but, she was related to my father in some curious second cousin relationship, I believe, because my father's mother was a Russell, and my mother's mother was a Russell, you see, so they were related and they knew each other. And so my father had, apparently, been visiting them, he came from Lancashire, and he used to go up there to see his, his mother's family, and he rather admired them, I believe.

And do you know anything about their courtship?

Do you know when they actually got married?

No, I don't , no.

Or where?

I could find out, but I've never bothered about things like that. I think they were ...no, I wouldn't know, I could only guess.

What was your mother's maiden name?

Lynn. The same as mine, that's why I'm called Lynn. She was Miss Lynn. And my grandfather was Francis Lynn.

And when we talked last time, you said it was actually your father who'd wanted you to be called Lynn, after her maiden name, rather than your mother.

Yes, because he ... because he ... coming from Lancashire, he greatly respected this family, the other lot there, and because my mother was called Lynn, he wanted to continue the name. I could have, because I was called Lynn Russell, to get the both of them in, you see.

And what do you know about your father's father?

Very very little, except that he lived to a great age and was very robust, and even at the age of about 90 he used to write, correcting my father's letters, saying that his handwriting was getting rather poor, and things like that, you know.

And he had come from Lancashire, had he?

Yes, he had too, yes. But they finished up in Napier in New Zealand, where he survived the earthquake there quite easily. He was an extremely robust man, apparently.

And all of your father's growing up took place in Lancashire, or what?

All what?

All of your father's growing up took place in Lancashire?

Yes. He was, he did, actually, become a soldier in the South African War, that was, I suppose, at the end of the growing up, yes. But, apart from that, he grew up as a child in Africa, sorry in Lancashire, yes.

Do you know which bit? Do you know where they lived?

In Lancashire? Let me see. Near Manchester.

And do you know where he went to school?

No.

And you don't know what your ...

He'd go to the local council school, I suppose, whatever they would have in those days.

And do you know what your father's father did to earn money? What was his profession?

No, I don't. No, I Don't. I was going to try to find out, but you see, these, they're not matters that really concern me. I know a lot of people are very concerned with ancestry, but it has never bothered me. I mean, I've been too busy trying to do something for myself.

And do you know anything about your father's mother at all?

No, I don't know. Who would have been a Miss Russell, no, I don't.

And did you get the impression that your father had had a happy childhood? Or did you get no idea?

I think it was a very hard childhood there, at the end of the Victorian Age. It was very hard indeed.

Because of economics?

Yeah, you still had a real hard time if you weren't middle-class, shall we say. After all, the middle-class wasn't very big either, then, but there was a vast, I suppose you'd call it working-class, and, and fringes of it, fringes of it, so that the ... quite a sort of degree amongst them of how much better they were than anyone else, you see, that sort of thing. There was more competition in the working-class, shall we say, than in other classes.

Do you think that was something that marked your father all his life?

Yes, Certainly. Oh yes. He wanted to get better.

And was it the kind of thing where he would never be satisfied, that he always wanted to get further and further, or not?

No. No, no, no. He had limits. Oh yes, no, that's the curious thing. He set his targets, and he got them. It's all right. He became Mayor of Barnes, and that was the ultimate thing you see. Most curious! (LAUGHS)

And did he have brothers and sisters?

Oh yes, he did. He did. He did. He had, but then I don't know whether it was a step-sister, so I really don't know that, because he had a stepmother when, when I sort of knew about him. His own mother was dead, I think. So, so whether she had any children, I don't know, apart

from my father. That I don't know. There may still be some remnants of that family somewhere, I don't know.

So there were no uncles and aunts from your father's side, that were in your childhood, at all?

No.

And, presumably, because the grandparents weren't there, you didn't particularly go to Lancashire? That wasn't part of life for you?

No, we didn't go to Lancashire, there was nothing to go there for. There was no one living there, that we knew.

And the house where you were born, was where you grew up, also, wasn't it?

I was there until ... oh, we moved out of it, we moved to another house in Barnes, when I was about ten years old or something, I don't know which, whether it was nine or eleven, but sometime round about ten years old, we moved to another house. But the house where I was born, yes ...

Was the moving to the other house when you were ten, was that part of your father's plan of going up?

That was a step upwards, yes, in his mind. It was down in mine, but up in his! (LAUGHS)

And what was that first house like? How do you remember that house?

It was a rather charming cottage, and my father had done some research, and he found that Handel, the musician, had lived in a cottage beside Barnes Green, and so he said, "Ah, that's this cottage," you see, so he always told us that we lived in Handel's cottage. It may be true, I don't know.

And what was it like outside and inside?

Oh, it was very simple. They had, we, that is to say we had it altered a bit. It's still there, and I noticed it was for sale the other day.

Did you have any desire to buy it back?

No, only as a sort of ... as an idea, but there is absolutely no point in my having another place.

So it did cross your mind? It did cross your mind that you might?

Yes. Just as a sort of oddity! But there's no point, no, there's absolutely no point in having it. I often think, "Oh, I'd like to buy that, or that". Anyway, I do that all the time, much to everyone's annoyance.

You've probably got good memories of it, then, if you thought that it would be quite nice to have it back.

Oh, not for that reason, no, no. No, as a souvenir, that's all. No, I wouldn't want to have it back.

And when you were born, was your sister already born, or was she ...

No, I was the elder.

And there were the two of you as children, there weren't any more?

Only two, yeah, mmm.

And when was she born?

I suppose she was born in the same house, I don't know, I can't remember.

How much younger than you is she?

Less than two years, roundabout 16 months.

And her name?

Margery.

And do you know where that name came from?

Well, I think it had been in the family, but I don't know quite where. You see, my mother was called Margery, but it was spelt differently. And where she had got it from, I'm not quite sure.

And, as children, did you both have your own bedrooms?

Yes.

Was there enough space for that?

Yes.

And, apart from your two parents, did anybody else live in the house?

No, at one time, there was a maid's bedroom, because, you know, in those days, everyone had maids. In fact, two, mmm.

And did you get on with the maids? Were they part of your life at all?

Well, I'm getting a bit confused at the moment. When we were living in the cottage, there was, there may have been a maid at one time, but I don't think so. No, I think it was at the other house they had maids, yes. And, what did you ask me?

I just wondered whether the maids were sort of your friends, or what the relationship was, and whether you liked them as a child?

Oh, I think it was a fairly easy relationship. I mean ...

They weren't sort of allies against the adults.

Oh no, no. No, no, no.

And what would they have worn? Would they have been in a uniform?

I think that they all wore a certain amount of uniform in those days, an apron and a sort of thing on the head, I think.

And so, really, it was your mother who looked after you mainly, or did she have anybody coming in to help?

Well, there was somebody who had been my nurse, as a child, and she used to come in a bit. But, I mean, I don't know to what age, no.

And have you got good memories of the nurse? Was she a kind nurse, or a strict nurse?

No, it, it wasn't a nurse in a sense that people have nannies, it wasn't like that, no. No, there was somebody, the one who had looked after me when I was a very small child, she was very friendly, yes, and she used to come back.

And do you remember particular toys? Do you remember things that you had at that age?

Well, sort of ... bricks and things like that, which I used to arrange in long, straight lines, on the floor. I mean, usually children build high things, until they topple over, with bricks. I don't think I did that very much. I may have done, but not much. But what I liked to do most was, long lines of these bricks on the floor.

Were they coloured bricks?

Well, I think they weren't in those days, they were called "Lotts Bricks", and they were just sort of sandy-coloured.

And were they wooden?

No. They were made of some sort of thing like ... reconstituted stone, I think. But I really can't remember that. I don't know what they were made of.

And would you tend to lie them in the same place, and in the same lines, or would it vary?

I think the whole idea was to make a straight line.

And did you have what lots of children had at that time, the metal soldiers? Did you have those?

We had a few. I had a few, yes. Yes, I did. I think all little children had little soldiers. It was before motor cars, you see. And, of course, there were trains, engines. I think I had a little railway with a little engine on it.

Did you have tin toys at all?

That's right, tin toys they were, mmm.

And what about soft toys? Did you have a teddy bear, for example?

I don't think I did have a teddy. Oh, I may have done. I can't remember a teddy bear, I can't remember teddy bears, no. I may have had one, there's no reason why I shouldn't have had one.

And did you have a garden?

No, there was nothing much of a garden in Barnes.

So you wouldn't have had outdoor toys, like wheelbarrows, or spades, or things like that?

No, no, no, no, no.

Would you have had a bicycle, or anything like that?

No. That was a great sadness to me, that I always wanted to have a thing called a fairy cycle, which was a small bicycle, but I wasn't allowed one, it was considered too dangerous. So I was rather horrified when they bought one for my sister, later. However, I was allowed to borrow it.

Did they trend to treat you differently from your sister?

Oh yes, I think, oh yes, there was a definite division there, mmm.

In which way?

Well, I don't know how they treated my sister, but I know it wasn't the same as they treated me. ...This cough isn't very good.

You mean that she had an easier time, in some way, or that they ...

Well, you know, brothers always think that sisters are treated more leniently, and favoured, they do. This is the beginning of a certain jealousy between brothers and sisters.

And were you treated in quite a strict way?

Yes. Yes, I think that we were treated very strictly. I think all children were in those days, but, I mean, I don't think we were any more than anyone else, but it was fairly strict, yes.

What sort of things were they strict about?

The attitude towards things, you see, was very black and white.

What sort of things would you have been prevented from doing?

Taking out my sled on Sunday! (LAUGHS) That was not allowed. That was terrible, because the snow went away on Monday. No, otherwise, we had a fairly generous upbringing. And we were taken various places, in England, for holidays. Oh yes, also, we used to go to Belgium, because it was just after the end of the First World War, and my father had started a business in Belgium, and ... it was not a business, but selling his things through a place in Belgium, so he had an agent in Belgium, and so we used to go to Belgium for seaside holidays at this place called Ostend, and that was very good. It was rather nice to be in a foreign place, foreign smells and all that. Foreign food.

And you'd go over on a boat, presumably, would you?

Yes. That's where I first became seasick.

And you were doing obvious things like building sand-castles, that sort of holiday?

That's exactly right. Plenty of sand at this place, Ostend. Plenty of sand there.

What was your father's business, then? What was he up to?

He was an engineer, and he designed industrial furnaces, which he had made very efficient, so that they were so efficient that everyone wanted to buy them, you see.

So he had his own business?

Oh yes. He'd been an engineering apprentice, and he'd done everything, he'd studied a certain amount, and then had an idea for making this certain furnace, and he borrowed the money to start this business up.

And did he work from home, or did he have office somewhere?

He had an office in the City.

Oh right. Did you ever go up to it?

Yes, I used to go there often.

What was it like? Where was it?

It was in Grays Inn Road, and I used to go there quite often. Old-fashioned offices, in those days.

What do you remember being there?

Oh ... I suppose, really, what I remember is the way I was treated by the staff, by the other office staff, you know, the boss's son.

But, I mean, there wouldn't have been computers or probably even typewriters, at that point.

No, no. No, there was nothing there. Yes, I daresay there was a typewriter, yes.

And it was really where the things were designed, rather than where they were made, presumably?

No, designed, designed, yes.

So would you have seen all the drawings? Would they have been around?

Yes, but they didn't mean much to me, you know. Drawings of ... technical matters, don't really, don't really, didn't really affect me much. In fact, they don't really mean very much to anyone, unless they know what the thing is.

Would your father wanted to explain to you? Was he keen that you should understand?

I think he probably was, but, I mean, I was too young. We're talking about a time when I was very young, you see.

And did he ever draw at home? Did you ever see him?

He?

Mmm.

He did do a certain amount of designing at home, when he was making a new invention, yes, he did. He did. And he was even studying as well, to pass examinations. A very studious person, really, in that respect, because it was one of the hurdles he had to overcome, you see, to become a qualified engineer, in order, well, it was in his mind, he had to be qualified.

And did be encourage you to draw?

Well, no, no, that's artistic, artistic.

End of F4555 Side A

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I was just asking if your father encouraged you to draw.

I think, there was no question of this, it didn't arise. The question didn't arise, because it wasn't a question of drawing, the thing was, that they were wondering what was the best profession for me to be put into. And, as a sort of respectable profession, they thought either architecture, as a last resort, or medicine, which would be the best thing, or the Church, they thought the Church would be very good, or ... anything ... because it was, they were both, medicine and the Church, were both respectable, and something that the family could be proud of. But, the trouble is, that they'd put me into the wrong side of the school, they'd put me into the Classical side, so that was not much good for medicine, and it would have been all right for the Church if I'd gone on, but I showed no inclination that way, so that was rather difficult. So architecture was a sort of last resort.

Why did they think architecture was so respectable?

Well, it was better, better than what I, I had suggested that I'd like to go to an art school, or something like that, but they said that that was out of the questions. Well, I had, really, come across a young sculptor who was a friend of my sister. By this time, we're talking about the time when I was now 18/19, and I'd met this young sculptor, and I was very impressed that a young man could have a studio to work in, and, and make things, all by himself there, and I was most impressed with this. It sounded a wonderful life. So my mother said, "Well..." she knew a sculptor called Thomas Clapperton, and I'd better go and see him. And so I went to see him,, and he advised me not to try to be a sculptor, because it was a hazardous life. A curious man, because he was the sculptor who did the frieze on the building, Liberty's building in, in Regent Street, yes. Anyway, he said, "no, no, that was not a very good

profession to try". So, in the end, it was decided that architecture would the best sort of compromise.

Do you remember the name of your sister's sculptor friend?

[INTERRUPTION]

Actually, I was rather interested in what you just said, while we were having our coffee, about how you think artists might use art. Could you bear to say it again?

No, it's only my personal opinion, that, shall we say, that some artists, for some artists it's a substitute for appreciation by other people, for themselves. They say, "Well, all right, you don't like me, but what about this thing I've got?" You see, this flashy object. And they say, "Oh, isn't it lovely", or, "How nice", "How wonderful", "How do you do it?" you see, and this is a substitute, really, for reality.

Mmm, an interesting idea. And the questions I'd just asked you was whether you knew the name of the sculptor friend of you sister?

Well, he may be still alive, I doubt it. He's called Wilfred Dudeney, and he was a very talented young pupil, when I knew him then, and he was much admired in his student work. But he never manage to get out of just being a pure craftsman.

And do you remember where his studio was?

Well, the first one was in, in Fulham, I know that. He used to, when I say Fulham, we call it Chelsea, or somewhere there, Chelsea, mmm, and that was where he had a studio. Then, after

that, he had a studio out in the, what was then the wilds of, exactly where Heathrow Airport is now, it was called Stanmore Moor, you see, Stanmore. And he had a little wooden hut there, and he worked in there.

And you went to both places, did you?

Yes, I did go to both places, yes.

What sort of age were you when you first met him?

I would have been about ... 16, oh well, I might have been 18, but it was 16, 18, shall we say, 18, yes.

And what sort of work did he do?

He did fairly straightforward portraits, because he was doing a portrait of my sister, for instance, that's how I know that. But he also did carving. He was very interested in stone carving, and in the end, when I met him much later, he came to see me when ... he'd heard about me, you know, because ... when he knew me to start with, I was only a schoolboy. But then I was sort of, was know a bit, doing something in the way of sculpture, he came to see me, and I asked him what he was doing. He was carving gravestones. But he wasn't at all embarrassed by this, he was terribly proud of it, because he was a craftsman, and he could do the carving on the gravestone very well.

And when you were 16 ...

Or monuments, if you like.

Was he kind to you when you first met him, or did he ...

Oh, we were all friends together, yes, we used to ... oh yes, we used to go camping together, and holidays together.

And ...

He was, he was not much older than me, I suppose, he'd be about 21/22.

And you didn't ever go and spend any time, actually working in his studio?

Oh no, no, no. No, I just used to ... I was impressed by the fact that a young person could have a place of his own, and be able to do what he wanted to do himself. Quite different from having to take a job.

And did he have any private money?

He?

Mmm. I think that a lot of people had £2 a week given to them by an aunt. I met several of them, and they all used to come and eat in Bertorelli's in Charlotte Street, and you could just exist in London on £2 a week, and have a studio and just get a, one meal a day in Bertorelli's, which was 9d., if you sat in the front. It was possible to be an artist without any money, in those days, with £2 a week from an aunt, which was quite a lot of money then, that's £100 a week now, you see. You could. But you couldn't now, you see, not even on £100 a week,

no, because the rent would be afar too high. You see, the rent would be very low then. It was much easier for poor people to do something like that, individual, than it is now.

Since it's cropped up, Bertorelli's was a kind of meeting place, really, wasn't it, for a lot of people used to lunch there.

Well, I went there to eat, I don't know to meet anybody.

But, I mean, you would probably see the same people, because they'd also gone there to eat. It was a sort of focus point, wasn't it?

Well, I think ... yes, a lot of people have said that to me, or did I sort of know people there, and I didn't really, no. It was just a restaurant, really.

Do you know why you went to that one, rather than another one?

Well, it, I suppose because the young artist people I met used to go there. There were two up there, Bertorelli's and Bertorelli's brother had another one down the road, I can't remember the name of that one.

Do you ever go there now?

No. I haven't, no. Last time I went there was, oh, 20 years ago, probably, or more.

And did you go to the pubs nearby, or not?

Yes. Going to the pub, before the War, we're talking about before the War, by the way, occasionally, yes, not much though. After the War, a bit more, because we got used to going to pubs, and that's a sort of English thing, of meeting everyone in a pub, which is ... the French meet in a cafe, and they sit round a table, and they don't drink, the French don't drink, you see, the English stand and drink, that's the difference. And you stand around in England, so that everyone gets very drunk, because if there are 12 people there, you have 12 drinks. In France, you buy your own coffee, and that's it.

And going back to where we were, when you were little, when you were sort of four years old, did you draw then? Were you encouraged to draw? Did you have paints/

yes, I was, because it was a good thing to do. I mean, girls were encouraged to take up some sort of thing, too, weren't they. It was in the art sense, not ... apart from needlework and all that, but they were encouraged to do certain things. And I was only encouraged to do the drawing, because my mother felt that she was more on the side of artists than, than not. She had know artists when she was young, in Scotland, and so she was familiar with artists, and they were people that you could respect, especially people who did work that might be shown in the Academy, that was the effect of it when I was there. But when she was young, she had various artists friends in her family, that is to say, they respected these artists, you see, and so that that was the history and the heritage of it, given on to me. It wasn't considered a possibility for me to become an artist, but, at the same time, I was given special lessons at school, I was allowed to have special lessons, until the Headmaster stopped it, because it was interfering with my studies. (LAUGHS)

Do you know who the artists were that your mother had known? Do you know what sort of work they did?

There was someone called Tom Scott, but, I mean, these were just local artists of where she lived in Scotland. Tom Scott was one, but I don't know who he was, and I don't suppose anyone knows who he was, and I've never researched at all.

What pictures were actually on the walls of your house when you were growing up?

Well, there was one by Tom Scott, of course.

And what was that?

Then there were others that they'd bought, because, you know, the tendency was, in those days, to have things on the wall, you know, it was the sort of thing to do. That's probably why I don't like having things on the wall, I mean, just one or two, but, I mean, in those days, you more or less covered your walls with things. Some people still do. The only sort of thing that I ever, any wall I'd ever cover, would be the wall of the loo, or something like that, you know with little vignette things.

Can you actually remember what the pictures were, some of them?

That I saw?

In your parents' house.

There was one enormous great watercolour of a corn field somewhere, that was a watercolour, a great big watercolour painting, which was very thick stuff. There was some curious Hogarth prints of some sort, too, as far as I can remember. There was nothing very exciting, no.

Did you have anything in your bedroom?

In my bedroom? No. No, the thing in my bedroom was the wallpaper. I remember the pink roses, great big pink roses, I remember that.

Did you like it?

I liked that. I liked the pink wallpaper, I think, yes. I liked, sort of, cosy wallpaper, in those days. I became much purer later, much more severe.

What else would have been in your bedroom?

Nothing very much, I don't think. I can't remember. I really can't remember back there.

And did your parents have any sculpture?

Oh no. Not, they weren't, they would not have had sculpture in the form of art, shall we say. They would not have been collecting art in any form. I mean, paintings were a different thing, you see. But, you see, also, in those days, art was not as art is now, you see. It was just a thing to have as a sort of sign that you were one step up, as it were, rather like the Americans are now. You see, they buy art just to show that they are civilised.

It wasn't part of normal life?

Oh well, there was a tendency to have art, prints or something or other, I mean, there still is, but, I mean, amongst people who don't really enjoy it in its reality. It's only the effect, the, the ... the, as a sign of their ...culture.

And did they have ornaments then? By the sound of it they would have done.

Yeah. Oh, a few. Not a lot, no, no.

Do you remember anything in particular?

No, no. There was ... no, no. Ornaments, there was one little Chinese pottery thing, a Chinaman, but I can't really remember them having any ornaments. Really, it was only a cottage, you know, there was not much room for anything, not much.

Was it a dark cottage, or a light cottage?

Well, it was, it was fairly, it was fairly light, but we sort of made some more windows, and let more light into it, because the old cottages had only windows one side, you see, and then nothing the other.

And it was probably wallpapered throughout, rather than painted?

Well, they had some imitation panelling in one of the rooms, I remember. Mmm, had to be respectable, you know.

And carpeted?

Yes, carpeted, yes. It was carpeted with goats hair carpeting, rather strong sort of stuff.

What sort of colour?

Sort of dark beige, I would call it, grey and black and beige together, a mixture.

That must have been quite an odd texture to grow up with, because, as a child, I don't know about you, but I spent a lot of time on the floor. Did you spend a lot of time on the floor?

Well, yes, I did. But it wouldn't be that sort of carpeting in there, I don't know what there was on the floor in my bedroom. No, I can't remember that. It might have even been linoleum, but I can't remember.

And when you were small, did you have paints of some sort, or colours?

Paints.

What, poster paint, watercolour, or what?

Well, like children do now. I don't really remember painting like that, like they do nowadays, I don't ever remember doing that, no. No, I don't. I must have had some, but I don't remember painting until I went to school, really.

So would you have had wax crayons, that sort of thing, do you think?

I don't think so. In fact, I was, even later, I was a little bit backward in draughtmanship, in any case. I resisted sort of drawing anything, I still do.

And was there music in your house?

Well, my father had got my uncle, the one in Scotland, the joiner, to make him a gramophone. Now, no, I don't know, no. No, that wasn't quite like that, no. He bought a gramophone, a wind-up gramophone, and he had a lot of records of, of Caruso, and Madame Melba, and people like that, in those days, singing Italian opera, yes. And we used to play these things again and again and again. And sometimes, because he had bought one of the very first cine films over from Belgium, because it came from the Continent, the movies, the movies came from the Continent, and we had one of the first little projectors, and we used to have these early films, Charlie Chaplin and so on, and early cartoons too, very curious cartoons they were in those days. They were very good, but, of course, no one will ever see them now. But, anyway ...

Can you remember any of them?

Well, no. There was one about a dog catching a fly, "Bobby catches ...", oh, it was in French, of course, they were in French. "Bobby Catches a Fly". There was another one about some inventor who made a thing for attracting birds in, it was a sort of flashing thing you put in the fields, to attract birds or something, I don't know what. Here was another one of a girl diving off the cliffs in, in Cornwall, and that was a sort of news thing. I'm not sure about Charlie Chaplin, by the way. There were early films, certainly. And we used to play this gramophone to the accompaniment of this.

The whole family, or you and Margery?

Well, I don't know. I can't remember how many people were there. One or two, anyway.

And ... there were little toys that were projectors, but maybe later, you didn't have anything that you made films yourself with any ... I seem to remember being told about toys where you drew your own little films, and then you could wind it round?

No.

You didn't have anything like that, to invent yourself?

No. No. An animated film, yes.

And there was a musical instrument in the house? Was there a piano?

No. There was a piano, yes, but for other people to sue when they came to see us, because although we, both myself and my sister had music lessons, I remained absolutely tone deaf, and absolutely incapable of playing anything.

And did you ever get taken to concerts?

No.

Did you ever get taken to theatres?

My mother took me, as part of my education. There was someone called Forbes Robertson, a family of actors, who were quite well-known actually I believe, and they had a sort of private theatre somewhere in Fulham there, and I went with my mother to see or hear Ibsen, an Ibsen play.

You went to hear Ibsen?

Ibsen, yes.

Can you remember what?

No, I can't, because it didn't mean anything to me whatsoever. I was quite young.

Were you taken to the pantomime at all? Did you go to Peter Pan, and things like that?

Yes, I did, actually. I was taken to the pantomime, yes, yes.

With pleasure, or not?

Peter Pan, yeah, that was quite good entertainment in those days, yes. Peter Pan wasn't bad, no.

And were you taken to any kind of sporting events, anything like that?

Well, not in the normal sense of the word, because in Barnes, you have the Boat Race going through Barnes, and so we used to go to see the Boat Race, but that wasn't quite that. No. Sporting events? Mmm, I think my father may once have taken me to a football match or something, I can't remember that. I don't think so. No, I can't remember.

And would you ever, for instance, have gone to see the Crystal Palace? Oh, in Sydenham.

Mmm. No. No.

And what about religion? You were churchgoers by the sound of it.

Yes. It, it was still the days of, more or less normal to go to church every Sunday, which I hated anyway. But I hated going to church, and the service was absolutely abominable for me, I couldn't bear it. But, you know, I was obliged to go. Then, later, at school, in the sort of period when I was also ... I was ... I had to be confirmed by the Bishop of London, and so .. in that period, my headmaster, by the way, was an extraordinary man who used to preach all the time, about the, the Glory of God, and all that sort of thing, and so that I did actually get infected with this for a while, and I used to go to church myself, to early service, and, and all that. And it made me feel that I was doing myself a bit of good by this sort of penance. But that lasted for about three years, actually.

Which church did you go to with the family?

In the summer?

As a family, where did you go on Sundays?

Oh, it was always the same, it was Church of England.

In Barnes?

Yes. My father was a churchwarden, you see.

And did the architecture of the church have an effect on you?

I would say that, perhaps, the effect, because you see, as a child, you get so bored in church, I used tom perhaps, count the panes of glass, that sort of thing, and the effect on me would have been, perhaps, I mean, I'm only sort of guessing, I don't know, the fact that you were in a large volume of air might have given me this feeling of wanting to be in a bigger space, I don't know.

And did you have prayers at home, in any way?

No.

You wouldn't have said Grace before meals?

I think my father always said Grace before a meal, yes.

And what do you feel about religion now? Are you a churchgoer still?

No. I'm completely atheist now. I mean, I feel very strongly about this, because I think that it is a very dangerous thing. I think religion is misused always, by everybody. So I feel rather strongly about it. But, on the other hand, I'm not going to start marching about the streets about it.

So do you think that, when you die, it's all finished with? Or do you think there is something else?

The thing, at the moment, for me, is that it seems that we are destroying ourselves, but what will survive will be some bacteria or virus will probably survive, at least there'll be a

molecule swimming about in the ocean, that will eventually, in several hundred million years time, evolve into something or other again, like that, yes. Life is indestructible, it's a terrible thought. (LAUGHS)

You're speaking of life on earth. You don't think there's a life anywhere else?

There's a possibility, yes, because if it could happen here, it could happen somewhere else, but in a different form, of course, because it's unique here, the actual conditions that have produced life in this earth are, I mean, it's very curious, because everything is exactly right for life, for animals, animals, you see, we are animals.

But do you think when an individual dies, that individual is completely finished with?

There is another sort of feeling that I have, is that, that matter is indestructible, and that all is matter anyway, so that even a thought is matter, and that it's indestructible, and it'll go on, and perhaps can be picked up one day, I don't know.

And do you think much about death?

No. Well, yes, I do, really. I do. Yes, I do. Very boring.

With dread? With dread?

Yes. Yes, I do, really, yes. Not dread in the normal sense. No, no. No. No, the idea of being extinguished is disagreeable, and it always has been that, but I'm not worried about the, any sort of physical sort of thing about death, no.

And did your parents remain Christians throughout their life?

They expressed Christianity, shall we say. I mean, I don't know whether they were Christians, but, you know, don't know, don't know what that means, anyway.

But they carried on as churchgoers, at any rate.

They would have said that they were Christians, oh yes. But then so do people now, everyone does.

But after you'd had those three years where you were going to services by yourself, did you then lose your faith at that point, or it faded out?

I went to, I went to Communion by myself, I didn't go to services, because actually, I can't bear sitting there with people lecturing me, shall we say, or, you know ... the service itself is terrible for me.

But did you then suddenly lose faith, or it just phased our, or what happened?

Gradually. Gradually, yeah. Mmm.

Can you sort of remember an age where you started to lose faith?

Well, I think that it was a gradual process as soon as I was, as it were, grown up, you know. But in different forms, you see, for different reasons.

Was it to do with getting more interested in other aspects of life, and rather forgetting about religion? Or was it something that was actually much more to do with questioning it?

Well, it's more to do with the appreciation of the development of things in a scientific way, you see.

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And was that interest in science to do with some way in which you'd encountered it yourself, or was it to do with general developments that, in science, that were being talked about in the wider world, rather than school?

No, it, it ... I don't know which influence was most ... partly political, in a way, because you really ... because, sort of, more Left-thinking people had a much more open mind towards everything, and I think it was that. It was not that I was Left, like that, but I was reading Left literature.

How did your parents vote, do you know?

How did they think?

How did they vote?

My, in those days, it would be only my father voting, wouldn't it. There was no vote for women then, when I was a child. Was there? No. They would have voted Conservative, most certainly.

And would politics have been something that was discussed at home, or not?

No, not discussed. No.

Did they take a newspaper?

Yes, my father took the Conservative newspaper, it was called The Morning Post.

And did they have periodicals and magazines?

No.

So they didn't have The Illustrated London News or anything like that?

No.

And what about you, did you have any comics or magazines, as a child?

Yes, I think all children had comics, yes. All did, mmm.

Can you remember what you had?

No. No.

Can you remember any early books?

Books? Well, not really, no. Not really, because I was never a great reader anyway, because it's very difficult for me to read. I've got dyslexia, not only in speaking, but also in reading, especially, and so that I find it very difficult to, to follow a sentence, you see, in a book. I actually have real difficulty, but it was never recognised, and it's just something I have to struggle through. So sometimes when I'm reading a book, I have to read the sentence several times, even now. It's very bad.

So was it a source of anxiety for you, when you were a child? It must have been quite ...

The only anxiety was when, at school, you have to get up and read a passage, you see, and when I had to do this, of course, everyone tittered, you see, and laughed, you see, and that was not very good for me, that reduced my morale even lower.

And do you remember any picture books, when you were even smaller?

When I was smaller?

Mmm.

Pictures? Of me?

No, picture books. Did you have any illustrated books?

Can't remember. I can't remember them, I had them. I had them, yes.

Did anybody read you stories?

Probably, yes. But I can't remember what stories they read me.

And any poetry around?

No.

Did you have The Golden Treasury, or anything?

No. Oh, at school, yes. Not at home, no. Not at home.

And when you were, say, having a family lunch, would your mother cook it, or would somebody else?

Yes. She was a cook, actually. She had been to a cookery school in Edinburgh, and she had learned to cook, and she was a good cook.

And would you eat in the dining room? Would it have been quite formal?

Oh yes.

And would your parents have alcohol, or would it not be?

No. They used to have a little bit of wine sometimes.

And did they have quite a sociable life? What was the relationship ...

Yes. They, they had all kinds of people, friends, and things like that. And they used to have a certain amount of dinner parties for their friends, and, and ... not business so much, no.

Were there any other adults, as you were growing up, who mattered to you a lot?

It's this word, "mattered" to me, I don't think they mattered to me, no. No, they don't stand out in my memory as anybody like that.

Did you have any heroes?

At school, all schoolboys have a sort of hero they look up to, you see, the Captain of this, that or the other, you know, that, but I don't think I had any heroes, no.

And how did you get on with Margery, as you were growing up?

Well, there was a sort of understanding between us, really. It was all right. It was amicable and, you see, she was so different from me, because she was very attractive, and she had all kinds of friends, I mean, she was very very popular amongst the young men, and I didn't have a girlfriend at all, you see, so that we, we lived quite different lives in that respect.

But when you were much younger, when you were sort of eight or nine, would you have played together, or were you ...

Yes, certainly to a certain extent, yes, we would have played.

And were you friendly with local children at all?

Yes. Yes, yes. Oh yes. Yes.

Anybody in particular?

Well, there were just sort of people that I met on Barnes Common, so to speak.

So although you didn't have a garden, you had a bit of an outdoor life on the Common?

Oh yes. And I, I am a bit of a loner, I'm a loner, in fact, and so I liked to walk about Barnes Common by myself. I loved doing that. Even when I, you know, all the time, when I was young, all the time I liked doing that.

And would you have been having sort of deep philosophical conversations with yourself? Or not?

I, I don't know about what sort of philosophy I might have had. I'm not a great thinker anyway, so it's difficult for me to retain an idea in my little mind for very long, anyway, so I don't usually ponder over things like that. But I would be ... I'm more of a visual person, so that whatever I was doing, I'd be regarding the visual aspect of Barnes Common, shall we say, or the river.

When you say you're a loner, and you were from that stage, was it that you felt uncomfortable with people, or that you actually just felt natural by yourself?

With people, with other children, in that case, I was on my guard, I don't know whether I was apprehensive or anything.

Were you quite shy?

Yes, I was very shy, yes.

And if you had been unhappy about something, would you go and tell your parents or somebody else, or would you just keep it to yourself?

I'd probably keep it to myself, yes, probably. It depends what it was. It really depends on what it was, really. There were some things which would have been secret and some not.

Did you feel lonely at all?

Yes.

Do you remember when you first felt lonely?

No, I don't remember. I'm just trying to think of any instance that I can remember at all. I think ... sort of walking about the hills in Scotland when I was quite young, you see, by myself, I'd sort of feel, you know, you know, I'd got no one, as it were, that sort of feeling of being lonely, maybe. But it didn't bother me being lonely, because I was quite happy being lonely.

So there was a sort of pleasurable aspect to loneliness?

I wouldn't go as far as that. No, I think I was always looking for somebody. Yes, I was looking for someone, yes.

And you were taken to see some Epsteins when you were a child, weren't you?

Yes. This was all part of my education, you see, to show me the horrors of modern art, to see the Epstein.

What were you taken to see?

I was taken to see Rima, I think it's Kensington Gardens, or ... it's either Kensington Gardens or Hyde Park, I'm not sure which. Rima, which is still there. That. There were also the sculptures for the, the Royal College of Surgeons, or something like that, which I don't know whether we actually had those pointed out to us. There was ... in Hyde Park there were also other sculptures. There was Physical Energy or something like that, by someone called Thornton, I can't remember what it was he was called. And we were taken to see the paintings of, is it James Watt, or something like that, in a sort of private museum in Surrey. We used to go to the Tate Gallery on a Sunday, quite often, to see the Tate Collection there, and the various things. That was quite good.

What do you remember seeing?

Well, I remember, actually, seeing Epstein's Visitation there then. I think there was an Eric Gill there too. But ... and the paintings, of course. And I even remember, vaguely, seeing van Gogh's Sunflowers, even then, I think. Then, then there were the Turner watercolours, I remember seeing those. And watercolours. And there was Constable there. I do remember, and it was, it was quite good, we used to go to the Tate Gallery. And then perhaps, afterwards, we'd have lunch in a little Italian restaurant in Soho, called Pinoli's, or somewhere else. We used to go to lunch on a Sunday, up to a restaurant in London. What else did we do on Sunday sometimes? Oh, we used to go for picnics a lot, into Surrey, especially at this time of the year, when it was just getting a little bit warm, and primroses and bluebells. Kew Gardens, of course we weren't too far from Kew Gardens, we used to go there quite a lot.

Were you brought up to know the names of flowers and trees? Were you quite a nature lover, in that sense?

My parents were not gardeners, you see, and you have to have a gardener to make you be aware of the ... what you see there, someone who is actually interested in them. And I think, you know, really, I suppose, that's the way with all subjects, you see. Because look, if a person is really passionate about a subject, they can teach someone else that thing by ... infecting them with their enthusiasm. That's why a good teacher is somebody who is so interested in it himself that his enthusiasm boils over and it goes into ... you see, teachers who are dull are not interested in the subject anyway, it's just something they've had to do for their course.

So you grew up enjoying nature, but not particularly knowing much about it?

Yes. Enjoying it in a blanket fashion, yes, that's right.

Did you have any animals?

No. We had dogs, I mean, everyone had dogs apparently, then. That's all. We didn't have any rabbits or mice or anything.

And, just going back, what did you think about the Epsteins and the Gills when you saw them? What was your response?

Well, I, I reached a point when I felt that I ought to be receptive to modern ideas in that respect, yes.

Why did you reach that point, do you think?

Oh, I don't know why, but I suppose it was a rejection of, of previous acceptance of ideas, I suppose. And this is a, one of the reasons why people become contemporary or modern, or something like this, because it's a fashion isn't it, you see, it's a fashion, so you want to be fashionable. And it takes a long time until you can really settle down and judge a thing for it's own intrinsic value, because you, you accept a thing as a movement. I've just bought a book about what they call "modern architecture" of the thirties, forties, like that, and it's very interesting, because, in those days, I was passionate about it, you see, it was very ... very acceptable, and we thought it was going to last forever. We thought it was finite. And now you can see that it's all in a flux, and it's, it's a thing that is just changing all the time - taste. Taste is changing all the time, for different reasons. We don't change with it, I don't change with it, but, I mean, I do see that it does change, and it's no good saying, "Well, it shouldn't".

And when your parents took you to see the Epsteins, to show you what you shouldn't like, so to speak, did you discuss it with them, and debate about it, or did you just privately like it? How did you respond?

No, I think it was just as the idea, really. Basically, it was the idea of wanting to be on the side of people evolving something. Because, in those days, don't forget, you see, it had already been started a long time ago, not only the Impressionists and all that, and the post-Impressionists in Paris, but the movement had started a long long time ago with the, the poets and theatre people, and you know, the ballet, and everything else. It's already been going on a long time before this, so that this was the tail end of it, really. So I'm only getting the slight echo of it, but, I mean, it was new to us.

It was your discovery of it, almost?

Yes, that's right, yes. Acceptance of this new thing, this new wave, which we thought was there forever, of course. We thought, "This is it!" Nothing's it! (LAUGHS)

Did you actually go to the ballet at all? Was that part of it?

No, I don't think I was ever taken to the ballet, no.

And what about things like the Constables, how did you react to them?

I can't remember about the Constable, but I just, you know, I was impressed, generally speaking, by, by certain paintings more than others, and certainly by the Turners.

Any particular Turners, or just in general?

No. I can't ... I can't even, I don't even know what the Tate's got of Turner there. I know that ... and it was basically a Turner Collection anyway, the Tate.

And did your parents like Turner?

Yes, I think they did, yes.

And just going back a bit, when did you first go to school?

At what age? What age? I think, '26, that would be when I was 11.

So you were educated at home until then?

No, I, I'd gone to a sort of prep school before that, but it wasn't a very good prep school, so that I had to have a tutor for about a year, coaching me in Latin, because I had to pass a Latin exam to get into school.

Would you have gone to the prep school when you were about five?

The first school I went to was a convent, in Barnes, and I was there when I was about four or five, and I probably went to this other school when I was six or seven.

Can you remember the name of the Convent?

It was called The Church of ... The Convent of the Sacred Heart, in Barnes.

That sounds rather alarming!

Yes.

Was it frightening to go?

Well ... the nuns were very sort of ... they were, they were very sort of motherly, shall we say. It wasn't too bad.

So it was quite a gentle beginning.

Yes. Then, I can't remember going to this, what I call prep school, it was, in those days, it was a private school, you see.

What was that called?

It was called Beverley School, Beverley School.

And was it in Barnes?

Yes, mmm. It was just across the other side of the Green, from our cottage, and it was run by a Mr. Stephens and his brother, who was the organist also in the local church, Barnes. And it was a, it was a pretty sort of ... (LAUGHS) Evelyn Waugh type of school! A prep school as described by ... and it had ... it had all these boys from the age of about six to, I suppose, to 12, I don't know how old they actually went to, and it was pretty simple an affair, and the education was, in my case, nil.

Was this because of the problems you had reading, really, or what?

No. I don't know that I even had any reading, well, I suppose I had ... I suppose I could read by then. It may have been ... I don't know. I don't know what made me not be able to read. I wasn't aware of it then, by the way. I just thought, "I can't read".

And none of the masters was at all perceptive of what the problem was?

Oh no. Oh no, they didn't, they didn't. It wasn't like that in those days. No, you see, in those days, they were all sort of shell-shocked from the First World War, and ...

How aware had you been that there had been a war? I mean, were you told about it?

I was told about it, yes. Oh yes.

But you were too small at the time to ...

Well, I was too small, yes. But they kept talking about it, because, you see, they'd had these balloons on Barnes Common, they thought these things would stop something, I don't know what they were going to stop, the Zeppelins, or something. Certainly not aeroplanes. Zeppelins, I think that's what they were worried about then.

That must have been quite a sight.

Well, I was too young to see it, I couldn't, I don't remember that, I was being pushed about in a pram then.

And were you aware of a lot of sorrow as a result of the War? Did that permeate your growing up, do you think?

What?

That there was a lot of grief and sorrow, did that permeate your growing up?

No. No, no. No, because we didn't actually lose anyone in that War, well, we didn't lose anyone in the War, no. No.

And was the fact that you weren't doing very well at school, was it made to be something that was a worry, or did your parents not give it so much ...

Well, I didn't do badly enough to draw real attention to myself like that, I always managed to scrape through a little bit, and, in fact, when I went to the other school, I managed to do quite well in some subjects, you see, from time to time. And then I'd sort of lapse again and get disinterested.

And what about in the practical, drawing, did you have drawing lessons?

No, no, no, no, no. It wasn't a real prep school either, it was a private school. Private.

And was there bullying?

Not at that little school, no. At the other school, yes, there was, there was organised bullying, yes. It was a day school. You see, I went to a day school, and the only time we could do bullying would be in the break, eating break, which was then called dinner time, don't forget. It was called dinner time. That was normal, everyone called it dinner time.

And you'd eat at school?

At that one, yes. Dreadful. Because my mother was quite a good cook, so this stuff was absolutely inedible, so I couldn't eat it, and that really was rather bad for me, because then I used to eat coconut bars and things like that, which were frightfully bad for my teeth, so that ruined my teeth.

Were you allowed sweets at home? Was it quite liberal, in that sense?

Eat at home?

Sweets.

I don't think there was any objection to it.

And was the transition to your bigger school, what was the name of the second school?

The public school I went to was called Merchant Taylors.

And was the transition to that school quite hard?

The first one was a bit of a shock, the private school was a shock. The next one, I was already inoculated against the shock, you see, so it wasn't too bad, really. It was, it was horrific in many ways, of course, because the discipline, in those days, was very severe. You know, you had no choice. The discipline at school was such that when I was in the Navy, I found the Navy discipline very simple, really easy! (LAUGHS) I understood it! (LAUGHS)

Did you rebel at school, at all?

Rebel? I have a memory of rebelling once, but I don't know which school it was in. It was, it would not be possible to rebel in this public school.

What's your memory of rebelling?

I can't remember. I can't remember.

Did you ever argue with your parents? I mean, were you fairly obedient?

I was obedient, because there was no alternative, until I became slightly more liberal-minded, shall we say, and objected to some of my father's opinions.

And what sort of stage would that have been?

Oh, that would be when I was 17.

And then you would actually confront him?

No, not really. Not really, just say something silly.

So he wasn't really encouraging you to speak out?

No. No, because he, he'd not so much lay down the law, but he was very definite about things.

And did your mother tend to agree with him, or did she just let him take the lead?

I don't think she interfered.

Do you think she had strong views?

She may have had views of her own, yes. She may have had. I didn't ever hear them.

And when you went to Merchant Taylors, what were the subjects that you did best at?

Well, I rather liked Latin and Greek, actually, because it was more or less easy, you just had to sort of learn the verbs and the, the syntax, and it was comparatively easy. I mean, it was just a question of ... the memory was the only snag with me, that I can't remember things very well, but that was all right. Other things like history were frightfully difficult, because I couldn't remember the names of the kings and queens. I couldn't do that, history, as it was taught. Because there again, you see, you have to have somebody who's actually really interested in the period, and they can make you feel interested in it. It's like a really good gardener can make me interested in the gardens, because he can make me feel interest in the little flower. Well, the history people can do that too, some of them, but, of course, there are not many of them about, and most schools can't afford them, I suppose, so that it tends to be rather a dry subject. Also, geography can be extremely boring at school, whereas it could be very good. Geography could be fine. Science, I didn't do, well, apart from, you have to do a certain amount of so-called science, even on the Classical side, but that was, perhaps, more interesting to me. I remember, we had to read a book called, Physiology and Hygiene, about the human body, which intrigued me quite a lot, all about vitamins and things, which ... it was a new thing in those days, in the, in the thirties, or the twenties. The twenties, yes. When I say "new thing", it was comparatively new.

What about maths?

Maths? I, I could do trigonometry, geometry. Geometry. I liked geometry. Mathematics not so good really, when it came to quadratic equations, I rather sort of faded out really. Couldn't comprehend at all. I remember my father trying to tell me about the calculus, but it didn't mean anything to me. It still doesn't, by the way! (LAUGHS)

So, in a way, with Latin and Greek, you've got patterns and rules.

Yes, I liked that. I liked having definite rules, yes, what you can do, and what case is taken after certain pronouns.

And what about sport, did you have to play sport?

Yes, that was compulsory. You had to play rugby. That was all right. Running was the sort of thing you did anyway, it wasn't compulsory, you just had to do it anyway. Sport? Cricket. I hated cricket, so I didn't, I sort of faded out of that, really, but that didn't matter so much, but you couldn't, you couldn't get out of playing rugby. That was absolutely essential. Either you played rugby, or you had to do boxing, neither of which I wished to do, really, neither at all.

Were you physically quite brave?

No. But the point is, that if my back's to the wall, I'm all right.

End of F4556 Side A

F4556 Side B

Actually, what you just said about being all right when your back's to the wall, reminds me of something you said last time I was here, which I thought was very interesting, which, you were saying with some surprise, that you realised you'd survived. Do you remember saying that?

No. Survived? What have I survived?

I think you were meaning, apart from surviving life, that you, here you were, as an artist, making sculpture, in the place you wanted to be.

Oh yes.

And that it was quite a shock to you, in a way, that every now and then, you're suddenly, you realise this again, as though you'd expect it always to be under threat.

Yes. I don't think I look at it quite that way, but I am a survivor, yes. I am a survivor, yes.

When you say you don't look at it quite that way, what do you mean? Where do you ...

Well, I think I've always been optimistic, that it would be all right in the end anyway, so that I don't, I'm a survivor, yes, but, I mean, I've never thought of it, "I am going to be a survivor", you see. It's not that. It wasn't, it was just that I didn't have any problem about it.

And, going back to Merchant Taylors, what about the art education there?

Well, it was, I mean, the normal art in school was, was the art master giving you something to draw, and the boys using it as a period not to do anything at all, just mess about. It was a messing about period, really.

For you as well?

No, I think I tried to do what I was supposed to, well, you know, draw what I was supposed to draw, or something. Oh, and I had special lessons as well.

From whom?

From this art master, who became a sort of friend of the family.

What was his name?

He was called Brown. I don't know what his initial was. Brown. He was an old-fashioned type of artist, who was, you know, passionate about water colour painting and so on, and painting, and he used to go to Italy every year to enjoy being in Italy. And they went to, he invited me to go to Italy with him one summer, but I said, "Well, not really, because I'm not ready for it yet, you see". I don't know what I was not ready for, but I didn't feel that I wanted to be exposed to this sort of thing of, of ... of becoming a sort of ... a person who appreciated the antiquity of Italy, I suppose. I don't know what it was quite, I was frightened of him.

Were you uncomfortable with him in some way, or not?

No, no, no.

But he must have thought you were rather special, that you had some gift, otherwise he wouldn't ...

No, I don't think he did, no, no.

And did he give you any sort of background in art history? Did he give you any grounding for that?

No. He would have done, he would have done, but I don't think the occasion ever arose. No, I'm pretty well self-motivated in that respect, but, but the limitation is that I've not really been interested very much anyway.

And what materials were you using at this stage, when you were painting?

Well, I started with water colours, and then he did encourage me to do oil colours too, or he, he started me with oil colours, but I was never very good with the oil colours, I must say. I learn, because I find it very difficult to learn any technique, therefore, later, I taught myself my own technique when I had to do a painting. I just worked out something for myself, and that was the way it worked. It's all right if I work out my own way of doing it. I have to do it my own way, and then it's all right. But I'm not very good at following some pre-ordained course of how to do something.

Did you at any point, as a child, when you were growing up, have plasticine or clay, or do modelling or anything?

I do remember the plasticine, yes, and I couldn't think of what to do with it, except to roll it into little balls, or tubes or something ... not tubes, but, you know, like roly poly, like they do. No, I couldn't, I really couldn't model. I was not a natural modeller.

And you didn't also have models in the other sense of making aeroplanes and things like that?

I did make aeroplanes, yes, and I had a boat, and things like that. Yes, I was going to make a model boat, and that sort of thing, yes.

And did you go kite flying, and that kind of thing?

Kite? Yes. I had a wonderful kite which I got in, in Belgium, it was a marvellous kite, it really flew, it was wonderful, and I'm surprised that they don't have that kind of kite nowadays, because it was a very simple type of kite. The ones they try, these box kites, never seem to work.

And were you the kind of boy that sort of had ambitions to make projects, make structures of any kind, but, in fact, you couldn't carry out?

No, I didn't have that, no. I didn't really come to structures until much much later. And although I have, I have been talking to Mike again (I've been talking into the mike again - ?? - 069), although I have, now, occasion, shall we say, to make structures, I don't, because I've used that ability in my work, that's all, I do the structures in my work.

And were there any bits of architecture, when you got to be being a teenager and upwards, did you become aware of architecture in any particular way?

No. I became aware of architectural design, through having to face a drawing board and do, do things. And this is a very dangerous thing, you see, being an architectural draughtsman, it means that you're faced with this drawing board, with a set-square and a T-square, and you're drawing straight lines, and so you're drawing shapes which are meant to represent voids and solids, and things like that. It's terribly dangerous really. However, I, I got quite facile with doing a drawing on a drawing board, so that it looks all right.

And that was after you left school, was it?

Oh yes. Oh yes, a long time after.

But were you aware of new buildings going up in London, at all?

No, not then. Not until after. There were not many new buildings going up, by the way. There were very very few modern buildings going up in England at all.

How much of the rest of London was part of your growing up? Were you really centred in Barnes, or did the rest of London seep into your life?

Well, like I say, we used to go to Soho on Sunday.

But that was really the territory?

Yes, yes.

And actually, I didn't ask about ... just tell me a little bit about the tutor that you had, this was before you went to Merchant Taylors. Was that an interesting time, or was it gruelling, or ... how was it?

That was rather ... rather ... that was rather curious. I had this tutor, because I had to learn Latin, in order to pass an exam, and he was called Dr Silvester, and he was a clergyman, and he had a German wife, and he, and he lived, oh, about, I suppose, about two miles away from where we lived, and I used to walk there every day. I think I used to walk there every day. Sometimes I used to find another way of getting there by bus, and so on, but it was always a complicated journey there. And this Dr. Silvester, and so he taught me, but I wasn't very, a very good pupil, I must say. I don't know how on earth I passed the entrance examination!

So he didn't particularly introduce you to exciting ideas of any kind?

Oh no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no. He was very, he was very basic, he was.

And were you a family that laughed much? What sort of things amused you all?

Laugh? No, I don't think so. I don't think there was ... I'm sure there was plenty of laughter, there was no reason why there shouldn't be laughter, but I can't remember what on earth we'd ever be laughing about. I can't think of any reason why we should ever laugh.

And there weren't terrible quarrels?

No. Not in front of the children, anyway.

So it was a relatively light-hearted atmosphere?

Yes. Yes. But my father was very serious, you see. He wasn't frivolous in any way. I suppose, I suppose he had frivolous moments, but I don't know when. I can't think of one.

And how much time did you actually spend with your father when you were growing up? I mean, did he ... he obviously spent Sundays with you, but did he try and make time to be with you?

No. No. No, he didn't, no.

And did your mother spend quite a lot of time with you?

You know, in those days, this question didn't mean anything, really. No. I mean, the modern education is so different now, so it's difficult to believe what, what is more or less Edwardian or Victorian attitude towards children. They were to be seen but not heard, and all that sort of thing, you see. And it was, it's true. You were just children.

Did you have scrap books?

Scrap books? I didn't have one, no, but ... no, I didn't, no.

And just tell me a little, where did Margery go to school?

She went to St. Paul's, and she managed all right. She did, probably, better than I did.

And did you know quite a lot of her friends too, or not?

At school?

Mmm.

No. No, I don't, yes, she used to bring them home, yes. Yes, she did have school friends.

So, although you went to a single-sex school, girls were part of your life, it wasn't like being really segregated?

But it wasn't boarding school, yes. Oh no, no, I mean, I've always been, I was always interested in girls, but they were unobtainable, unapproachable, and so on, yes.

Who actually told you about sex?

Who?

Who told you about sex?

I think that my cousins in Scotland explained a few things, in a rather curious elementary way. No, not elementary way, no. Inaccurate way.

So your parents didn't ever tell you?

So I didn't know, I mean, I heard that something like that was going on, but I didn't know, it didn't mean anything to me. It doesn't mean anything to you until you're faced with it, in any case. I'm just trying to think. Sex. Sex, I was a bit of a late starter with the sex thing.

And there was no formal biology teaching of it at school?

Well, there was, actually, we had a lecture about it, and the man had the blackboard and easel, and he had the primroses, and ... with their stigmas and pistils, and things like that, and that sort of thing. But that didn't mean very much either.

And was there homosexuality at school?

No, not at a day school, no. No.

So it was really something that you talked about with cousins, in a corner, rather than something that was ...

No, no, no, no. No. No, no. It was, it was associated with, because in my uncle's place there, in one of the buildings there, there was a sort of barn, and they used to sit round smoking, not cigarettes, but they used to get cinnamon sticks and smoke these! Goodness knows where from! That was supposed to be very naughty, this was. And I suppose they were talking about sex, but it didn't mean anything to me in those days. It doesn't mean anything to you, until you're finished with it.

But it wasn't a source of anxiety either?

It what?

It wasn't a source of anxiety, either?

Anxiety? Well, no. The thing is, you're aware that there's something there, that you don't know what it is, what it is. You don't know what it is, but you know there's something. I mean, I'm only looking backwards as it were, trying to think backwards, but you don't know what it is, and you want to find out what it is. But in my case, I had no reference for anything.

And at what age did you leave Merchant Taylors?

What?

How old were you when you left Merchant Taylors?

I was either 18, or just nearly 18.

And when you were about 16 or 17, what would your social life have been? What would you have done at weekends, for example?

I really can't remember this one. In term time, you see, what you do, you're supposed to be doing your homework, aren't you, but I didn't, of course. I, I suppose we had friends we used to go out with, both my sister and myself, sometimes, yeah. School, school friends, school friends for the weekend? But no other social life, you see.

And did you have a particular friend at that point, or were you part of a group, or what would happen?

Well, some of the school friends, yes, I used to ask home with me, and we used to just wander about, just like I used to wander about by myself, but with someone else.

And do you keep in touch with anybody from those days?

No. No. No, because, in any case, I found that, that you cannot continue anything that you've, any relationship that you've had under specific circumstances, like school, or during the War, people you've been with during the War, afterwards, it doesn't mean anything at all. You lose absolutely all contact. You don't have the same requirements any more.

And by the time you came to leave school, you'd been abroad, in terms of going to Belgium, had you been to any other countries?

I hadn't, no. No.

Had you been brought up to be very patriotic?

I don't know that I, I don't think ... like some schools are brought up to be patriotic anyway, some schools are more than others. But not at school, no, it was the school that was the only thing that mattered there. No. My family didn't bring me up to be patriotic, I mean, that's more of a sort of a military school would, they'd do that. I don't know which school that would be, but, I mean, certainly not mine. We had the OTC - the Officers Training Corps - and that, but that didn't, that made me the opposite of being patriotic. It just made me rather frightened! (LAUGHS)

Were you any good at that?

Not terribly, no. I, I was very good at survival, as it were, of getting out of difficulties. I was not, I was not, I'm not a leader, you see. Some people are leaders, normal, natural leaders, they are naturally, people follow them and go off with the Pied Piper, and you know, get destroyed. But I'm not like that, and I don't want to lead other people on. I don't like ordering other people about. This is bad, you see. It's much better to be able to order other people about, you have much more respect from other people if you do that, but I'm rather more, I tend to get pushed around.

And, by this stage, had you got used to handling money? Had you been given pocket money or anything like that?

I was given pocket money, yes, but I'm not used to handling money, and I'm absolutely hopeless with money. The other day, I took out a hundred pounds out of the bank, because I thought "I'd better have some cash", so I had this £100 out of the bank, like that, and when I got home, I didn't have it. And so what did I do with it?

You'd lost it, rather than spent it?

I don't know what I did with it. I probably left it in the thing there, probably didn't take it out, you see, so the next person thought, "Thank you very much". I'm hopeless with money.

And yet if your father had had this sort of drive to achieve, you didn't seem to have that passed on to you.

No. Oh yes, but in my own way, it wasn't, it wasn't in a sort of way of getting social standing, I wouldn't know, I'm not interested. I was not doing it for that reason. His drive was to get one step up the ladder.

And did you not feel that there was a ladder you wanted to go up, even if that had been an option? I mean, in that sense, do you feel much more secure, do you think, than your father?

My motives are different. Mine's, as it were, survival. All right, you had to fly an aeroplane, so, all right, you can dice around in the sky and do wonderful things there, but the, my thing was, I've got to survive, I've got to make this thing fly and then make it come down again, you see, in one piece. So, you see, I managed that.

And did you do things like go to the cinema? Were you beginning to go out more?

I used to go to the local cinema in Barnes, where I could get into the seats which cost 4d., so I was able to get a little bag of wine gums and, and go into the cinema, and watch some curious thing, with a man playing the piano at the same time. And that was rather, rather good, yes.

Do you remember anything in particular you enjoyed?

No. No. I obviously preferred the comedies if there was such a thing. Harold Lloyd, or something. I didn't, I couldn't bear anything serious, or any of, any love scenes, it doesn't mean anything at all to a child.

Did you ever do any acting yourself?

No. No.

Was there any acting at school?

No. That would mean performing in front of people, and that makes me very nervous.

And what would family Christmases have been like?

Standard. Everything standard. The right kind of turkey, pudding, everything like that, yes.

And would you have had a radio? Would you have listened to the King's Speech, or whatever it was at that time?

I don't think we had a radio when I was very very young, no, no. Later we did, because, you see, my father was at school with two people called Eckersley and Lumbers, who were the originators, really, of what was then hi-fi, in the very early days of radio, so he had this radio built for himself, this great thing with umpteen valves, and had a cabinet made by my uncle, out of some wonderful piece of wood, and had it fitted to this thing in the billiard room. And we had, so we had radio, yes. I had my little crystal set when I was much younger, much younger, a little crystal set, with a cat's whisker, that ... but that ... the thing is, that my father, he knew these, the originating people of the, the early days of radio, because he'd been at training college with them. He'd been there at the same time as Baird, who invented television, actually, too. So it was all just the beginning, you know. It was the origin of modernism, really.

And do you remember enjoying particular things on the radio?

No, there were funny programmes, that's all. Radio, no. It was not very good. But, in order to have a radio, my father insisted that the quality should be as good as his gramophone.

And so were you encouraged to be quite excited about those sort of inventions that were happening, or did you just take it in your stride?

No. No. We used to go to the Science Museum too, sometimes, on Sundays, just to see things.

Anything you particularly liked there?

Well, all little boys like to turn the handles round, or press the buttons and make the wheels go round, yes.

And what about the British Museum?

Well, that's rather sinister, isn't it, with these mummies, and Assyrian sculptures. I don't think that means so much to a child, except that it's rather, if you put any child to have a big space to rush about in, or go from one case to the next, looking at things, that's interesting, but not a serious study, you see. No, I don't think, even when I was older, did I ever have a serious attitude towards museums.

And can you just tell me a little bit about the house you moved to when you were ten? Where was that?

The house?

Mmm.

Where we moved to?

Yes.

Well, that was on the other side of the Common, and it was a bigger house, had more, had more bedrooms, and it was sort of Edwardian house, really. Well, I don't know. It was not very interesting really, that is, to me now, it's not a very interesting house. The cottage is better, because at least that was at least a unit. This other thing was half a house, because it was a semi-detached. It had another monstrosity next to it, owned by a sort of ... butcher. No, they were not, they were not interesting, architecturally, or any other thing. The only interesting thing was that, that they'd made a mistake in ordering these houses from the builder, and they had these terracotta lions on them, and they'd made a mistake, and they added a nought to the order, so they had ten times as many lions as they wanted, so they absolutely plastered these ... you see them also in Fulham, the same, the same builder, they had all these terracotta lions, and they had to put them all over the buildings. So the first thing we did was to take them off! Which is something I can't quite understand why my family wanted to have them off, but they didn't want them, anyway.

Actually, that reminds me, when you were a child, did you have a farm set, or a zoo set, or anything like that?

I think we did, yes. I remember having cows and milk maids and things, yes. I do remember those, yes. But I wasn't interested from the point of view of being an embryo farmer.

Did you have any puppets?

Puppets? No, I've never managed those very well. I'm not terribly interested in anything to do with acting, to start with, you know.

And when you moved to this second house, did you have a garden there?

Small one. Small one, mmm.

But it wasn't of great interest to you?

No. No, it wasn't ... well, a garden, I think, like a gardener's gardener, no.

And when did you first start thinking about how you might earn a living when you grew up?

I don't know that I ever grew up! But still, let's think. Did I say that it was the Headmaster who suggested architecture? And they found that somebody who'd been to the same school was an architect, and so they put me into his office.

And well, presumably, what you'd said was that he'd suggested that, because you'd said you wanted to be an artist. I mean, when did those feelings ...

It was the alternative, you see. If you can't do that, but you can do this. So I did this.

But when had you started to think that you would quite like to be an artist?

Well, when I was about 16. But only from the point of view of having a studio to myself and being independent, that's right, after the business of leaving home, I think. I think.

But, presumably, if your sister had been seeing somebody who was a baker, with his own premises, which would have given independence, you wouldn't have wanted to become a baker. I mean, there must have been some chord that was struck by this sculptor?

Oh yes. I think that aesthetics, what was always at the back of my mind, aesthetics had been there anyway.

End of F4556 Side B

F4557 Side A

Sorry, you just were saying a bit more about aesthetics having been at the back of your mind.

Well, I'm just suggesting it, I mean, I don't know, because, I mean, I'm not the greatest authority on, on myself, like that. But I think that, generally speaking, that the ... my attitude towards aesthetics started when I was quite young. I remember, for instance, when I was in the second house there, I, I thought, "Now, I want to have a place of my own", you see. So there was a garden house there, this garden house, a room, it was a room in the garden house, so I went there, and I, I had a bed there, and I had a few rather pure ornaments there, I took the little Chinaman I told you about there, and a few little things, and it was very pure, and that's what I, I wanted it to be like that. And I used to sleep on the grass sometimes, outside, even, even in the frosty weather, you know. I was a bit potty that way. But I did like to have my own place, arranged in my own way. Yes, I did. Because the house itself was monstrous, I mean, still is. It was ghastly, there's nothing you can do with it. I mean, I suppose I could do something with it, but, I mean, it would be very difficult to make anything interesting out of that house. It's only half the house anyway, you see, you know, semi-detached, and a long corridor down the middle. No, horrible!

Where do you think that aesthetic sense sprang from?

Well, it may be genetic, it may be. Or it may just be chance. Could be, because my sister didn't have it. I don't think my mother had it either, really. And we were talking about the grandfather being a joiner, and respected as a sort of artist/craftsman, he was, I mean, he was an artist/craftsman, and he'd done a bit of woodcarving. I don't really think that he was what I'd call an artist, anyway. But the tendency was already, the genes were already there.

But then a desire to go into an environment that you would have created, rather than a desire to get away from the other people in the house?

Oh yes. No, no, I had my own environment, that's right, which I've always done. Always wanted that. Wherever I go, I've always made things my way, like a dog, you know, in the straw, it goes round and round till it gets it right. Like that. I've always done that anyway.

And as an adolescent, were you reading much? I know you didn't find it easy.

No. So that I tended not to read much, because of that reason.

So again that would, to me, that would be a kind of loneliness because ...

Yes. Oh yes. I was, I suppose, lonely, and so that I could, of course, have friends, then I wouldn't be so lonely then, yes.

So friends would be invited to your own environment? It wouldn't be an entirely private place?

I hadn't really thought about this one. I didn't invite them to my environment, because it was my father's environment anyway, my parents' environment, it was just to enjoy companionship with people that, at least, I had something in common with, who went to the same school, you see.

But, I mean, did you, did you invite them into this place that you'd made your own, in the garden?

No. No, I ... I didn't. That may have been later. That may have been later, after I'd left school.

And did any of your school friends have homes that you found aesthetically more interesting?

School friends?

Mmm.

No. I don't know.

And had you been to any other houses where you felt more at home than in your own?

No, I didn't, no.

So it was just a sense that there was a possibility of it, rather than anything you'd ever seen?

No. I, if I had had friends who lived in something which I would have enjoyed, that would have altered my whole thing. My career, almost.

In what way?

Well, I would have wanted to do it. I don't know, I couldn't have done anything about it at the time, but I'd have looked forward to it. Whereas, in fact, I ... in fact, had no reference when I started to have my own place. The first place I had ... well, I lived for a while in a cottage in Kent. I had a weekend cottage in Kent, well, I immediately just painted that white, inside and out, much to the surprise of the owner.

And had you, before that, ever seen anywhere that was painted white, inside and out?

No. No. It was just a nice clean colour.

And so when you were about 16, you started to think you might be an artist. Had you ever considered being anything else, before that?

Oh ... no. But after that, I mean, after that, because when you realise that it's a bit hazardous and, and a bit uncertain, an artist, there's no certainty that you'll ever succeed, I did think of other things I could do with ingenuity, you see. I thought, "Well, all right, I'll design this ... structural panel, and make a patent", which I did. I did this. And so I formed a company and made these structural panels, and the steel company said, "Yes, this is very good. It'll save us 10%" and all that sort of thing, but no one took it up, so in the end it just sort of faded out.

But that was quite a bit later, wasn't it.

Yes. Well, yes.

But, so you voiced these thoughts that you might become an artist, and your parents reacted ..... (INAUDIBLE - 079)

I didn't have any definite idea of what I was going to do, but it was a vague, nebulous idea that, one day, "I shall be ...", yes, like that. But nothing finite about it.

And how seriously did they try to edge you into the church, or medical career?

It was a moral sort of thing, you know, "This is what you ought to do".

And did you, for a moment ...

And "If you're going to be an architect, then the best thing is, is to get a job with the Hammersmith Town Hall, as a, as an architect in the Borough Council. This is a good, safe job".

And how did you react?

Well, I didn't say anything. (LAUGHS)

But do you think that you might have been persuaded to go and do that, or to become a doctor or something?

Well, I couldn't be a doctor, that was not possible, because I hadn't had the right training, you see. I'd have had to go to a medical school for that. But I wasn't qualified to go to a medical school, I suppose.

[INTERRUPTION]

We were interrupted at the end then, it was somebody asking about bringing a sculpture in to be photographed.

Yes.

Do you have a sort of set of principles you follow, I mean, to do with light and placing when something's going to be photographed?

Well, no, it's only a question of finding the right place for a certain thing. I mean, that's how I go about things anyway, finding the right way of opposing two objects, anyway. And so if it's a question of, "Where do I put this up?" you have to think, "Now, which is the best background for it?"

But you answered him almost instantly. Had you thought about that piece that he was talking about, or was it a new question?

No, I hadn't thought about that one, no, because I wasn't aware that they were going to take a photograph of it, not today, I didn't think. But, I mean, it is a problem, I know that, but I, I hadn't really decided what to do about it.

When we were talking just now, we'd got you faced with your position, briefly, with your parents, when you said you wanted to become an artist, and your headmaster suggesting architecture. What actually happens next?

Well, I did actually have this job in an architect's office, where I was a draughtsman, drawing out things, terribly boring, and I wasn't really good at it, really.

Was this somebody Hamilton?

Yes, yes, called Donald Hamilton, when I come to think of it, mmm.

And you went straight from school to that?

Yes.

And where was it?

It was in Grays Inn Square.

And what was the set-up? Was it a little office, a big office?

Well, we didn't have many people. About six, I suppose.

And he was an architect?

Yes. In those days, you didn't have to be a proper architect, by the way, to call yourself an architect. He was really, what was then, he had a sort of degree or something, in ... he was a surveyor, really, or something like that. He was associated with architecture.

And what sort of age was he?

He? Well, he wouldn't be all that old. I mean, I was 20ish, or less, and he would have been about 30/35.

And were you put under somebody's wing to learn? How did you actually learn?

Oh no, no, no, no, no. I was just a draughtsman, I was just pushing, pushing the pen about, mmm.

But you hadn't done anything like that before, had you?

No. But anyone can do it, more or less. I mean, you just, you learned how to make this drawing without splodging the ink too much.

But what were you doing? Interpreting somebody's measurements or something?

Oh, I see.

What were you actually doing?

Well, you do all kinds of silly things when you're learning. You have to trace other people's drawings. You see, they did the drawing in pencil first, and then you have to trace it over in tracing paper, or in those days you did, to make a drawing, because then, then that was more permanent, and then they could take prints from it.

And what sort of projects did he have?

Oh, terrible. It was, it was shoe shops they were designing, and it was the details of the shoe shops, and calculating how many boxes of shoes you could get in the shelves. That sort of thing, you see.

And did you find that sort of problem-solving stimulating, in any way?

Not at all stimulating, no. It was just a thing. No, it wasn't stimulating, no.

So your heart must have pretty well been in your boots, wasn't it?

No. I just accepted it as, as what I was doing. I really didn't see what it was leading me to, I agree. But I thought this is what you do, this is part of the training.

So you didn't feel you would be doing that for the rest of your life? You thought something would happen?

Yes. I always knew that everything would be all right in the end. That's, that's how I got through. Otherwise it would have been terrible, I would have given up, wouldn't I.

And were you still living at home at this stage?

Yes, I was. I was living at home then for several years, really, until ... almost to the War, yes, nearly, but not quite. Actually, I did get a little flat for myself before the War, just before the War. It was in Charterhouse Square, oddly enough, where my school had been.

Oh yes. I didn't realise that. Tell me about the Charterhouse Square then. I somehow assumed the school was Barnes, but, of course, it's not.

No. This was the public school. Merchant Taylors were in Charterhouse Square because they had taken over the buildings of the Charterhouse School, which had moved to Godalming, and there was this school in, out of the old Charterhouse property there, which had been made, I suppose, 50 years before, with the school buildings, and my school had taken over, and altered it a little bit, and then we put in a few more buildings, everything which has now been demolished there, to make room for ... I don't know, at first for a medical research unit.

And what was your flat like?

Well, it was a modern flat overlooking Charterhouse Square, overlooking the school, rather, rather than Charterhouse Square. And it was a modern one, with a nice big window overlooking this place where I'd been taught in for so many years. And it had modern thingummy, and I made it modern, with modern furniture, you know, sort of Finmar (?? - 173) furniture, all kinds of things like that. And had a, I remember, I had a brown carpet on the floor, and a yellow ceiling. And I had some blue somewhere, I don't know where. But that must have been in another room. But it was, it was as tidy and as smart as I could make it.

Where did you go to buy the furniture?

The?

The furniture. Where did you get that sort of furniture, at that time?

Finmar furniture, I'm not sure. They advertised it. I don't know where we bought it. I can't remember where I bought it.

And would your parents have ever come there?

No. Never.

Because they would have, presumably, found it quite hard to grasp what you were trying to do?

No, I didn't, I've never thought about it, but no, they didn't ever come to see me, no.

And was leaving home, your leaving home, was it hard for them, or not?

For them?

Mmm.

I don't know. They, they didn't express emotion very much, ever, about anything, so I can't really tell. I think the nearest to emotion would be sort of ... in my father's case, it would be more a criticism of my behaviour. On the other ... you see, it's difficult to explain my parents. But my father merely said, "Well, of course, you've always got this place here if you ever want to come back", that sort of attitude. Well, we know, we know that attitude. "There'll always ... there'll always be a room for you here". And I'm going to say that to the children now, knowing very well that all children want to get away from home. And if they don't want to get away from home, there's something wrong with them, isn't there.

And did you go back to see your parents fairly regularly, or not?

Yes, fairly regularly, because my mother died in 1936, actually.

Was that very sudden?

I'm just trying to think whether it was '36. No, it was before that. I can't remember. But anyway, she died, and, and so I used to go to see my father, yes.

Did your mother die very suddenly?

No.

So had you watched her being ill?

Well, not quite, because she was in hospital when she was ill.

And how did you react when she died?

Well, it was, it was a shock, but it, I mean, I knew she was ... it was impossible for her to live. But the whole thing was very unsatisfactory in a way, because there was never any proper contact between myself and my mother for a long time, because she was, I suppose, you would call her an alcoholic, and whether she was an alcoholic because she may have missed her first husband, I think that that might have been one of the reasons, but I do not ... I don't know at all, but she was an alcoholic, and I think this is what killed her, eventually.

And had you been aware of that during your childhood?

Well, I ... yes, I had, really, been aware from a certain age, I would say from the ... from teenage, teenage, I was aware that my mother did have too much to drink occasionally. I wasn't quite sure what it was. I didn't know quite what it was.

And did it make you want to move away, really? It's the sort of thing that's very unattractive to a child.

No. It had an effect, yes. Very very embarrassing. Terrible. A terrible embarrassing thing, yeah. I mean, if your parents deviate at all from what you think is normal, from other people's parents, you are embarrassed anyway.

And I would have thought your father would have hated it too, from what you've said about him.

That he would?

Have hated it, and found it rather difficult.

It was embarrassing for him, but he, he was very level-headed about the thing, he didn't react in any sort of way that a lot of people would.

So it sounds as though your mother, underlying everything, must have been very unhappy really.

She must have been, yes.

And do you think ...

I had no contact with her, so I don't know. She didn't ever tell me, "I'm unhappy because of something". I think that sometimes I got the impression that she would have liked to talk to me about her unhappiness, but she didn't, so I just had to ... later, afterwards, to assume it was like that.

And did you feel rather haunted, afterwards, by her unhappiness, or not?

No. No, I think, the trouble is that I do, actually, reject the possibility of anything like this, and it's psychologically very bad for me, you see, I should.

Because you find it unbearable?

Yes. Don't look at it, doesn't exist, mmm.

And how did Margery react?

Well, she was already half way to being alcoholic herself. And it killed her in the end, too. So it may be a genetic thing this, you know. So that I, I have a tendency to take, take to alcohol, I haven't, I'm not like that now, but I have been from time to time, you know, in a jolly sort of way, that's all. Not a drinker, I was never an alcoholic, I was never an alcoholic myself, like drinking quietly on my own and that sort of business, I've never done that.

So was your mother actually a secret drinker?

Who?

Your mother.

Secret, up to a point, yes. Because you do if you feel that you'd be condemned, it's your secret, then.

Especially then, as well, and especially if you were a woman, I should think, too.

Yes. Mmm.

It must have been very difficult for my father, because he certainly didn't drink, apart from a very small amount.

And what was his life after she died? What was happening for him?

Well, he just continued. He had a sort of ... he didn't have girlfriends, like that, quite, but he had women who used to look after him.

So he didn't go to pieces in any way?

No, no, no, no, no. No, he was a very very strong-minded man. Very strong-minded. Oh no, he didn't, he would never go to pieces. No, no, no. He was almost unemotional in that respect. Because he ... he wouldn't let himself, that's right. But I don't say that's in any way to commend him, I mean, he ... he, well, it's pretty ... in control of himself all the time.

And was his career fairly much a straight line? Was it fairly successful, or was it very up and down?

No. No, his own career was all right, yes. He was all right, yes. I think from his own, from his point of view, I think that ... perhaps people did take advantage of him a bit.

In what way?

Well, by ... I mean, this is, this is only in certain respects, they did, you see, the people he worked with, the people he had made directors of his company, took advantage of him. That's what I mean.

But in his own terms, he felt financially secure by the time he was, say, 60 or something?

Oh yes.

He was ..... (INAUDIBLE - 294) in any way.

No, no. He was all right from a fairly young age.

And did you get closer to him when your mother died, then?

No.

And you used to go and see him.

No.

So what would you have talked about?

I used to go to see him a lot, but then I found there was nothing to say, really. And he, he had nothing to say. He merely asked me what I was doing, and he had a tendency to say, "Oh, which way are you going home?" And I'd say ... he would then say, "Well, I shouldn't go that way, if I were you". So I, I used to think, "Oh, all right, I'll be careful about that next time, so I'll tell him that I'm going to go the way that he was going to advise me to go". So I told him that. But then he got the jump on me there, because he then, he then said, "Which way did you come?" (LAUGHS) He got me there, you see!

So was he always trying to wrong-foot you?

No. No, no. No. Trying to give me advice, you know, assuming that I was a little bit sort of ... uninformed, and I needed to be informed how to do things.

But to say to you, "Which way are you going home?" is that also a way of suggesting that he thought you ought to go home? Was this a way of saying you ought ...

No. No, no. No, it was just giving me advice. "If I were you, I would do this, or that". Because people who say, "If I were you ..." they don't ever think of the consequences (LAUGHS), if that's a change.

And did he show any interest in your career, in your work, really?

He merely asked me how I was getting on now. "How are you doing?"

And would you tell him in any detail?

Well, up to a point, yes. But I wasn't getting anywhere, I wasn't making any money. Never. Never. He couldn't understand at all when I sort of stopped being employed as an architect, in architecture, and went to live in the country, and doing these things. He, that was complete mystification to him. He almost came to see me once, in the country, but he didn't actually come, because he said he had to come down to visit the Crematorium in Cheltenham,

but he didn't come. So that, on the whole, he just didn't understand. I was more or less a ... I was written-off, in fact. So it was a great surprise to him when he saw my picture in the newspaper, to say I'd won a prize. He said, no, he said, "You know, I suppose I've been wrong all these years". That was very nice just to hear, wasn't it.

It must have been very hurtful, his lack of belief in you.

No, I didn't expect it. No, I wouldn't have expected my father to be sympathetic. No, I didn't, because I knew he didn't have the, the make-up to be interested in what I was doing. I knew that. In the end, it was only because my picture was in the paper, the paper that he bought (LAUGHS), that it convinced him that there must be something in it, even if he didn't understand it. It was like that. He couldn't take an interest in it. No, certainly not. No, no, no, no. But then I didn't expect it, it didn't matter. It didn't worry me. It, I suppose it must have been very different for families where they do sort of back each other up, like the Sitwells, so it must be much better, you know, scratching each other's backs all the time, it's very good.

And what age did your father live until?

What age? Now, I think that it was about 75, actually. It might have been a bit older, might have been. But he had a bad chest problem, and you see, I've got a cough now, so I hope I'm not getting it too. But anyway, he did have a chest thing, and it got worse and worse.

And did you see him every now and then at that stage?

I used to go, go to London, always used to call to see him, yes.

And did you actually miss your mother, or was she just not part of your life by that stage?

I'd had to dismiss her from my memory altogether, really, because it had been such a, a, a bad traumatic thing altogether, knowing that my mother was like that, and, and cut off from me, altogether, you see, because you can't talk to an alcoholic.

And do you think about her ever, now?

As a?

Do you ever think about her now?

Yes, I do, a bit. And, you know, one regrets, and has, "I wish I had", and all that business, but, but I'm a realist about that, I don't ...

And do you think about your father ever?

Yes, I do. You know, you think most about a person when they're just dead. When they're no longer able to be recalled, no longer ... when they've gone, you suddenly are aware of their total being, as a person, that, you know, you can see them from childhood onwards, and you can see the whole thing. My father, any rate, that's how I felt about it. My mother, no, because I didn't really know much about my mother.

And do you feel any sense of regret now? I mean, do you feel that there was some aspect of parenting, in a sense, that you didn't have, that you would still quite like to have had?

Oh, I'm sure there was, but the trouble is, I've suppressed it all. That's the trouble. I realise that that's wrong and I shouldn't suppress that, and all that. I know all that. But, I mean, I did. And there we are, that's it.

And do you ever feel in danger that it's going to get out anyway, however much you try to suppress it?

No. It won't come out in that sort of way, it will come out in about how I am, or something.

And when you were an adolescent, did you get depressed, like lots of adolescents do?

Yes. I got depressed. But then a lot of young men get depressed at that sort of teenage adolescence, and beginning to have love affairs and things like that, you get very depressed, yes. Well, I mean, I did. Some young men are different, they, they thrive on it.

And did you get depressed throughout your life, sometimes, or not?

I, I don't get depressed, I just have this feeling of loneliness sometimes, that's not depression.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing.

No, no. I quite, I quite, I don't, when I say enjoy it, I don't enjoy being alone, but I am quite happy being alone. I used to walk all over the hills in Scotland, it's very good, very good for me.

End of F4557 Side A

F4557 Side B

So can you tell me, I know it's not going to be very scintillating for you, but can you just tell me a little bit about how you learnt from being a draughtsman, what you were doing with these ... what your role was in the shop design and everything.

No. It has nothing to do with anything, really, except that if you have to learn to compose a few lines on a piece of paper, like that, and get the drawing composed so that it looked right on the sheet and all that sort of thing, it's beginning of learning composition, really. That's what I found. And the further I got, towards the end, and even I was considered to be rather good at making a drawing, a coloured drawing, you see, special for showing to people. So I could do these very well. So this was embryonic artist, if you like - coloured architectural drawings. I, I got quite good at that. And one architect I worked for, taught me to do charcoal sketches of these interiors, and I got to be able to do that too. I hated doing it because I can't bear using charcoal because it's so smudgy. But I did. And it was, perhaps, at the back of my mind, "Oh, this is sort of ... an artistic occupation". It probably was, actually.

And did you draw when you weren't at work? I mean, did you ...

No, no, no. No, no. I don't draw now, actually. I can't bear it. It's only when I've asked to do drawings for an exhibition or something.

So, you felt you were doing something that might lead you somewhere else, but at this point, you had really no idea of where it was you wanted to go?

Yes. I realised, at a certain point, especially towards the end of my being employed in an architect's office, I realised that I would not succeed as an architect, because you have to be,

to be an architect, you have to, in those days, anyway, you had to be not only able to design a building, which I thought I could probably do that, but you had, also, to be able to cope with the builder, and the building regulations, and then you had, also, to be able to cope with the client, which wouldn't be quite so bad, and all the legal things too, you see. The law. An architect has to know the legal things. SO I realised that what I wouldn't be able to do, would be a, to be a businessman, which you have to be. You see, most of these big architects now are quite good businessmen, well, these ones that we hear about so much now. They're all businessmen, and they can cope with their affairs very well, and they can get other people to do the work for them, they say, like that, you know, "Do a building like that, and then do another building here". And they can do that, and other people will interpret their ideas for them. That's very good. I could never have done that. That was no good, no.

Were you beginning to think about building design? I mean, did you have some buildings in the back of your mind?

Buildings?

Mmm. Were you beginning to think you might?

No. No, because I was only drawing things on paper, that wasn't buildings, that was design on paper.

But you weren't really thinking architecturally?

No. The only time a building has ever come into my mind is when I've got a good building to cope with. Here is a building like this, the house, I mean, you know. You've got a physical problem, do something about it.

So when you were at Hamiltons, there was no attempt, really, to teach you anything else, other than to make these drawings.

No. No, I was learning. Well, for a time, I tried to go to night school to learn, you know, so as to pass exams, but it was no good, I was too tired after work to, to do that.

Where did you go?

The Regent Street Polytechnic, night school.

And was any part of that of any use to you, ever? I mean, anything you learnt there?

No. I couldn't understand certain things like ... you had to do the theory of structures, and that, that, I couldn't cope with that at all, the theory of structures. A little bit about building techniques, a little bit. But otherwise, I, I got bored with the lectures.

And what, at this point in life, were you doing in your spare time?

What was I doing? I suppose looking for a girl.

Where did you look?

I don't know! I was looking all over the place, like all young men do.

Did you have a group of friends?

Yes. Partly ... sometimes, I suppose, school friends, in a way, but I don't think they were by that time. They mostly people that I met in the architect's office. That sort of thing, yes. That sort of thing, yes. I did. Because, yes, I did. I, I used to go walking with some of these people that I met in the architect's office, go camping with them, climbing mountains with them, mmm.

And did you stay in touch with any of these people?

Yes, I did, up to a point. But, you know, it, it goes in sort of waves, you see. You have companions in a certain time, and you're all in one bunch, and then you drift off and then you separate, and then there's no longer any possibility to come together again. You, you have lost the reason for your being together in the first place.

But it must have been quite an exciting time for you, mustn't it? Sort of establishing your own house.

Well, yes, but I, I suppose it was, it can be put that way. There were exciting times, yes. Just like Daniel is having exciting times, but, I mean, difficult for him to say now that he's having an exciting time.

But, looking back on it, what do you think were the sort of exciting moments?

Well, this was the, the thirties, and it was a sort of age when people were beginning to unburden themselves of all kinds of things and ... so that it was ... possible to ... enjoy all kinds of new ... entries into, into the world which had been closed before. You see, for instance, my sister knew all kinds of people, and so I got the impression that, you know, here were these rather colourful friends of my sister's, because being a rather attractive girl, she

had all kinds of friends who were entertaining her. And, and I got to know some of them, and it was an opening into a new world, really.

Who were some of them? What sort of people?

Well, they were sort of either writers or ... people, people ... I suppose, you wouldn't call them intellectuals quite, but a bit more intellectual than I am. But they sort of, they showed a way into another life, for me, you see, a life of ... I don't know ... more important people that I didn't have any chance to meet. People like Thurber, you know.

You actually met him through your sister?

No, I didn't meet Thurber, no, but my sister did, yes. No, but ... and other people, you see, too.

And would you tend to see these people in their homes? Or where would you all get together?

I just heard about these people from my sister. I didn't ... well, I had my little flat after. In my home, we did actually entertain a little bit in my father's house, a little bit, yes. Because my sister, she did get married, and she sort of used it, then she came back to live in my father's house when my mother died. But I don't know, it isn't clear-cut exactly, how I ... what I did in the way of spare time, amusement, or whatever.

And did you fall in love with anybody?

I think young men are always falling in love, you know, in as sort of speculative way, and it usually makes you unhappy, you see, because it was frustrating ... waiting, waiting for somebody who never turns up, etc, so to speak.

And when you look back, in terms of girlfriends, is there anybody who looms very large at that time?

Well, from the point of view of ... no, no, not from the point of view of an emotional thing like that, no. No.

And on a practical level, I mean, did you cook for yourself?

Yes, I did a bit, yes.

With any pleasure, or not?

No.

And what about things like laundry?

I much preferred to go to Bertorelli's, you see, if it's a question of by myself, I didn't want to do it by myself. I'm not interested in cooking, no.

And what about things like laundry, who did that for you?

I can't remember. I suppose, in those days, everyone took their washing to the laundry anyway, and I can't remember what I did when I was alone. Maybe I took it home to my father's house. I can't remember at all.

And would you have been going to galleries at this point? Were you going to galleries a lot?

No, no, no. I didn't go to galleries until after the War.

By the way, when you were growing up, as a child, did you go to the Royal Academy then? Were you taken?

No, no, no. I'd, I didn't go to the Royal Academy until quite recently, actually.

And were you going to any kind of concerts at this stage?

No.

Or theatres, or anything?

No. No. Actually, I find if very difficult to sit down and listen to anything, or listen to people, or music, or anything.

And did you invite friends to your flat, or was that a private place?

Well, I didn't have many people to ask, really, to my flat. It was this, it was like this ... a bower bird, you see, in a way, "I've got a little flat, come into it", you see, business. That, it was rather like that.

I don't think, when we were talking about the bower bird, I don't think we had the tape recorder on. Perhaps you'd better explain what the bower bird is.

Well, the bower bird is a bird that lives, shall we say, in Australia, but I may be confusing it with the lyre bird, which also comes from Australia. But anyway, it's a bird that builds a nest and decorates it with all kinds of glittering things, as many colourful glittering things as it can, and stands there inviting any lady bird in. "Please come and see my wonderful house". And she'll come and look at it. And if she likes it, think it's smart enough, glittery enough, she'll stay. And so I suppose that I was doing this in a way, but I wasn't aware of any similarity with the bower bird. I don't think I had any success, really. If I had any success, it was nothing to do with my bower! (LAUGHS)

And did you have anything on the walls of it?

No, I didn't, no. No, I didn't have anything on the walls, no.

And did you bring anything like the little Chinese statue with you?

No, I don't think I did. I don't know where that is, by the way. I think it's been lost. Because the War came in between, you know, too. I lost everything there. All my little treasures.

What were your little treasures, then?

I can't remember! I lost, I didn't, I didn't take anything with me, you see, because I went off, so I didn't take anything there.

Did you have any books in the flat?

I did, actually, yeah. But I gave my books away to someone. I do remember that, yes.

Can you remember what they were?

Well ... no, I can't, no. I can't. I was going to say ... Das Kapital, but no, because I had Das Kapital here. Books like that, that I thought, you know, I couldn't very well take to war with me, because it would be considered not the right thing at all. I, I don't know.

So were you quite political by this stage?

No, no. I was just interested to see what was going on. I just wanted to know.

And were you aware...

Because what I didn't ever get around to saying just now is, that all young people were a bit sort of Leftish, and Rightish, at the same time. Some of them were Left, and some of them would be Right. And it was difficult, because it was just, I suppose, a sort of change of the scene, people were getting away from something and moving into something, the next one, which, in some cases, was Right, in some cases. But in most cases, it was left. All the people interested in what we call the arts, were Leftish, and they still are, in a way, but in not quite the same way, that's all.

And you worked, as well, after Hamilton, you worked for an émigré German architect, didn't you?

Kaufmann. Kaufmann.

How did that come about?

Well, I wanted a job, because I had ... let me see. I don't know quite which way round, the first job after Hamilton. I can't remember. But I did, I worked for Kaufmann at one time. And then the rouble was, being an émigré, he got very nervous every time Hitler walked into another country, so they tend to ... I tended to sort of lose my job, as it were, as the job didn't exist any more. And then I'd get another one. And then I got, yes, another job, with Ascot gas water heaters' architect. Well, now, the trouble with Ascot gas water heaters was that that was also run by a German firm, and so that was rather dicey.

What were you doing for them?

Designing displays for gas showrooms, oddly enough. I got very good at that. I had to put these, stand the things on the wall in the ... all the numbers and everything there. I got quite good at doing anything like that, display, or anything like that.

And were you doing it with any kind of excitement, or not?

No. No, no. Merely a job to do, and to do it as well as I could.

Right. And what were you doing with Kaufmann?

Kaufmann? Oh, well, I was doing perspectives for him, of his buildings. He was very economical with everything, so he, you know, normally, architects sketch to one-eighth of an

inch to a foot, which is one-hundredth, one-hundredth, you sketched to one-hundredth. But Kaufmann, to save paper, he made us sketch, do sketches to one-sixteenth, which would be 1:200. And that is very very small indeed, so that a step is almost the width of a pencil line! And he'd ... teeny bits of paper with all these sketches on, of every detail, of the house, the bathroom. They were all done to this very small scale, just to save paper!

And that was before paper shortages, wasn't it?

Well, it was before the War, just before the War.

So, in other words, each of these jobs taught you something.

Well, I had another job, actually, with ... I can't think what firm it was. I think it was some supermarket firm, not supermarket, but ...British Home Stores or something.

And what were you doing for them?

The same thing I'd always been doing, drawing, doing drawings. Details, because we, when we were doing the shoe shops, I did the details of the shoe shop fronts, which is a complicated thing, you have to do details of all the mouldings.

But you didn't actually have any chance to design them?

No, no, I never had any chance, no. Oh no. That's why I, I always felt that I could design my own house, but by this time, you see, you can't design a modern house and have it built in England. It has not been done. There were a few houses built in the thirties and early forties, early thirties, the thirties, but nothing has been done since, except in the city, modern building

in a city, that's permitted, but not in the country. You can't have a modern country house. Not allowed. Especially no. It's even getting worse and worse. Very curious, isn't it. Nobody realises this. It has to be ... well, in France, it's style Provencal you have to use if you're in Provence. But, mind you, maybe it's just as well, because some of modern architecture doesn't sort of fit in so well with the old stuff. I don't know what to do. Pull the old stuff down, I suppose!

Is there a contemporary architect that you do enjoy?

I think that Norman Foster is a good architect. I think he is a very sound, good architect. I don't like him very much, but he's a very good architect. Sound. Very good. Rogers, just a bit fancy, isn't he. I mean ... Smithsons, sound but not really contemporary, just good solid materials. Yes, that's all right.

Did you listen to Richard Rogers do the Reith Lectures on the radio?

No. Was he good?

Um, they were mixed really. But he was putting forward ideas for the way we could design our cities, taking ecology into account, as well as human things.

Mmm. You see, architects love to think, now, they're going to design a city, and make people do this. And they're all going to walk about the way <u>he</u> wants them to walk about. And this, automatically, if you look at Corbusier's plans for cities, he's got these great towers, and cities on several levels, you know, several levels, so you can have, you can have a horizontal city, but at several levels. But it's the architect who's deciding what we're going to do, and people don't like that. Oddly enough, they don't like it. No. The architect thinks

this is the only way, this is the intelligent way to do it, because then you are showing them how life could be much better for them,. And it probably could be, but the people don't like it. They don't want that. They want to have a sort of bungalow with a bit of garden, and it's no good arguing with them. I was, I knew Maxwell Fry, and he said it was impossible to get anything through these local councils. He said they said to him, "A flat roof on a reinforced concrete house is absolutely impossible. But, if you like to have a flat roof on a brick house, that's all right. Or you can have ac concrete house with a pitched roof, that's all right too." (LAUGHS) And it's a bit like that, that's the way they think, you see, the authorities.

And how did he feel? Was he angry, was he depressed?

That's how it is. What's the point?

What kind of man was he?

He was a very sympathetic sort of person who, I think you'd call it a humanist, I'm note sure what humanist means, but he would take into account human beings when he was designing a building, not just, "I am just going to impose this on you" business.

Did you meet Lubetkin at all?

Yes, he came here. He came here, because he, he was a Communist, and he had become a farmer during the War, and another farmer with the Commies was near here too, and he used to come and see him. And Lubetkin came, and he, he said, it was very curious, he said, "You know, here am I, a man who, basically, got the banner up for contemporary architecture". I mean, that was me always. I found myself going round the old buildings in Cirencester,

picking up old bits of beam and stuff like that, and taking them home to preserve them, otherwise they'd be thrown away. He thought this was very odd.

How did he respond to your work?

Lubetkin? Well, I don't think he, he said anything about my work, that wasn't quite the point, to me. He didn't even say anything about my work inasmuch as they, of the architectural sort of thing, you know, the tables and things that I've done, all that. I don't know, I suppose, you know, a lot of people don't say anything, because you are an exception. Most people say nothing when they go into that sort of Chamber of Horrors, you know, with all these things like that, they don't say anything at all. Now, I assume that quite a lot of them don't say anything, because it's bad manners to say anything, in England. It is, you know? You don't say anything. You don't make personal remarks in England, in fact, you see. And so it's being polite, with English people, not to say anything. Or they, they could not know quite how to express themselves, because they might say the wrong thing about liking it. I don't know. But anyway, so that it's quite normal for people not to comment on, on what I've done. I don't mind.

So you didn't really have any particularly interesting conversation with Lubetkin, about work, either his or yours, really?

No. No. Not really, no.

Did you feel disappointed by that, or not?

No. No. I don't mind ... I mean, people can do what they like. I mean, as I say, I'm very impressed, not impressed, that's the wrong word. I'm terribly gratified that you react in a sort

of way that's pleasing to me. You see? But, I mean, if other, if people don't react, well, I say, "That's, that's how they are".

But was it a shock to you, early on, when people behaved like that? I mean, you've obviously had long years of it.

No. Don't forget that I've had so much experience of Americans coming in and over-emphasising how their impression of this, that and the other, and saying how wonderful everything is, that they overdo it, you see, so that it doesn't bother me if people say nothing.

And you went to the 1938 MARS Exhibition, didn't you? If that's how you pronounce it?

1938?

The MARS Exhibition, the MARS Group.

Did I?

I think I read somewhere, I can't remember where, now.

I don't think I went to the, I may have gone to the Exhibition, because a friend of mine was doing something about it, too. This Rodney Thomas I worked for. Rodney Thomas was the person that I eventually fetched up with in the end, before the War.

Did you get a job because it was advertised, or did you find him in some other way? Did he find you?

No. I can't think how ... I don't know.

[INTERRUPTION]

One thing I forgot to ask you about, I think in 1932, you had a trip to Paris? How did that happen?

In '32?

That's what I read.

No. Yes, let me see. '32. I think I was, more or less, still a schoolboy, and I was going to go to Paris on my way to Tours, a place in France, Tours, to learn French. That was the idea, the basic idea. And I stayed in Paris, on the way through. And I thought that, having read the book about Epstein, I though I'd go to the cemetery where there was a tomb carved by Epstein, on the tomb of Oscar Wilde. So I went to, I went to have a look at this Epstein carving, in this, in the Cimetière Pere Lachaise there. That's what I was doing there.

That's an extraordinary place, apart from anything else, isn't it.

What, the cemetery? I was, I was, what? '32? I was 18, I think, 17, 18. It was .. I may only have been 17, yes. Yes, I was.

And what did you think ...

I was not interested in the cemetery, I was only interested to see this, this sculpture.

It's just the scale of it that's extraordinary, isn't it. It's like a little town. It's not like an English cemetery, or any English cemetery.

No.

What did you think of the Epstein, in the end?

Actually, I thought it was a very fine piece of carving, very simple. A little bit Assyrian, I thought. And in fact it is. It wasn't quite what I expected, but it, it impressed me quite a bit.

Did you ever go back to it, subsequently?

To?

To it, afterwards? Did you ever go back in later years?

No, I haven't, no. I've been past it several times, too.

Did you do anything else in that time, in Paris?

No. I was on my way to Tours, or a place called Vouvray actually.

Were you alone?

Oh yes, mmm.

So that was, apart from Belgium, that was your first time abroad, was it?

Yes. Yes.

And did you speak some French, by this stage?

Not on the way there, but on the way back, I could, I could understand French.

End of F4557 Side B

F4558 Side A

So were you going to a family in Tours, or was this a school?

A farmer, a farmer's family, yes.

And whose idea had that been?

Apparently, one of my school friends, not from my school, but another friend of my school days, had been there the year before, so I went to the same place.

And did it open up any horizons for you, or did you just come back knowing French?

No horizons, I don't think, no. Sort of ... I had a slight impression of, of France, through it, because this farmhouse, it was a farmhouse I was staying in, but they had one more boy there, an American boy, he was a bit older than I was, I think, a year older than I was, and we used to go round together a little bit. I used to go out every day doing watercolours, actually, I did watercolours, every day, on a bicycle, and they used to pack me up a little lunch to take, and a little bottle of wine, which I never drank, I used to bring it back. But then, then, eventually, this American boy suggested that we went to look at the, the chateaux area, so we, we had a sort of coach tour of the chateaux, I think, well, it must have been a coach tour, because we couldn't have done it on a bicycle. Maybe I did, I don't know, I don't remember. SO that. So that was the only time I went out, really, apart from going out with this American boy, once I went to the movies with him. He was the son of some ... American sub-mariner.

So this was really your first bit of independent travelling, in any dramatic sense, really?

Yes, a little bit, yes, mmm.

And have you got any of those watercolours still?

I don't think I have. I may have, but I don't know. They're pretty awful. I gave the best one away.

To whom?

Two. I gave two away. I don't know where they are now, those, they're in a drawer somewhere.

And had you been in the habit of doing a lot of watercolours in London, by this stage?

No.

Or was it because you were in France?

No. I had done a couple, I think.

And do you remember what they were like, particularly?

What, the watercolours?

Mmm.

Yes, because I've got them still.

What were they like?

I've got one of the buildings round Charterhouse Square, and the other one of the end of the Thames by Mortlake Brewery, where the Boat Race finishes, there.

And were they successful?

Well, people say they're all right.

Did you think they were?

Not really, no.

Why?

Well, because I can never do what I think I ought to do with the brush, you see, it doesn't come out exactly right! (LAUGHS)

And what had caused you to do them? Why did you suddenly start to do them?

Well, I suppose the idea was, that, "I'm going to be an artist", I suppose, at the back of my mind, that, "One day I shall be an artist, and I'm going to start now".

And do you remember thinking the ones you did in France were more successful?

Some of them actually were, yes. Some of them were. Mind you, they were painted when I was sitting in the very strong sunlight, and so the colours are a bit garish. Also, I think I had sunstroke.

On the whole, do you tend to have a very strong visual memory?

Of places?

Mm.

No. Not a vision like that. I get a general impression, and I carry the general impression, but it's a bit nebulous. I do get the general impression.

And what about a memory of people, do you have a visual memory of them, or is it similar?

Sometimes I can reconstitute, as it were, their faces, yes. Sometimes. Sometimes. Not always. I get a general impression of their character. I can usually get an impression of people's character straightaway.

And were you quite keen to learn French?

Oh, it was something to do. I thought it would help me with my ... I hadn't, I hadn't done my examinations the, you know, in those days, it wasn't the 'A' Level, it was the School Certificate, actually. There was a School certificate and a Higher Certificate. I would say the Higher Certificate was a bit more difficult than 'A' Level, but I didn't do that, I only did School Certificate.

And did you pick up French reasonably easily?

Yes.

And you've carried on, presumably, talking French, because you've had a lot of connection there?

No. No, no, I'm not a very good linguist, really, but I'm quite interested in language.

Does that stem back to your learning of Latin and Greek?

Probably. Oh yes. Yes, I was quite happy with French. But I ... I didn't really study French very well.

And, jumping forward again, we were just talking about how you came to be working for Rodney Thomas.

Yes. I think that must have been just before the War. I really can't remember which came first. I think it was just before the War. He was the last job before the War.

Do you remember how you got it? Was it advertised or word of mouth?

No, I can't remember, no. I really can't remember how I got it. It, someone must have told me about it.

And where was his office?

In Ebury Street.

And again, was it a fairly small concern?

I think Ebury Street, but I'm not quite sure. There's another street next to it, I'm not sure which one it was.

Was it a fairly small office again, or was it bigger?

Yes, there were three other people there.

And he was the sole partner, was he? The other people worked for him? Or were there others in the partnership?

No. He was the only partner, but he was working for Ascot gas water heaters. And it was a small office, yes. And we didn't have an awful lot of work to do, because there was no building to do, there was only just the gas showroom display. And it was a, a job, anyway.

And what was he like?

A very curious man. He was very tall, and he was relatively young, I suppose. He's still alive, and he's 85, I think. 95 now. He's 95. Very curious man, who, whose parents had died when he was still a boy, in India, I believe, and he was sent to school by his uncle, in England, where he had a rather curious time, inasmuch as he didn't quite fit in, you see, because he was very tall, he was about six feet five, and when he ... left, he went to Eton. When he left school, he was still six feet five, of course, but he's still a fag with short trousers on! (LAUGHS) SO he had a very curious impression. His uncle sent him there, so that ... he

had learned what he calls “survival technique”, and he managed to get through somehow or other by, for instance, he learned to amuse the older boys, the boys who would have otherwise bullied him, by amusing them, by juggling eggs, he could juggle eggs, and he could forge return tickets to London. (LAUGHS) So he was quite popular!

And by the time you knew him, what ... I mean, he sounds a very attractive man, in many ways.

A ..?

Attractive. He sounds as though he would be ...

He was quite attractive to women, I believe, yes, mmm.

But, I mean, in terms of his personality.

Yes. Yes.

And did he, were you just someone he employed, or was he interested in knowing you?

Yes. But, no, he became, we became friends. And he used to come here a long time after I used to work for him, a long long time after the War, for instance, because this was before the War, and then after the War, I did actually go back to work for him for a short time, by which time, he was doing pre-fabricated bungalows with a group of people, and I, I didn’t, I couldn’t stand that for very long.

Did you meet any of his friends?

Friends? Yes, I suppose I did.

You don't remember any of them particularly?

Well, no. He had a partner called Squire, who was the son of Sir John Squire, the poet. And this person, Squire, and they were all sort of grouped together.

And was the atmosphere in his office more cheerful and more stimulating than some of the others?

Well, now, there are two offices. The one before the War, hat was the small one. And the one after the War became quite big, because it was the beginning of a big group of, of companies, as it were, expressing themselves through their products, in trying to produce a pre-fabricated bungalow - steel firms, asbestos firms, joinery firms and so on. For instance, there's a big firm now called Taylor Woodrow, they were part of the group, that they'd been brought in in order to make the, part of the joinery for this bungalow, and they did so well with this that they were made the sort of co-ordinators of the bungalow, co-ordinators, and they used to install the bungalow parts, and all the other parts of the steelwork, and the asbestos sheeting, and all these other things, and they, they did the erection and everything. And they became very important. So they're now quite a big firm because of all this business, you see.

And did Rodney Thomas have any kind of, sort of, other ideals of where he was working to, or was he quite happy to be a producer of bungalows?

No. He was definitely the real architect manqué, he really would have like to be a sort of Le Corbusier of England. He would, yes. Oh yes. There was no doubt about that. He, too, had visions of the city of the future and so on, and he used to draw these drawings on a blackboard in his office, because we had an office in Chelsea by this time, yes, this one in Chelsea, and on the blackboard he used to do these wonderful perspective sketches of, of the bungalow, of course, too, and of these other cities, vertical cities.

So do you think, did he feel, in the end, that his career didn't fulfil itself? Because he rather vanished, didn't he? I mean, he didn't, in the end, build anything particularly distinguished, did he?

No. The sad thing for him was that, despite all his work, drawer after drawer after drawer filled with designs of buildings, nothing was every built. Nothing. The only thing that was approaching building was the Transport Pavilion of the festival of Britain in '51, which he designed, the Transport thing, with railway engines, aeroplanes, everything, all in it, you see. And that was quite good. But that's the only thing he designed. And eventually, of course, the Festival of Britain had to be demolished, so they invited the King and Queen, in those days there was a King and Queen, to see the demolition of this building, and the only remarkable thing about that was that it fell down and killed somebody. So that was that. That's the only thing that he ever did.

So was he rather bitter? How did he ..

Bitter?

Mmm.

No, I don't think he was bitter, no. He wasn't a bitter man, no. No, no. No, he, he is still alive and he's blind, but he's not bitter. No, he's not bitter.

But, as far as you could see, his buildings should have been built, probably? They would have been worth exploring?

I think that if he had been more ... he was a very good man at getting on with people, there's no doubt about that, but he wasn't a businessman, and you have to be a businessman now, to be an architect. He was not a businessman, that's what it was. No, he, he knew how to cope with a committee and all that sort of thing, he was very good at, very good at that, but you still have to be a businessman in a business world. We keep forgetting, you see, it's a businessman's world isn't it, really. It is a capitalist world we're in.

And are you still in touch with him? Did you remain friends?

No, no, no. I hesitate to go and see him, because he's blind, and ... he's got ... [ASKS FOR TAPE TO BE TURNED OFF] No, but Rodney Thomas, essentially, could have been a very important architect. Well, he probably was, but, I mean, the thing is, he didn't ever have anything to show it by.

And in times when you were between jobs, or anything like that, at this stage, before the War, did your father give you any kind of allowance, given that he'd made some money himself. Did he help you in any way?

No. No. No, he didn't give me an allowance, but he gave me a hundred pounds now and then, you know. When I went to London, he said, "Have you got any money for the fare back?" or something. And say, "Oh well, here you are, here's a bit of money". But he didn't

ever give me an allowance, and it was never very much money. And I wouldn't have wanted it, anyway.

And did you worry about earning a living, in that sense?

Me?

Mmm.

No, I've always been very optimistic. No, because I ... you see, when I stopped working for him before the War, no, after the War, when I stopped working in the architects office after the War, I was very lucky to be offered a small cottage in Gloucestershire, which cost almost nothing a week, and a remote cottage, which I wanted anyway. And I managed to survive there for ten years, on very very little money. No, that was very good. It was a sort of formative period in my life, which allowed me to get in with doing something. I liked using my hands, making things, I was making mobiles to start with, and gradually I made things that were a bit more static, and gradually it came into sculpture, and I learned all kinds of things by myself. The only way I could learn is by having to do it. Sort of desert island technique, really. You have to do it. If you have to do it, you do it.

And how aware were you of the build up to war?

Well, it was one of those things, you now, you didn't want to know about it business, you wanted to put it off, and forget it in your mind. But it was a nasty fear, mmm. It was a very disagreeable fear.

And you went, and for a while, you worked on the land, weren't you?

Yes. I tried to avoid the War, as it were, by working on the land, which was permitted, but I felt very curious, and sort of out of place on the land, and not accepted by the, by the farm labourers.

Where did you do?

Herefordshire. No, hey didn't, because, you see, I was avoiding being called up, and that's not acceptable, really, anywhere, I don't think. Nobody likes that. And so, in the end, I got so sort of disillusioned, well, not so much disillusioned but sad, and I said, "All right, okay, I'll join up, then".

So then what happened?

Well, I went to the Army place, and they said, "Well, you're reserved, you see, you can't". So then I had to volunteer for something. So I had to volunteer for flying duties, and I thought, "Well, it's a rather nice poster for the Fleet Air Arm, it looks rather nice. I'll do that."

And did you, I know you went to Canada to train, in the end, but did you train in England first? What happened?

No, I didn't. No. First of all, you have to do square bashing, but I'd already done that at school in the OTC, so that was, there was nothing new about that, and I was quite good at that.

Where did you go for that?

At Leigh on Solent, HMS Vincent, it was.

Had you any experience, apart from when you went to Belgium, and, presumably to France, had you had much experience of being on ships>

No. No. No.

And did you find ...

I wasn't, I wasn't that interested in ships, you know! I was interested in not having trench warfare, which I thought was very disagreeable, a horrible thing. I had seen pictures of that, of trench warfare during the First World War, and I thought that the most horrible thing that anyone had ever done. I don't suppose it was, but, I mean, I thought it was. SO I wanted to avoid that. So I was a bit of a coward about that. So I thought flying over the sea would be much cleaner.

So you were on the boat, HMS Vincent, or whatever it was called.

No. No. You can have HMS Vincent on land, you see. They ... all naval establishments are HMS something or other.

Right.

Or it's ... Her Majesty's Service now, I suppose, they're all that, and they have a flag, you know, the standard, you know, the white ensign. They have that, all of them, wherever they are.

Right. So how long did that go on for? Just a few months?

A bit more than that it was. I've forgotten now. Because I think, I, I fell over, doing a smart salute on the parade ground, something like that, you see, and sprained my wrist, and so they put me in hospital for a while, and then, so I missed my course. I missed the course that I was on, so I, I should have been going to Pensacola, and I didn't go. So I was then put on the next lot to Pensacola, and so we went on and ... with the next draft, yes. And we had to go, first of all, to somewhere near Detroit, to learn to fly. Somehow or other I didn't get on very well there, and I was transferred back to Canada.

You mean you didn't get on well with the people, or you didn't get on well with the techniques?

No. The flying. I didn't quite manage that one. I don't know why. But it's just as well I didn't, because the, the Pensacola, having to go to Pensacola, that would have been lethal, you see. I wouldn't have survived that at all.

Were you quite frightened, at this stage?

No. I'm never frightened, really, like that. I, I have apprehension about things. I think that's a bad idea. But, I mean, you don't know, because you don't know what it's going to be like anyway. I'm just saying, it would have been lethal if I had. So then I went back to Canada, and did the flying there.

And that was better?

Well, I mean, you learn to fly. But I got my wings and everything there. And I got married there, too.

Were you interested in flying though? Were you interested in aircraft?

I'm not, I'm not particularly interested in it, but if you have to do it, you do it as well as you can. Some people are, they really want to get up there, and move, dice about in the air, they do. And I didn't really.

Did you find the aircraft visually attractive, or not?

No. I'm not like that, quite. Like boys with motor cars? No, not really.

And were you at all, given that you'd had a father who was an engineer, and then you'd had this time sort of working as a draughtsman, were you at all interested in how the planes were constructed? Was that even a faint interest to you?

No. No. No, because it wouldn't have helped me if I knew how they were constructed. They're going to fly the thing. I don't think pilots ever bother much about how the thing's made.

And did you, at any stage, enjoy the flying?

I think ... well, you have to admit that it's much more pleasant flying in an aeroplane than fighting in a horrible trench. That is an enjoyment, isn't it, that ... the differences are good.

But no more than that?

No. No, I mean, it's not my scene at all, being in any Service like that. But because of my experience at school and so on, it was something I could accept.

And how did you meet our wife?

Well, we had to stay for a while in, in a, in a sort of camp, if you'd like to call it, in Toronto, and families always invite people, you know, like foreign service people, to their houses, to entertain them. SO I was invited there, and anyway I met these two sisters, and so I got involved with them.

So what sort of household was it?

Well, the mother came from a ... family which, in a way, came from England, called Trethilly - Cornish. And the father was Secord, a French Huguenot from Fair Isle, so ... I don't know where Fair Isle is exactly, but it's a very lonely island somewhere, where some of the Huguenots went to escape before, and the Secords then went to America. There's some chocolates in Canada called Secord, Laura Secord Chocolates. And the father, actually, was, I suppose, really from Pittsburgh, or somewhere in America. And some of the Chadwicks, actually, went to Pittsburgh, I believe, because he was a, he was a railway engineer, and that's where they made their railway engines, in Pittsburgh.

Have you been there?

I have actually, yes. I went to see Uncle Jim. That's my wife's Uncle Jim. I can't remember much about that, because, you know, when you're a visitor, you're just taken from house to house.

It's quite a strange city, I think.

Is it? Oh.

And so what where the names of these two sisters?

Ann and Beth.

And what sort of age were they?

Well, I suppose 17 and 19, or 17 and 20.

And did you like them both, straightaway?

I wasn't allowed to like both of them, I was snatched by the elder?

And that was the one you married?

Yes.

So what was the ... how did your relationship develop? What was your courtship like?

Short. Very short. Because we got married out there, you see.

When you say you were sort of grabbed by her, you mean that you felt you were slightly engineered into it?

Well, I think that she thought it would be a good idea. I mean, this was ... this is what I imagine she thought, it would be a good idea. I don't know how young girls think, by the way, to start with. But it must have been in her mind that this would be a good idea. Because, in fact, I think ... she was wrong, by the way, because for other reasons which I won't tell you now. But anyway, she thought it would be a good idea, that's the only important thing.

And really, but you hadn't got a girlfriend before this, is that right? Or had you had some?

I had, yes, I had had a sort of girlfriend, yes, mmm.

And had you had anyone else you wanted to marry?

No. I'd never thought about marrying, by the way. And there it was, here's the, the sailor abroad, going off, and he'd probably never come back, and, and somehow or other, there must be a sort of biological thing.

So it was sort of being caught up by what a lot of people were doing in the War?

I think so. I think that we were all doing crazy things.

Do you remember having any reservations?

About it? No, I don't. No, no. Fears? No fears, no. No, no. No, no. But I think that ... no. I suppose I was really a bit compromised in a way. All my friends in the Service with me, were saying, "well, you'll have to do it now, boy", "You're going to have to do it", you know.

Was that because you'd slept with her?

No, it wasn't that. I hadn't, by the way.

So why were you compromised?

No, I see what you mean. I mean that they ... all my friends were saying, "You've got to marry her", you see. That was compromise to me. And maybe, maybe I'm using the wrong word.

But you mean, really, because she'd come to assume that you would marry her?

No, she hadn't. No, no, no.

Did you actually propose to her?

I don't know. I suppose I did then. But in a very sort of off-hand way, "Let's get married", sort of, so to speak.

And what was your wedding like?

Well, it had to be fairly correct, because it had to be done in the church, the Church of the Redeemer, it was called, in Toronto, which had been more or less dedicated by my wife's grandfather. He had, sort of ... endowed this church.

<u>End of F4558 Side A</u>

F4558 Side B

... you fall into. I mean, I start probing into all kinds of nooks and crannies, but I don't know that it's really necessary. It wouldn't be any use to anyone, it's too remote, too removed.

And did you have anybody at the wedding, who was from your side of the world so to speak? Or was it really just you and her family?

Oddly enough, the best man was a man with whom I'd been a student with in the Regents Polytechnic night school, a man called Leon Williams. And he was there. And he was a very curious man, really. Very tall. And he said, "Oh, you've got to ..." He said, "You've got to marry her", too, you see. Not for any compromise reason like that. It was none of that at all. It was because they thought that she would be unhappy otherwise, you know. Well, it ... I don't know, I suppose I was a bit inconsiderate, really. I hadn't really summed up the situation, but I think that, that my wife, she wanted to get married, too.

And were the parents quite keen on it?

Well, they, they sent somebody, one of their relatives over, to check out my father! (LAUGHS) And they thought it was all right, yes. (LAUGHS)

What did her father do?

Her father? Nothing very much. He, no, he, no, he wasn't doing very much.

But had he had a career?

Oh, sort of. But she'd, her mother came from a rich family, you see. But the husband didn't come from a rich family. But, I mean, he was a gent, but he wasn't ... not from a rich family. A gent as in Canadian gent.

And the man who was your best man, he just happened to be there? He didn't come out because you'd asked him to? He was there already, was he?

No. He was in the Fleet Air Arm too, with me. He just happened to be training with me. It was just a fluke.

But did you have a chance to live together during the War?

There were all kinds of people with me, because it's very curious how you get people from all walks of life, all, all together, in a Service like that, in one training unit. I mean, there were all kinds of people there who were quite interesting. People from, you know, undergraduates from Oxford, and there was some ... all kinds of people, like, there was a ... one of the Tolstoys, Prince Michael Tolstoy was with us too. All kinds of funny people, but they all mixed up together, and all kind of ... you know, other people as well, mmm.

And did you stay in touch with any of those?

No. You dissipate. You know, it's a question of, you're all together for a reason, and when the reason's no longer there, you dissipate again.

So did you have any time to set up a married life with your wife, before you were whisked away, or not?

Not in Canada, no, no, no. No, no. I had to come back, and she followed me.

And what about the actual flying in the War?

Well, that was just flying from an aircraft carrier, over the sea. The days like this, you see. The sky over the Atlantic is always a bit like that, grey, and the sea is grey, and it's boring as you can possibly imagine.

And were you flying alone?

No. I had two people in the back, one telling me which way to go, and one of them operating the radio.

And what was the purpose of the flight?

To prevent the U-boats from sinking the convoy, because we were guarding a convoy of 50/60 ships, you see, and we were flying round it all the time, because the mere sight of these funny little aeroplanes made the U-boats sink under, they, they wouldn't surface. They couldn't surface, or the thought they couldn't, if we were around. And it's true, actually, because they'd lost so many of them, because we were armed fully enough, even in these rather primitive aircraft, but we, because it was a rather curious aircraft, but it was the only one they had available that would land on a small carrier, they were small ones, you see. They were called "banana boats", because some of them had been banana boats. Small freight carriers, they were, and they were converted with a steel top. And instead of bananas, they had, they had aeroplanes in them. And so that they were very small, and so they had plenty of them, and they were all welded together in California, or somewhere. And they

were the thing that saved the convoys, because they were losing the convoys one after the other - bong, bong, bong.

And did you feel, at any point, that you were in terrible danger, or was it relatively monotonous?

Well, I think you're always in danger, actually, but you just don't think about it. The thing is, you've got to keep this thing going, and you have to land on this bloody little thing down below there, when the time is up.

And was there anything about that life that you missed afterwards?

I think the, you do, the camaraderie sort of business, you miss a bit, but it's just as well, really. This business of reunions of old squadrons, I've never done that. No, that's crazy, that's all. It's all right while you're having to do it.

And did, that was the course of the War until you were demobbed, was it? Or did anything else happen to you before the end of the War?

No. I was just doing the same thing until I was demobbed, yes.

So you came back as a married man. Where did you go to live?

We lived in Cheyne Row for a year.

How did you manage that? That's rather a wonderful address, isn't it?

It is, rather, yes. But, you see, it was a rented house, and it was only £200 a year, because even houses you could buy for nothing in those days.

What number was it, can you remember?

Number 1 or 2. It's the first house in Cheyne Row, anyway, opposite the King's Head and Eight Bells. It has a sun over the doorway.

And how did you furnish that house?

Well, I didn't have any money at all, so with sticks of furniture. Basic, very basic.

And was it hard to adapt to married life?

No, it wasn't, you see, because my wife wasn't a normal person, you know. She was ... she was a bit advanced, shall we say, independent, so she didn't bother about any bourgeois matters.

What was she actually like? What did she look like?

She was a blonde. I don't know what you ... can say she looked like. But she wasn't a dizzy blonde, she just happened to be blonde, that's all. She was ... and fairly serious. And she had ambitions to write novels. Novels. Novels, yes.

And had you seen some of her writing?

I have seen it, yes, but I can't remember it, because I, I told her that I'm not a good enough judge of literature to say anything one way or the other, and it would be wrong for me to make a judgement about literature. I really am not good at judging it. I know what I like, of course, like everybody likes all kinds of things, but it's not necessarily a good recommendation.

And had you known that you could go back working for Rodney Thomas, or not?

I, I phoned him, and he offered me the job back, that's all.

So did you go back with mixed feelings? You must have done.

No. No. No. I was pretty cool about it.

And by that stage, what kind of work was he doing?

By this time, this was when they were starting this pre-fabricated bungalow, with this group of companies supporting this architectural practice. There were two partners, three partners, mmm.

And what was your role by this time?

Well, I was in charge of this special co-ordination department, we were having to work out what happens when two things meet, you see, the ceiling and the wall, or door and wall, or something like that, because all ... when you have things with pre-fabricated parts, and they have to join together, you get a, a gap, because it it's too tight, they won't give in at all, so they allow for a small gap, but that gap can be bigger. So you have to have what we call

“cover strips” to cover the gap, and you have to work out what happens when these two cover strips would meet each other, like the, the thing called the skirting and that thing all round the door, which is called the architrave.

It doesn’t sound as though it would fire you with interest.

Mmm?

It doesn’t sound as though it would fire you with interest, every morning.

No. It was just a ... it was just a task, really.

Were you doing things for exhibitions as well, like the Ideal Home Exhibition?

That was separate, yes. Rodney Thomas was doing, doing that, and it was a time when building restrictions, really, were not so much of an importance as the ... licence for building materials. There were no licences for building materials, so architects couldn’t build a house, but you could build an exhibition stand, and that could be grand and elaborate, and all kinds of things. So we were doing that, we were doing all kinds of fancy exhibition stands. And that taught me quite a lot about design.

Can you pin it down, what it taught you?

Oh, freedom to, to have, not just ... regular ... definite shapes, all fitting together in the normal classical way, but you could have shapes in different ... different shapes, sort of mingling together, we call it free shapes, you see. Instead of having a circle, but you’d have something,

you know, like they have kidney-shaped ponds and things like that, well, that sort of kidney-shaped things, you know, that sort of shape. Freer, freer from the old rectangular thing.

And I can't remember the date of it, but there was an exhibition called "Britain Can Make It", fairly soon after the War, wasn't there.

Was there?

At the V & A? Did you go to that at all?

I don't know. No, I didn't, I didn't go to the exhibition.

And was London very changed after the War, compared to the London you'd known before?

Yes.

In what way?

No horses, pretty well no horses left. It was practically disappearing anyway. What else? Well, of course, there were ... the big difference was the fact that nothing was available, you couldn't buy a motor car, even if you had the money, and furniture - Utility furniture, and the food was limited, you couldn't get certain things. There were still rations, butter and things like that were still rationed, a long time after the War. A long time, yes.

So, really, Ann must have got a pretty grim view of England, didn't she?

She didn't mind. No, no, she didn't mind that. Oh no, she didn't mind that at all, no. She's living in a rather miserable place in Wales at the moment, because she prefers it.

What was she like as a personality?

I wouldn't say she was a powerful personality, it's not like that, but she had very definite views about things, and critical attitude towards people, mmm.

And did you, between you, have a social life going on? Or what was life like?

We always had sort of friends, yes, mmm.

Can you remember who they were at this stage, do any particular people stand out?

Well, in, well, while we were still in Chelsea, we had met some of the John family, Augustus John's children, we'd met them. And they stayed as friends, and they used to come down to see us in the country, and eventually, some of them bought, got a cottage down there too, so we used to have quite a lot of mixing with them.

Were they great fun? I mean, were you having, sort of, exuberant times? Or was it quite serious? What would be the times with them?

Fairly exuberant, yes.

Which particular members of the family were there?

Well, it was Caspar John, really, and Mary, Caspar and Mary were the ones we knew best. But I met the other, some of the others too, because a lot of them lived in Cornwall, mmm, and we went to see them. But, Caspar, he was still in the Navy for a long time. He eventually became First Sea Lord, but he was always just Caspar to us.

And with somebody like them, when you were in London, would you go to each other's houses for dinner, or would you got out? Or what would you do?

Well, wherever we were, yes, but it was a big thing of sharing, and, you know, you'd be in the pub and say, "Let's eat, then. Let's go and eat". And, "Right, I'll bring a dish of this, and you bring a dish of that", and they would dash through the streets with it. I was thinking about Cornwall, actually, with the food.

When were you in Cornwall?

Oh, in 1946, I think it was.

You lived there for a bit, or it was a holiday?

No, no, no. I went there for a holiday, and ... and some of the Johns were there. I just happened to go to Cornwall for a holiday, yes.

Whereabouts were you?

Mousehole.

And did you know people like Patrick Heron, at that time, or not?

Yes, I knew him before he was a painter. I knew him when he was the art critic of the New Statesman.

How did that come about?

Well, he was down there. He was down in Cornwall.

So you met him in Cornwall for the first time?

Yes. He was, he was ... he was sometimes referring to me in his criticisms.

In what capacity, though? Because you hadn't begun to be an artist at that point.

No. No. No, I was just a visitor then, in those days, yes.

What was he like, at that point?

He was snooping around. He was an art critic you see, but he could see people painting, and he thought he'd like to do it too, himself. So he approached one of these painters, and made the proposal that it would be a good idea, maybe, if they did a painting together, you know. "You do one brush stroke, and I'll do the next one", you see, like that, on the same canvas. This was how he started. I know that.

What a bizarre idea!

Well, I know that, because I was there when, when he was discussing it.

Who was the painter?

I, that is something ... I cannot quite remember the name, but he was somebody who was passed, of course, in ... in reputation, by Patrick Heron, because he won!

And did you meet anybody like Wilhelmina Barns Graham? That generation.

Barnes, I knew the Barnes brothers. Wilhelmina Barns Graham? What did they do?

She's a painter. She's about 90 I think. She's still painting. She lives sometimes in Cornwall and sometimes in Scotland.

The Barnes would be from the two Barnes brothers, and they had a collection of early, of cinematograph material, old projectors and other things. The other things you mentioned earlier, these things that turn round and you see animated movement. Barnes. I don't know the other one. She could be anyone that I knew, but I wouldn't know her under that name.

And did you come across Margaret Mellis who was a close friend of Patrick?

No.

She might have left by then, she used to be married to Adrian Stokes.

Yes, Adrian Stokes. Of course, he was a brother of Stokovsky, wasn't he.

Was he?

Yes. Adrian Stokes was very keen on my sister for a while, and he said to my sister, "You know, I have terrible trouble, mice are eating my canvases!" And there was something else about Adrian Stokes, because there again, he was a Charlotte Street friend, in those days.

I should think your sister had a narrow escape.

Well, I don't think there was anything serious going on there.

And in London, who else did you see at this stage?

I don't ... I don't ... I can't think of anyone at the moment. There are bound to be lots of people, because in Cheyne Row, there were all kinds of people there. But they're not people that I continued to know afterwards, that's the point.

And how did it come that you won the competition to do with designing fabrics? Because that happened fairly soon after, didn't it.

No. This was when I was still in the architect's office. There was a competition by Ascher, Zeka Ascher, for textile designs, and Graham Sutherland was one of the judges of those competitions. I put in some little sketches, and I got, I got a sort of prize, a sort of mention, shall we say. I got the third prize, or something like that, and so they gave me a little bit of money. I got a little bit of money from the textile designs there, and I had a little bit of money from a firm in Glasgow that, that made furniture, to design furniture. It was very curious why I got that, because I can't think how they got to know me. Oh, I know, through someone else, they got to know me. Because, you know, at a certain point, you get a reputation as a designer, shall we say, which meant quite a different thing. It doesn't mean

like it does now, it wasn't a dirty word in those days. You see, Daniel has got through that stage, but he has been known for being a young up and coming person for a long time, but without his doing very much to gain this reputation, because he's the sort of person who mixes very well, and he's very good at mixing, and he goes to parties and he's quite an entertainer, I believe. We never know what our own children do, but he's very popular. And he's not, you know, at lunchtime, he was a bit hesitant when you asked him questions, but he's not like that normally. If you had him out there alone, he'd be very voluble. Oh yes. No. But he's very popular. And he's, he brings some of these people here. But I think, on the whole, he prefers not to be known as my son, he wants to be his own ... he wants me to be his father, as it were. Do you see what I mean?

And what do you feel about it?

I don't mind. I don't mind. If I can do anything to help him, I'll help him, because it's in a way, it's my story all over again, you see, so if I can help him in any way, but without pushing ... I can't push him, of course, I wouldn't try to do that, or advise him, but if he wants advice, "What do I do now?" I'd say, "Well, I would do this, or that", you know.

And, going back to you, had you ever done any fabric design before? Did it just come because you saw there was a competition?

No, it was just a competition, yes. But I wasn't, I didn't, I didn't do anything, and they did print a few of them, but I don't think they were ever used.

Can you remember what they were like?

Well, I did, sort of, almost ... if I say William Morris, it wasn't William Morris really, but it was designs made out of all, all different things - people, or plants, or anything. Houses.

And did you meet Sutherland?

I did, but not through that, no. No.

What was he like?

He was all right.

Did you like his work?

Yes, I do. Oh yes, I did. Oh yes, I did. She was a bit ... a little bit difficult, inasmuch as she was a little bit pompous, his wife.

But he was much more approachable, was he?

He was all right. He was ... yeah, he was normal natural, yes.

Which bits, which sort of areas of his work do you like? I mean, do you like it in general?

Well, I think I like his landscapes. Well, I do, yes. His sort of imaginary landscapes too, with twisted bits of tree root, I like those.

What was his reputation at this stage?

In those days?

Mmm.

Well, I first saw his work in an exhibition in London, and I don't know quite where it was now. It might have been ... it wouldn't have been in the National Gallery, but it was in some big gallery, of war artists. He and Piper were showing this exhibition, and that was the first time I noticed .. a war time artist, you see. Because there were other artists too, of course, doing wartime ... [TEATIME]

So was it the case, then, of winning the fabric competition gave you the financial freedom to give up working for Rodney Thomas?

No. I didn't win it, I got a prize in it, and it gave me a bit of confidence, yes, it did, from being a, from zero, I then had a little bit of security. I sold ten designs at £15 each, or 15 at £10 each, I don't know what it was. £150. Well, that was very good in those days, you know. And, but I had about the same amount from this furniture man in Glasgow, and, and this gave me a certain amount of confidence and ability to be on my own in the country. And that was very good, because I, I hadn't started to do anything like sculpture at all, I was making mobiles, but I wasn't showing them to anyone. It was some time after all this that someone said, "Why don't you show them to a gallery?" And I didn't know what a gallery was, really. I knew a little bit. I had actually been to a friend's show, a person called Julian Trevelyan, I went to his show, and so I knew what a gallery was, but I had no experience, myself, of showing. And I would never have gone to show anyone my work. But he said, "Look, why don't you go and show them yours? Because they've got things a bit like yours, but they don't move, but they're very much like yours". So I took them, and, and this was Gimpels, and they put it in their summer show, and they sold it, and this gave them great

confidence. There's nothing like selling to a dealer. And so they, the next year, they gave me a show.

Hold on, we're going a bit too quickly.

I am?

You'd begun to make the mobiles while you were with Rodney Thomas, is that right? How did they all happen?

Well, what happened was that Rodney Thomas made a balancing thing, a little thing that rocked, a little rocker, he made a little rocker, and he called it "mobile sculpture".

What was it made of?

Wood, I think. I think it was wood, wood shapes, sort of Arp, Henry Moore, Arp sort of shapes, something like a bean or something like that, and it rocked, and I think it may have been two beans that rocked together. And I thought, "Well, that's very interesting". And I, without understanding the other principle, I thought, "Well, I could do that by suspending them". So I did this suspension idea, and it took a long long time till I realised that I was doing exactly the same thing as Calder, but this was just about the time when I gave it up, because I realised that Calder was, really, better at doing what he was doing, than I was at what I was doing.

Had Rodney made his just for fun, really? I mean, it was just that he felt like doing ...?

To amuse himself, yes, I think. Yes.

And what sort of scale were they?

Scale? His?

Well, both his and yours.

But I made these much bigger things, bigger and bigger and bigger. That thing behind you was a sort of mobile, you see.

But that was much later, that sort of thing?

No. That and that are the same time together, that was from the Festival of Britain in '51, yes.

Right. But you'd been starting making the mobiles before that, hadn't you? In the forties?

No. Not forties. Just a minute. Couldn't be forties. '49 maybe. It might have been.

End of F4558 Side B

F4559 Side A

Can you just tell me a bit more about the mobiles you made at the beginning? Tell me, again, what they were made of?

They were made of all kinds of funny ... one of the first ones was ... I bought a plastic shape from an aircraft, something to do with a ... you know, like a hood, you know, a curved thing, and I curved things, and I made that into a mobile. It's all in the book, you know.

But I want you to tell it. But what, what sort of scale was it, then?

Quite small. I did ... all my mobiles were quite small to start with.

And were things suspended from this shape?

Yes. All my early mobiles were suspended, things on ... on threads that were hanging down, all like that, all my early ones, mmm.

And so it was somebody seeing those that suggested that you should go to Gimpels?

Yes.

And then he gave you an exhibition of mobiles, is that right?

Not then, but the next year or the year after, yes, mmm.

So how many ... what did you have to show, by that stage?

How many?

Mmm.

Well, I'd make as many as there were required for the exhibition, probably 15-20.

And were they all metal, by this stage? What were you working in?

No, no, these were still wood, mostly wood, but perhaps with metal supports, bent, bent rod supports.

And were they coloured?

Yes, I'd painted most of them, yes.

A uniform colour, or separate colours? How was it?

Oh, different colours, as of a paint box.

But within each mobile there were a number of colours?

Yes. I had little balsa wood things, little shapes, balsa wood shapes, and I'd paint one side one colour, the other side another colour.

And could the little balls of shapes, could they actually go round at 360 degrees?

Well, they could have done, yes, but they were on a thread, so they were very light balsa wood, so they, more or less, stayed more or less in their own position.

And, I mean, this is obviously quite a leap from just doing drawings for ...

Oh yes. It suited me much better to be making something, than drawing. It did suit me very well. Yes, I'd got used to the drawing, you know, doing architectural drawing, I'd done that, that was all right. But this was very ... much more fascinating for me, to be able to make something with my hands.

So it was something that you'd started while you were in London, but that you really took up pretty full-time when you moved to the country, is that right?

I hadn't made anything in London, because I had no workshop or any facility there whatsoever.

So, tell me where you moved to in the country.

It was in Gloucestershire, oh, probably about five miles from Cheltenham, in the country, two miles from the road, in a very remote cottage, without any electricity or ... and no water supply. The water was in a well at the bottom of the field, and we used to get it in a bucket.

How did Ann react to all this?

Oh, she loved it. She wanted to escape from the normal bourgeois life.

And was she managing to write?

Yes. She wrote nearly all the time. She did. Novels, she wrote, most of the time.

And what was the cottage actually like, then?

It was a very simple little normal Cotswold cottage, a front door with a window each side. On one side was the kitchen, and the other side was a sort of living room, with a staircase coming out of it. It had a staircase in the wall. All the Cotswolds things have a stone staircase, in the wall, almost, so that you have a winding staircase up the wall on to the first floor, where there were two bedrooms. And outside, there were outbuildings, and I did convert one of them so that we could actually have a bed in one of them. And the other outbuilding had been an old ox shed, because they used to plough the land with oxen, and so they had an ox shed, and it had the stall for the oxen, which was different from a cow shed. Different, apparently, they told me that the stalls were of a different height from cows, for oxen. I don't know why that should be, but anyway, they were. So this was an open shed, and I covered one side of it with glass, and made a sort of studio in there.

So it must have been a very exciting leap, from doing a job you didn't want to do to actually having time and space.

Well, it was a wonderful way of becoming independent, oh yes. Marvellous to be able to be on my own.

And I can't remember, did you have children with Ann?

I had Simon, that's my son.

Right. When was he born?

He was born ... very soon after the War, or even during the War. During the War, I suppose, but in England. In England, in a place not too far from London.

Were you there when he was born?

No, I was at sea.

And did having a child change you?

No. I suppose it gives you a slight sense of responsibility, that is to say, the man. I don't know that it changed me.

Did you actually do things like bath him, and feed him, and play with him?

Later. I think I did, actually, yes. I think most fathers do. And I remember, of course, when we moved to the country, because it was in London when he was a baby, we were in Cheyne Row in Chelsea, but when we moved to the country, yes I did sort of look after the child a bit.

Did you enjoy it?

Well, no, I'm not a sort of person who enjoyed looking after little children really, but I mean, I did it, but I was very ... I looked after him, and I used to take him to school in the morning.

And had you wanted children? Was it something you'd thought about?

I think it was ...my wife, Ann, who obviously wanted the child, curiously enough, actually.

And when you moved to the country, did you have any help, or were you looking after him between you, really?

Oh, we didn't have any help, no. We were much too remote to have any help.

And were you really each other's only company? Was there anybody else ...

No. People used to come at the weekend. Oh, there were a few people nearby. There was, actually, another couple living near us, who we became sort of friendly with them, and he had been an assistant to Diego Rivera in Mexico, and his wife had been a student at, at some art school in England, and he'd been teaching there, and that's how they got to know each other. And .. anyway, he, he had come back from Mexico, and ... it was very curious, actually. And they, they had other friends too. They were friends of the farmer, the local farmer, who used to invite, but he was, gentleman farmer, you'd call him, really, and they used to ask us down to see them, too.

And the person who had been the assistant to Rivera was Mexican or British?

No, he was English.

And what was his name, do you remember?

Clifford Wight. Wight, W I G H T, I think. Wight.

And it was actually the farmer that suggested you went to the gallery, is that right?

Well, when I say “farmer”, he was somebody who was being a farmer, like Lubetkin was being a farmer during the War.

Right. And how did you come to know Julian Trevelyan?

Ah! Well, now, during the War, my wife’s family had taken in some people to look after, from England, called Lodge, Oliver Lodge, and his wife. And my wife became very friendly with Diana Lodge. And after the War, they came back from ... they were in America, he’d been in some university in America, and this was after they’d been staying with my wife’s parents in Toronto, and so they came back to England, and when they came back, he knew an architect over here, I think he was not alive then, but he knew his widow. A man called Detmar Blow (ph), and he’d worked with this architect called Detmar Blow, and his wife, widow, shall we say, had said to them, “Oh, there’s this cottage down ...” No, that there’s, “You can come and live in this house on the estate”. So they were living in the house, and when they were living in the house, they found that this cottage was available, so they let my wife know, and that’s why we came to the country. A long way round.

And how did you come to know Julian?

Julian? Ah, he was a friend of, of the ... Diana Lodge. I can’t remember quite how.

And did you see quite a lot of him, or was he just someone you knew a little?

He came to see us in the country. I used to go to see him quite a lot, at Durham Wharf.

Did you go to his parties?

Yes. Always went to the Boat Race party, yes.

Did you enjoy them?

Yes.

What do you remember of them?

Mmm. Anything except the Boat Race! I don't know! I met all my friends there, you see, they were all there.

Like who?

Well, Douglas Glass, the photographer. Elizabeth Smart, you know?

The writer?

Wrote, "By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept." Other people, but I can't remember who, now. Everybody went there!

Everybody! Was he married to Ursula still, or was it Mary's time?

Mmm?

Was he married to Ursula at that time, or was it Mary?

No, he was married to Ursula when we first met him, and Ursula used to come to see us in the country.

What was she like?

She was big, and ... big. And then Mary, yes. I don't remember Mary ever coming to see us. No, this was ... he came to see us when he was more or less alone, not with Ursula, anyway. Ursula did come to see us, independently, in the cottage, yes.

Do you know what happened to her?

Ursula? No.

And did you like Julian's work, or not?

Yes, I did, mmm. No, he had a great charm in his work. He was what I called an artist, too, you see. There are not many people who are really artists, they're sort of entrepreneurs now, really. They sell them. Because you have to think what's going to be the best way of attracting attention now, you see, rather than, you know, having passion for doing something with paint, or whatever it is. That's the way I feel about it now. They're not artists. So that, although Daniel fits into the new scene, he will, I think, eventually, become an artist, merely ... because he's quite critical, really, he's not all that silly.

And can you tell me how the changes happened, so that you stopped doing the mobiles, and moved forward to making sculpture. How did that arc take place?

Yes. Well, really, the best way would be to look at the photographs of my early work. However, I'll tell you, because of this recording. Now, the thing is that I was making mobiles, and I had a feeling that I ought to become static, because it was a bit limited in my imagination, how far you could go with mobiles. And when I came to making a thing with a structure to hold it up, like this one ...

Can you say which piece that is?

"The Fisheater". I had to support this mobile on a sort of little pylon. So, in doing that, I realised that, in fact, the actual structure itself was interesting me, because I'd earned to weld, by this time, in order to make the bigger things like these structures that I thought, "All right, I'll concentrate on that, and I'll see what I can do with it". And, at the same time, it coincided with my finding a certain material, which was a very good form of plastic material for filling in, in, in frames, so as to make a solid structure. But first came the ... making these big frames for the mobiles. And I though, "Good. I've learnt to weld. Now, what can I do with it?" And I was very interested in the actual technique of welding, and I sort of made these frames, for mobiles to start with, and then I thought, "Well, o, I'll let them be something in themselves, in their own right". So when it came to the Unknown Political Prisoner Competition, I made a frame, but I filled it in solid, so it was solid, and that was the first, really, solid sculpture I'd made, really. Well, not quite the first, but the first time I showed it, showed such a work.

And that must have been a tremendously exciting transition. Did you realise quite what it meant, doing that, for you?

Well, it was a dare, you see, because, you see, the thing is, I'd come into the art world through the back door, really, through the mobiles, and it was a question of whether I'd be

accepted, because I hadn't any previous experience or exposure, as a, as a sculptor. I was really only a mobile maker, so that ... but, on the other hand, I thought, "Well, we'll try anyway". So I, I made these solid things. And for my next exhibition I had more of these. They may have been associated, in some cases, with something that was mobile, like this little thing, this sort of frog-like thing.

What is that one called?

It's called ... oh dear, I can't remember the name of it!

Can you just describe it in a way that will make it clear to someone listening to the tape in a hundred years.

Well, it's a solid object, but it's got two arms, with a sort of ... if you understand what a ... ... a gimbal is, for a ship's compass, like that, so that sort of thing. So it's one shape moving inside another shape. That's what it is. That's what it amounts to.

And, with the centre pieces, they're obviously set, in a sense that it's not swinging back and forth, but it is moveable, that upper two parts?

The idea was, it was still mobile. It was still mobile. But I'm going towards a solid, you see, and non-mobile, in that case.

So the base is solid.

Yes. Transition stage.

Right. But, a mobile, presumably, moves with air currents.

Oh, no, no, no, no, this is the thing.

Whereas this is moveable with the hands.

I, that is very limited, because. Even looking back now, on mobiles made by people like Alexander Calder, they don't move in, in the atmosphere, outside, unless they're very very big, it takes a terrible wind to make them move at all. And, no, I've tried this thing outside, and it gets in the most awful tangle, yes.

"The Fisheater". Right. But with this one that we don't know the title of, at the moment.

Yes. I'm trying to explain. Yes, it's very difficult. It's one shape moving inside another shape, really, that's more or less ...

But, it's set in a particular position, at the moment, but it could be moved into another position?

And it'll go back to that position.

Would it?

It will, it's balanced in that position, really.

Oh, right. And how do you achieve that? How do you make it do that?

Well, it's, it's not difficult, actually. You just balance until it does!

If it would always return to that position then, it must be quite carefully weighted?

No. No, it's not as delicate a balance as that. That would, that would be ideal, if I could do that. But then you'd have to have very very accurate bearing points, so that it ran very easily, and then the balance would have to be absolutely exact. But it would tend not always to go back to the same point, in fact. Oh, I, I tried all kinds of things, but it's not done with enormous accuracy. But you could do it with enormous accuracy so that it did exactly what you wanted it to do. It could go on and never stop in the same place.

And what is the lower part made of?

That, originally, was ... originally, it was some sort of plaster. A metal frame with plaster in it. It was after this that I found another material, which was a sort of a plaster material, but it was slightly harder, which I used for all the other subsequent work. But that was, the original thing was plaster. That particular thing is not, because what I did was, I altered it, and took out the plaster, and put this other stuff in there.

Is this Stolit?

Stolit, it's called. Stolit. Artificial stone, it was called, which is now no longer obtainable, apparently. But it was, it had a very hard surface, and I thought it was going to be permanent, but it's not, it rusts away, so that I've got to preserve all my early work, to stop it rusting away.

And then what is the final surface?

Oh, that's just a surface, and I've painted it, that's all.

Paint?

Paint. Black paint, yeah.

Gosh, because it looks like, really, a weathered hard surface.

No. No, that is just paint.

And the airy bits above it, what are they?

They're just mild steel, forged, if you like, just beaten out with a hammer, hot, and welded together, all those little spikes are all welded on.

So, at this point, this is the first time you're mixing materials in that way, is it?

Yes. Yes.

And was that something you just found you'd done, or was it something you set out to do?

No, it was all developed, mmm, natural for me, natural development, one thing to the next.

So that first show at Gimpels, had a mixture, did it, of the mobiles and the pieces that were slightly in between?

I can't really remember what they had there. I had made all kinds of little things, you see, with moving things in them.

And were you very nervous? I mean, did you have apprehensions whether it would be a success, or not successful?

No. No, no, I didn't, no, no. After all, I, I just made it, and I was saying, "What do you think of it?" And I said, "Well .." you know.

And was the Gallery very supportive?

Galleries are supportive if they think you, your work sells, like that. That's what, that's the only thing that really influences them. They're not interested in aesthetics at all, until they have a success, and then they're interested in the aesthetics, they they'll tell you how beautiful it is. No, no, they are quite cold about this.

And which of the Gimpels was it running the gallery, at this point?

Well, they both were running it, really. Difficult to day. I think that Peter was supposed to be looking after me, but I don't know which one was. They worked together.

Before the show actually opened, did you have any idea whether it would sell, or not? Did you have expectations?

No, no, no. I had no idea, whatsoever.

And do you remember the show actually opening? What was it like?

My first show, yes, I do. I do, in a way. I remember that a bit. But before that, they showed, they put me into their mixed summer show, which ... and I didn't go to that opening, I don't think. I didn't go to that opening. I don't think I did. I went to the other opening where I was there, with Kandinsky watercolours on the wall, it was. And Madame Kandinsky was there, mmm. I remember him, mmm.

And was it an ordeal to go through, or did you enjoy it?

I never like lots of people, anyway. An people talking about my work is very difficult.

And what was the response to the show?

Well, people were getting sort of interested in it, generally. And I'd already had a certain amount of interest in my work through showing mobiles in shop windows. I had one in Liberty's shop window, and everyone saw that. I was amazed how many people used to walk down ... Regent Street, past Liberty's windows. A lot of people said, oh, they saw that. That's very funny, because I'd never walk down Regent Street.

Had Liberty's actually bought it? Or what had happened?

No, no, no. I just loaned it to them. I didn't, I didn't do it for money. I was so pleased that anyone would be at all interested in showing one of my things.

And did the first show sell?

They sold a few things out of my first show, yes. They did, yes.

And did that make you feel that you'd really begun on a path?

Yes, it did. It gives you confidence to think, "Okay, I'm on my way", as it were, yes.

And did you get written about? Did you get a press response?

Yes, I think so, because, don't forget that what a critic has to do, a writer had to find someone new to write about. That's one of the things they have to find out. And the other thing is to think of something new to say about someone else. But they have to, if they can, find somebody new. That's why you find a tendency, nowadays, for them to be hanging around the art schools, waiting to see what's going to pop out.

And do you remember any of the pieces that were written? Did you think anyone was expressing what you had hoped?

No, I can't remember. I can't remember, no.

By the way, I didn't ask you about it. When you said that you also had a contract with a furniture maker, what furniture were you doing?

Well, I made models of chairs and things alike that, in my own way, but they were never made, they were never carried out. But, and when we had this reputation of what I called a designer, in those days, that was something different, not like they have designers now. Not that sort of thing. But I had this reputation, and everybody's looking for somebody who can do something for them, you see, in that case. Because, I suppose, they have a standard product, they make standard furniture, he was making furniture for he big liners, because it

was Glasgow, you see, in Glasgow, and all the liners came from Glasgow, and so he was making furniture for them, terribly dreary stuff. But it was, there was a lot of money in it, I suppose. And they had this great big joinery works in Glasgow, and they gave me a lot of the bits that they could make, there were all kinds of plywood and things like that, and they cut it up for me, in the shapes I wanted, and gave me great big, enormous great sections of balsa wood, six feet long, and great big thick ones. And I took these all back with me, in the train, and, and I used those for making mobiles, too. So I made a mobile out of some of those bits and pieces, later. And used the bits which they made for me, these little bits out of special plywood, to make a mobile too.

And I know you said they didn't get made, but can you describe one of your chair models? Can you describe one of your chair models, even if it didn't get made into a chair?

Well, it was rather like the skeleton for a boat, that sort of thing, you know, like the ... the ribs of a boat. More or less, like that.

On four legs, presumably!

Yes, it was. But that was, that was the structure of it, you see. You could put cushions on the top of these ribs, you see, that was the idea.

And would the frame have been metal?

Wood. No, no, this was a furniture firm, yes.

Always wood?

Mmm.

Right. And was it as a result of the Gimpels show that the commission for the Festival of Britain came, do you know?

No. Which commission? That's the whole point, you see. I already knew Maxwell Fry, and his wife, Jane Drew, who was a very powerful woman. She had asked me to do something for her. So that that was one thing I had. Then they asked me to design something for the ... well, it was called "The Regatta Restaurant Garden". I showed them that. Well, I showed them, first of all, that.

Hold on. When you say "that", the tape can't see it.

No, they can't see that. But this sort of, sort of ... it's difficult, because at the same time, there was a big thing there called the Skylon, Skylon. Well, I wasn't influenced by the Skylon, but, I mean, a Skylon type of thing, and I was making it my way, you see. But that was the first thing I did, which was in the form of a ... I was making a vertical space frame, with a bit of mobile at the top. But they did ask me whether I'd be disappointed if they removed the mobile part of it. And I said, "Not at all", because this was exactly what I wanted to hear, that they didn't want me to have a mobile, they wanted me to have a stabile, which was ideal, that's why I had this.

<u>End of F4559 Side A</u>

F4559 Side B

So ... at this point, I was able to, perhaps, stop worrying about being a person who made mobiles, and to think that I could be more of a static sort of a sculptor.

So the piece we've just been talking about, that was visually linked, it turned out, to the Skylon, that was for the building that Misha Black designed, was it?

No. Misha Black was, I think, more interested in this Regatta Restaurant, I think he did that. The Regatta Restaurant building, I think he did, because he is the one who said he'd rather I didn't have anything mobile in it, which is just as well, because it would have been a disaster, because it would have blown about in the wind, and got into a terrible state. No. I can't, I'm trying to remember the name of the architect who did the Skylon. You know, the actual thing itself.

It wasn't Powell was it?

Powell? I think it was. And then there was that big dome building.

The Dome of Discovery.

Yes.

Was that Ralph Tubbs?

Tubbs, yes. Mmm. How do you know all these things?

I'm interested in it.

No!

But, so, which was the piece you did for Jane Drew, for the Festival, then?

Well, she had a ... she wanted to have a tower, and I can't remember quite where it was, this tower, but it was somewhere near that area, so I filled it in with coloured triangles of, of ... canvas triangles, and then I had a mobile in the top of it. But the mobile, that's where I found that it is impossible to have a mobile in the top of this tower, you see, and the wind was blowing through, and although the bits were very heavy, it still wasn't very satisfactory.

So what was the scale of this piece? Huge?

No, this was a building, actually, in the form of just a framework, just a framework. And I, in this .. this open framework, I put in these canvas triangles, like a ship's sails, you know, like the little sails you have in a yacht, in the front.

And what was she like to work with?

She was quite easy to work with. She's still alive, I believe.

And what about Misha Black, what was he like to work with?

I didn't have a lot of contact with Misha.

And did you come into contact with Hugh Casson, who was running it?

Yes. I met him from time to time, yeah. I was quite friendly with him.

Did you like him?

Yes, I did. He was a very likeable person.

And you did a third piece, didn't you, for Battersea Park?

Well, that's not Festival of Britain, actually, but it may have been about the same time. The Battersea Park, I think there were two exhibitions there, and the first one, yes, I got in there with a mobile. It was a very unsatisfactory mobile, and it was put in a rather off the beaten path place to show it, so it was a bit of a mistake. The second Battersea Park, I had a piece of sculpture there.

And why was the first, why did you say it was unsatisfactory, the first one?

Because I didn't understand the principle of what I was doing, then.

And did you actually go to the Festival?

Of Britain? I don't remember ever being there with public in it. No, I don't remember that, no. I saw it before.

And do you remember responding, particularly, to any of the other artists who had pieces there, or any of the buildings, in particular? Did any of it excite you?

No, I can't really. No, I can't. Don't forget, you see, I saw everything before it was finished. I didn't see any works of art there, but, I mean, there was a Henry Moore, of course.

What did you feel about that?

Well, I mean, don't forget, I was only just starting, it was just a Henry Moore to me, another Henry Moore.

And, incidentally, why was Hugh Casson likeable?

He was a gentle person. Accessible. A nice, accessible person.

And, as an introduction to working with architects, it was a fairly good one, presumably, then? With Jane Drew and Misha Black, I mean, it wasn't one of those things ...

I wasn't working with Jane because of the Festival of Britain, like that. I was doing the Festival of Britain because I knew her.

Did you ever work with her again, or before?

No. But, not for any reason, it's just that she didn't have anything that would be suitable for me to do. I mean, yes, I could have gone and worked as an architect in the office there, because I think she would have liked that, at one time. But, I mean. I had already got out of that sort of thing.

And were you invited to take part in the competition for the Political Prisoner?

No. No, I was just told that there was this competition, and so I submitted something for it.

And did you consider submitting anything else? Was that just the one that you made for that?

No. No, I, I decided on that, yeah. I made it specifically for that.

And were you impressed with any of the other pieces? Were you interested by what was happening?

I can't remember anything else. The only thing that impressed me, you see, I was very ignorant, in those days, of all techniques, and there was someone, an Italian sculptor called Minguzzi, who made a human figure, to be cast in bronze, and he had left all the runners. You know when you do a casting, you have all these runners to get the metal to go into the thing. So he left all the runners on, and so he had all this sort of cage with this chap in the middle, which was quite a good answer to the problem. I was quite impressed with that.

What about the winning pieces?

No, the winning ... piece ... was Reg Butler, wasn't it? Reg Butler's was a little forged iron thing, with this ... and I've never quite understood, but he had yards and yards of explanation of it, which was very good. He was a very good explainer of everything.

But it didn't particularly excite you?

No. It was very well done, it's a beautiful little thing. It is a beautiful little thing, but it wasn't quite my thing, at the time, either, but I like it now.

And did you come into contact with Kenneth Armitage, at this point?

No. After.

Right. So when did you meet him?

About two years later than that.

And was that when you sent to Venice for the first time? Were you a part of the Venice Show?

Yes, I was, but I thin, maybe ... I don't know whether ... Kenneth was there too, I suppose, yes. I didn't know him very well then, quite. I was just about meeting him, because he was with Gimpels too, you see, so that I met him there.

What was he like, in those days, because he's quite a difficult man. Was he difficult then?

He was, he liked to be difficult sometimes, but he wasn't as bad as ... he wasn't ... it was just something he did sometimes. But now, it's, it's chronic with him, poor chap.

Were you in sympathy with his work, at that point? Did you feel any ...

I still am. Oh yes.

What do you think its strengths are?

Its?

Strengths. I mean, what do you like about Kenneth's work?

It's, well, it's not, it is, he is a very good sculptor. The forms are very good and all that. But that's not quite the point. I like, like him. Yes, it is that. It's because the actual sculptural quality is right. He, he, he doesn't want to hear that, apparently. He wants to think that people can appreciate his expression, what he's saying, the violence to be coming through. And he likes that, that's what he wants to hear. And I don't want to know about the violence of his work.

And were you thrilled to be asked to go to Venice? Was it ...

Well, I was flabbergasted. This is ... we're talking about '52.

Yes, the first one.

Mmm, '52. Well, I think there were nine of us invited to Venice, nine British young sculptors. Young, I was, then! Barbara Hepworth was a bit older, I suppose. But the others were quite young, too. When I say nine, I think there were. There might have been seven or nine. There's ... Reg Butler, I'm sure Reg must have been there, yes. Me. I suppose Kenneth. Geoffrey Clarke, Bernard Meadows, probably, that's five. Barbara Hepworth, have I said?

You didn't count her in.

Barbara Hepworh, that's six. F.E. McWilliam, seven, probably. Might have been seven.

And you all went to Venice, presumably?

Well, I say, it could have been just that number, because the same year, Gimpels had a show in a French gallery in Paris, Galerie Rive Droit with more or less the same people, because we, we'd all been associated with Gimpels. I had the impression that, at one of them, there were nine people. But I may be wrong. My memory's very very bad about this.

And what was McWilliam like?

When I first came across him, he was one of the avant garde people, doing slightly sort of surrealist things, Max Ernst's type of thing he was doing, or I say Max Ernst, I don't know who else it could be, but not at all what he did later on. And he was a very sound sculptor. Carver, I suppose, I don't know what, because it was carved, or plaster, I don't know. I did see some of his things at an exhibition in the Hanover Gallery, and I was quite impressed.

And did you meet him? What was he like as a person?

Oh yes. Oh yes. Well, yes, I knew him a bit. I went to his house.

What was he like?

He was ... almost like a sort of schoolmaster, rather ... he wasn't authoritative, but he was a bit like a sort of ... I say schoolmaster. A bit. Yes, he was ... I liked him.

And did you feel his work remained interesting, or got less interesting?

His? I think he did actually change a bit, I think he tried to change his style, which was silly, because he was quite sound in his own way.

And what about Reg Butler, what was he like?

As a person? Very very bright. He was a very bright boy indeed. He knew ... you couldn't get away with anything with him, he was really on the ball all the time.

In a way that was stimulating, rather than overpowering?

No, not stimulating, as far as I was concerned, anyway. But ... ... we didn't know each other very well, by the way, but we got on all right together.

And did you feel at home with these people? Were you all together in Venice?

For the most part, yes.

And was it, did you feel comfortable? Did you feel you were in the right company?

Oh, Political Prisoner, Eduardo Paolozzi was there too. Yeah, he was there too.

And what was he like?

Just like he is now. A big toad! (LAUGHS)

And was Hepworth there then? Was Barbara Hepworth there?

Yes. I didn't see her there.

I was going to say, she might have been quite threatened by you all, mightn't she?

Oh there was .. Elisabeth Frink was there, at the Political Prisoner, yes. So there must have been nine, mmm.

And what was the impact of Venice on you?

Well, the first one I didn't go to, so I don't know whether that had any impact on me. The second one was overwhelming, to have people sort of ... being interested in, in what I was doing, at that, at that sort of level, was quite extraordinary. ..... (BREAK IN RECORDING) ... anyway, by the way, where I've had, you know, people making a fuss of me, but not like that, in an international environment like that.

Can you remember the pieces that you took to Venice in 1952, or that were sent to Venice?

No. No. I didn't take them, anyway. They were, they were sent by the British Council, which, and they got them, maybe some from me, some from Gimpels, and so on.

And can you, just as we finish, can you just tell me about the one called "Barley Fork"?

Oh! Well, that was a barley fork, actually! And I ... it was a barley fork, and I'd made a sort of swivelling mobile in it, I think. I think so, yes. It's in Philadelphia now.

Permanently?

Well, it belongs to somebody, not Philadelphia so much as Allentown.

And at this stage, were the pieces unique, or were there little editions? There couldn't have been editions, could there? They were unique.

No, they were unique. All the early work was unique, yes.

Actually, something I did forget to ask you, where did you go to learn to weld?

British Oxygen Company's Welding School in Cricklewood. I did a two week course there.

And, presumably, it changed the way you worked, for ever more?

Well, because I ... my technique was different, yes.

And do you think you weld in a different way from the way anybody else welds?

Well, I'm not exactly a professional welder, and, no, my technique, a real welder would. But I get away with the things.

And is it a process you find exciting, or is it something you ...

Satisfying more than exciting. Satisfying, mmm. Very tiring, sometimes.

And it's for welding that you wear the mask, isn't it?

No, no, it's gas welding. It's only gas welding, with goggles on. It's not too bad.

Mmm, because I was interested in that comment you made somewhere about that restricting your vision when you're working with the goggles.

No. When you have goggles on, and good heavy goggles, you know, strong ones, you can't see very much, you can just see a bit and what you're welding, there, and so, really, your environment doesn't really matter so much. That's what I meant, I think, probably.

Right, because I got the impression that it was to do with the fact that you see a part of the sculpture in great detail, more than having an overview to it.

No, well, you stand back and take your goggles off then! If it's a question of getting the alignment right, or the stature, or the stance, or whatever it is, you have a good look. No, but when you're wearing them, you're just getting the actual ... you decide on the angle of this, of this angle you're going to make, and you get it right.

And are you very patient? I mean, supposing you've been working on something ...

You have to be. You have to be.

Yes. Are you naturally patient?

No. Not all the time, anyway. But you have to be patient when you're doing welding, yes.

End of F4559 Side B

F4560 Side A

Interview 20th April, 1995 at Lypiatt Park

You were telling me you've got to go away quite soon, where is it you're going?

We go to Zagreb.

And why?

Because I've been invited.

Can you tell me the story behind it?

Well, a long story is that there was an auction, to make some money, to restore the buildings of Dalmatia, which had been destroyed by the other side.

And how did you become involved in that?

Is that it?

Can you keep going? How did you become involved with that? What's the connection?

Oh, there was an auction to which I gave something, and it got a sort of high price, and they thought it was a good idea to invite and the person who bought it, to go to Dalmatia, to see the restored ruins.

You've just been telling me about the time you were in Yugoslavia, and you were asked to work in marble. Did you do that sculpture in the end?

Oh, this was a long time ago, nearly 20 years ago. Do you want me to tell you about that too?

Yes please.

I see. Well, I was invited to go there. I had all kinds of contacts with Yugoslavia apparently. Anyway, I was invited to go there to make a marble sculpture, which was a rather curious invitation, really, because I'm not a carver, I'm a constructor. So I went there, and it was a town called Arandelovac, south of Belgrade, and they had a park there, and they were going to fill it with sculpture, including mine. So they asked me to do something in marble, so I said, "Well, I'm not a carver". And they said, "Well ..." they would have plenty of stonemasons there, they would carve it for me. So they, they found some marble, and they put it together, because it had to come in blocks, because, in fact, although they had said that I could do it any size I liked, the fact that the marble didn't come in to much more than one metre cube blocks, so they had to compose it out of one metre cube blocks, and they started to carve it. But they weren't quite ready, that's right. They weren't quite ready, so they sent me on a tour of the various restored monasteries. This is before the present damage. And this was in Tito's time, actually. So they sent me on a tour all round what was then Yugoslavia, to see the various restored monasteries and so on, which was frightfully boring, and very uncomfortable, because the motor car they gave me was a sort of Russia-built Fiat, and it was a most uncomfortable vehicle. And so I was taken all round, and in the evening, I was taken back to the hotel, luckily ... it was very difficult, you see, to stay in a hotel by yourself, because you couldn't say a word of Slavonic languages, and it was difficult to order any food, of course, So I really ate, more or less, what they put in front of me. They guessed what I'd eat. But anyway, I was there as a guest too, and the Communist Party clique invited me to special sort of comradely evening parties, where they sort of ate fully roasted animals, I should say complete animals roasted, and ate them with their hands. This was considered to

be the right thing or comrades to do. And it looked like a dog we were eating. I don't know what it was, anyway, very much that size, anyway, about the size of dog, anyway. And, well, it was an interesting experience. But the awful thing was that they never managed to get ready to do the work. So I had to keep going back, backwards and forwards, back to England, back there. Eventually, it snowed, and it got so cold that the poor stonemasons were obliged to build a little wooden fire out of bits of wood they found around, on the ground, they built the little fire on the ground, and put their implements into it, to warm them up, so they didn't actually freeze to them. And after a while, I really decided that it was quite impossible to go on like this, so I came home. But I believe, I was told by somebody who went there later, a few years later, that they, in act, exhibited this dreadful, half-finished thing, there in this park. Very sad, it was, really. A sad park, altogether. Those were the days. Also, I remember, I used to know the Yugoslav Ambassador in London, who was a splendid chap, he'd been one of the original partisans, and he took me out to dinner in a, in a restaurant in London, and he said, "You know, after all my years in prison, I feel rather like this mediaeval type of life". I remember that, because he was rather a nice chap, really. I don't know what happened to him, because I didn't sort of hear much about him after that.

And did that little time of working with marble, presumably it didn't make you want to work with marble, because otherwise you would have gone ...

No, I wasn't doing the marble anyway, someone else was doing it. I don't think ... no, I'm not a carver. I'm a, I'm a ... adder. O construct, I don't think I could ever visualise a shape, as they say they do, they can visualise something inside the marble. I don't believe they can. But anyway, that's the idea. After all, it is a question of eroding something. You have a block and you erode it, so that you get something a bit smaller, inside it. But I construct out of, out of, shall we say, in my case, metal rods, to make a structure, and from there, the structure is then the bones, a skeleton of what I'm going to make.

And if the marble one in Yugoslavia had been finished, what would it have looked like?

Dreadful, I think! Oh, if it had been finished? Oh, it could have been all right, actually, if it had been finished, if I'd been able to stay there and have it finished properly, I could have adjusted it so that it did look all right.

What would it have been like? Was it abstract? What was it?

Oh no, no, it was a couple of, a couple of people sort of walking, but modified from my normal style, so that it didn't have legs, because I couldn't have marble legs.

Because marble wouldn't support it?

Well, I wasn't experienced enough to know how to do that. Anyway, most marble sculptures with legs and so on, usually have some sort of subterfuge of supporting the body with a tree trunk, or something like that.

And would it have been polished marble, or matt? Or what was it?

Well, I don't know what ... yes, it would have been fairly smooth, yes.

And did it get far enough along for you to sort of have an idea of what difference it made it being marble?

No. It didn't really interest me, because I didn't ever intend to continue that technique myself. It would have been impossible for me, anyway.

When we were talking last time, you were talking about the transition between making the mobiles and going into solid sculpture. What do you remember about that period?

Well, it, it was definitely in my formative period, I mean, I was just working things out for myself, so I was just going from one thing to the other, rather like, shall we say, my son is at the moment. He's going from one thing to another. Search, the search, I think.

But were you conscious that you were moving towards something solid? Was it in the back of your mind, or it just came out subconsciously, almost?

I see. I think that the idea in my mind was to go from the structure, the pure bones of things, to get into something with a skin, and become a solid thing. That was definitely in my mind, yes, because I felt that sculpture was, really, a solid thing, volume, not just a skeleton, not transparent that you could see through, But, I mean, It's just a question of, of ... of preferring one technique to another, or another expression, because, after all, it doesn't really matter what it is, so long as you do it the way you want to do it.

But it was something that came out of working, rather than seeing other sculptures, or deciding you wanted to be a sculptor?

Oh no. No, no. It was entirely to ,entirely to satisfy my own needs, as it were.

And in 1954, I think, you'd begun to have things cast in bronze.

Well, that originally was because the things that I was making, which I had originally thought would be permanent in themselves, were, in fact, not permanent, they were fragile, and so

casting in bronze was a solution to making them more permanent, as bronze is a fairly permanent metal.

And did that affect the way you worked, in any way?

No, no, no. No. No, because they can cast something in bronze, almost anything, if they want to. Almost anything. There are sort of slight limitations, but, I mean, generally speaking, a bronze caster can usually find a way of reproducing almost anything.

And can you remember, when you first saw your first sculpture, once it was cast, did it look as you'd expected it to look? Was it a shock in any way?

I can't really remember that experience. It, apart from the colour, yes, it seemed all right.

Had you got someone you went to talk to, about where to go to have it cast? I mean, how do you make that jump?

Well, no, that was fairly simple, because I, I knew that there was a bronze foundry fairly near where I was living, in the cottage where I was living, and I knew that they had, actually, cast things even for Henry Moore, you see. So I knew that there was one with experience near me, so I went there, and they were very helpful.

And from then on, has everything been cast in bronze, apart from the ones that are steel?

It's normal to have things cast in bronze, yes.

And that, presumably, means you begin to do things in editions, does it?

I work in exactly the same way, I haven't changed my technique at all, it's just that they reproduce them in bronze, because if they didn't, they would rust away.

But it means that instead of just having one object, you can have a series of the same piece?

Well, yes, that is another aspect of it.

And do you tend to have the same edition size for each piece, or does it vary?

No. I think, perhaps, that the larger they are, the fewer there would be, and sometimes a very small thing, you might have quite a lot.

And did that, at any stage, because you had more than one of the same piece, did that lead you into doing little groups at all, or did the groups come out ...

No. No, no, that was nothing to do with it, no. After all, if you have an edition of, say, four, to say there are four of those, that thing, in the world, isn't over-populating at all. Even if you have 12, if 12 different places have them, you would hardly notice.

But the structure called the "Inner Eye", which uses glass as well, how did that happen? How did that come about?

Well, there are two things here. First of all, the "Inner Eye" is a structure. It was a structure, then it had ribs and bones, and it also ... one side of it was shaped ... surface, so that I was, in fact, perhaps consciously, going towards solid sculpture by indicating the surface of a solid, and at the same time, showing the ribs of a structure, that. The eye, the glass, the glass was a

different matter altogether. I had had a dream of making a mobile with pieces of glass, when I say glass, it's sort of crystal, it's the residue in the bottom of a crucible when they're, when they're making glass, and they break, they break this thing, which they call "cullet" into bits, and I was, I was able to get a few lumps of this crystal. That's how it, that's how it happened, anyway. And so this dream, I had this ... it was a fish, and inside this fish, were all these pieces of crystal.

Where had you come across the crystal in the first place?

I, I don't know how I heard about this thing called cullet. I don't know, but I mean, I heard about it, and I, I went to the factory, or whatever it was called, that made it, and they gave me some.

One of the reasons that it's got tension is because it, the piece is sort of gripped by rods, but it's almost free, but there's that sense of it.

Well, originally, it used to turn round, rather like a, like gimbals, it used to turn round. Originally. But when it was in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, it got damaged, because people turned it round too quickly, and so they were obliged to make it unlovable.

So, in a way, it's still slightly linked back to the days of the sculptures with moving parts?

Oh, it was, yes. Yes, it was, like this thing here, you see. The same, the same idiom.

But that doesn't move, does it>

That that moves, the middle bit does. So does that thing behind you.

Those are the ones you were talking about, the one behind us being balanced ...

I was, perhaps, experimenting with various ways of having movement in sculpture, but only just to amuse myself. It's not a basic thing with me.

And do you ever do that now? Is it a practice you're still keeping?

No. No. I don't. No, I, I sometimes think of ways of making sculptures that move, and I think, "Why? What's the point?" You see, I'm not really interested in doing the actual result. It isn't all that important to me. I think that the static thing is, perhaps, more important, because you can give movement in a static thing, and that's more, more important to me.

And when you say that, do you mean, for instance, where the "Three Elektras" out there, that there's movement in the sense that their, their gait is different, one from another. Or do you mean it more literally, as in the ones where the girl's hair is blowing?

I don't think much about these things, you see, I just do it, so that I try to get what I consider movement or vitality in it, by indicating movement.

And when you did the course at British Oxygen to learn how to weld, how did that affect your working practice? Presumably, it opened up ...

Well, no, only so that I wouldn't weld too badly. I mean, I'm not a great welder anyway. But anyway, I thought I'd better learn how to do it properly, rather than fuddle about on my own, that's all I was doing that for. Also, to learn the various techniques of doing iron, mild steel,

and non-ferrous metals, I, I found it very difficult to weld bronze, or copper, or anything lie that.

It was also the point when you were making very large pieces for the Festival ... I mean, there's ...

Well, I made, I made a large sort of thing out of sheet metal, it is, that I did, I did do. But that wasn't ... it was welding inasmuch as it was .. brazing, really, and beating the metal. It was just my way of making something with my hands, in my own hands, as it were, but big enough to show in a place like that.

And then when you came to do the sculpture for the Unknown Political Prisoner, that's quite a jump, isn't it, the solidity and the grouping of it.

Well, that, that was ... shall we say, a turning point, because I decided that I didn't want to do just mere structures anymore, I wanted to do something more solid and so I thought this would be an excuse to do something more solid.

And, at the time, were you quite confident about it? Did it seem to be expressing what you wanted to express?

Not really, because I wouldn't normally have chosen a theme like that.

And how did the theme alter what you were doing, then?

Well, no, I still managed to produce my three-dimensional figures, I still managed to do that, and the ideology behind it. Perhaps I didn't answer that question very well, a bit, but it was considered, by some people, to e a bit banal.

But it was also one of the first times where you'd got a group of shapes, isn't it, as opposed to a single structure.

Yes. Mmm.

How did that come about? Was it something that was in your mind right at the beginning?

No, I never have very much in my mind, especially at the beginning, I just sort of let it develop. I probably had the vague idea what I was going to do. I let things develop as I'm working. I always sort of think, I weld something together, you know, and I go on from one thing to the other.

And when you've been working all day, presumably you're concentrating very hard, and it's developing ...

But I', concentrating on the actual physical thing of working, yes. That's what I'm concentrating on.

And if you've done that all day, and you then stop working, and have the evening to go to sleep, are you still mentally working on it, or do you drop it?

I don't think I had any trouble about just either working or not working. I don't think I had any difficulty with a bridge between the two.

But in a sense, you're saying that the pieces grow out of doing the work. I just wondered, when you go back to them the next day, whether anything has changed in your mind about them, or whether you go back and it is actually from physically being with it that it changes again?

No. I, no, no, it's a gradual process, it's a continuous process with me, rather. Continuous, mmm.

And what difference did it make to you? You did very well in the Unknown Political Prisoner competition, what difference did it make to you?

Well, it, it sort of ... I didn't do all that well in it, by the way, I was only one of the many people who were mentioned, that's all, but it gave me confidence, because I was then sort of referred to as a sculptor. Up to that point, well, I had been making mobiles.

And this phrase of Herbert Read's, "The Geometry of Fear", it rather worries me because it's such a potent phrase, but it seems to me it's got more to do with the times than with your sculpture, particularly.

Well, I, I don't know. I think that Herbert Read had been .. involved with my work in the beginning, inasmuch as he was what they call a commissario, what a commissario was ... in the Venice Biennale for Britain. And so he'd, he'd been involved, up to a point, and so that ... he was, he was invited to write a little booklet, a little preface in a booklet about me. And so in order to get to know a bit about me, he asked me to lunch in his Club in London, and he asked me a few questions, and so he understood a bit about it. But his experience of seeing my work, up to that point, was more or less what he had seen in the Venice Biennale, which

did include quite a lot of my early work, which, I suppose, could have been interpreted as being a little bit ... aggressive. I don't know. It wasn't aggressive to me, but Herbert Read did think it was aggressive. And so, because I also, perhaps, ... I don't know quite what it was about it, he could see a geometry as well, and I think that's why he called it "the geometry of fear" because, of the other people working in those days, that there was no geometry in their work at all. So it must have been something to do with what he thought was in my work. I do tend to work in triangles, that's true. And I daresay that some of my early work did look aggressive ... to him, anyway. He was a very gentle person.

And did you find mostly his response to it was perceptive?

Receptive?

Perceptive. Did you think that what he wrote was helpful?

I don't think that ... no, I don't think he really perceived very much in my work, except "the geometry of fear", but, I mean, I don't know. I don't think it was really his field at all. I mean, he was a poet, and he was interested in certain ... avant garde painting and sculpture. I really don't know his history either.

Was his support helpful in other ways? I mean, did it make people look in a different way? Did it help, do you think?

No, it's just a, it's just a confusion, because, I mean, he said that, "geometry of feat", so that's repeated time and time again, by everybody else who writes. They're like a lot of parrots. They don't even look at the work. They, they ... all they know is that Herbert Read said, "geometry of fear", and that's enough.

And do people apply it to your work now?

Oh, I don't know what they'd say nowadays. You see, it's a bit complicated this, because it was ... what, ten years, or 15 years after the War, and people like to think in terms of, and of how one had been affected by the War. Well, I don't know. I've always done what I can within my own ability. I never thought about external influences.

But do you think, in a way, it's unhelpful that he said it? I mean, is it ...

No. It doesn't really matter. It doesn't matter. I think that he said it, and that's very good, it's very good to say something that everyone knows about, like that, to be known for such a thing. I wish I could be known for saying something, but then that's not my business, is it!

Do you think that it put a label on you, in a sense, that people wanted you to stay being this person who expressed what Herbert Read said is "the geometry of fear"?

I don't know. I have my own reasons for thinking that the "fear" actually, if we're talking about fear, Herbert Read had a certain amount of fear, inasmuch as he was very very shy, this I know, so it could be that he had that sort of fear, like, shall we say ... Thurber indicates a fear in his drawings too, but he may not have been frightened at all, as a man.

And did you carry on seeing Herbert Read, apart from this lunch, did you see him quite a lot?

No, no, no. No, no, I didn't see him anymore after that. That's the only time I saw him, apart from, you know, meeting him at meetings, at exhibitions.

And over the lunch, was he asking you about your work?

I can't remember what sort of questions he did ask me. I know I had the impression after this luncheon with him, I had the impression that he hadn't asked me anything very pertinent. That's the impression I got, yes. But then I wouldn't have been able to answer him, anyway, because I don't really ever think about my work in an analytical way.

And somebody else who wrote about your work, I was interested in, was Stephen Spender. Did you feel he ...

Well, there again, you see, he wouldn't know anything about my work. I don't know quite why. I think that was because my ... my dealer in Paris had heard of the name Stephen Spender, he asked him to do an introduction to something. I mean, I, I had met Stephen Spender, that's true, but, I mean, I , I had met Stephen Spender, that's true, but, I mean, we weren't connected in any way. I wasn't part of his group, as it were.

Do you rather dread people writing about it?

Probably, yes, yes, because it's very difficult ... you see, a person writes with his own impression in mind, and that's what he wants to say, and so that's, that's fair, isn't it. He should only say what he feels. But he shouldn't ever say what, he shouldn't ever report what I tell him.

But I suppose it's different if they're writing it in a newspaper, then it's, in a sense, nothing to do with you, but if they're writing in a catalogue, you're linked with it, aren't you, you appear to be endorsing it.

Yes, but I can't tell them what to write. They still have to write what they want to write.

Yes, but, perhaps, in a way, if you just had a catalogue with no preface, you'd be freer?

This depends. Most people, especially French people, say that the , the photographs of the work, and what the artist says, is unimportant. What the important thing is, to have plenty of writing about it. They've told me this. "You've got to have plenty of writing." "Books about your work are more important than the work". They've told me that, much to my surprise. So there is a tendency for people to be very interested in, in what people say -the intellectual side of the work, in fact.

End of F4560 Side A

F4560 Side B

The comment that writing about your work matters more than the work, is deeply depressing, isn't it?

It, it was a bit of a shock to find that people really were not particularly interested in my work, unless they, shall we say, they had bought it, or something like that, you see, then it was possession, that's a different matter. But I'm very gratified if, if anyone at all notices anything in my work, which ... gives them an emotion.

And it's become rather unfashionable in writing about art, to talk about emotion, hasn't it.

Your.... you see, the emphasis, nowadays, is to, to the intellect, and this is to say the conscious mind is winning, nowadays. The subconscious mind is in the sort of descendant, really, but it's still there, and it's still a thing that produces everything. However, the intellectual people tend not to have any sensual aspect, and any feeling for work, but they want to know the historical order of the work, they want to know all these things which could be considered intellectual aspects of it. And this is really what they're after, they're not after the emotional side at all.

But do you feel that you've almost learnt to shield yourself from somebody's reaction to the work?

Yes. Yes. I think you have to, otherwise you'd go mad.

And do you feel that people running the galleries understand all that, that they have a feeling for it?

People who run the galleries understand if the work sells. They are only interested in the value, as a commodity of art. It's logical, isn't it. The fact that someone may be considered to be a good artist, only has a significance if they are selling it. And, by the way, of course, people who are considered good artists, considered, that is to say, by the public, are usually people who are selling well, anyway, because they get more publicity.

So it's a sort of vicious circle.

Yes. No, there's no, there's no easy way out of this problem. I think that we just have to wait and see.

And do you think England is particularly bad, or do you think it's the same everywhere else?

I don't know that it's really national, in that respect. I think, at the moment, in England, certain ... writers on the subject of art, happen to me more intellectually-minded, that's true. But then, there again, in France, too, and I don't know about Germany or Italy, but there is a tendency, after all they are writers, and it is more of an intellectual thing than a, a sensual thing.

Is there some sort of industry that is going along in parallel, rather than something that is really related to the piece?

You see, look .. you know very well that in music you can have something which is harmonious and so on, which would be decried by the intellectuals, on the grounds that it's too soft and melodious. But, generally speaking, in spite of the fact that people will say, "Oh yes, I know", they'll dismiss it. Yet they still like to listen to it. People still like to listen to

old Viennese waltzes and so on, in spite of the fact that they may condemn it on intellectual grounds.

So where do you feel your work reaches the people you want it to reach? What are the sort of routes you can take?

I'm not really trying to, I'm only trying to say something in my own way, and, if people like it, I'm very gratified, but I'm not trying to make them like it. I can't make anyone like it.

But if you had been being a sculptor since 1947, and no one had ever responded to the work, it would have made a difference, wouldn't it.

Yes. I think that you, you have to ... be fed a little bit of nourishment on the way, yes. I mean, it's, it's like plants in that respect.

And do you feel that, generally, you did have enough nourishment, or not?

I had, I had ... perhaps a gratifying amount of attention, to me. After all, coming out of nothing, to be accepted as readily as I was in the beginning, it couldn't, I couldn't have had it better. Yes, of course, one is accepted, and then put on the shelf again, very soon. That's fair enough. I remember Max Ernst and his wife, it was actually in Venice, yes, I remember them saying to me, "Oh yes, you're having success now, but it won't last". I remember them saying that, because that's how it is. You go in phases. You're, you're pushed, you're Number One, and the you're dropped. It's like that.

And when he said that to you, did you believe him? Were you expecting it to happen like that?

No, because one always, I mean, you don't ever think, when you've had a little bit of success, that's ever going to stop, like the boom, everyone thought the boom was going to last forever, they didn't ever think of the recession, at the time.

So when you started to get a little bit less attention, were you very depressed?

No, not really. No, not really. Just carried on doing a bit of work.

And what was Max Ernst like? I didn't realise you'd met him.

He was a nice, a very nice quiet chap, I thought.

And so he was giving you that piece of advice to be helpful, he wasn't trying to put you down in any way?

Oh no, not put, no, no, no. Trying to be helpful, yes.

What was his wife like?

I, I can't really remember. I think she was younger than he was. I can't remember. I'm getting wives a bit mixed up, you see. There were all kinds of people who had wives. And, I mean, I was supposed to be meeting that person, not the wife.

And actually, it reminds me, when we were driving once, you told me a wonderful story about Giacometti, and meeting his wife.

Annette. Yes, Annette. She kept the place tidy. She kept her room tidy, because he liked to make a mess, and so his room was terribly messy. But Annette ... yeah, I didn't know them very well.

But there was a story you told me about spending the evening with them and another person, and then he, Giacometti went off on some mysterious assignment on his own, and didn't get home with his wife. I can't remember quite what the context was.

Well, I had been coming from Switzerland to Paris, because I ... there was a, a gallery in Switzerland that was dealing with my work at that time, and I'd been there, and I was coming back, through Paris, and I arrived in Paris in the evening, and I went to the various sort of cheap hotels which I knew, and they were all full up, and I couldn't find anywhere to sleep that night. And so I thought, "Well, I have to stay in my car all night, and just sleep". So I thought, "Right, well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go to the, the restaurant called 'Lippe' in the St. Germain, I'll go there, because it's, what, eight or nine, Giacometti will be having his breakfast now, so I'll go there and have a coffee with him". So, what I did was, I went to dinner, and Giacometti was there, and so after dinner, I went to him and said, "Hallo", and he said, "Hallo". He said, "Sit down". And he said after a while, "Let's go to a bar". "Well", I thought, "That's better than sitting in a car all night!" So we went to a bar, a rather curious bar, and he had a Japanese chap with him, luckily, because he was talking a bit of philosophy with this Japanese chap, and I was left alone, really. Annette was there too, but somehow or other, I can't remember her in this bar, but anyway, Annette was certainly there. And, after a while, they called another girl over to the table, so I was talking to this girl, I found that her conversation was a bit limited, and, and it went on until, I think, five in the morning, this ... it suited me, because I had nowhere to sleep. At about half past five in the morning, or six o'clock in the morning, we got up to go, and I, I said, "Well, I'll give you a lift home if you like", because I was in my, in my Jeep. "I'll give you a lift home". Giacometti said, "I'm not

going home". So he, he, he and this other girl, who'd been invited to the table, went off in one direction, and the Japanese and his wife, Annette, went off in another direction, and left me alone there. That was the story.

Had you known them before?

I'd met him from time to time, I think. I'd been to his studio. I was invited by somebody in the British Council to go over and see him. They did that sort of thing. I must say, I don't like that sort of thing of going to see an artist in his studio, I think that's rather ... it's not quite the right thing to do, not unless you ... unless you are invited by the artist to come to his studio.

And what did you feel about the work?

His work? Oh ... I think that he ... has a great intensity in his work, which is very amusing, but it's not sculptural. His early work was more sculptural, when he was influenced by Brancusi, and that, the plasters of that are in the museum in Zurich, in a, in the Kunsthalle, I think, in, in Zurich. And it's very interesting to see his early work, sculptural work, but the later one is not really a sculpture, because it's almost a negation of sculpture, but with great intensity of expression.

And did you carry on being in touch with him, or was that really ...

No. No, no. No, no, we had no reason to be in touch, because I was not interesting to him, being a non-intellectual, I was no, I was of no interest to Giacometti.

Did he ask about your work at all?

No, no, no.

And since Brancusi has cropped up, I was going to ask you about him, because I read a quote of yours on my way, that you seemed to be saying that he was one of the few artists you felt who was able to say something worth saying, in an abstract way.

Who?

Brancusi.

I don't know very much about Brancusi's work, I've seen it in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where it's very well displayed, and I've seen photographs of it. But I don't really know enough about it. It's, it's really exquisite work, that's what it is.

But you seemed to be saying in this piece I read, that he was almost the only abstract sculptor who you felt really had something to express. Is that ...

No, I don't thing that's entirely true. Abstract sculpture, mmm ... it's difficult, this one, because in a way, all sculpture is abstract to me, you see, it's just a shape. But, of course, it does also indicate an emotional thing as well. So it's a bit confusing in that respect.

What, and this is jumping miles, but, I mean, what triggered you to do those pyramid pieces, and the completely abstract groups that you had a phase of doing?

I did actually ... to simplify things, I did make some actual pyramids, and had an exhibition of actual pyramids, but that was only just an exercise, really, because as I work in straight lines,

and make triangles, and I can join up triangles and make a pyramid, it was like that, so, so this all comes from the days of structures in architecture, structures, you see. If you look at a crane, you'll see that it's made out of triangles forming sort of three or four-sided pyramids, no, no four-sided pyramids, no. Mmm.

And do you know why that shape is exciting to you?

No, it doesn't excite me, it's not that. It's just, in my own way, intellectual concept, yes.

And that's really always been there in your work, hasn't it.

Well, not necessarily. I think you'll find that in some of my earlier work, there's no triangles. I can't remember.

And can you tell me a little bit about how the "Teddy Boy" and "Teddy Girl" work began to emerge? But you gave them that title afterwards, didn't you?

No. No. Well, there again, it's two shapes, well, one a rectangular shape, and one is a triangular shape. Two shapes opposed, because I was doing male and female, and then shapes opposing each other. All my early thing was that - balancing two different things. That's what the Teddy Boy and Girl were. I gave the name afterwards, yes.

But it's also, I mean, It's also about the placing of them in relation to one another, that friction and energy that happens, by putting two forms together.

Yes, I think that's intentional, yes.

I mean, was there ever a “Teddy Boy” or a Teddy Boy form by itself, and then you formed another one, so that you had two?

No. It’s better, I find, to have two, getting a bit of interaction. Single things can be successful too, like these Greek carvings, “Kore”. That’s very satisfactory to. But I, I’ve always wanted to make a sort of tension between two things, yes. Tension, I suppose, yes. It doesn’t have to be tension, it can be an amicable thing.

But also, I was interested that nearly always the male and female, I don’t think I’ve ever seen two things you did that were two males, for instance.

No, I wouldn’t do that. I wouldn’t do two men, no.

Why not?

I don’t know. I don’t know why. I mean, I was, I’ve got a male figure up there, and it was meant to be part of a pair, male and female, but I can’t find a woman to go with him. So I don’t know, I thought, “Well, I’ll make another male”, but then it doesn’t appeal to me, that.

So when you say you can’t find a woman to go with him, you don’t, when you’re beginning, you don’t have a picture of what that woman would be, anyway?

No, I ... in order to do that, I would have to have a picture of her, and I don’t like the idea.

So, in the figures, for example, that are seated outside, the couples, does one figure always come first, and then the other comes from it?

Oh well, no, I do have a sort of attitude towards how I make a male figure and how I make a female figure, and I just sort of make them so that they sort of physically fit together.

So what's the problem with the one that you're talking about? Why is it so different?

It's, it's not right, in the beginning. It's had a bad life, that one.

In what way?

Well, it was originally intended for an exhibition in New York, and it didn't arrive in time, so it wasn't shown. And it has never really been shown. It's, it's got a sort of ... a funny thing on it. It's unsuccessful.

And why wasn't it ready in time?

There was a strike in the docks.

So it was nothing to do with you having a problem with it?

Oh no, no.

Have you had times when you've been blocked, when you haven't been able to work?

No, no.

Never ever ever?

Recently, I've had a bad leg, and so I haven't wanted to do any work, but otherwise ... only for reasons like that.

So really, since the forties, you've been able to work all day, every day?

Continuously. Well, yes, I suppose, but I did actually have holidays, so I can't quite ... but I used to work every day, yes.

And what was the pattern? Did you get up early, and start work early?

Yes, I did, because I, I prefer to start early in the morning, and, and not work at night.

And that was always the same?

Daylight, you see.

And we talked about the first place that you came to live in Gloucestershire, when you left Cheyne Row, you then moved to another place, is that right?

The first place I moved to, was a place called Fisher's Cottage, yes. And that was a very small proper farm labourer's cottage. There were two together, two cottages together, and I stayed there for a year. And I did actually start making mobiles there. Yes, I started to make my mobiles there, in the beginning, and ... ... it's a long time ago that, yes. But them, I was there for a year, and then I moved to this other cottage, which was more remote, and it had no road to it, and that was a marvellous place.

And at this time, Simon was a little boy?

Yes. He was born during the War, yes.

And when he grew up, when he was sort of six, or ten, or something, where did he go to school?

He went to the village school in the nearest village, yes, he went to the village school. And then eventually, we managed to get him into a prep school.

And where was that?

Nearby.

And then what happened to him? Did he go off to university? What did he do?

Well, he went off to another school. He went off to a big school. And then, after that, he, he went off to a place called Corsham, Corsham, it was the Bath Academy of Art. He was there for a few years.

Were you involved there at all?

No.

Kenneth Armitage was teaching there, wasn't he.

Yes.

And how did Simon get on?

I don't know. I don't know whether he got on or not. I don't know. I never know. I had no come-back on that one at all.

Had he been very interested in your work as he was growing up?

I don't think so.

And were you glad or dismayed when he started ... wanted to go to art school?

Oh, yes, I was, I was .. I'm always, I'm all for encouraging people to do what they want to do.

Had you been quite close to him, as he was growing up, or not?

No, not really. No, I hadn't been close to Simon at all, no. He's a very difficult person to be close to, really. For me, anyway. I think his mother also found it difficult. But then I suppose it's because she was the sort of person she is, and I'm the person that I am, and we were both busy doing our own thing.

When we talked about her last, you said she wanted to write novels. Did she actually write them?

She wrote two novels, yes, but they were never published.

And does she still write?

No. No.

And what did Simon do after Corsham?

He got a teaching job, because he'd been on a teaching course. He, originally, was on a, the ordinary Diploma Course, and he changed to the other course, because of the woman he was going to marry. She was a great person for education. So he changed. But then, when he was getting a job in an art school, he was quite unsuited to teaching art, I think he went to an ordinary school to teach, well, of course, that was a crazy place for him to go, because he, I don't think he was much good at keeping order or anything. And he eventually, started making musical instruments, and that was much more in his line. He was a very good craftsman.

And is that what he does now?

No, because if ... he was making ... lutes, and it took him some time to find out that nobody used lutes any more, because you can't ... I mean, first of all, you make money if you're a musician, out of playing guitar, you see, so that these people who played a guitar ... they have to have their fingernails cut in a certain way to play a guitar. If they play the lute, they have to do something completely different with their fingernails, and so the lute became unfashionable. So he was making these beautiful lutes, but no one could buy them. So he then, I don't know what he did after that.

And what does he do now?

He's making sort of sculptural models.

As pieces in their own right? Or for somebody?

No. He's, he's making them, as it were, to teach himself to be a sculptor, I think. That's the only way I can look at it.

And he lives in Lypiatt Park?

No, no, no. He has his own house.

But nearby?

Yes.

And does he work here?

Yes. He does. He does. Yes, he has how own place to work here.

On your property?

Yes.

So, in a way, although you're not close to him, there must be some quite strong link, otherwise he'd live in some other place.

Ah, that ... yes, I think that he feels it necessary to be near, I think, although he's never looked upon this place as his home anyway. No, I don't think so. No, he's never lived here properly, because he was either at school, or art school, or ... he got married.

But do you like to have him nearby? What does it mean to you?

Oh dear. It is not a problem

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But do you like to have him nearby? What does it mean to you?

Oh dear. It is not a problem for me, this one. I mean, if any of the children comes here, I'm very grateful, gratified. But, I mean, it doesn't mean anything to me. I mean, it's nice having them, that's all. I'm not a, what they call a "family man".

Why do you think that is?

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know why people are.

And do all your children get on with one another? Do they think of themselves as ...

Children never get on with one another, actually, in fact, but they tolerate each other. And when they're very little, they learn to ... exist amongst themselves, as a, as a family, they do, but they always squabble, don't forget. And as they get older, they get jealous of each other.

A family unit doesn't really exist, apart from the days when, shall we say, a farmer had sons and they worked on the land, and the daughters worked in the dairy, that sort of thing. That worked. And that was the family closely-knit unit, but that doesn't exist any more, anyway.

And ...

End of F4560 Side B

F4561 Side A

What were you reading on the train when you went up to see your healer, the other day?

Now, that's a good question. My memory's not perfect. Let me see, reading on the way up? Oh, I think I was reading this anthology of ... of people writing about gardens.

When you were asked to represent Britain in the 1956 Biennale, were you, I mean, it's quite a responsibility, isn't it. It must have been very exciting, but rather alarming.

Well, it wasn't a responsibility hardly for me, it was more, more for the British Council who were proposing it. They had to take the responsibility for actually showing me, and they did it very well.

And were you showing pieces you'd already made, or did you make pieces for it?

Oh no, no. No, no, it was more or less things ... they had to be available pieces for them to choose, because always, if there's anything to do with an exhibition, they want to photograph first.

And how were they all laid out in Venice? Were you in charge of how they were placed?

No, I didn't do anything about that at all, because the person who was in charge of the British Council Fine Arts Department, in those days, was a woman, and she organised everything, and she did it very well.

So did you not go out to Venice, until it was all set up? What was your involvement?

Well, I think that I may have arrived a day before, or so. But it was already done, yes. I mean, I'd had nothing to do with the arrangement.

And what does it feel like, to have your work there?

Well, you see, it was a new experience for me, to be shown in an international setting, after all, I'd only had the exhibition in London, before, in a gallery. But this was quite a different thing, because there, each country has, or most countries, have their own pavilion there, for showing their own artists' work, and so it was quite an experience to be there, meeting artists from other countries. And I got to know people there. But also, I met people I knew before.

Did you see any work there that you particularly liked? Anybody's work that you hadn't seen before?

No, I didn't. It sounds rather mean, but I think I didn't have time to go round looking at other people's work then.

Why, because you were endlessly being ...

Well, I was busy ... well, I don't know what I was doing, now. I was either enjoying myself, or concerned, perhaps ... I wasn't actually arranging the exhibition myself, no, but taking an interest in it.

And how did you feel when you won?

Well, it was a most extraordinary sensation, because I couldn't believe it to start with. I, because I didn't think there was any chance of that sort of thing. I wasn't even expecting it, or hoping for it. I wasn't ... that sort of thing was out of my mind. I was just very gratified to be showing at all.

Of the pieces that were there, were some of them more your favourites, or did you feel equally happy with all of them?

Well, I never really have favourites in my work, but some of them, I think, well, they've been more successful than others. But, you see, it was more a question of their being ... where they were exhibited, they were very beautifully placed, in this building, which had windows, and the light was coming in through, and it was a wonderful feeling there.

And having won it, what happened? There was just a sort of ceremony, and everybody told you how wonderful you were, or what happened?

No, it wasn't like that. There was a ceremony in a way, I think a slight ceremony. I think the, the President came round and congratulated each artist in turn, I think something like that, but there was no ceremony, no.

And did you celebrate, yourself, in any way?

Not really. I think that I remember, I suppose we, we used to eat there, but ... the prize, of course, is announced a few days later. And I had been, I had gone for a picnic with some other sculptors and painters in the daytime, and when I came back, I went to eat in the restaurant where I always had eaten anyway, and I found the whole of the sort of British contingent, whatever you like to call it, there, waiting for me, to tell me this, this thing. And so it was a terrible shock to me, because I hadn't expected anything. So I, I had a good dinner and ... and that was that!

And were people, other people, jealous of you for winning it? Did you have any bad side to it?

I had no experience of people being jealous, but they were probably were, some people. Some people were. And a lot of people were rather surprised, put it that way, that I had won the prize.

And it wasn't like, I mean, I know when ... I've gone blank on his name, the architect of Coventry Cathedral, after he'd done that, he didn't get any work for ages, because everybody thought he was too grand. It didn't have that effect on you at all, where people thought they couldn't afford you, or ...

Oh, there might have been, yes. It could have been. No, I didn't really capitalise on my success very well, I must say, put it that way. Yes, I was trying to think of the name of the architect too, I can't.

It'll come back to us in a minute. And what about ... Louis le Brocquy wrote you a letter congratulating you.

Did he?

I read somewhere that he did. Does that not ring any bells?

I don't remember that.

Was he a friend?

He was in Venice about that time, I remember, because I remember sitting in St. Mark's Square with him, and looking at the pigeons, and he said, "Now, you can tell which is the most beautiful female pigeon, by the fact that she has no feathers on the back of her neck".

That's the only thing I do remember of seeing him in Venice. Otherwise I had once, oh, after, or before, I don't know which, I met him in the South of France, where I was sitting in a cafe, having a drink, and he, he passed in his car and stopped and talked to me. But I didn't know Louis le Brocquy very well, although he was in the same gallery as I was in London.

And actually, you told me, not on the tape, the story about the nationalities of people who came and congratulated you, after the prize-giving.

Well, it was interesting, in a way, inasmuch as it was the year of Suez, when Britain was rather unpopular, because of ... well, various things. And many people from countries, people who were representing their countries, inasmuch as they were on the jury, of the jury of Venice, which was a big jury, 40 different people, actually, were on this jury, so a lot of people came up to me, that I wouldn't have expected, people like the, the Indian representative, the Egyptian, and the Irish, all came and told me how much they liked the show, which was very edifying, really.

And did England make much of a fuss of you when you got back?

No. On the contrary, really, because this exhibition, after Venice, had toured, toured round Europe, in various national galleries and museums, and had been well-received everywhere. But when it came back to England, or it was England's turn, it was proposed, or suggested, that it should go to an exhibition in the Tate, and it was not accepted as an exhibition there.

Who was the Head of the Tate at the time?

I think that was still in Rothenstein's time, I think so. But that wasn't the ... I don't think it was anything to do with him, because the, the Trustees of the Tate can overrule the Director, anyway, or in those days, they could.

Did he show any interest in your work? Did you know him?

Rothenstein?

Yes.

I don't think, no, not particularly. I mean, I don't think so, no. I mean, he just did his job as the Director of the Tate. I don't think he showed any specific interest in my, in my work.

So how long was it before you had any interest from the Tate?

Tate? I can't say that I have had any interest in the Tate, except as a small child, being taken there on Sundays.

No, I mean, how long was it until the Tate showed any interest in you?

I don't think they ever have done. I don't think, I don't think they've ever had occasion to.

Well, they own some of your work, didn't they.

I think that they have acquired certain work, but gifts from the Friends of the Tate, I think, gifts from other things. They may have bought something, I don't know. But I don't know, I don't think so.

So what do you feel about them? Do you feel ...

Well, I think that, you know, each Director of the Tate does what he thinks is right, from his point of view. It's like that.

And do you ever feel hurt by it?

No. Because ... I may have been a bit surprised at first, but then I realised that it is like that, you can't really interfere with other people's opinions, and so that's that. That's all right.

But do you take from it that they don't like your work, or that they simply hadn't thought about it?

No, I don't think it's anything to do with my work, no, it's nothing to do with that. But I think that ... I could be ... put into the category of an artist of the fifties, and what they like is artists of now, or people they think are now. This is what I think they prefer, because, after all, any museum like the Tate, they have to make as much money as they can to pay for the running, expenses of the gallery, and, you see, the permanent collection which is open to the public, free, doesn't make any money, so they can only make money out of exhibitions which they put on from time to time, and so they charge admission for these. Now, this is a very important thing for them, because then they have to think, "Now, how many people can we get into the exhibition? Is it worth having?" So the only experience I have of this is in America, where if one director of a museum is approached, he will have to find out where

else the exhibition has been, and what the attendance figures were, and so on, before he will agree to have it. It's a question of how much money will the travelling exhibition make in America. Well, now, I think there is a tendency, perhaps, to think, not perhaps in such financial terms in England, but there is the thing, "Will it cause a stir?" "Will it be talked about?" "Is it worth having?" Because the Director only thinks about whether it's going to be well-received or not, in the press, the press, I mean the art press.

What about them buying a piece? What about, I mean, the fact that they haven't been adding Lynn Chadwick to their store of holdings?

Oh, I don't know. That is not something I could ever express an opinion about, I mean, I just leave it to their judgement, really.

But why should you be thought of as a sculptor of the fifties? You've been working and producing new work, progressing, ever since.

Well, I know, but it's, as I say, they've put me in a category of an artist of the fifties, and they're interested in the artists of the nineties.

So are you cross, if that's what they've done?

No. No. No.

And what about the Arts Council, how do they react to your ...

The Arts Council, basically, is for showing art, not necessarily English art, but showing art to the English public. This is how it used to be, anyway. The British Council is for showing British art abroad, that's the difference. But I think it may be a little bit confused now. Anyway, originally, it was like that. So that the Arts Council, although they gave me the exhibition in the end, in London, not the Tate Gallery, I had an exhibition in the Arts Council in London, and that was all right. A lot of people saw it.

But have you felt supported by the Arts Council, subsequently?

No. No, I haven't. This, the "Fisheater" was theirs, but it was too difficult for them to store, really, so I said, "All right, well, I'll have it back, and I'll give you a bronze cast, instead, of something else", which was more convenient for them.

And have they shown it?

What, the bronze? I don't know. They have a collection of work which they've acquired, and they've probably sent it round to various places. I don't know where it is.

Does it feel ironic, the way you say that they couldn't store the "Fisheater", so you gave them one that was easier to store, but, I mean, it's not meant to be stored, is it!

Ah! Well, all right, if it's sent on exhibition somewhere, it's even worse, because, for instance, the "Fisheater" was sent to an exhibition, or loaned to Southampton Museum, and the night watchman bumped into it at night time, and it knocked his hat off, and I think it actually damaged him, because you can see, it's a bit spiky. And so he lost his temper, and savaged it. (LAUGHS) So I had to repair it. And it was because I had to repair it so many times, because it's a very difficult thing for anyone else to do, the balance is a bit critical, and it was always coming back to me to be repaired, so in the end, that is why I said, "I'll have it, and you have the other thing".

And so what about the British Council, have they been helpful?

Well, I haven't been very much in contact with the British Council, at the moment. But they too, their job is to find new British artists now. They found me when I was new, and so now they have to find new people all the time. So there's no, shall we say, national organisation which would be supporting me now.

And have you found national organisations abroad more helpful?

No, I don't think that they ... they also have the same problem, they have to support their own people if possible. They ... they show foreign artists from time to time, like the Tate shows foreign artists from time to time, but they don't, the Tate doesn't take an interest in the foreign artist, apart from the exhibition.

So how do you survive, financially, without any of these structures giving you much help.

Well, I've always managed to sell my work through a dealer. A dealer is a person with a gallery, who gives you exhibitions there, and his job, really, is to act as the agent for selling your work.

And you found that the dealers have been consistently supportive?

I've always relied on them, but recently, the whole art market, for the last few years, has been dwindling, and so there is a change in it, which I can't quite explain, I mean, their way of working now is different, and they, they are probably selling work, but, but not necessarily of my period.

But your period is now, because you're still working now.

Yes. Yes, I know. But I think that, in a way, they have to find someone new, even they have to.

Is it you that's beginning to think of yourself as an artist of the fifties?

But no, I face the fact that I am. I am an artist of the fifties. I, I had all my aesthetic things set up in the fifties, or earlier, actually. I mean, all people have formulated their visual things, at a certain age, I suppose, up to about 40, 30/40, I think all people did, Henry Moore, anybody did that. And then you go on, and you develop the idea, and you refine the idea, and so on, but the basic thing is a thing of when you are at a still formative age.

So it's the age of the artist, you're not talking about the fifties as a period of historical time.

No, only for me. Only for me, mmm.

Right. And when you won the Venice prize, were there a lot of people collecting your work then? Did it have a knock on effect from that point of view, from the point of view of the exhibition?

It didn't make a lot of difference, in fact. No, I don't think it did. It, I suppose ... various dealers from all over the world did take an interest in my work, but not necessarily because of the Venice Biennale. I don't think so. Some of them may, it is true. Some of them may. Also, it's because I was showing internationally.

Did you begin to show internationally, because of winning the Unknown Political Prisoner?

No. No, no, no. I don't think that really had very much effect. No, that didn't, no, that didn't. No. No. It was through, I suppose, almost chance, that somebody that I had already met in England, I met in Venice, not at the time of the Biennale, but a few years later. And I, I found this person, and he was not running a, he was originally part of a music group,

actually, but he was living in Venice, and after that, he came to Oxford, and had a little exhibition there in, in some place which he'd rented, and at the time, he knew, he knew about me, and he gave me a show of my mobiles, and this was a very curious thing, because later, later, much later, he, he married a Danish woman, and went to live in Copenhagen, and had a gallery there, and was a very great enthusiast of my work, so he showed my work.

What was his name?

Kaner, Sam Kaner. And I think that he had contacts with people from all over the place, too, and that spread my reputation a bit. There were also dealers in Paris who dealt with my work, so you get a sort of international reputation, which is the important thing, really, for anybody, because the, the home market, as it were, is always very limited.

But you went in an incredibly short time, from having almost no money at all, to doing terribly well, really, didn't you.

No. It wasn't like that, quite. The only time I had any money was during the boom period when everyone was buying art, that, that's only just a few years ago. But in those days, of my success, as it were, if you like to put it that way, I wasn't making any money at all. Very very little. No, I didn't have success like that.

Presumably you were making more money than you had been when you were, when you had the contracts for doing the fabrics and the furniture?

Oh yes. Oh yes. A bit more. A bit more. But, I mean, I bought this house when I had no money. But it didn't bother me, not having any money, but I just managed to survive somehow.

And since you've mentioned this house, perhaps you could say how you discovered it. How did you discover Lypiatt Park?

Well, I was living in this little remote cottage, and it was ... idyllic, really, and I was terribly happy there, but I couldn't get the telephone, and I was spending such a lot of energy, walking to the village two miles away, to telephone, and send telegrams and so on, and so it was very difficult. So I was looking round for some sort of farm building, that I could convert into a studio and a little house of some sort, but I couldn't find one. It was very odd, I just couldn't find one. And this was when, I suppose, a proper building like an old rectory would probably be about £3,000, that was about £3,000 for a building that needed to be brought up

to date a bit. So I was looking for something like that, not that I had £3,000 at all, but I thought, "Well, all right, we'll take a risk". So I looked for it, and I couldn't find it at all, and I found this, this place, which I could get for about that money. And so I said, "All right", and it was a question that the ... the deciding factor was to have all this volume for little money, because I knew that, even then, to build anything would cost too much. But this, I mean, this was value for money, you see. There was all this volume of space for very little money. Nobody wanted it. It was far too big for most people. They wouldn't want it now. Nobody would want this place. It's inconvenient, it's no good, it's not suitable for a business person coming, commuting to London, it's quite unsuitable. But it suits me though, because we live in a funny sort of way.

For the tape recorder, could you describe the house?

The house. Well, originally, it was a, shall we say, a glorified farm house. It was a sort of manor house, originally, once upon a time. And then it was converted into a sort of gentleman's dwelling, at the beginning of the 19th century, roundabout 1810, it was converted so that they could live in style, and so on, that was all right, and it gave nice big rooms. And the old Tudor part of the house was altered to a certain extent, yes. But the question was, if ... the fabric of the house was all right. What they had done to it, in the way of decorating, wasn't quite right for me, so I sort of altered that a bit.

What did it look like when you first came here?

It was very grey and dark inside, very ... the walls were all covered in very dark wallpaper, dark wallpaper. But it wasn't, that didn't bother me at all, because I could alter that, I knew I could alter that. That was all right. The main thing was that there was enough space for me.

How big is it?

I don't know. I don't know, really.

How many rooms are there?

Not many rooms. There are not many rooms, because a lot of the old servants bedrooms, shall we say, I've made into fewer rooms, I've taken the partitions down, because I don't need servants any more, or we don't have servants any more. But what I had to do, the big problem was that there was no proper bathrooms, so ... and even the water system had to be, the water system had to be sorted out a bit. Now, the thing is that I didn't have any money,

so all I could do was utilise what I could, because the man before me, had converted a small section of the house into an apartment for himself, so that he had water, and he had a sort of bathroom there, but it wasn't really suitable. The whole thing was unsuitable, but at least it was workable, and I could stay there until I could do something about the rest of it, which I did fairly soon after coming here. I started to make alterations suitable for me. And ... and I had to do it bit by bit, because I couldn't do it all at once, it would be too expensive. And I just did it every now and then, when I had a little bit of money, I put in a bathroom or two.

And did you put your bathroom in yourself, or you paid somebody to do it?

No, no, I didn't do any of the work myself like that. The only thing I ever did myself was to ... make holes through walls, and take down partitions and so on, like that, a bit, just to see, to make sure that it was possible to do that thing.

Did you design the bathrooms yourself?

Yes. Well, I like designing bathrooms.

Can you describe some of the bathrooms, because the two I've seen are both rather magnificent.

Well, it ... one, one bathroom had been a void space before, it was just the top part of an entrance hall, and it was just a tall entrance hall, 20 feet high almost, almost, and so I didn't need that wasted space, so I made a hole through the bedroom above, into that space, and put a, had a concrete floor put in, and had a bathroom made there, and that was all right. But it's, it's not just a question of making the bathroom, you've got to have all the plumbing for it as well, you see. You have to bring the water in, and you have to take it all out again into the drainage system which, in this case, is a septic tank. So it all had to work. I made that bathroom. And there was a little bathroom upstairs, which I made a bit better. And that was all right for a few years, so that we had two bathrooms for a few years, and that worked very well. Then ... with the children, it was necessary to alter it a bit more, and so I had to make it more convenient for having children as well, but it was all done bit by bit, that's the point. Not all at once. Also, this is a terribly good idea, because if you do it all at once, you'll probably make a dreadful mistake which you will regret. But I can make little mistakes which I don't regret so much.

<u>End of F4561 Side A</u>

F4561 Side B

They're not just ordinary, boring bathrooms. I mean, you're making them sound as though they're just any old bathrooms.

Well, I do everything my way.

Can you describe your methods, or what your solutions were?

Well, I think the bathroom that people would like to know about, probably, is the bathroom where I had this ... space, you see, they didn't have bathrooms, but they had something, perhaps, better. But they had room service, they had people who brought in hot water in a jug for you in the morning, and took it away again in a bucket, so they didn't have bathrooms. So, we don't have that sort of facility nowadays, so I found this place which had been a sort of dressing space, I suppose, I don't know quite what it was for, and I found that the ceiling below it was much lower than the other ceilings, so I had a space, so I thought, "Well, this is very good, so I'll have a sunk bath in there", you see, because then I was able to sink the bath into the void beneath this space. And so that, and then I did other things to support the wash basins and all that sort of thing. I did it my way, that's all.

And what about the fireplace and the dining area, as one comes, on the right of the front door as one comes in?

Yes, I know. Well, there had been a fireplace at the end of the dining room, it was the dining room when I came here, and it had a great big partition up one side, which stopped the light coming in from that side. It just had the north window on the other side. No light. So I had this great big partition which was 20 feet high, yes, I had it taken down, and had a balcony put in, because it was, in fact, a passage on both floors, so as to retain the passage, which had originally been ... to have access from one end of the house to the other, so that I retained those in the form, one as a gallery, an open gallery going through the dining room, and the other one is just going through the dining room. So I took the partitions down.

And what about the actual chimney-piece?

Oh, the chimney, yes. Well, I thought I'd have a bit of fun, and I made this sort of open fireplace on a, on a concrete hearth below, but supported, so that it seems to be free-standing, and it was meant to be a heated seat for people to sit on ... in those days, you see, the idea at the back of my mind probably was, all right, all my artist friends are going to be sitting

around there, and I thought, "Well, that will be very nice, and you sit around on this seat, and then you eat at the long table". I had a table, which I sort of constructed, I welded a structure, and ... it was in ... that formed the reinforcing for a concrete table, and I had a concrete table covered in stuff which is called "terrazzo", it's a sort of marble chipping thing which they, they put on in a liquid form, and then when it's dry, they polish it.

And so were you very sociable? Did you have lots of people here all the time?

I think, in the beginning, we used to be quite jovial, yes.

And have you made most of the furniture, I mean, have you made the table in front of us, for example?

I think that's just a piece of marble which I bought in London, and I made the legs for it, yes.

And what about the fireplaces?

Oh yes, this fireplace is a sort of concrete thing, because the fireplace that was there before was a hideous thing, from my point of view, because, after all, it's very difficult to mingle the styles too much, and to have this other fireplace, marble fireplace there, it wasn't right at all for me, so I made this concrete one, which is not terribly efficient, but anyway, it is better than the thing that was here before.

But did you understand about chimneys and things, because of your training in the architect's office, or ...

Well, generally, no. The thing is that they're very tall chimneys, and so, so long as you can get a fire going in the bottom, they have a very good draught anyway.

And you've more or less painted most of it white inside.

Well, I think that, originally, was because ... I like it, I like it white, anyway. But also, it's very good, because if you're going to have sculpture around at all, it's best to have it against a plain background. I know that they sometimes have sculpture against modified colours, beige colours and so on, but I prefer it against white. They also put paintings against coloured walls, which I think is a very curious idea.

And have you designed the kitchens as well, here? Have you designed everything?

Yes. Well, I hadn't really made a serious kitchen, because I'm not a cook. I think that if I knew a bit more about cooking, I'd get a more efficient kitchen, because I've only been thinking about, you know, just getting the various appliances housed.

And do you enjoy designing?

Yes, I do.

And are there more to do, or have you done this house? Are there more places left?

Well, I suppose I could start again, but that would be ... that would be ... in fact, I can't now, because it's now Listed Grade I, and the curious thing is, I wouldn't even be able to change my own work! So it's very curious that, isn't it? Because when I did it, I would not have been allowed to do it.

And what about the flooring? Floors? What are the floors?

No, I've left the floors exactly as they were.

And the heating?

That, well, I've got a sort of modicum of heating here, it's not really a hundred per cent efficient, because it would be too expensive, in any case.

And have you had many cold winters here? I mean, what's ...

It's been absolutely frightful, yes, especially in the beginning, before I had any, any hot water heating at all. When I say "hot water", I mean radiators. Before I had radiators, it was terrible.

But do you, in the real winter, do you live in a part of the house, rather than all of it, or what?

Well, we try to. We've got a very small sort of dining room up the other end, which I think you've seen, and that, we go in there when it's very cold. And we hardly ever use the big rooms, mainly because of the cold, and, but, somehow or other, because I very seldom come and sit down and do nothing. I'm usually doing something, usually gardening if I'm not working.

And why is there the upstairs kitchen? Why was that put in?

Ah! Now, we had ... we had a kitchen down here, in that room over there, which is now the sort of document room. Now, it was too much trouble going up and down stairs to the kitchen, so when my wife, my then wife, was expecting another child, I said, "All right, we'll make a kitchen upstairs", and make it more compressed, our living space. And so I made a kitchen upstairs for that reason, that was 1958, no, 1962. 1960 yes, we made that kitchen up there. And, at the same time, I think I made the bathroom upstairs. I think I did.

So you were living in that part of the house, really, at that point, and not using downstairs to live in?

Well, for a few years we lived upstairs, yes.

And did you use some of the downstairs as a workshop? Where were you actually making sculptures at that point?

Well, I did actually make something in this room, in the dining room, in the drawing room. I started, when I first came here, working in the chapel, but I didn't like to do that very much, so then I worked in, I worked in the stables for a while.

Why didn't you like the chapel?

Well, that's a ... I think there was an article, a letter, a letter in the local paper, by the, by the rector who'd been up here to say that I was sort of desecrating the chapel.

Was it rather creepy, working in the chapel?

No, no, no, not at all, no. Well, one day, I was welding there, and I could see, you know, even when you have goggles on, you're aware that there's someone there, so I, I looked, and there was a small, well, not small, a schoolgirl standing there in the doorway. So I said, "Hallo", she said, "Hallo", and then after a while, she said, "Do people think you're mad?" So I said, "Yes", I said, "They do". And she said, "Do you make any money out of it?" So I said, "A bit". "Oh", she said, "Oh!", and went away! (LAUGHS)

But was she real, or was she a vision?

No, she was real, yes.

And what about things like the candle holders that you make? When did you begin to do that? Because they seem so part of the house.

Well, no, I ... I suppose I, I have a way of looking at things aesthetically, you see, and I tend to do things that way. They're not so much part of the house ... maybe they are, but the point is that I, I try to do things in what I would call my aesthetic. It sounds a pompous term, doesn't it. But I just, I do it as well as I can, in my way.

Can you describe your aesthetics?

Well, no, it's purely a practical approach to anything. Practical, I would say. And the aesthetic thing is really, it's what comes out of it, the way I would do it, and it looks different. After all, to just do an ordinary candlestick, would be an ordinary candlestick, wouldn't it. However I did it, it would still be an ordinary candlestick. So I like to do it my way, think of a different way of approaching the subject.

And are there other objects that you've made, like that?

Not really, no. I don't think so. I mean, I'm not sure if there's anything else I want to do, like tables or something like that, not really, I don't want to become a furniture designer.

And can we just talk a little bit about some of the pictures you've got on the walls here. There's a very interesting Julian Trevelyan. When did you get that?

Oh, I bought that just after the War, I think I was still in uniform, and I ... I, I had met Julian Trevelyan through a friend of mine, and I went to his exhibition at one of the galleries, and I bought it there, you know. I didn't have any money, but I paid for it in instalments, that's right.

And why did you like that particular one?

Well, it was very ... sort of personal to Julian. It was in his studio at Durham Wharf, anyway, and it seemed very typical of his, and it has a warmth about it.

And the painting in the kitchen, of the avocado pears, who did you say that was by?

That was a friend of mine, a friend from France.

What's her name?

Susannah Linhart.

But there's a big mobile in the dining room.

That's Daniel, my son.

When did he begin to make mobiles?

I would say about three years ago, about. He's had an exhibition in a gallery in London. When I say three years, you know, time flies, doesn't it. It might be four.

And what about the piece just outside this door, about disguise, what is that?

Oh, that's something that a man called W.S. Graham said, because he was, he was one of these poets who likes to sit in the public house and say all kinds of things, but to me it's very important, you see, "Disguise is Mortal", which to me, means that if you try to conceal anything from yourself, as it were, pretend that you don't do what you do, you are doing something very curious, because your subconscious mind has already absorbed certain do's and don’ts, commandments, you see, it has already accepted certain things that it must do, mustn't do, so that if you ... transgress these little things that you've stored away, and you do the thing that you shouldn't do, your subconscious mind will not forgive you, and this is the mortality about it. So if you pretend, if you pretend to yourself, that you're not doing what you're doing, it's very dangerous. It's very difficult to be open, by the way, but, I mean, it's very dangerous to conceal anything ... from your, from your subconscious mind. Don't try, ever, to fool your subconscious mind. Your conscious mind, that's all right, that's the sort of thing that will change from day to day.

Have you tried to fool your subconscious mind?

Probably. Yes, it gives you a pain here or there!

And how does it come to be in that form?

Oh, someone did it for me.

You commissioned it?

No. No, no. A friend of Eva's did it.

Because they knew you liked the work?

Yes. I was probably always saying that!

And what about this picture?

That's also by Susannah Linhart. She was very good at getting an impression, a quick impression of anything. She could do children, and children are extremely difficult to get a likeness of, very very difficult, because they don't stand still for a moment. But she could do that, she could actually get the right expression.

And that's honeysuckle, isn't it?

No. Someone asked me recently if they could paint a portrait of me, so I said, "Yes", because I was used to this idea of being able to be painted in about five seconds. So I said, "Yes". And I was obliged to sit down, in a certain position, with my feet on a certain spot, and my head in a certain angle like this, and I was to look at a certain point. And after a while, I began to get a bit worried about this, and apparently, it's a special way of painting, it's called the "Florentine Method", or something like that. And I got so bloody bored with this sitting there, getting a stiff neck, that I had to stop. But they do it, sort of, brush stroke by brush stroke, and each time they have to come up to you, and look at you, and go back to the thing. Incredible. But I was so used to this impressionism, which gives an exactness, that, that the, the other method never never gets it, it's always dead, in my impression, opinion, anyway.

So was the portrait finished?

No. No, no. I, I ...

Are there any portraits?

Portraits of me? No, there aren't, actually, no. I get impatient.

And also, in the other kitchen, there's a watercolour by you.

Oh yes, that's when I was a schoolboy, yes, of the Thames.

And there was also one that you'd done for Eva, of flowers.

Cherries.

Sorry. Yes.

Cherries, because you were looking at the cherries, that's why I say that. No, I did the one at the bottom of the stairs, of, of ... Binswell Cottage.

Why did the cherries one get done?

Oh, it was a ... I did this as a sort of birthday present, or something like that, that's the sort of thing I do them for.

But you don't do them for pleasure, normally?

Not as a, not as a thing, "I'm going to do cherries this week", no, no, no.

No, no, but I mean the watercolours at all.

Well, I'd like to do a great big painting of this place, because it ... just to give the impression that the valley is spacious, and do this thing on the top of it. I would like to do that, but it's very difficult. I, I can't really face ... because ... trees are, for me, extremely difficult, they've got no proper outline, you see, they're fuzzy, they're like a woolly bear, and I'm not quite sure how to do them. So if there's anything to do with trees, it's almost better that they should have no leaves on them, winter time. I don't know, I haven't got, I haven't got around to finding out my way of doing trees, especially a wood.

So are you painting quite frequently?

No. Very infrequently, no.

And is it always watercolour now, or what?

Well, at the moment, I haven't got any oil colours to paint with, because I bought some oil colours when I was at school, actually, and I used to take these round with me afterwards, and I used to use those to do things, for the, for the swan painting over there, anyway. And I may have, oh yes, I painted one of the cottage where I lived, and then the cottage where I lived, but from a distance, and you haven't seen that, have you? I'll show you that. But only, only ... I don't do it as a professional thing, I just do it to amuse me.

But, I mean, now, might you do three paintings a year, or might you do thirty paintings a year?

I haven't done any for a long long time, no.

And can you talk a bit about the grounds here? How much land was there when you first bought it?

Well, the house and the garden, as it were, was just under ten acres, and that was all right. For a long long time, that was fine, after all, it's more garden than I need. But then, a few years ago, the farmer who owned the land all round about, said that he would sell it to me, the land, because he wanted to buy his brother's land, next to him, which was more suitable for him, because it was flat. The thing is, that they get a subsidy for having flat land, because they get a subsidy for having their animals on it, a subsidy for growing something or other. But now that they find that they're growing too much stuff, they're not quite sure what to do, because there's a bit of a problem for them, because they're now producing meat, but they'll soon be producing too much meat, because people are going off eating meat, actually, so they'll be less, although people in Germany and France are still eating a lot of meat, so that's probably all right, that's saving them at the moment. But a lot of people are going off meat now, because they see that it's not terribly good for you, from the point of view of all the chemicals they put into, into the meat now, into the animals. What was I talking about?

The grounds.

The grounds, yes. So that the, the land which I think is very beautiful, was able to be bought, so I bought it, because otherwise, it would have become a golf course or something, which was not quite what I wanted outside the house. Not that I've got anything against golf courses, they're probably quite a good way of preserving the landscape, it's better than a housing estate. So I, we bought it, and it was in a pretty ghastly state, aesthetically, because the cattle had been trampling all over it for a number of years, and they'd made a terrible mess of it, and all the old ponds and things were all filled in, so we, we spent quite a lot of time and

money, having it cleared, and it's still going on being cleared. And eventually, I'm hoping that we'll be able to have what is called a "sculpture park", that is to say, sculpture dotted all around about, as well placed as possible, so that people can see it, and to have a certain number of people in to see it.

But it's a massive place to run, the house and grounds, isn't it?

It is. But we do everything as economically as we can.

And you've become quite a passionate gardener, is that right?

I'm not a gardener in the sense that I go out there with a fork and spade, and do things like that. I don't do that, no. That would have been a waste of time, and I'd have not been very good at it anyway. But I like to design the garden, and take an interest in it, and perhaps do a little bit of the actual physical gardening.

Do you read quite a lot about gardening too?

I get the books, but I don't really get down to reading an awful lot about how to do it, because that's, that can be also rather a waste of time, because I'm not going to do it anyway.

But you get a lot of pleasure from flowers?

Yes. Yes. Of choosing something that will go in the right place, find the right place for a certain plant, yes. Try to, try to do that. But, of course, you need a lot of money to do it properly.

It must have been very important to you to be able to place your sculpture in the landscape, and have real control over it.

Well, it was a question of ... I haven't done it yet, by the way, I'm going to do it. I'm going to try to do it properly, but it is a very difficult thing, because making, shall we say, a base for sculpture is quite a problem, a physical problem, having to get, take all that amount of aggregate to make concrete there on the spot, and then you make a concrete base, and then supposing you don't want it there? It's a terrible business, so I'm a bit wary of putting too much concrete around. But I'll find a solution to that one too, having bases made more provisionally.

And is the idea of the sculpture park one you're doing to make the place economically viable, or because you actually want it to happen? What are your feelings about that?

No, it's the same as the house. I mean, if I'm anywhere, I like to get it right, visually, for me.

And there are quite a lot of buildings on the land, and other people living in them. Who else is accommodated here?

Well, my son Daniel is living somewhere, I have somebody who is a bronze founder living there also. There's an old gardener, who no longer does any work, living there in the gardener's cottage. That's all, really, outside.

It's a little community on the spot, really.

Almost, yes.

And can we just bring your personal life up to date? When we talked before, you were married to your first wife, and you were living in the other properties. At some point, you and she split up. Was that something that happened very gradually, or something that was sudden? I mean, did she leave, or, or what happened?

No, she did, I'm never quite sure why. But the reason she gave was that she wanted to go off and write and have children, neither of which she did, by the way, but this is the reason she said she was going to do it. And there was, there was ... no sort of splitting up, except that she did not want to be with a successful person. That's very curious, and almost difficult to believe. But she didn't want to be part of a successful artist household, so to speak. She didn't ever explain this one to me, or it may not have been true, but anyway, this is what she said.

So was it a big shock to you when she went?

Yes. Oh yes.

And did she take Simon?

No, she left him with me.

So what did you do?

Well, he, he was at boarding school by this time, luckily, yes.

And did you try and stop her going?

Yes. Yes, but she was very adamant about this.

End of F4561 Side B

F4562 Side A

So did you have a period on your own?

Yes I did, actually, when my first wife, first wife left me, I did, I was a bit alone. I had sort of girlfriends from time to time, but I was more or less alone, yeah.

And you were still living in the depths of the countryside or not?

Yes. Yes. Mmm.

And were you quite good at looking after yourself by that stage? I mean, did you just get through it?

Apparently. I can't remember that one. That's funny, isn't it. Well, I did get through it all right, yes. There was no one living with me.

And you don't sound as though it's a terrible black period.

Oh, I see. No, because I carried on working. I found that the best medicine was to go on working.

Did you cry?

No, I don't think I did cry about that.

Do you cry?

Yes, I do, but ... not for that sort of thing. I can withstand any shock, you see, without crying.

And what kind of thing makes you cry?

Sort of soft, sloppy sentiment.

When did you last cry?

Oh, I don't know. I don't cry very much, you see, I just get a bit weepy, that's about all. I don't cry properly. I can't, I've got a blockage, you see. I, I ... I have this sort of ... sort of Teutonic upper, stiff upper lip, I suppose.

And you did, ultimately, get married again, didn't you?

Yes.

And who was that to?

This was to a person who ... lived in Cheltenham, and ... who was very sort of suitable for me, very suitable. Unfortunately, I was not entirely suitable for her, eventually, because somehow or other ... I suppose, really, I'm not ... attractive enough, inasmuch as I, I'm not ... ... doing the modern thing, in the way of social life. I suppose I'm not, I don't know. I suppose I am a bit dull that way. I don't know, by the way, I don't know the answer to your question. I don't know the answer to that. But she found somebody who was more ... apparently, more attractive, led a much more exciting life and so on, so she went away with him, and that lasted for two weeks only, unfortunately for her, and then I think she was unhappier after that, but I don't know.

Did she come back to you?

No. No.

Before we get to her leaving you, can we just do the happier bit? Where did you meet her?

I met her sort of locally.

What was her name?

Frances.

And what was she like?

She was very ... she was tall and she was very attractive, tall, physical, I suppose, in a way, inasmuch as she was ... not athletic quite, but ... but she ... but that is not so important, what she was like, like that, but she had been an English student at London University, but she gave it up to stay with me. I thought that was rather a silly thing to do, but she did. And ... I

don't know ... I suppose she had a sort of ... fantasy about me, because we married when we were still in the cottage, in the cottage, yes.

Had you thought you'd get married again?

No. No, I never think about this, because it's just a thing you ... well, I do it without thinking, yeah.

So did you propose to her?

Not in the normal way. Not in the normal way, the traditional way of novelists, I didn't do it like that, no.

And did you have a very romantic courtship?

No, no, no, no. No, that wasn't like that. I mean, nowadays, people don't. Or I, I don't think they do, anyway. Maybe some people do, I don't know. No, it just seemed the obvious thing to do. We got on all right, so it seemed the obvious thing to do.

But had you already become divorced?

When? From what?

From your first marriage.

No, I got divorced in order to marry the other one.

And you didn't consider just living with her?

You know, it was at the sort of border line time, because then the, the rules of divorce were very ... still as they had originally been, it was very strict, you see, you couldn't mess about, it was the King's Proctor, or the Queen's Proctor. You couldn't mess about in those days, it's one or the other. There had to be a guilty party and so on. And so, I mean, it wasn't an important point, actually.

And did your first wife mind being divorced?

Only from the point of view of ... an intellectual problem. There was no need to. But why? You see. I mean, she didn't want to be married, but that wasn't quite the point, either. Nor did she want to go back to her maiden name.

And are you still in touch with her?

A bit, yes, but she lives rather a long way away, and a difficult place to get to in, in the middle of Wales, and I can't drive there any more, and she can't drive here any more, but otherwise, yes.

And so ...

But people, they come together, and they go apart again like that, and the more you leave that time apart, the worse it gets, the less you have to say to that person, the more embarrassing it is to see that person. If you ... I found, for instance, that going back to my parents' house was embarrassing, because I didn't know what to say to them. You probably have the same thing, I'm sure. Most people do.

And did Simon live between the two of you, or he really came to live with you?

He was with me, he never lived with her, no.

And with Frances, you had two little girls, didn't you?

That's right.

What were their names?

Sophie and Sarah, or Sarah and Sophie, in that order.

And had you wanted more children? Had you wanted to have more children?

Well, it's just a sort of natural consequence, really. I, the man isn't necessarily the one who wants the children, you know, it's the woman who wants a child, yeah.

And did you like having daughters? Was it different?

Oh yes, I did like daughters, yes.

And were you more involved with their childhood, than you had been with Simon?

Yes, I suppose so.

What were their characters?

It's difficult to talk about Simon, because he's a special case. He's a bit sort of ... I don't know. He's different from other children. He always was. And even his mother found him difficult to get through to.

And what were the daughters like? What are their personalities?

The elder one, Sarah, is a person who can study very hard, and pass her exams by studying very hard. The other one doesn't study at all, and passes her exams too.

What were they like when they were little?

They were a very good pair, they played together, they were a pair, and they aided and abetted each other, and got on terribly well. Now they don't, of course. All kinds of ... as I say, you grow apart. The bond you have as a child disappears when you're grown up, and this other person is a complete stranger, because you meet someone, and it's like two comets meeting, and you meet, and you part again, like that.

And were you designing things for them? Did you design their bedrooms, and things like that?

Yes. They had, the bedroom was up here, the nursery was up there.

What was it like?

Well, it was all right. They didn't have just a nursery and a bedroom, they used to, they used to clamber all over the roof! Everywhere! (LAUGHS)

It must have been lovely to have small children in this house. It must have been a paradise for them.

For them, yes, mmm.

But did you like it, too?

Well, I, I was usually ... I really was working in those days, I hardly saw anything of the children. You see, I don't know how other sculptors or painters are, but I had no time, really, for the family at all. I was working all the time. And I saw them at mealtimes sometimes, and I probably would be a bit impatient. Not a very ... sculptors, anyway, certainly, are not very good fathers. I mean, I know Henry Moore was crazy about Mary, I don't know ... they ... it didn't last. She was a great disappointment to him in the end.

Did you know her?

Yes. Well, I don't, didn't, but I stayed with her in Italy for a night or two. Yeah, a couple of nights. She was rather funny, really.

And how did the children react to having sculpture all around them?

I've never even thought about that. I don't know whether they ... noticed it at all, really, because, you know, it's just furniture, isn't it, stuff that ... like we're brought up with all kinds of ornaments around the house.

And did it matter to you what they thought about it, ever?

No, no. It didn't worry me.

And when we talked about you as a young man, you said you often felt lonely. Did you feel lonely at this stage of your life as well?

Now?

No, then, when the children were small, when you were living at this point, here.

I suppose ... lonely, but only ... because not having, not so much the physical presence of someone, but lonely because you do, or I, really, I, probably do feel that I haven't anyone to confide in. That's loneliness, you see.

And did you feel that with Frances?

No. No. That was the exact opposite. That was all right. No, that was all right.

And how did she spend her time?

Well, she wrote a lot of poetry.

And was that published?

And so, and, by the way, my first wife would not take any interest in my work, that is to say, insofar as having to help me with writing letters or anything, she wouldn't do that, although she was a writer, shall we say. And the other one, Frances, too, didn't help me with my work. I think she would have done if I'd really asked her to, but she wanted to do her own poetry, or whatever it was she wanted to do. So, so that was all right, too. So I had to get other people in to help me do that thing, that sort of thing, or do it myself.

So you had some sort of secretarial help?

Occasionally, yes, I mean, I'd even try and type letters myself, with one finger.

And did you have someone to help look after the children?

At one time we did, yes. A local girl used to come in and look after the two girls, sometimes. But they also went off to school fairly early.

Where did they go to school?

They went to a Rudolf Steiner school to start with, until they went to boarding school.

Were you there when they were born?

Yes. I was ... Sarah was born in this house, Sophie in a nursing home somewhere, and I wasn't there with her when she was actually born, but I kept going to the nursing home, but I missed her, as it were. I would have seen her born, mmm.

And what was it like watching Sarah being born?

It was a very odd experience, really. Very odd. I don't think men should really watch these things.

Why?

Well, it's got nothing to do with ... well, I suppose it has, I suppose you should really feel even closer to the person you're with, that way. You should really, yes. But it's, it's slightly grotesque too, you see, that's why.

And are you closer to one or the other now?

No, I'm not really, not now, because the thing is now sort of smoothed, the whole thing has lost its ... any edges. Not that there was any difficulty, but ... ... am I any closer to them now? No. No, but it's more equal now. No, what I was going to say, the reason I hesitated was, that I didn't have a chance to explain, that when their mother left, she was going to take the two children, and the older one, Sarah, said that she would stay with me, because otherwise Daddy wouldn't have anyone to look after him. So she stayed to look after me, you see. So that's how it happened, that there was a separation in the beginning. Then they came together again, but somehow or other, that separation had disturbed Sophie quite a lot, because she'd had rather a nasty lot of experiences, because they went to America, you see, for these dreadful two weeks they were in America, and I think that she'd had some very nasty experiences there. So Sophie was disturbed, really, and had suppressed a certain amount of horror. Sarah had not, she didn't have this problem, because when they, they came together with me again, I mean, for Sarah, it was just having Sophie back again. For Sophie, it was a bit weird, because she'd been disturbed twice, you see, in this case.

And again, were you very surprised when Frances left, or were you expecting it?

I was horrified, because, because in any case, I knew that the thing was hopeless, what she was doing. Everybody knew that this person was quite incapable of being interested in a woman, he was well known for the other aspect of it, no, no, but everyone told me that it was no good. His, his wife told me, she said, "Don't worry, it will only last a fortnight", and it did, a fortnight, it was dead accurate timing.

But do you think that she would have left you if it wasn't for the other person? Were things going wrong?

Well, having found out that she was wrong, she wanted to get the bit in her teeth, and continue, didn't want to give in as it were. So I think that, basically, it meant that she did have some reason not to want to be with me. I think that she had. No, what it was, I don't

know. I don't know what it was. I think that perhaps I wasn't glamorous enough. It is possible, that she could see that a more glittery form of life was accessible to her. She had, in fact, led a rather curious life before me. She had applied for a job in the Folies-Bergères if you can imagine! So, there she was, doing this thing, she had learned this technique, doing this sort of ... whatever they'd have to do with ostrich feathers up their arse, and things like that, but I'm only being vulgar about that, but she'd been on this tour of Spain, in Madrid or somewhere, with this Folies-Bergères, and so she'd seen a bit of jolly existence, and I suppose, really, I was a bit of a flop compared with that. I mean, I ...

Had she grown up here, though? Had she grown up in this area?

She'd been to a convent school when she was younger, if you can call that growing up.

So where were her parents? Where did her parents live?

Her father was dead, but her mother was living in Cheltenham.

And had her father been around during her childhood, or had he been dead a long time?

Do you know, if he, I think he was killed in the War, because he was a rear air gunner. It lasted about half an hour. So he might have seen her. I really can't remember now, whether she'd be born before the War, do you know, I've forgotten when her birthday was.

And did you know her mother?

Yes.

And did you get on with her?

No. Well, I mean, there wasn't a question of getting on with her, I mean, we were poles apart!

What was she like?

Well, a person with a lot of ... prejudices ... misinformed prejudices, or prejudices based on a fictitious basis.

And had they had financial problems, if there wasn't a father?

Financial?

Mmm.

No, I think they managed to survive all right. The mother had an antique business in Cheltenham, she was doing all right. The, the stepfather, shall we call him, he was ... well looked after as well.

And did Frances have any brothers and sisters?

She had a brother, yes, who was a rather curious chap. I don't, I didn't know him, but I only understand from Eva, she always tells me, Eva always knows the stories behind everything!

And what did she tell you about him?

Well, that this brother of Frances was a rather curious chap. He's gone to live in South Africa now.

And so had you and Frances been having quarrels or anything?

No! No! No, we hadn't, no.

And so when the relationship that she went off to have, failed, did you ask her to come back, or did you realise she wouldn't?

It was in, in the middle of an old-fashioned divorce, where I couldn't even see her, in those days. I mean, I was playing my part ... I had been asked to have a divorce, "If you don't give me a divorce, I'll do this, that and the other" business. So I said, "All right". I didn't want to. But it was almost at the point of a gun. "I want a divorce. I want you to divorce me, and, because I'm going to be happy ever after with this person." So, what could I do? No, I think that she realised her mistake, and she may have wanted to come back to the children, or have the children, but there was no question of coming back to me, that was never asked, she would never ask me whether she could come back and be with me ...

And then she died?

... if she did. She committed suicide, yes. But I don't know. If she had wanted to come back to me, it would have been a terrific problem, because there was Eva going to have Daniel, and everything ... but, I mean, all right, I would have had to make some sort of decision. It would have ...

Did you actually ever see her again, after she left?

Well, yes, but I wasn't supposed to see her. I wasn't supposed to have any contact with her at all. But I did see her, yes, she used to come down to see her mother, so I used to lend her the car to go and see her mother.

And did she come to see the children?

Well, first of all, that would only be in the last few weeks of her life, you see, because before that, she had the child, Sophie, with her, anyway. She may have come to see Sarah. The whole thing was very very unsatisfactory, really. I mean, that was no way to treat a child. And, you see, people like Eva, who is Jewish, you see, she says, "How could any woman leave her children? How could she even contemplate leaving Sarah with me?" Or whatever. Or both of them, in the end.

And had you ever had any idea that she might commit suicide? Did she ever try anything?

No. No. I had no ... I had no warning of that. I could see that she would want to create some sort of situation to draw attention to herself, yes, mmm. You see, anything to do with acting, or, if you like, the Folies-Bergères, means you want people to look at you. I don't have this problem, because I don't want anyone to look at me. Look at my work, if you like, but not me. I suppose it's ... hiding behind my work, in that case, yes.

So who told you what had happened? How did you find out what she'd done?

Eva. Eva told me ... because she was staying with a friend of ours, at the time, it was in, in this friend's house, and this friend must have let Eva know.

And what did you feel? What did you feel?

Well, I was terribly shocked. But the problem with me is that I have a resistance to showing any ... to emotional shock like that.

So did you have to tell the children?

I did, in the end, yes. That was the most difficult thing I've ever had to do, because I was a bit funky about that one. I really did try to avoid it, but Eva said, "No, you must tell them. You must tell them, because it's even worse if you don't tell them, because they keep thinking that ..." well, I don't know.

How old were they?

How old was I?

No, how old were the children?

Four and sixish. Fourish.

And how did they react?

Hardly at all. One of them had a slight tear, and the other one said, "Oh, let's go to the swing", something like that, it was like that.

And how do you think it affected them as they were growing up?

I've never been able to find out. I've never tried to find out.

So they've never talked about it?

No. No. No. I could ask Sarah, I might try asking Sophie. Sophie has a very curious attitude towards the whole thing, you see. I don't know what, I really don't know what Sophie thinks, because she's a bit unbalanced about the problem, but probably because of it.

And what happened to them when they'd finished school? What was the next stage of their life?

Well, Sarah wanted to be a marine biologist, and so she went to Liverpool University, because they have a Marine Biology Department. So there, she went there, and studied marine biology in their research station in the Isle of Man. And Sarah ... that's Sarah, I'm sorry. Sarah. Sophie went to Oxford, and then she went to the Courtauld Gallery, as I say, she can pass any exam anyway! But nothing came up the other end. She just went there,

and met, perhaps, the wrong people, inasmuch as she didn't meet anyone who would be any use to her. Maybe they were successful, the people she met, but, but it didn't really help her. She could have done almost anything. It's very sad really, because she's so capable.

So what does she do now?

Well, she's living in France now, and she's considering being a photographer, or considers herself a photographer, already. But the competition in photography is, oh, incredible, especially in France. There are so many good photographers now.

How old is she?

How old is she? Well, she was born in 1960. So, what's that? 35? Well, she will be 35 next month.

So did you support them all for a long time?

I support them in anything they want to do, like help them, help them get apartments or houses, or whatever. And we do, we do support them, yeah.

And are either of them married?

Both of them are married.

With children?

Yes, Sarah has two boys and a girl, and Sophie has a girl who goes to school in France, is bilingual now, or trilingual.

And are you close to their children?

Not really, no.

Where does Sarah live?

In ... Hampshire somewhere, I think, Hampshire. I'm trying to think of the name of it, I can't remember.

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F4562 Side B

How often do you actually see them?

Well, Sarah was here a week ago, two weeks ago. Sophie is stuck in France now, and she doesn't come here any more, well, I'll probably go down and see her soon. She's living in a very nice little town, I understand, called Montpelier, which is an old university town, from the Middle Ages it was a famous university ... medical, for medical people, I think, as a lot of them were.

And are you at ease with them?

Oh yes.

And did Daniel marry?

Yes. And he's being divorced now.

And does he have any children?

Tiger.

Sorry, I meant to ask about Simon, not Daniel. Did Simon marry?

Simon was married a long time ago now, and he has two boys and two girls.

And he's still married?

Yes, he is, mmm.

That marriage has worked. It stayed together.

They're still there, yes.

And where did you meet Eva?

Where did I meet Eva? Here. She came here with the solicitor, organising the divorce from Frances, actually.

And why did she come? Was she working with the solicitor?

She was working with him, yes, as a sort of ... I don't know what.

That's a very unusual way to meet a wife!

It is rather, isn't it! I don't know whether it's unusual, I just ... I'm sure it happens quite often.

So you just saw each other a lot through that?

Yes. I don't know whether I want ... [BREAK IN RECORDING]

What was Eva's background?

Eva was born in Budapest, and ... a Jewish family. The father had already been eliminated by the Gestapo, and the mother and aunts looked after Eva as a small child, and managed to hide her from the Gestapo. She was living in a cellar on a shelf. It's very much like this film, Spielberg's film. Living on a shelf in a cellar, she was, and she managed to survive that, but afterwards, with the Russian Occupation, they found that she had actually been born in Paris, so that they managed to get her a passport, so she could leave Hungary, and to go out of Hungary. She then came to live with one of her Hungarian aunts, who'd come to England before, had come to England before, because, at one time, a lot of Hungarians were able to leave Hungary. They had two Occupations, they had the German one and the Russian one. But anyway, she did. She came over here as a young girl, I don't know how old she was, 14 or something, and she was sent to school in England, Woodford Grammar School, I think, and she obviously, very quickly, learned to be sort of English, but with always, don't forget, this ... ability of Jewish people, to think as a Jew, which is very good, because it has a very ... it's a community thing, they feel all together, you know. Not that Eva is very much like that, she was certainly not like that at first, but then she, when they grow older, they realise that it is a big thing for them, this feeling of unity, which we don't have, I mean, I don't have any feeling of unity about anything, being, being English doesn't mean anything. British? Oh, it's a little bit, it does mean a bit, I suppose, but not in the same sense. Not the family. Not the family.

So has she got very close relationships with the members of her family?

No. No. No. Well, yes, she wants to go and see her aunt who is now 95, living in Broadstairs or somewhere. She's going to go and see her, because this aunt was one of the people who saved her, you see, when she was a small child.

And was she actually a lawyer when she came to see you?

No, no, no, no. She was only, I'd say, if you like, a secretary, if you like, at the most.

And so when you're talking about the sense of family, you mean her sense of family with you and Daniel and the children? The other children.

Yes, because they're all part of her family too. She's very loyal to the whole thing. They are, much more than us, much more than the English people are. Well, I don't know, I believe there's a lot of English people like this too. Yes, I'm probably, I am an exception.

So she, in a way, became Daniel's stepmother ... um, Simon's stepmother, and Sarah's stepmother, and Sophie's stepmother.

Yes. Yes.

And then Daniel's mother?

Yes.

Daniel is your last child?

Yes.

And when was he born?

Oh, 30 years ago, whenever that was, that would be '65 or '66.

And again, had you wanted another child?

I? Never thought about it, you know, I mean, I'm probably ... I'm not very calculating about this sort of thing, how many children am I going to have.

Were you worried about having to support another child?

No, I didn't worry about that one, no, no, not at all.

Because you were making quite a lot of money, or because it didn't worry you?

It wasn't anything to do with money, because I didn't have enough money, no. I was pretty well bankrupt by the time that Eva started to sort things out for me.

And so she began to take over your letter-writing, and dealing with the galleries and everything?

Yes.

And did you have anybody to help with Daniel when he was growing up?

Well, Daniel was here with the two girls at first, and there was somebody who used to come in, one of the farmer's daughters used to come in and look after them, and another one did, yes. A certain amount of help, yes. Daily help. Daily help.

And how did he get on with the little girls?

Oh, they got on in a way, you know, a bit of bickering and ... they managed all right.

But is he now the one you're closest to? You seem very close to him.

Well, yes, because we have certain things, a certain amount of things in common. I'm afraid most, mostly motor cars. But he is growing up, and he's becoming much more ... he's growing up. A late developer, mind you, but he is, and he seems to be very knowledgeable, much more of a man of the world than I am. Much more a man of the world than I am.

I didn't know you were interested in cars.

Well, slightly. It's the only thing I've got in common with him, or was, but now it's getting a bit better now.

You're interested in the design of cars, or the working of cars, or what?

Oh, just cars. I'm not interested in horses, for instance.

But do you know how cars work?

A bit, mmm. A bit.

And where did Daniel go to school?

The same as the girls, at Millfield, they were all there together. Poor Daniel, he was sent there when he was only six, to the prep school, much too young, poor chap.

Why did you send him so young?

I sent him there because, at least, if he had been here, alone here, it would have been worse than being there, as I thought, with the two girls there to look after him, but they were in different houses, they were too far apart. It wasn't a question, really, of their being together. But that's what I did it for, so that he'd have some sort of companionship, whereas he had a miserable time there at first, because he was a bit of a spoilt child, you see.

And did you mind how the children did academically? Did that matter to you at all?

No. No. But I didn't have to worry, I wouldn't have had anything to worry about Sophie and Sarah, anyway.

And did you all go on family holidays together, and things like that?

Yes. Eva and I took them on holidays, yes. Eventually, you see, roundabout 1969, we got our little, teeny little cabin in France, and so we used to go there for our holidays, and when the little children were very little, it was all right to do that, you see, because they slept in a tent, and that was very good.

And did you enjoy family holidays?

Yes, but don't forget ... yes, all right, we used to go to the beach every day, so it was a sort of seaside holiday, if you like. But after a while, you see, we got another place there, a bit further away from the sea, and I didn't go to the sea, we sort of, we made a sort of thing like a swimming pool, and stayed there, and only went to the beach sometimes, because going to the beach was really rather weird, really, sort of sitting there, getting drunk all day long.

So were the holiday times really the times when you spent the most time with the children? Is that when you got to know them, then?

I don't ... that's an expression which I don't quite understand, because I never got to know the children. I don't know. Do people get to know their children? I suppose they do. I mean, did you ever get to know your parents?

I was quite intensely involved with them, but not necessarily pleasurably.

It was never part of the equation with me, getting to know my parents, or getting to know my children.

Do you feel you've got to know anybody?

That would mean to be on a sort of same wavelength, completely, like that. That's difficult for me, and it may be just temporary, temporary that.

And did Daniel then go to art school? What happened to Daniel?

No. Daniel went to an engineering college in London, part of the South Bank Polytechnic or something. He went there, and he got fed up with being taught, just like I did, to. So he left that and, and took a job with some sort of engineering company. In fact, that might have been part of his training course, he had to do a certain amount of practical work. But anyway, he didn't finish, he gave up before the end, he got fed up with it, because they wouldn't let, they wouldn't accept his ideas for his, as it were, thesis, you see, and so he got fed up and left. [It's getting cold in here, I think we ought to turn the heating on.]

Just to finish off talking about Daniel, so he did engineering, and then what? Came back to live here?

No, he didn't come back to live here, no, it wasn't like that. He got married, and they were living in London. He found a place in London, to live there. It was only when he had difficulty in the marriage that he came ... oh no, it wasn't that, no. It was when his wife was pregnant, and they were going to have a child that they came here, because it was unsuitable for them to try to do this in the place where they were in London, so it was better for them to be here, especially with Eva looking forward to having a grandchild, you see, that was very important. So they came here for that reason. So when they broke up, his wife was living in his house in London, and he was, he was obliged to stay here.

And did you like his wife? She's an illustrator, isn't she?

Do I like her?

Mmm. Do you get on with her?

Not really. I mean, I get on with her, because, I mean, one ... I get ... one gets on with anyone, but, I mean, I have no real affinity for her.

And what about the grand-daughter?

The grand-daughter is, is becoming quite an interesting little personality now, but whenever I saw her, you see, she was being difficult, well, that isn't really a good idea, is it, to have a difficult child, never wanting to do anything that you want her to do, was not the best way of going about things.

But it sounds as though he's a rather devoted father.

He's a ...?

Is he rather a devoted father?

Not so devoted, but he is a very good father, he is very very good with, with children, and he's very good with his own daughter. He is very very good with her. And she behaves very well with him. It's very extraordinary that.

And what about his beginning to do sculptures?

Well, you know, it's always difficult for a child of a painter or sculptor to continue anything like his father, or her father. It is very difficult, that one, but he's managed all right. And it's just as well he did it through the mobiles so that he wasn't, well, if he'd tried to be a sculptor, that would have been difficult anyway, because I don't think he is, sort of, a natural sculptor, like ... like I was, in a way, although I didn't, I didn't start by doing sculpture, at all, but I had a natural feeling for making forms. But he has too, you see, but it's coming out in a different way altogether. He always had an interest in making shapes, and things like that, some of his childhood toys that he made at school were all, in a way, sculptural, and so it will come out,

but it will come out in a different way, as the whole art scene is changing now, and so it will go through all kinds of phases now, and he may be well in the forefront of the next lot.

And would you like him to be?

I want him to do what's best for him. It's not a question of wanting your child to do what you want them to do, I mean, you must want them to do what they ought to do, that is to say, the thing that's best for them to do.

But it can't be an accident that he started with mobiles, and that's how you started.

No, I probably did. I can't remember quite. He was making static things, that's true, little ... he was making models, and maybe I did, but I've deliberately not ever tried to influence him in any way, because ... I don't think it works, trying to influence a person, they want to go the other way nowadays, so I didn't ever try to do that.

But did he ask your advice at all?

No. No, he doesn't, no.

And do you feel a sense of companionship with what he's doing?

Oh yes, yes I do that. I don't, I don't feel very sympathetic to some of the things he does, but on the other hand, I sympathise with his wanting to do it.

Because you had an exhibition together, didn't you?

No.

I thought you did in that gallery at Chalk Farm, or Camden Town.

No, I ... ... well, maybe we did, come to think of it. Yes, I think we did. No, you're quite right. Yes, I'd forgotten about that. Yes, we did.

And what did you feel about it?

I mean, I was quite happy to have his work there, mmm. No, that was all right.

Okay, can we go back to your work. I wanted to ask you about this commission that you had, for the R34 airship memorial.

Yes. Well, a man called Sabin, who had a little gallery in Cork Street, and he was a secretary, I think, of the ... when I say British Aeronautical Society, I don't think that was the actual thing, it was some other thing, title a little bit like that. They were interested in, in flying, anyway. I don't think he was an aviator himself, but he was interested in it, inasmuch as they had approached him as a dealer, to find somebody to make a sculpture to commemorate the first dual crossing of the R34 backwards and forwards across the Atlantic. This is what it was for. So I, I made something. He asked me to do it, after all, I did something in my fashion to do it. Well, that was all right, everyone liked it very much, except Lord Brabazon, he didn't like it at all, and so it was turned down. Well, what he did was, he got up in the House of Lords and said it was a monstrosity, which it probably was. But anyway, the thing is, it was turned down, on, on the grounds of Lord Brabazon saying it was a monstrosity, and so that was that. I didn't mind. I hadn't actually made it yet, I'd only made the maquette which I, I continued to make, and that was the first thing that I had cast in bronze, actually, in Cheltenham. Yes, that was it, the R34 maquette. Anyway, it didn't really matter.

So you weren't terribly upset at the time, or were you?

I'm never upset, I'm so used to things not coming off, it didn't bother me.

It sounds as though he was rather absurd, this man.

Well, no, he's only following his own taste, surely. Everyone can do that. In a way, I was quite, I was quite glad at the time, because they were going to put it in the, the sort of foyer, as you like to call it, on the first floor of the building which is now Terminal 2, it was then <u>the</u> terminal, Terminal 2. But in those days, there was a big staircase coming out of it, and I thought, "Well, they can put it here if they like", but I didn't like the idea, because the idea of a piece of sculpture being in a ... corridor, is what it amounts to, anything like that is a corridor, because people are rushing past it all the time, in both directions, so it's a corridor. I didn't really fancy that, really, but, however, that's where they wanted to put it, that's them. I think that some sculpture, especially ... you see pictures of American sculpture in their buildings, where it's in the entrance hall or something like that, a sculpture which is absolutely suitable for that position, and I'm, I'm very pleased to see that. But my things are not meant to be seen like that at all, they're, they're not really sort of interesting from a public point of view. So I didn't mind it not being put there in the end, anyway, because when you

go outside and you see that carving of, of those two airman, Allcock and Brown, who flew the Atlantic the first time, I believe they did, it looks so sad, being sort of stuck outside the ... I don't know where it is, outside somewhere, but it looks very unhappy.

And your piece actually went somewhere else in the end, didn't it?

No, it didn't go anywhere.

I thought it went to a girls' college in America?

Oh no. Yes, it did. I actually continued it, and I made it. I made it, and one went to a college in America, and one was bought by someone in Belgium. There may be three, for all I know. I don't know.

But didn't I read somewhere that it's in a college in America, for girls, and they throw coins in it, for luck, or something.

You may have read that. It's a story I may have told the press, because this is what I was told. They told me that the girls did ... it was beside a fountain, they did send, put money in the fountain, yes.

And what about in 1959, you won a prize at Sao Paulo, what was that?

No, I didn't, actually. No. First of all it wasn't '59. No, Sao Paulo was a different thing altogether. The Sao Paulo Biennale, the one in Venice was '56, Sao Paulo was '58, I think, or it might have been '59. '59, it's quite likely it would be, because it would be not in the same year. So Venice was the even numbers - '56, '58, '60. And Sao Paulo would be the uneven numbers. So yes, they have a Biennale there. I haven't been to Sao Paulo, mind you. But that year, I was put ... I was in the Exhibition all right, so it was the same thing as Venice almost, but I was considered to be "au concours" you see, because ... as I say, I don't know quite what that really does mean, it means that you're not eligible for the prize, which was a great pity, because the prize was really worth something, whereas the one in Venice was hardly any money at all for that, you know, and I needed the money in those days, so that I was a bit disappointed, in a way, about that, if you like. Not disappointed, but, I mean, what a pity, I thought, to have such an honour; I was the only Englishman ever to be put "au concours" in an international competition, and what do you get for it? (LAUGHS) Nothing. It doesn't matter. Anyway, that's the way it is.

And what was the piece? What sculpture did you have there?

Well, it would be, a whole group of sculpture, sent by the British Council. There would be a catalogue of it somewhere, somewhere, but who knows, because most of our catalogues disappeared, because they were in a cupboard in the room there, and I had a leak in the washing machine upstairs, and it went down and it destroyed all my catalogues, up to, up to a certain date.

And what about in 1962, when you were working in Genoa, with David Smith and Calder.

Yes, Calder, actually, didn't actually come there just like that, but David Smith and I did stay in the same hotel, and eat together, and wander about Genoa together, and an Italian firm, a steel firm, called Italsider, had made arrangements for us to use their workshops. So David Smith was housed in an old disused factory, which made, basically, screws, all kinds of screws, all kinds. And I was put into the steel plate works, where they made steel plate. That is to say, they'd get a really large piece of steel about three, two metres long, by about one metre wide, and about 20, 30cms. thick, almost. A great big thing. It comes in from the furnace outside, hot, but it's already black, and then they put this thing through the rolling mills. It's quite extraordinary, because this great big lump keeps its heat, and they roll it up and down until it becomes sheet, any thickness you like, you know, as thin as corrugated sheeting, if you like. But at any moment, they can stop it, and make it any thickness they want, because they just cut the ends off and keep rolling it again. And so, anyway, that's where I was. Sheet steel, that's what I was given. What am I going to do with sheet steel? Couldn't think. So I thought, well, I've been doing some winged figures, so I'll do winged figures in sheet steel. So I sort of got the sheet steel, and drew on the steel, shapes like that, and I said, well this is like that, and this will join like that, and there will be an end to it, like that, and we'll attach them to big tubes, which they did. They did. They were terribly good. Terribly good. I was most impressed with the craftsmanship there, in this place. So they made these things for me. And it was for an exhibition in this town of Spoleto, where they had an exhibition of international sculpture, all over the town, in the streets, up the alleys, everywhere. In the square, and so on. And ... Calder had been invited to do it too, but he sent a cardboard model of a sort of mobile stabile thing, which they made into steel for him, but he didn't come there for that. But he came later.

<u>End of F4562 Side B</u>

F4563 Side A

Where was I? Calder, well, I can't remember whether it was Calder, anyway, there was sculpture all over the place. And Calder was there, and we had been invited by somebody who had been the curator of the museum in Rome, actually, for this, anyway, and so I met Calder at, at dinner one night. We had a dinner in a lovely garden, a restaurant garden, it was very good. And I remember Calder, you know, he tended to drink wine throughout the meal, and he made little sketches of my wife, Frances, and handed them to her, and then he went and did one of me, and handed it to me, and he said, "And here's my address. Come and see me." And I felt, well, that's very funny, because I remembered that some time before that, in fact, in 1951 I think it was, I'd been to New York, and I had a special letter of introduction to various people in New York, through the British Council, and one to somebody called Andrew Ritchie, to say that they'd like him to introduce me to Calder. I got the message back from Calder to say that he was too busy to see me. I got the impression that he, he was also intimating to an ... imitator, but, I mean, that's only my interpretation, he probably didn't mean that. Anyway, the thing is, that at the end of this meal in Spoleto, he gave me his address. And I said, "Do you mean that?" He said, "Yes. Forget the other time". And I thought that was terribly nice, and I was really happy with that one.

And did you go to see him?

No. The, the Spoleto thing was ten years after the other one.

But then, did you go to see him after that?

No. I don't know where he was after that. He lived in France most of the time, you know. I didn't go to see him there either. I don't really like going to see artists, you know, not really, no, not unless they ask me.

But he had asked you.

Yes, this time, yes, mmm. No, I didn't, actually. I don't know which address he gave me either, the one in Connecticut, or which one. Westbury, Connecticut, he lived, I think.

Do you like his work?

Yes. I like it more and more, the more I see it. I use this word, "aesthetic", I think it comes from le Corbusier. I didn't like his aesthetic then, because I was much more rigid, the

"geometry of fear" business, you see, the triangle and all that, I was much more interested in that, more precise shapes. And those flabby shapes, the ones that Daniel is doing now, you saw those, I didn't like that at all in those days, so that I rather ... I rather sort of didn't see much of him in those days. But the more I see of his work, the more I like it. And he's one of ... I don't know what you call it, but he was a friendly being.

And also David Smith you got on with very well, didn't you?

Yes, David Smith and I lived in the same hotel, and we used to sort of talk in the evenings, and eat together, and then ... it was very curious, I was having an exhibition in New York, and there was another American sculptor, a woman there, not there, but I mean, I met her, and she, she said, "Let's go and see David Smith together", so I said, "Well, all right", because I don't like going to see artists like that, but she wanted to go, and ... she came round to my hotel at about six o'clock in the morning, to go and catch an aeroplane to go to ... wherever he lived, somewhere in New England, Boulting Landing, Boulting Landing I think it's called, it's a very difficult thing for me to say. Boulting Landing I think it was called, and I've forgotten the place where it was near. Anyway, that's where he had his place, there. So we went there by aeroplane and so on. Oh, I think he actually came to meet us at the airport, that's right, yes. That's right, he did, in his sort of jeep. And it started to snow that night, so we couldn't go to the airport, so we had to stay the night in his place. And she was saying to me, "Don't leave us alone", you see, "because I don't want to be ... alone with him", and he was saying to me, "Get this woman out of here quickly!" It was very embarrassing, the whole thing, really! Oh dear!

And how do you like New York?

No, well, anyway, what was interesting was, about this thing, you see, David Smith lived in this steel house which he'd built, he'd actually welded the thing together himself. A hideous place it was, absolutely ghastly place, and cold, and awful. But I suppose he got it heated up. And he was very proud of it. And he showed me his drawings which were made of ... ... splodges, I don't know quite ... it was most odd, but he obviously was terribly proud of his drawings. And his paintings too, his black and white paintings, which he'd made of some girls who had actually been once snowbound, and he'd taken them in, and managed to get their clothes off, and paint them. He was very pleased with this painting he'd done of these naked, snowbound girls. And anyway, so we had to stay the night, because we couldn't get to the airport. And I managed to cope with all the various difficulties of who was chasing who! Yes, what else did you ... did you ask me something?

I wanted to know how you liked New York.

New York. Well, I've been to New York a few times. I went first on my honeymoon with Ann, my first wife. I went there on our honeymoon, because she had relations there, we stopped there. I was dressed in what they called "square rig" sailor, you know, I was a sailor then, in square rig. So we stayed in New York, and I was put in, I think, the Yale Club, or somewhere, one of the colleges, in the club there. We were put in different clubs, anyway, because somehow or other, you can't mix the genders in the clubs in New York. So, although we were on our honeymoon, we weren't allowed to sleep together. That was a weird place. But I do remember, when I left New York, because we were going on to Pittsburgh to see my wife's Uncle Jim, in Pittsburgh, and I remember feeling quite sad. You asked me about being sad, and all that, tearful. I felt quite tearful leaving New York, because it's such a terrific, it has such an impact on you, this visual, physical impact it has on you, these buildings, which is even more so now, I believe. But what do I think of New York? Well, it's an experience, that's all I can say. You couldn't ... I mean, the New York life will still go on living, just as life goes on anywhere, the social life, there's social life going on in St. Tropez, in spite of all the tourists. There's social life going on in Paris, I'm sure, behind the scenes, you know. That's the hard core of a place is there, it stays there, and, and this other thing happens all round it, the sort of Disneyland world we're living in now.

Did you find the American art world sympathetic to you, or not?

No, then, not really, not the artists themselves, because they don't know, they can't see anything that I'm doing, they can't see, no. Still, I get on all right with them.

And in 1964, you were given a CBE.

Well ...

Does it mean anything to you?

No.

Why were you given it, do you think?

Well, they gave it to a lot of people, actually, that year, or the year after. I was owed something, you see, because of Venice, and I was obviously unsuitable for a knighthood. They had asked me to Buckingham Palace, before they give you the knighthood they ask you

to a cocktail party there, and, I don't know, I suppose I didn't say the right things. (LAUGHS)

And has it ever meant anything to you, to have it?

No. No, the worst thing for me would be a knighthood, I don't want that. I certainly don't want that. I think that some form of appreciation would be rather nice, not only for me, but for everyone, you know. But what, I don't know. You see, the only thing that's worth having is the Order of Merit, still, that's limited, and obviously, I wasn't suitable for that either. But certainly a knighthood would have been a horrifying thing for me. No artist, no visual artist should be called anything else except his name.

And why do you think they accept it? Why do you think people do take it?

Well, that thing the poet said, "Just for a handful of silver, he left us just for a ribbon to stick in his hat", so to speak.

But somebody like Paolozzi it's rather peculiar.

I think it indicates something in him, you see. He needed this reassurance, probably.

And what about Venice in 1988?

'88? What did I do there? Oh, that's when I did ... back to Venice, oh yes. Well, here again, the man who had arranged the exhibition in Spoleto, he was called Carendente, Professori Carendenti, had become the director of the Biennale, which you have for two years, and he had invited a certain number of artists, sculptors in this case, to exhibit work in and around the, the grounds ... Venice is not one building, there is one big Italian pavilion, and there are several other pavilions, of which the British Council have one, and the other, all the other countries have their own buildings, you see, they have their own buildings, and it's quite separate. And they're all in the gardens they call the Jardini, and it's the old pleasure grounds of Venice. Anyway, so ... these sculptures, by various people, American, British, and everyone, in, in the grounds, but most of them all round the Italian pavilion, near the Italian pavilion it was, yes. And my thing was there, everyone else was there too.

And did you go yourself?

Yes, I did. I went to have a look, you know, going back to the scene of the crime.

And what did it feel like?

Well, it wasn't the same. Not the same at all, no.

Were you glad that you'd gone?

Oh yes. I'm just trying to think now of any incident at the time. Just think, going back a bit. Eva came with me. It wasn't the same. Venice was not the same. The restaurant where I had always eaten in the evening was no longer the same, it had gone definitely downhill. That was a disappointment. Venice will never change, unless it sinks forever, that's, there's something about Venice that's eternal, it's been like that for hundreds of years, five hundred years, probably. People, tourists there.

And what about your 1992 show at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park?

Well, that was quite agreeable, I mean, it was well-accepted. You see, it's very difficult for me to be shown in England, as you've probably gathered by now that I'm not invited in England anywhere, as if there's something, as if I had some sort of disease, which I probably have, actually, so far as they're concerned. But it was very good, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. It's very well done, he'd tried very hard, this Peter ... I can't remember anyone's name. He's a nice chap, anyway. Murray, Peter Murray.

Did he select it, or did you?

Oh, I, I think we select what's available. We're sending some off to, to Barcelona now, well, I don't know what for, I mean, just sort of something to show, really, in the town, a tourist attraction, whatever, I don't know what it is. It's not really an art show, is it, I mean, they're going to put these things all over the town. And in Monte Carlo, too.

Interview held on 16th May, 1995

Today is May 16th, and I wondered, did you in any way, mark VE Day? Did you do anything for it?

No. I didn't. No. In Bisley they were quite having a lot of fun there, rather like the original VE Day, actually, but I didn't do anything, no. I just went to see it, that's all.

Did you see any ceremonies, or anything?

No, no. No, no.

Did you feel anything? Did it make you remember your War years?

No, it didn't, actually, no.

... people wanting to come and work with you. We were just talking about gurus and that sort of thing. I just wondered, have you had young artists wanting to come and just be with you in the studio?

I think that a lot of people think that by working with an artist, a young person to go to an old person, thinking that some of it will rub off on him, I think that, but I don't know whether that's possible, anyway.

Do you get people wanting to come to you?

I did earlier on, twenty years ago, thirty years ago, yes, people did want to be assistants, as it were. This is only part of their experience. But I think that, nowadays, people who go to art schools, are not terribly keen on being anyone else's assistant, they want to go straight into it, and be an artist themselves, which is now much more possible, by the way.

And did you ever have anyone as an assistant? It wasn't something you needed, was it?

I had an assistant for a while, but I couldn't ever find any work for him to do. I really couldn't think of anything, so that's why we started a small bronze foundry, because he said that he could probably work out how to do bronze casting, because he was a very clever chap, metal working sort of person, and that was all right, but, I mean, he couldn't really help me, because I couldn't ever think of anything to ask him to do, that I wouldn't want to do myself. I much prefer to do things myself.

And that same person is still running the foundry, is he?

No, no, no. No, no, that was a long time ago. No, the foundry now is quite separate. I don't have a foundry any more. This was, and I didn't have a foundry, but he was just casting

my work, you see. You understand, he was only my assistant, but that's what he was doing, casting, bronze casting.

And was he particularly sensitive as he was doing it? Was there anything that he achieved, that an ordinary foundry wouldn't have?

I don't think that was the question. There was no problem about that. He was just doing things his own way, and he was very clever, he was a very ingenious chap.

And now you're having trouble with your leg, is it at all a possibility that you could use an assistant, or would it ...

No, I couldn't, no, I couldn't, no. I could, to do certain things, to, as it were, reproduce something. That is possible. I made some stainless steel things from ... made by somebody else, from models which I had made. I made very simple outline models of a ... a frame, shall we call it, and these were translated into, into sheets. It's a difficult thing to explain in words, this, but I merely did an outline drawing, and it was measured up, so to speak, so that it could be made into a solid thing. But it did, it required my sort of sketching out the thing, so that it could be measured and then reproduced.

And, presumably, you had to be involved, really, in every stage.

Yes, but the difference is, in my normal work you couldn't do that, you see, because it's, it's got all kinds of textures and angles, and things like that, which couldn't really be drawn and measured.

And presumably, that's partly because they evolve as you work, at the stage that they come into being?

No, no. The, the sketched models for enlarging for stainless steel things were quite different, quite different from the others, you see, they were just straight lines, whereas when I'm working, some of it gets a bit rounded off, but you can't reproduce that in the form of a drawing.

And do you feel that it would have helped you to have gone to art school, or do you think it would have been irrelevant?

Helped me? It would have helped me, not in my work, but as a, as an experience of being with young people, I think. I think, yes. I mean, it's difficult to know whether it would have helped me or not. It might have set me on the wrong track.

And there was never a point, I know the reasons why you didn't go to art school at the time when you were leaving your ordinary school, was there ever any point, later on, where you thought about going? Did you ever reconsider it?

No. No, no.

And did you feel, for instance, when Daniel was setting out, that it would have been a good idea for him, or not?

Well, he was given the opportunity to do that, but he had already decided, beforehand, to go in for engineering, so there was no question of it.

And when you've written about your work, sometimes, you talk about whether or not you find when you're working, there's a rhythmic impulse, and that will determine whether the piece is successfully achieved.

Well, I think that when you're happy working, there is a sort of rhythm, yes. Mmm, there is, mmm.

Does that imply that you sometimes, when you haven't found that impulse, you've discarded the work, or what's happened?

I haven't discarded much work, I sometimes change it, and make it into something more suitable, or more satisfying for me. I haven't discarded many things, and I haven't finished many things which I don't like, only a few, because, looking back on them, I think, "Well, that's a pity about that one", yeah.

But if you're conscious of working without that rhythm, do you actually just stop for a while, or what do you do? Do you go on with it and see where it leads? What happens?

Well, it's a sort of natural thing, I mean, when you've got fed up with a thing, you stop working, yes, and go and do something else.

And how, I mean, how quickly would you know it wasn't working? Would it be a matter of hours, would you know from the moment you started?

Well, there again, it's only a question of personal judgement, I mean you think, "Oh well, that's not working", so you ... it's like that. I don't know how you do that. I don't know how you judge your own work, but, I mean, it is quite possible to say, "Well, that's not worth going on with".

And I know you respond a lot to the Easter Island sculptures, what ...

Well, because ... it has a subjective impact on me there, they seem to be saying something.

Any idea what?

No, I haven't the slightest idea what they're saying, no. But, I mean, I can get the gist of it, the sense of it. I can usually get the sense of what people are thinking, but I couldn't say the words, but I know whether they're telling the truth or lying, that sort of simple difference like that.

And is there any other body of work that you feel such a strong response from, for you?

Well, that's only an example of something which I find very powerful. I suppose, I suppose there must be other things, but when you ask me for an example, it's much more difficult to give one. But that has always been an example, because I used to watch, and I'd look at the Easter Island figure outside the British Museum, which has now been put somewhere else. But that always had a sort of message for me. I couldn't say what message it is, but a powerful feeling coming out of it.

And have you been to Egypt, for example?

No. No.

Do you have any ...

No, that's true. The Egyptian things are a little bit too sophisticated, you know, they're not simple enough. Yes, the early ones, probably, yes, and like the early Greek sculpture, too, the Cori and so on, were very powerful too.

You went to Greece at one point, I gather?

Went for a holiday, yes.

And did some of the work you saw there have an impact?

I didn't see any work when I ... oh, when I went away for a holiday. I did actually go into the museum in Athens at some other time, I can't think when, but I did actually go there, and I saw some things, but, I mean, I was only a tourist or something, I wasn't going there on purpose.

And what about in England, things like the standing stones, do they have anything for you?

Standing stones?

Mmm.

Which ones?

Well, things like Stonehenge.

No, not much, no. No. No, they don't really. It's such a long time since I saw those, yes, I was only a child when I saw Stonehenge. And I have seen a few of these monolithic things around in the islands of Scotland, and so on. No, they don't really have a great impact on me, really.

And what about the white horse that's carved in the hills, not very far from here?

Yeah, well, I haven't really seen one of the old ones, I've only seen sort of more modern ones. No, they don't really, no.

And can you, can we just talk a little bit about the period in the fifties, when you began to do birds and beasts. How did that transition come about?

Transition from what?

Well, you'd begun by doing mobiles, and then you were beginning to do ... like ...

Oh, well, I think, usually, I used to weld something up, and I'd say, "What does that resemble? What does that remind me of?" And if it's a bird, then I'd go on making it into a bird. If it's something else, an animal, I'd go on making it into some sort of animal, but not a specific animal. I couldn't do a portrait of an animal.

But am I right in thinking that, at some point, you had a form that you hadn't thought of as being a beast, and it had been actually made as something else, and you suddenly saw you could add a head ...

No, no. No, no. No, no. I gave the name afterwards, actually.

And I think, somewhere, you said that, actually, on that trip to Greece, you'd seen ... is it lions, in some way?

Yes, on Mykonos, they have lions there, they had an avenue of lions, but I, I don't know whether they had any great influence on me, really, except the stance, the way they were sitting or standing, I can't remember which, they're sort of sitting, aren't they. Yes, mmm. A sort of powerful image, anyway.

And the birds are always very elegant birds, they're not little fluffy canaries, they're quite separate from something.

Probably, yes. I ... I just do them, do them my way. I don't think about whether they're fluffy or not!

But I suppose they tend to have, again, the triangular shape in them, don't they, because they tend to have the wings out.

Well, the actual welding technique that I use, tends to give more or less the form to my work, anyway. I'm very limited in that respect. I can't normally do rounded surfaces, not normally, anyway, certainly not volumes, rounded volumes, I can only do that by ... by doing, doing my welding technique, and then adding something to it, adding this.

Have you wanted to do rounded forms?

Mmm?

Have you ever wanted to do rounded forms?

Yes, I would love to, yes, but you see, I mean, that my whole work would, would be no longer my work to other people. Whether that matters or not, I don't know, but anyway, I would no longer be recognised by my work, and I think that, somehow or other, we, we do like to be known for our work, the way we do things.

Also, part of the elegance of your work, seems to me, to come from the straight lines, and the slenderness of it, the fact that it isn't rounded.

Yes, but it probably suits my attitude very well, the idea of the straight lines. It may do, it may well be that I've chosen a thing that suits me.

End of F4563 Side A

F4563 Side B

Can you tell me, there's a wonderful piece called the, is it "Idiomorphic Beast"?

Yes, you see, I give these titles after I've done the work, and this was a pompous way of a title, for me. "Idiomorphic" merely means that it has its own shape, something in its own right, you see, because I couldn't say that it was something else, like I say a thing's a beast, or whatever it is, or a bird, but this was something that was neither one thing nor the other, it was just a shape, so I called it "idiomorphic" - it had it's own shape.

Can you actually make me understand, as somebody who is completely without technical knowledge, how you produced that? How did you do that piece?

I don't know. By the way, I don't know which it is, which it is, the "Idiomorphic Beast", I just can't remember what it looks like, but it doesn't really matter.

Well, hold on, I'll find it for you. [Page references in this part of the interview refer to "Chadwick: The Sculptor and his World", Paul Levine and Nico Koster, 1988.]

I can tell you a little bit about this. Originally, it was quite a different thing altogether. It was a thing, horizontal thing, and it had pieces of glass in it, crystal, shall we say. If I could just show you a photograph, if you like, I can show you a photograph of it, then, so then ... I, when I'd sort of finished with it like that, I turned it up the other way, and put legs on it, because that was the period, perhaps, when I was making things ... '53, yes, you see, when I was making things, and I called them beasts. It was only just a sort of name, name, so that they could be recognised as a family. Ah, here we are, you see. It was made out of that. It was made out of that, you see, there. And then I, I don't know why I changed it, but I did, and I put it up the other way, and made these into the legs of an animal.

Can I just say, this is the "Iron Sculpture With Glass", 1952.

Yes, you could do that, yes.

On page 79 of the book we're looking at. So do you remember, I mean, what's the relationship between this piece, the "Iron Sculpture with Glass", and things like the "Inner Eye", I mean, you're using that combination of the metal and glass.

Well, yes, I was using a bit of glass in those days, because I had this sort of memory of a dream, where I'd seen this sort of thing in a dream. I'd seen a thing, I think it was a fish, actually, and in the middle of the fish, were these pieces of crystal. That was the origin of it, a dream.

Because this piece has got this great energy, because you've got these two parallel lines, which seems to me, rather similar to what happens when you place two figures together, there's great electricity between them.

Well, I had always wanted to contrast two different things, as it were, you know, male and female, small and big, and all that sort of thing, like in the mobiles, you see.

Before we move off the "Idiomorphic Beast", can you talk a bit about the texture that you've given it. How did you achieve that?

This was before I made anything which, the sort of thing which I call solid, that had no plastic material in it, like plaster. It was just a frame, and so in order to give it some sort of rigidity, I used to do a little supporting framework, and this supporting framework formed, as it were, the, the skeleton of a form.

So that texture is actually little spokes, almost, is it? It's not just marks?

They're just spokes, yes. Exactly that, they're spokes. It looks as if that bit has actually been filled in too, with, with some material.

So is that literally the same piece, or it's another version?

Yes, it is, look, that ... like that, yeah, you see, those, those have disappeared, and this has become the thing to support the glass. No, the other way round, actually. That has become a leg.

And the leg is welded on is it? Is that how it works?

Yes. It's just developed out of welding, yes. It's all just welding technique.

And what is, what is the quality that iron has? I mean, why would you have worked in iron?

Well, because it's a convenient metal for welding, iron. Other metals, the non-ferrous metals, are a bit more difficult for welding, or unsuitable, shall we say, for this sort of welding.

And would you now have any interest in making something similar to these? Have you dropped them entirely?

Well, I think once I've finished an idea, or a technique, I don't want to go back to it, no.

And can we just look at one that I find very perplexing.

Certainly, yes.

This one on page 70, called "The Seasons", I find it entirely unlike anything else you've ever done.

Well, yes. This was a contrast again, between the sort of pyramid form, and a framework there, and I think that the trouble was ... I made this, and then the ... there was an exhibition which had a title, "The Seasons", and so I submitted this, in a big form, this is a maquette here, but I did submit a big one, and I called it "The Seasons", because it seemed to me that, here we are, we, we have the sort of, the tree without leaves, and here we have the tree with the leaves, that was the idea, basically, in my mind.

And it's like a ballet, that piece.

Possibly. Because I was ... that, and other things too, I was merely balancing two forms in my, you know, I can't see any more, actually, but, I mean, that was the idea.

I was listening to the radio broadcast you did, and you made an interesting point about the things you found out about balance, when you were doing the mobiles, about balancing a large thing with a smaller thing at different points along the, the stem, and that you seemed to be saying that that related to the way you used pairs of things in later work.

Well, yes. I balance two things, that is to say, visually. Visually, yes, in order to ... I mean, you have, you can have the single image, you can have a single image, yes, that's true, but sometimes, the pair - the negative/positive; male/female; light/dark; heavy/light, and so on - it's interesting too, to be able to balance something. And here's another one, you see, where you get a sort of pyramid thing, and it has a skeleton balanced.

Yes, that's "Later Alligator" (p.104), I mean, that seems to me a more obvious pairing, in that one is a sort of negative, and one is a positive, whereas in "The Seasons", the form seems so different.

Yes, well, you know, I develop all these things, ideas and forms and everything like that, as I'm working. I have no preconceived idea of what I'm going to do.

I suppose, in "The Seasons", it does slightly break out of the idea of straight lines. Is that because that part is made differently?

I'm contrasting two different techniques, really, two different forms.

Can we just ...

Yes, do.

Talk about, talk about how those two different forms were made. How is the left-hand part achieved?

Just welding little bits of welding rod all together, you see, just continuing it, rather like a complicated family tree ... network.

So that's an accumulation of separate pieces?

Yes. Yes. I think the idea originally started with something I made for a showroom, outside a showroom somewhere, because they wanted me to give a sort of idea of sleep, so I did a thing rather like this, an open twiggy, a twiggy network of twigs, and in it, I put a chrysalis, you see, a sleeping thing, that was the idea of sleeping. That's the origin of this.

Oh, right. And does that piece still exist?

No, I don't think so. I don't know what happened to it. It was, it was in a, it was in a street in London for a long time, no one ever bothered about damaging it, but I don't know where it went. Perhaps when they moved the showroom, they took it with them. I haven't heard.

So is this, if you did something like that, it stayed in your mind, and grew into something else?

No, the technique might, but, but I don't know why I did that, because it was all done about the same time, you see, when I was doing the sleep, the leaf, which was probably also a network, rather than a solid shape, in those days.

So, with "The Seasons", the left-hand part of it probably came first?

I had already done something like that, and I'd already done something like the pyramid form contrasting it.

Can you just tell me how you make a pyramid form? How do you begin?

Well, that's very easy. I mean, you just make a triangle, and make it into a pyramid, just by adding another side, as it were, or two sides.

What, you build the framework first, do you?

Outline the framework, and fill it in, yes.

And what did you fill it in with, at that stage?

Well, you see, more rods, more and more rods, and make it rigid. Make it rigid. But, you see, these fan shapes, they're partly to make it rigid, and partly to contain the plastic material, the plaster, which is in the inside. It's just to make it more rigid.

Right. So you build the framework, and then you cover it with this, Stolit, is it, or what?

Sort of, but I fill it, I don't cover it. I don't cover it, I fill it, you see, I shove it in, and then ...

And do you do that with your hands, what do you use to do that?

A spatula.

And is that quite minute work, or is it ...

Sometimes it can be, yes, mmm.

And where ... did the legs begin at the beginning, or do the legs go on afterwards? How does that relate?

Well, I probably ... I may make some of the components, but it wouldn't necessarily be the same technique for everything, but I might make some of the components first and join them together, that's true, in this case, I mean. On the other hand, you see, for that pyramid that we've got here, it might very well have been an object which I had lying about on my work bench, and I've merely used it as a part of the, as a component. It could be.

And what about the stance of the legs? I mean, you very rarely have legs that are absolutely parallel, without any kind of ... gesturing.

No. No. I think that's partly for stability, and partly for strength.

And can we look at "Snapping Turtle" (p.61), which I think comes earlier in the book.

Well, this, you see, is an example of my giving the impression of something solid, rather than the previous ones, which were rather transparent, it's opaque, by welding welding rods all together, you see, and making a surface. That's the, that's the idea there. So that it looks almost as if it's, it could have been solid.

Yes, I mean, I mistook it for being something where you'd actually taken away, rather than ...

Oh no, no, no. It's built up, it's all constructed.

And was this ever joined? Was it always ...

No, no, no.

Because, again, there's that terrific ... it's a bit like ...

It wasn't eroded, no, it was constructed, and just left like that, you see.

And it's got, actually, what a lot of your pieces have, that extraordinary mixture of vulnerability and strength.

Well, you say that, I mean, I don't make any ... I have no intention of doing that, but, I mean, if it has, it's obviously something that I tend to do. Vulnerability, yeah. I don't know about the strengths. Yes, I suppose I try to make things strong, yeah.

Where is that piece now, do you know?

This one?

No, the "Snapping Turtle". Do you still have it?

No, I don't, not at all. No, I don't, no.

Do you ever think about pieces that you've done in the past?

Not usually, no, because that would be terrible if you thought about everything you did then, wouldn't it.

And you've just turned the page to the maquette for "The Stranger", can you say what the development is between the ones we've been looking at, and this, because this was a very important series, wasn't it, "The Stranger".

I suppose so. These are still fabricated things, these are all fabricated, and "The Seasons", and the "Inner Eye", that was earlier, of course. You see, that's, that's later.

"The Seasons", mmm. But can you tell me how "The Stranger" was made? Can we just flip back to that again. How is this one constructed?

Well, that's just pieces of scrap iron, which I welded together to form a sheet, and I've just shaped them slightly to form a sort of rectangle, and then I've added the legs, by ... another form of construction, really, I suppose, and I've added a bit of silver in the middle there, for his body.

And do you remember at what stage, I mean, did you build this centre part, as a cavity, knowing you were going to put something in there? Or what happened?

No. Well, I may have done, I can't remember that one. But, but you see, here we have the surface. The main thing is a sheet, slightly bent, forming a surface, rather like the "Inner Eye", I don't know whether the "Inner Eye" is here.

Yes, it is. I think maybe it's easier

Further? Anyway, the "Inner Eye" was a surface with ribs sticking out of it, you see, that was that. So this, too, is the skeleton and a surface of a, of a solid.

And what about the holes that are in it?

Oh, they were just there. It's scrap iron, you see, so I left them there.

And the roughness of the texture?

That, well, that's the ... on the legs and things like that, that's just the welding technique. I'm not a very good welder.

And why silver? Why is it silver in the centre?

I just happened to have a piece of silver from ... I can't remember quite where I got that from. I think it was from a silver trowel, I can't remember why it was a trowel, but I think it was ... I think it was some object.

Because you went through quite a long time when you did use found objects as part of your sculptures, didn't you.

I wasn't predominantly interested in found objects, but I probably did, yes. I mean, scrap iron is found, isn't it.

Yes. But would you actually have shaped the silver piece, then, to go in, or was that the shape the silver piece was?

I probably shaped it a bit, yes. It was a, a rectangular piece of silver which I beat out. I think the silver was a heritage from the days when I was trying to make jewellery.

I was going to ask you about jewellery. Do you still make jewellery?

No, I don't, no, no.

Why were you making it? Why did it happen?

Oh, I don't know. I just ... the sort of thing that I ... I don't know. I don't know why.

And what about this piece, "Insider", on page 90, this is lots of found objects, isn't it?

Ah, that is all found objects, yes. More or less found, yes.

And how did that come about?

'63. That ... heritage of the time when I was in Italy, and I was making ... I was making something for the exhibition of open air sculpture in Spoleto, and the other sculptor who was also working in Spoleto at the time, he, he was ... what we were, we were invited there, and we were given the facilities for working in, in an iron foundry, a steel foundry, steel, rather, steel. This, this ... factory made sheet steel, and they made it in all different sizes, all different thicknesses, so I was put into the repair shop of this place, and I said, "What have you got for me to use?" And they said, "Sheet steel, any size you like". So I used the sheet steel to make this ...

That's "Two Winged Figures (p. 92).

And I got the big sheets, you see, and I drew the, the outline in chalk, on the sheet, and they cut it out for me, and they made these columns to support it, this is "Two Winged Figures", '62, this is, '62 it was, in Spoleto, with ... this was made in a, in an iron works near Genova. That's right, Genova, that's right. And so this was really constructed from my drawing on the steel there. Well, now, that was what I was making. David Smith was given the opportunity of working in a disused factory which had previously been making something else altogether, and in this factory, they'd been making something, there was a lot of scrap things, a lot of scrap objects, and he had joined them all together and made a little family there. So when I came back from Italy, I thought, "Well, I, I could do that too," you see. "I'll have a bit of fun. I'll, I'll join a few objects together." And I, I found an old hay cart, and it was in a terrible condition, and we got a lot of the scrap iron from it, and I welded them all together. That was the origin of these. Now, these are things which I have only done for my own fun, and they've never been exhibited anywhere. And that was that.

We're looking at page 90.

But the funny thing is, you see, that I made this there, when David Smith was doing something completely different. In fact, his work, up to that point, had always been rather joining found objects together. So, but when he went back to America, he started to do these box constructions too. It's a box, you see, it's not just flat, but it's a box. Each shape has got a sort of thickness as well.

So that's a hollow, is it, inside the green? [i.e. `Two Winged Figures', page 92]

Oh yes, that is hollow, so is the white. You see, you can just see the shape of it. They're sort of wedges, like wedges of cheese, and that's a curious thing, I made, I made this. But it's the only thing I made, I didn't make anything else.

Is this a second compartment at the back of the green box, or is it just the same thing cut slightly smaller?

No, no, it's joined on, but I don't like to join things on straight, I like to make a little thing called "a set", in between two things.

But could it have been a single piece that tapered?

It could have been, yes, like that. It could, yes.

So why, why did you make it?

I don't know, because I often did have things, two bits instead of one. Yes, I did.

And what determined the height it was off the ground?

Well, I determined it, I thought I'd make it that size.

And is that something you do instinctively, or would you calculate it?

No, no, no, I just ... I do it ... they wanted this thing to be in an exhibition in the town, in the town, in the streets, and all that sort of thing, so I made it fairly big.

And therefore, the proportions of the boxes would have determined the height, presumably?

Well, yes, I sort of ... that's part of the design, yes.

And would you have drawn a plan, a bit like an architect's plan, for it? How would you have done it?

No, no, no. No, no, this was ... just ... each shape was drawn on sheet steel, and then I did a diagram to show that this is this side, and that's that side, and the sort of connecting bit between them, so as to make a wedge.

And what would it have it looked like, because we were looking at it from the viewpoint of the white side. What would it look like?

Well, you wouldn't see much of the green side, in that case, it would be mostly white. You wouldn't ...

But the other side of the white is a similar box shape, isn't it.

Well, it's difficult to say that, because it depends from what angle you're looking. But the white, almost certainly obscured the green, in that case. In that case. They were, originally, a different colour, actually, but that's ... as they were, I think, in Denmark, that was. It's coming back here now, this one.

What colour was it originally?

Yellow and black, I think, rather the same colour as the petrol, AGIP, the same colour as AGIP colours.

And why did it change?

I didn't like it! I got ... I didn't like that.

Because?

Well, when it went somewhere else, I changed the colour altogether.

Why didn't you like the yellow and black?

Well, it was rather boring, I thought, I didn't like it.

And had you used colour much before? I mean, it's quite rare to find colours.

I suppose it was, rather, mmm. No, I hadn't, I hadn't, no. I hadn't used colour, no.

Do you know why you began then? What was the trigger?

Well, you can't leave mild steel out in the rain for very long, you have to paint it. I don't know what colour you paint it, you see. Red? White? Pale blue. You can paint it any colour you like.

And was it always going to be two colours?

Well, that was, that's the male and female idea, you see, two colours.

When you do something that's a single figure, and when you do something that's a double figure, is it ever related to how you're feeling? About whether you're feeling isolated yourself, or is that irrelevant?

I think it's irrelevant, but, I mean, no, it's nothing to do with how I feel, no. No. I just think, "No, here's a single figure". "What's he saying?" "Two figures, what are they saying to each other?"

And we're looking in your, the serious book about your work (Eva Chadwick's book on Lynn Chadwick) - Paper Hats - the catalogue of works, at number 320a, "The Paper Hat". How did that one come about?

Well, I think that I probably had a bit of structure left over from something else, a bit of welding material, and I sort of said, "Well, that's a body now, right, I'll give it a head, and I'll put legs on it", that's how those shapes usually arrived. And I'm thinking, also, of having three parts to the body, usually, that's the head, the chest, and the pelvis.

And they're on little stands, how did they ...

Well, I mean, that's because they've got two legs, they've got to stand up, you see, without falling over, so that's very simple, really.

So "A Lying Beast" (No. 323) obviously doesn't have ... which is on this same picture, 323.

Oh, that, no, that ...

How did that one evolve?

That was just a ... well, because I thought, "Well, everything's standing up, I'd better do something slightly differently".

And would you have had some of those shapes, or would that one have started from nothing?

I, I don't usually think in terms of shape, you see, because I'm making a frame, you see, and I make a frame, and then I make it solid. But I don't really think in terms of lines, or ...

And on this page here (148 in the catalogue book), there's a drawing relating to the pieces, do you start with that drawing?

No, no. They're usually things I put in this notebook, just as a list of things I had made, only for that reason, you see. They weren't things, I didn't do drawings in order to make them into sculpture, I always did the drawings afterwards.

Right. As a record.

As a record, just a record of what I'd done, yeah.

So are there hundreds and hundreds of sketch books?

No, no, no. No, no, I did these after. No, no, no, after. No, there aren't any sketch books at all, no. No.

And what about this piece, which is slightly divided, but is still a whole? (319, "Boy and Girl").

Yeah, well, that's before "Teddy Boy and Girl", isn't it.

But is it on the way to "Teddy Boy and Teddy Girl"?

Yes. It would be on the way. "Teddy Boy and Girl", I don't know where they are, but they are just ... well, they're before this, aren't they? What's the date there? I can't read. '55?

This "Boy and Girl" is 1959. Yes, I think "Teddy Boy and Girl" was '54.

'54, '56, I think, yes. Well, it's just a theme of having two contrasting figures, you see, balancing figures. That's more or less what I've always done. I've done a few things which I

thought, I'll tried to do as an experiment. That's experimental work, it's a thing I called, "Skyscraper", or something similar.

231?

Yes.

How did that come about? What are you trying to do there?

I was just experimenting with shapes. Shapes. I wasn't trying to say anything at all. Just shapes. That's "Teddy Boy and Girl" there.

Mmm?

"That's "Teddy Boy and Girl" there. Well, that's one of them, anyway. Well, now, what can we talk about now?

What I'd like to talk about is the whole series called "The Watchers" (Paul Levine, p. 84), which is obviously a very major series, isn't it.

I have "The Watchers" here. I'll take you to see them, if you like.

Can you, for the tape recorder, can you just describe them? Tell, assuming somebody can't see, how would you describe them?

<u>End of F4563 Side B</u>

F4564 Side A

Presume I'm blind, and tell me what "The Watchers" are like.

Yes, well, basically, I suppose, it's my way of saying the same thing as the Easter Island figures are saying, but it's nothing to do with the Easter Island figures, not physically, it's just the same message. These curious figures which I've made more abstract than the Easter Island ones, but they're just looking, apparently, into space, or ... I don't know where. But that's the idea. And it's the ... and the forms are merely to say it the way I want to say it. They're not, in any way, representative of anything. They're just shapes. Blobs on the horizon. You see, the Easter Island things, for me, have this great intensity of, of message, as it were, and I wanted to do the same thing. And I, I can't remember what the date of this is ... 1960. That's when I'd just come here, and that's about one of the first things I made here, then. Yes.

But you must have recognised that you'd made something quite extraordinary with them?

No, not really. I, no, I'm not aware of that sort of thing. All I was aware of was that they, they satisfied me that I had done what I wanted to do, I wasn't trying to do anything specific, but it was just this way of having this intense feeling. You see, they're in the big ones, whereas in the maquette, which I probably did afterwards, of course I did, yes, afterwards ... I've lost it, because it's the actual physical size of these things that matters so much, in this case, in this case, but not always, you see. Not always, either. You can get intensity at any size, it's just a matter of scale really. I don't know. Yes. I don't, you see, my technique is only just a means to an end, although it does dictate the form. Quite often the actual technique dictates what I'm going to do, but as I do it more or less instinctively, intuitively, I can't really explain why I do it. I don't know why I've got these lines here and there, in that particular place, it's the way they just come. And it's better, and it's better for me to let them just happen like that, rather than to be too intellectual about how they should be. Yes, I'll take you to see these "Watchers" later, I've got them down in the valley now, looking into space, more or less.

But when you came to make them, would you have anything like their final form, in your mind's eye?

No, no, no. No, no, no. No. No. I wouldn't have had that, but I'd have the Easter Island figures, the, the message that they were apparently saying to me, anyway, I would have that in my mind, and I'd try to say something more or less on the same lines, I think.

And why do you think there were three in this case?

Yes, I don't know why. I don't know why, with "The Watchers" I had three, and normally I'd have only one or two, you see, the two, sort of male/female, negative/positive, black and white, that sort of balance. I don't know why I had three. Or with the "Elektras" there, I had to have three as well. I don't know why I want to have one in the middle sometimes.

Does it relate back to the whole way you use triangles?

No. No.

But it must have been tremendously exciting producing those, wasn't it?

You see, I can see one figure is all right, I understand one figure. Two figures, yes, you get a balance. Three is ... the intensity. But four would be hopeless, you see, because you couldn't balance four, you're always going to get two and two. But I never, I don't know whether I've ever tried four, but I don't think it's a good idea. You can have a family. You see, the "Elektras", which are three, the middle one started as part of a pair, and then that didn't work, I didn't like it at all, it didn't work at all, because it doesn't really go with anything else that I could do at the time, so that I had to make it into three, and that was all right, into a group.

How do the "Elektras" relate to "The Watchers"? How did ...

Well, it's much later. Much later, the "Elektras". Where are they? I think they're much later, '69 you see, nine years later. And there, I was starting to get a bit of roundedness into it, also a bit of polishing, to get a bit of contrast and colour.

How did you hit upon that, was that accidental? How did you hit on the idea of using polished metal?

I just saw a piece of bronze with a part of it polished, and I thought, "Well, that's very good, that gives me some idea of how to make, make something different in the, as it were ... colour of bronze".

Because you sometimes use it for the breast-plates as well, don't you.

Mmm. Yes, I did try that, because the thing is, I was making the breast-plate, you see, these are breast-plates, and this is the exact example. The "Elektras" had my normal, almost abstract bodies, and I thought, "Well, in order to get the curves, I'll make something slightly realistic somewhere", so I made the breast-plates like that, and the tummies, so that I could polish them. That's why I did it. And, but I also made it quite clear that it was something stuck on to my work, and I sort of made a line round them, as if it was a frame, or a cut-out that was stuck on.

And there are versions where there's more of the polished surface, aren't there. Maybe they're just small ones.

Oh yes, that's right. Oh yes, there's a whole lot, there's a whole family of them there. They're all photographed together. They weren't necessarily meant to be all together, but someone photographed them all together, standing and sitting, and lying, and all kinds of things, you see.

I mean, do you, on this scale, do you see them as being slightly rearrangeable, or is it just they all got put close together for a photograph?

Well, I didn't, I didn't arrange these, actually. They're just arranged for the photograph.

But do you think of them as a sort of extended family which can be brought together, and separated and split?

No. No. No. I think not, really.

And since we're looking at that page (pp. 98 & 99, Paul Levine), can you just talk a little bit about that "High Hat Man", and the "High Hat Woman"?

There again, that's the same period. I was looking for some way of ... having some sort of shiny thing on my work. 1969. It's before, this is before the "Elektras", so I sort of did that sort of diamond shape which I could polish, and the breast-plate which I could polish. I don't think that I really would leave them like that, no. If I had them here I think I would have them all one colour. It doesn't quite work to me.

Did you ever experiment having a whole piece polished?

No, you can't do that, because it's rough, the normal texture of my work is rough, so you can't polish it.

So, in other words, the parts that are polished have been finished differently?

Yes. They have to be smooth, smooth, yes, whereas my normal work, it has always been rather rough. You see, this is very rough, you can't polish that. Well, it wasn't necessary anyway, because ... ... no, I've just seen it.

What?

Oh, I see. No, I was just looking at ... there's some here, I thought it was incorrect, but it's correct, because I understand that they make a lot of mistakes when they're making a book, or anything like that, because they get the dates wrong or something. It's very difficult to proof a book.

Especially your own. And, I mean, between "The Watchers" and the "Elektras", I mean, does one of them seem to you ... to get nearer to embodying what it was you wanted to express, or do you feel they're expressing different aspects equally well?

I'm not usually trying to express any specific thing. It's a general thing I'm expressing, a general ... yeah, a general. I couldn't do a really specific thing. I mean, what would we do, you see? I mean, what ... can you think of an example of some idea that you want to express? I can't think of anything really. They're usually historical events that you try to portray ... or people do try and portray, like ...

But do you have a sense with some of the pieces, that you have expressed something that you didn't even know you were ...

Oh, I'm sure, yes.

Well, in that sense, does the "Elektras" do it equally with "The Watchers", or does one articulate something more?

No, I think they're different, you see. The "Elektras", shall we say, are more refined. "The Watchers" are very rough, crude things, on purpose, because they're representing something very primitive, I suppose, to me.

And do you know where the "Elektras" grew from? Have you any idea?

Well, no, I don't really ... I did, as I say, I did the central figure as a female of a pair, and then I gave her a husband, but I didn't like it really, he was all wrong. And I haven't ever made a suitable husband for her, but I did think, "Oh, well, I'll put these other two things, one either side, to make it three". I suppose the idea of three did originate in "The Watchers", but there again, I don't know quite why.

And would they always be standing in that combination?

No. I actually, they were the other way round, and then, instead of going in, they went out. But I think this is better, that's all.

And what about the distance between them, does that change?

Well, I think they should be as close as possible, like that.

And they're not on plinths.

No, but this ... this is a problem. If they're in a public place, they have to be screwed to something, so they usually are. They usually have special fixing bolts in their legs.

And can you just talk a little bit about their stance, the way they're placed? Did one, did the way one stands relate to the way the first figure was made, or were they made independently, in that sense?

I can't really remember why I did them like that, but I think I just did them ... the little one should be more or less static, like that, and the others should have a bit of movement in them, and I think that's why I, I did this slight twist in the body, the sort of ... the pelvis moving, letting the body move one way or the other. I can't remember why I did it, but I think just to give a variation, I suppose. And it, it makes a sort of, perhaps, a better group. But I didn't do it for that reason.

But they're very beautiful, though, I mean, they must have been tremendously satisfying to have achieved.

Well, I'm always very glad when I've finished anything. I know that I've finished it.

But do you get a tremendous high from it? Do you go round on a cloud for months?

No, no, no, no, no. No, no. No, no. I don't get that. No. A pity. No, I don't, no.

What do you get?

I get a feeling of satisfaction, perhaps it's a high, yes.

And when you'd made those three, would you then have a period where everything went rather latent, after you've finished something as clearly as those are finished and completed, or does it immediately trigger many other things?

I don't know. No, you see, I've never analysed this subject, but I daresay that when you've worked for a few weeks on one thing, and you've finished it, you feel, "All right, let's have a drink", or "Let's go on holiday", or something like that, or "Let's forget it for the moment", to regenerate, I should think. I've never analysed it.

And can you remember the pace at which you worked on those? I mean, I would have thought it must have been absolutely gripping working on it, you must have been longing to get on to it again.

Well, I always work rather quickly anyway. I have no difficulty in working quickly. It, I work quickly in the beginning, to get the frame outlined, and then when it's outlined then I have to adjust it a bit, but then, then I have to strengthen it, and so I gradually go on like that, and it's very satisfying, the actual physical construction of these things, to start with that, the large ones, and then, eventually, it's a question of what I call, "filling them in", filling them in with the solid material, so that you get a surface.

And is the solid material that you used on the "Elektras" utterly different from the solid material that you used ... ... it's just that it's a different finish.

No, it's always glorified plaster that I always use.

But it's the same recipe?

Yes. Mmm.

So, in other words, you've got a very wide range of surfaces you can end up with, using those materials?

Yes, because it's only, it's only a plastic material which you can adjust as you're going along anyway. You put it on with a spatula, and you can smooth it or rough it, or do what you like.

So the polished surfaces are additions?

They ... I ... I think, if this is going to be polished, I have to isolate it so that it can be polished, because the rest of it can't be, you see.

And what about the shape of the heads that's so wonderful? How did you arrive at that, do you remember?

No. I tried all kinds of ways of doing a head, because I didn't want to do a sort of naturalistic head, because that always looks slightly ridiculous to me, you know, people say, "Oh, it looks like somebody or other", or "I don't like the look of that person", so I didn't want it to be related to a human being, I just wanted to have a ... ... abstract, if you like, so that I started with just rectangular shapes, more or less. There isn't one here.

I think there might be later.

Oh yes, here we are. "The Watchers", you see, just a sort of rectangular thing.

And again, divided up.

By adjusting the angle slightly, you can give them ... I give, for me, anyway, as if they were saying something, this one is saying something different from that one, with the angle of this rectangle.

Do you think of them as having their own language, almost literally?

Not really. But if I look at them now, I could imagine that, yes, if I look at them now, yes.

And do you think of them as having another place which would be their place? To me, they have an aspect of ... on the one hand, they're totally self-contained amongst themselves, and on the other hand, I feel as though they belong in some other world, as though they're here as temporarily.

Well, yes, you can imagine them as coming from another world, you can do that, yes, in a way, if that helps.

But I don't think of them as being ...

These are the same, it's all the same, all these couples.

We are now looking at the sitting figures.

They all have their own thing to say, or express, or whatever.

Well, can we just talk about these, since we've turned to them, we're on pages 106 & 107 of the book, and these are quite solid sitting figures, with fairly solid clothes, fairly solid fabrics on them. When did you start actually introducing the idea of fabric, because it's a sort of wonderful contradiction between the solidity and the softness that you've managed to convey, of the fabric.

Well, I think the, the answer to your question, really, is, is that I didn't do it for that reason. I, I had the fabric, as you call it, the clothes were for a different reason. The clothes were, when I had a single figure on two legs, it wouldn't stand up unless I had another support somewhere else, like a third leg, and so some sort of cloak, that gave me the support, that was what it was for. It was just for practical reasons, in the beginning, and so I, I merely used it as part of the design and, and form, and so on, afterwards.

And is that the same explanation for the wings?

Yes. Yes. Well, the wings, partly, yes, if they're touching the ground, but also, the reason for the wings was because of my technique in working, I have to contain the plaster, Stolit stuff, when it's setting, and so it would, it would ooze out, shall we say, unless it had a sort of cage to contain it. So the wings were, originally, a way of having a thin form, wing-type form, to, and the, the rods were in fan shape, usually, in order to contain the drying, hardening plaster.

I suppose it's things like the wings that make one think of myth. It's the combination of the human form and a bird form, isn't it.

Of myth, did you say?

Mmm. And hence you start thinking of another place where they might come from.

Well, I don't, you see, not really. I don't think that way, but it could very well be something out of my subconscious that's saying it, but, I mean, I don't think of it like that.

What about where you've got, later on, I think it's the "Jubilee Pair" isn't it, the 1977 one, where ... this pair, the 1983 pair, you've actually got a cloak and a sort of ... I don't know what you'd call this part, you've got the pairing and the paralleling there, which you haven't got before. What's going on there? (This is pages 100 & 101).

Yes, yes. Well, because these were an enlargement of a tiny little thing which I originally made, and I don't know why I did it like that, I don't know, but I wanted to have something up high, and if it was just all down below, you see, it wouldn't be the same thing at all, would it. You see, if that was ... it would just be a figure with a cloak, but that gives it sort of more of a sort of ... flying.

But it is one of the rare instances when there seems to be an element that's put in, that absolutely isn't there for a purpose, such as keeping it upright, or balance, or whatever, and again, it's that extraordinary bit of excitement between the parallels, and the space between, the relationship between them. I mean, in a way, it's exploring some of the ideas you've used before in a different way.

No, I, I've never thought of it that way, actually, but I can see that other people can see things in it that I can't see, mmm.

But it's one of the rare instances where you've got an element in it that's not essential for keeping it upright, isn't it.

Yeah.

It's a sort of ...

Well, part of the design, in that case, the design, yes. I can't remember how that wing, sort of the flowing robe behind like that, I don't know where that came from.

Can you remember what you felt about these when you made them?

No. It's a long time ago, you know. Well, not really, only 11 years, 12 years.

And so is there iron underneath the bronze? Is it still the same ...

It's a frame like the ... all the other things. They've all got an open frame ...

Of iron.

Yes, of mild steel, yes. There's a cloak coming in the front, you see, a skirt, in order to balance it.

Well, these are very very different, the "High Wind" ones, because you're actually using a much softer, more human bodily form, aren't you.

Yes, yes.

How did that evolve? Because these again, they seem to me, quite different from the others.

Well, I was really trying to get a figure in the wind, and how am I going to get it to stand up, you see, with only two legs? So I had to have a skirt coming to the ground. Now, the latest one I've done, has no skirt touching the ground, the skirt goes up to the front, like the other one went up to the back, and I've had to do it by screwing the legs to a base, so that it is, in fact, cantilevered from the base.

Was this series triggered by watching people in the wind, at all? Is it more naturalistic in the way it's evolved?

No, I was just looking for some reason, in order to, to do this idea of a skirt being rather tight round the body.

But somebody made the point that you're, in these pieces, you're reintroducing the idea of movement. That you've gone from the movement, literally, in the mobiles.

Well, yes, I like to get a bit of movement in my work, I do, yes. But normally, I mean, unless they're meant to be sitting of course, that's different. But if there's ... mmm. And, I suppose, "The Watchers" are static. Well, static, yes. Yes, they are static, yes, "The Watchers".

And does "The Watchers" imply that they're watching something in particular, or not?

No, it's just the title I gave them, I mean.

But you later changed it to the "The Presences", didn't you? Didn't you later decide they should be called "The Presences"?

Did I say that once?

Well, somebody said you did, I don't know whether they were right or not.

Well, I don't know. I don't think they are, no.

And what about the title, the "Elektras", where did that come from?

Oh, because "Elektra" means "shining one" in Greek, you know, I just thought, "Well, they're meant to be shiny, so I'll call them 'Elektras'". There was also a person called Elektra, we know that.

But again, that came afterwards, it wasn't in your thinking at the time?

No, I just, oh no, in fact, I just had to think, "Now, what ..." ... Yes, Elektra, I remember that, but I said, "What does it mean?" you see, and it just means "the shining one", so I thought, "Good".

And I suppose one difference between the sort of seated figures that have the very abstract heads, and these girls in the "High Wind", the seated ones, to me, are always rather regal, and god-like and mysterious, whereas these are much more human.

Yes. Well, I suppose we have to have variation, don't we.

But she, for example, would be ... the girl in the wind, has less to do, to me, and maybe wrongly, with the Easter Island feelings.

Oh yes. Oh yes. They've both got movement, yes.

But she's also more usual.

She's getting rather human, yes. Yes, she is human, yes.

And do you feel differently about those? I mean, it must be a different relationship when you're working with them.

Oh yes, mmm.

Do you know how it's different?

Well, because I am, shall we say, influenced by the fact that I've got to think of how, how a human being would actually move and, and ... what would happen with the clothes in the wind? I had to think of those practical things as well.

And is that as an exciting an idea to you, for you, as the more formal pieces, the more abstract pieces?

Well, I don't ... I don't really think that way, as it were. If I'm doing this, I want to do this as well as I can, whichever way it is.

And did you try out other human pieces, you know, to do with humans moving and doing other gestures?

No. No, I don't, no. Not really, no. What, you mean, doing other things like jumping up in the air, or on a trapeze or something? No, I don't think of that ... dancing. Not really. There's a one dancer here somewhere, but ... but it was only I thought, "Well, they seem to be dancing", so I called them dancers.

And what about the ones ascending and descending stairs?

Oh, that was, really, just a sort of idea of the contrast. I mean, I'm contrasting various shapes, so I thought I'd contrast the movement of legs going up and down stairs, so you get the legs, the knees bending one way, then the other way.

And why did you suddenly come up with that? Did you suddenly notice somebody doing it? Or where did it come from?

No, I was really thinking, "How else can I do these curious figures of mine? How can I do them? What shall I do with them? What can they be doing?" Because they'd been sitting and standing and all that thing. "What shall we do now? Let's have them going up stairs".

And why does an idea like that, you go on and you do them again and again and again, and you get very gripped by them. What is it you're exploring each different time?

Look, basically, I'm trying to think, "Now, what can I do in the way of sculpture? What shapes can I make?" That's right. "What things can I ..." well, shapes, it is shapes, yeah. "How can I use the human body? What can I do with it?"

End of F4564 Side A

F4564 Side B

... before we had a break, while we are talking about the figures going up and down stairs, there's also that very exciting parallel in the steps themselves.

The steps themselves, yes. I think the base of any sculpture can, of course, be an object in itself, and it can be, it can be. I mean, I've often thought, "Well, all right, I'll do a great big cube, or two cubes, or a cube, or something like a cube, and have a small figure somewhere near them", for instance, for some public place, that might be quite an interesting idea. But I haven't done this, because I don't really want to enter the field of abstract sculpture, at the moment. I mean, because I almost came out of the abstract, you see, so I can go back into it again, of course, I mean, a building is abstract sculpture, and I can see that I could make a composition of abstract shapes, cubes, or things like cubes, or pyramids. I could do that, I can do that. But I don't know that I really want to. I, I just do what comes into my head next now.

I suppose, in that sense of being the, the sort of rooting part of the sculpture, the steps are similar, in a way, to some of the stands on which the mobiles were on in the beginning, when they were becoming more and more solid, when they stopped being hanging pieces, and were actually ground pieces. I suppose the function is almost the same, isn't it, although it's been transformed.

Well, the steps are not, I haven't actually designed the steps as objects in themselves, because that would confuse with the sculpture, so I tried to avoid that by having them as transparent as possible, although you're quite right, it could very well be something in itself, the steps.

And just one thing, before I promise to give you a rest. The cubes that you've got around, are they your cubes?

No, they're not, they're by some American artist, I don't know whether it's a sculptor or a painter, who lives, I think, in New York, I don't know. I bought them in Miami, I bought them in a gallery in Miami, and they're quite ingenious really, they're made out of different coloured plastics all moulded together, and it's very clever, really.

They're lovely.

You can turn them round, and they form different patterns.

And, presumably, the tower that's outside on the mantelpiece is the same?

Yes, that's an earlier example of the same person's work.

Do you remember his name?

No, I don't. It's awful, isn't it. [BREAK IN RECORDING] "The Young Visitors", do you remember "The Young Visitors"? Mr. Saltena was little mere, he was mere! (LAUGHS) It's a lovely way of expressing the feeling of mere. (LAUGHS)

Just to test the recording levels, what was the name of the painter whose work you just showed me that you bought his whole show?

The ones you saw upstairs are the paintings of Terry Eylot.

And you said that you bought almost his whole degree show, is that right?

Yes, I did.

What was it you liked about his work?

Well, first of all, it's, it was outstanding amongst the young people, the students, and I thought it was ... had sort of something to say that young people don't usually have, that's all. And I was, I was very impressed with many of the young students, who happened to be a vintage year at Cheltenham Art School.

And do you keep in touch with what's going on there?

No, I don't. I don't know what's going on now, actually. No, no, because ... no, I don't need to.

And did you actually have a formal connection with Corsham, which cropped up as well.

Not formal, no. Informal. Informal. And had a lot of friends who were either there as students or ... not friends, but children of friends, or even the staff, I knew some of them.

And one of the drawings you've got upstairs is a little one by Kenneth Armitage. What's the story behind that?

Well, he was just a friend of mine, and I just knew him rather well.

And did you buy that, or he gave it to you, or what?

I think that was a gift, yes. I don't know what that was quite, it was just a sort of scribble he did, you know, for me, as artists tend to do that sort of thing, scribble a little thing, "Have this".

And there's also a watercolour you did in Jamaica.

Well, yes, that, for instance, I was staying there, and we were invited somewhere for the weekend, by some people who had a small gallery there, and they were giving me a show, I think, and sort of, I thought, "Well, I'd better give them something, a bunch of flowers or something", and "No", I said, "I'll do them a little drawing of a flower", and somehow I did it, but in a very dark room it was, and I thought it was a complete failure, so I didn't give it to them, that's all.

And did you go to Jamaica quite regularly?

Well, we had a house there for a while, or at least, shall we say, we had a house, and I went there for a while, I went there from about '83 to '86, or something, but I wasn't terribly happy there. First of all, I don't like these long air journeys, because it's a long long journey, and then there's a long journey at the other end as well, and I don't need all that much heat either. But I did go there. It was very beautiful where we were, extremely beautiful place.

What made you go there in the first place?

Oh, someone said that I could get some property there extremely cheaply, I was told. It wasn't true. But I went there, and Eva, Eva, my wife, was very keen on having something in the heat, with the sea, so that's really why I went there.

And is that where she goes off to, for her hot summer holidays?

Well, she did sometimes, yes. She's given it up now, because it's not all that pleasant to be in Jamaica now.

And did any of the landscapes there have any effect on your work?

No, no. I'm not, I'm not really affected by landscape, shall we say, if you mean in my work, no. I like rolling landscapes, and you could say that they're a bit sculptural, rolling landscapes, not, not mountains, not peaks, no, but rolling ones are quite interesting for me. But I haven't done anything like that in my work. Peaks maybe, but I didn't ever think of it as that way, and I was never influenced, as it were, by mountains.

And what about the culture there, anything?

Culture? Where?

In Jamaica.

Well, I did meet some of the artists there, and I've seen some of the shows there, I somehow, I feel that really, you ought to be familiar with it before you can appreciate it, really familiar with it, and with the mentality of the people who do it, to understand it, because it is a bit alien for most people. I know, I know that people tend to like it because it is exotic. But I wasn't influenced by that, I just like it because it meant something to me, and somehow or other, didn't have all that significance.

And how did they respond to your work?

I don't know, really, because I ... no, I don't know at all. I really don't know.

But you did have a show there, did you?

I had an exhibition, but I don't know how they responded. I really don't know, because first of all, my things don't really have any connection with their work, and we're talking about the Jamaican artists' work, they're quite different. They tend to do things which are sort of ... related somehow or other, to their culture.

And, apart from, we've talked about you going to France quite a lot, and also now to Jamaica, were there any other countries that you went back and back to?

Not really, no. I went to Jamaica, because someone had said I could find a wonderful place there, which I did, then ... earlier, I had found a place in France which I rather liked, and I used to go there, because it just happened that that was where I went. I mean, I could have gone somewhere else, I might have gone to Italy, or Greece, or somewhere, but it just

happened that it was France, and I sort of felt fairly comfortable there because, first of all, the language wasn't too difficult for me, and the French culture I found very easy to understand, not so much understand, but accept. Accept, yes.

And did Italy ever mean anything to you?

Not really, no, because I couldn't speak any Italian, and I think that I would have not been quite as happy there, except, yes, on a different scale. It might have been marvellous to live in some sort of country place there with ... ... happy peasants, shall we say. Happy peasants. And the Italians have this wonderful characteristic of being able to accept visual things very well, especially sculpture, you see. There's no other country, that I know of, where sculptural form is appreciated so much as in Italy. Heritage, I suppose, from the Greek days, handed on by the Romans.

Where do you see that expressed?

In almost everything they are interested in. They're interested in sculptural things, yes. I can't specify anything specific, because I can't quite see it in their gardens or anything like that, but they, they do love three-dimensional work. They understand three-dimensional work, apparently, because they like it so much.

And have you had shows there?

In Italy?

Mmm.

In a private gallery I've had three, probably three or four. In a museum? Well, no, not really in a museum, except for the Venice Biennale, that's not a museum.

So did you feel that the Italians have a rapport with your work?

I didn't have a chance to find out how the Italians felt about my work at that time, no. But they do, normally, do like anything which we call sculpture, yes. They do, yes.

And in 1962, you went out to Ontario to be an Artist in Residence there.

Yes.

How did that come about, and what was the experience like?

I was, I was invited. I can't remember quite why. I can't remember why, but I was invited to be Artist in Residence in Ontario, in Toronto, in the Ontario College of Art, or somewhere, and it just happened that I hadn't any reason to be invited. There was no reason why I should be invited to Canada. Let me see. No, not really. No. No, I had no connection with Canada, apart from the fact that my first wife was Canadian, but that wasn't the reason why.

And you went to Toronto, did you?

Yes.

And what were you given? Somewhere to live and a studio, or what was it?

They gave me a sort of studio in the Ontario College of Art, yes. They gave me one to work in, and I produced a lot of work, because that's all I, I was supposed to be Artist in Residence, therefore, I think there was the assumption that I would also sort of mix with the students, and talk about their work or something. Well, now, I didn't know quite what to do about that, so I said that I would be very glad to meet them and talk, talk. And they were invited to come and see me any time they liked. That's how I did it.

And the work you did there, was that work you think you would have done here?

Yes. I just carried on doing whatever I do.

And what kind of response did you get out there? Were people interested?

You know, the trouble is that we don't always know how we are received by, by whom we are received, first of all who. There's the reaction of the press, there's the reaction of the dealers, there's the reaction of the people who buy the work. So I don't know. All I would know is that some gallery would probably want to show my work, but that's about all.

But you didn't sort of make any special friendships with the students, or with anything that's carried on from that time?

No. No, no, no. No, I was only just passing through.

But presumably, a lot of people I know who have gone abroad on that sort of thing, the facilities they're given, and the interest in their work, is much greater than in Britain. Did you particularly find that?

Well, in my case, it would be difficult to find anywhere with less interest than in England, so it was certainly ... gratifying, to go anywhere, really.

And can we just pick up on something. When we were in the chapel, looking at the two pieces in there, you explained to me a bit more fully about how the ... [BREAK IN RECORDING] ... Can you just tell me on the tape, what you were telling me in the chapel about ... you were explaining to me a bit more about the surfaces between the armature that you have, and you were talking about where you had pieces of coal, coke.

No, this is only the sort of fabrication technique. I had to find some way of making the things, that's all. And so I found that, well, as a matter of fact, it's very curious, if you like I'll give you the story. When I first started to do these things, I found that if I, if I used plaster, the stuff which I call Stolit, if I used that only, it was very expensive, because, I mean, I was living in this small cottage, and I was working in this old cow shed, and, and so it was very expensive, and I had to bring the sacks of Stolit there, across the fields, so I found another way. I filled them with, with something else, I've forgotten now quite what it was I was filling them with, but it was a, it was a poet who said to me, "Why don't you fill in with coke?" And I thought, "What a good idea", you see, because it's light, and available in those days, available, because you had coke from the gas factories, gasworks, because in those days, they did make gas out of coal, they don't any more, I know it comes straight from the bottom of the North Sea. But in those days, they did. So it was quite a good idea to use this coke, and I used to make walls of this coke all round the thing, so they were hollow in the middle, to save weight again, because I had this problem of ... carting these things about, anyway, because they were quite heavy when I'd finished them, and I had no help. So I used to have these walls of coke, and then cover the outside of the coke with this plaster, which we call Stolit.

But didn't you say that after the coke, you then came out with another surface, and it's now ...

Well, I, you, you put the Stolit on just to make it continuous, and then you smooth it, yes.

But you don't still use coke, do you?

No, I don't suppose coke's available any more. I think it's a thing of the past.

What do you use instead?

I believe there's something a bit like it. What do I use? Well, at the moment, I'm ... we're making a sort of wire mesh, actually, it's a thing called expanded metal, on the outside, in between my frames, the cage as it were, and then into this ... expanded metal, we, we plaster on the plaster. It's a technique we learn.

Mmm. And that was why I couldn't understand what kept the surface in place.

Yes. You really need to, of course, see it being done, and it's very simple really, or have a movie film of it, or something. It's very simple, really, but, I mean, it's difficult to explain, that's all, in words.

And can we just pin down, up until now, where has your main workshop been over the last few years?

It's been in a, in a ... what do they call it? Industrial ... industrial unit, in Chalford.

And what did you have? You had a storage space and a workshop?

I had, I had a store where I kept a lot of my old work, and a workshop where I could actually weld, a welding workshop.

So would you go every morning into the workshop?

Yes, I prefer to have a rather metronomic life - getting up at a certain time in the morning, going off and starting work at eight o'clock - this is what I, I prefer to do. And then I get the whole thing sorted out in the morning, when I'm fresh. And in the afternoon, I just continue. It's easy. And sort of drift on in the afternoon, more or less.

So would you come back to this house for lunch?

Well, yes. There ... metronomic again, to have lunch.

And usually with people? You wouldn't have lunch alone?

Well, the family would be here, yes.

And you've recently had to give up the store, haven't you. Can you just describe what it was like, because it was unforgettable going there.

Well, it was a fairly large unit, I don't know quite how long it was, it must have been about 70 yards long, and 30 yards wide, nearly. Nearly, not quite. And it was a very convenient place, because it also had an overhead gantry, so I could lift the things up on this gantry, and move them about.

And roughly how many pieces do you think you had stored there?

I haven't counted them, and they're all over here now, in the barn here, just crammed up together. But I must have had ... including the small ones, the tiny ones, I suppose, three, four, five hundred.

And did you sometimes go in there just to look, because it was an extraordinary place.

No, I didn't, no. No, I didn't. I walked through it sometimes. But I don't ever, I'm not a sort of a person who likes looking at his old work, no.

I never went into your workshop, is it very tidy, is it chaos, has it got lots of pieces going on?

No, I try to keep it fairly tidy, otherwise, otherwise I can't work. I like to keep it tidy, you see. Once I get in a mess, I can't sort of ... walk about so easily. You haven't been there, no. No.

So what would be in it today? If we walked in now, what would I see?

Well, I can take you there to show you, but, I mean, there's nothing there at the moment.

Absolutely empty? Not a tool in sight?

No, not quite, no. It's got all my equipment there.

Which is what?

Welding equipment, I've got gas welding equipment, and I've got another small hoist, a small gantry, a small one.

And is there any work in progress at the moment?

No, because I haven't been working for a while, because of my bad knee.

And you were saying you've had, you've actually been considering giving up the work space.

Well, it's only that we're contracting a bit at the moment.

And, going back to the actual sculptures, can you talk to me about the way the "Moon of Alabama" came about (PL, p.81). Because again, that's rather a sort of different kind of work.

No, it isn't really. Here again, you see, this is a three-dimensional shape, and it's filled in in the same way as all the other things are filled in. But the interesting thing about the "Moon of Alabama" is that it was the origin of what we later called "The Beasts", because I had this "Moon of Alabama", and I sort of cut it in half and put legs on it, you see, and I, so that I had ... I don't know whether there's a picture here. Here we are, yes. But this thing was originally ...

What's that one called?

"Beast 16". That originally was the "Moon of Alabama", or something like the "Moon of Alabama", very very close to it, you see, there. And some of the legs may have remained, but that's what it was. And it was originally like that, and I cut it in half and stuck the head on, and that sort of thing.

Does that suggest, then, that you found the "Moon of Alabama" unsatisfactory in some way?

No, no, no. I was just economising. I mean, I really can't remember. It's a long time ago, what, '57, yes. I can't remember why I did it.

But you didn't pursue the "Moon of Alabama" shapes, did you.

No, I didn't. No. No, no, but I'm keeping that for my old age!

And it reminds me, talking of "The Beast", you've got a tiny little teddy bear up on the shelves, and I asked you where it came from, and it led you to tell me how "The Beasts" became known.

Well, it was this young French student, a girl, a French one, and when I had made it, because I made this in Corsham, this big thing I made.

Which thing?

Well, it no longer exists, but it was a thing which was meant to be a diagram showing the development of a certain industrial company, and it had all kinds of things sticking out of it, you see, these were the various influences in the company. And when I had it there, I had it on legs, and so this girl said, "Oh, it's not sculpture, it's a beast", so I, I always called them "beasts" after that. This gave me an idea to give it a title, because we're always looking for titles.

Why had you done this diagram thing?

Why?

Yes. The piece that made her say it's like a beast. You said it was charting the development of a company.

Oh no, that, that's what it was, it was just an abstract representation of the, of the company, you see.

But had they commissioned you? Why had you done it?

Well, yes, I was doing it for an exhibition, I think, a building exhibition or something.

And then she gave you the bear?

She gave me the bear because I, you know, because I just knew her, yes.

Could you tell me about the piece you did for Manchester, which was called "The Sun"?

Well, yes, an architect asked me to, to make something for the face of a building. This was a bit difficult for me, because it was rather necessary to have it flat, as it was on the side of a

building, and it wasn't sort of in line with anything that I'd ever done, so I couldn't think what to do flat. So I thought some sort of thing, sort of thing like the sun, or something like that, which I had already thought about before, well, might be an idea. So I, I made this big composition of various, I suppose, circular panels, representing, I thought, if they did ask me, because it was for a physics building in Manchester University. I said, "Well, it's sort of something to do with atomic research", so I said, "Well, I made it ... atoms", you see, like that. But it was a very curious thing which I made in this room. We made it on the floor, in clay, and I, I covered the clay in, in fibre glass, that's right, and so that I had the negative form of it in fibre glass, that's how I made it.

Had you ever worked with fibre glass before?

No. It's horrible stuff too, but I, and I ... no, no, I haven't used it since either. But it was just my way of producing the thing fairly economically.

And you used gold leaf as well, didn't you?

Well, that was the architect, he wanted it covered in gold leaf.

And what did you feel about that piece?

Well, it, it ... last time I saw it, it was all right, really, but nothing on a building satisfies me, I don't like it. I don't like things stuck on buildings.

Have you done anything comparable?

I mean, there's a lot of work on buildings in London, you know, and that's all, nobody ever looks at it, because they're always too busy looking at the pavement. No, I don't think it's the right thing to do on a building, unless you want people to look up.

Have you done any other pieces that were at all comparable?

No. Not at all. The interesting thing, when I say that nobody ever looks up, they don't. If you ask anybody, "What do you think of the frieze at Liberty's, in Regent Street?" They'll say, "What frieze?" So all you have to do is go there and look at it, it's an enormous frieze, vast. I don't know how tall it is, eight feet tall or something like that, and it goes all the way round the sort of curved building. But nobody ever sees it. It was made by the ... a sculptor, who was a friend of my mother's, and when I was thinking about being a sculptor, a long time

before I ever did anything about it, a long time before, many years before, she said, well, she knew this man, Thomas Clapperton, and I'd better go and see him, because he'll give me advice about being a sculptor. So I went to see him, and he said that it was a very unwise thing to do, because there was absolutely no money in it whatsoever, and so he dissuaded me. That was a long time before. That was when I was still a schoolboy.

And if somebody in a similar position came to you now, what would you say to them?

Ah, well, nowadays, I'd say, "If you really want to be a sculptor, and you really have a feel that that's what you are able to do, do it, and don't bother about it. Just do it".

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F4565 Side A

Have you ever had the possibility of working with an architect on a building, from the beginning, and on a building in a landscape, where you have had a place?

No. Has anybody? I don't think anyone has!

Never even been within sniffing distance?

No, no, because modern architects don't need anyone else, they don't need it. Their building is, to them, their work of art, sculpture, and they may, sometimes, be persuaded, shall we say, to put something in the ... whatever they call the entrance, the vestibule, or whatever it is, they may sometimes have a mural of some sort, but I haven't, I don't know whether they do or not, I mean, I'm just thinking that they might. But the actual thing of putting anything on to their building is redundant, you see, because their building is supposed to be perfect once they've finished the drawing on paper.

And, going back to your standing and seated figures, the ones that are ... actual figures, but not ... I'm not thinking about the girls with the blown hair, I'm thinking about the more abstract pieces, one of the reasons I think they're so vulnerable and so elegant, is that they've got these relatively thin necks. Were the necks always that thin? How did you arrive at that?

I don't know. One is tempted to say economy of material, but I don't know.

And what about the fact they have no arms, did they ever have arms?

No, I never knew quite what to do with the arms. I never ... they're a bit awkward. In fact, I always thought, really, the Venus de Milo is much better off, because she's got no arms, that's how I looked at it. So I didn't really bother about the arms, because I wouldn't have known what to do with them, you see, because there was, in some of my early work, I've got arms, but they're very sort of reduced arms.

And when you were doing the wind-blown girls, did arms crop up there?

No, I'd already forgotten about arms by then, a long time before that, yes.

Arms are out.

I'd already worked out a technique for doing something that didn't need arms, and a lot of people don't notice that there aren't any arms, that's what I can't understand.

But I think that's because they do have a sense of being absolutely complete, and self-contained, they don't look as if they're missing something.

Well, I don't know why, but I mean, they ... nobody ever says, "Why don't they have arms?"

Well, yes, it's quite a shock to realise they haven't got them, actually!

(LAUGHS) I mean, you could do it without legs, but, I mean, I have to have them standing on something.

I suppose it's because a certain amount of their structure does relate back to the bird forms, and we accept that birds have legs and no arms.

Yes. They either have to ... birds either have to hop, or do that rather ridiculous thing with their heads that pigeons have to do, mmm.

Is that because of balance?

Yes. They've got no arms, you see, so they have to either move their head like that, or hop.

Right. I don't think I'd realised that. And what about the ones we're talking about, the slightly abstract figures. What about the head shapes, how did those evolve? Because you have a sort of, often a male head and female.

Well, just as an abstract shape, because if I had ... like "The Watchers" are abstract in many ways, you can look at them as abstract, or you can look at them as humanistic or whatever, or inhumanistic, you can look at them like that, if you like. But their face can't be a human face, because it would be a contradiction, you see. So I have to do a head, which is a sort of blob, then later, I sort of refined them a bit, and made them into triangles for, especially for the women, triangles for the women and rectangles for the men.

Why do you think that it became those two? One was male and one was female.

Well, I don't know. When I had a pair, it was necessary to contrast them somehow, and the triangle for the woman was quite good, because it indicated either that she was wearing a hat, or that her hair was done up in a certain way. But it's just an indication, so as to get the actual model, the two models together, the male and female one, so that she wasn't ... not too much smaller than the male, because that didn't seem right, especially these days, you see, you mustn't have the female thing in any way reduced in importance, shall we say, physical importance.

Because, actually, with them, you tend to make, you give the females female characteristics, and leave the male fairly plain, don't you. You don't make the males male.

Well, it's meant to be as male as I want him to be, I don't have anything sticking up on him to make him look male, I don't want that. No, just that the, it's the impression of maleness and the impression of femaleness I want to give.

But, in a sense, the impression of maleness comes from the absence of the female characteristics you give them.

Mmm, possibly. It depends on who's looking at it.

But you have said somewhere that you want them to have gender rather than sex, which is presumably what this is achieving?

No, the sex thing would be tricky. I don't see any point in bringing sex into this sort of thing, anyway. I'm not sure whether it should ever come into what we call art, anyway. I'm not sure. It would only detract a little bit, or distract, rather. I think. For me, anyway. I mean, perhaps some people might require it, they wouldn't be able to enjoy it without.

I don't think it's got to that point! And could we just look at these kind of works that you've done, which is on p.210 of your catalogue of works, and they're the Pyramid Series, and the stars, these types of work, which seem to me, again, to be very different from the main body of the work.

Oh yes. This was all experimental work, just experimental. It was an experimental period altogether. These and something else. These. These things.

What page are we on now? 199.

Yes. All these things were experimental. I didn't continue them, because I thought they might lead to something, but, but I didn't want to continue.

Can you remember what the trigger was, why you began them?

Just ... ... seeing what would happen if I did this or that, really, that's all, whether it would lead on to some other idea or form, or something.

And why do you think it didn't?

Because, I think that, fundamentally, I was going towards, I don't say figurative, but humanistic. I don't know what is the word, what is the correct adjective for what I was going towards. More to do with people, anyway. People, if you like, but, I mean, not just people like that.

And also, can I ... yes, I wanted to ask you about "Diamond", which is on page 240 of the catalogue of works.

"Diamond"? Which one's that?

It's this, I think. 596. What's that one?

Well, it's just one of these trials, trying to find surfaces which I could polish, getting some flat triangular surfaces, I think, that's all. It was all experimental in those days. I did, later, I did make, or I have made, rather, I made a model, and it was, shall we say, translated into stainless steel. And there was one put in a new building, or complex of buildings in Paris, and the exhibition was opened by none other than the now President, Monsieur Chirac, and I even shook Mr. Chirac's hand, at the opening.

This is quite different from the one you did for Citroen, is it?

It wasn't Citroen, it was on the Citroen site. That's it, yes. I've forgotten the name of the complex of buildings there.

Can you describe that one?

Well, it was very much like this, but bigger.

Like a diamond.

But much bigger, yes. And we, I called it "Hello Paris", just for a title.

That had colour in it, didn't it?

Yes, it was. And I'm afraid it was very badly shown, it was in ... and it was quite the wrong sort of thing to make for this site. If I'd have known what the site was like, I'd have done something different. Or if I'd known what else was being shown, around ...

What was wrong with the site, then?

Well, I think that it was a bit dark, actually. Normally, stainless steel has an enormous advantage in that it doesn't matter where you put it, you can ... in slightly dark, but if you have a thing with plenty of facets on it, one of them is bound to shine and make it look bright. But this one, somehow or other, perhaps because I'd painted, or made some of it blue, it was a bit subdued, and it didn't shine up enough. Not nearly enough, no.

Was it lit?

I don't remember. It was daylight when I saw it.

I mean, do you think of your work in terms of being lit at night? Do you ever ask for it to be?

Certainly things like that could be, yes, if they were properly lighted they'd look rather good, yes.

And was that piece rather similar to the ideas behind "Palm Beach Blue", the one you did in 1988?

Well, I think that was a series ... "Palm Beach", if that's what the ... it's almost the same thing, as far as I remember. I did this thing for somewhere in Miami, it was a ... I've never seen it there, and I don't think it was very well shown, either.

That was blue as well, wasn't it?

Probably, mmm.

And can you tell me about using the sheet steel? I mean, why did you start doing ...

I don't use the sheet steel, the stainless steel, I don't use that myself, because it requires a special type of welding of stainless steel, and you have to be an expert, and I wasn't going to dabble about in something I couldn't really do. So I got, what I did was, I made a diagram model in the form of a wire frame and someone else measured all the dimensions of all the various triangles, and heights, and everything like that, from the model, and enlarged it, and it worked very well.

Mmm. But you've worked in stainless steel quite a lot now, haven't you?

Not really, no. In this year or two, whenever I did them. I haven't done any since.

Because there are some outside, aren't there.

Yes. Yes, well, there are some, yes. And for me, a bit difficult, because I don't think they go quite so well in a natural surrounding, but we'll see what we can do. But really, they'd be best with a modern building, you see, a modern building.

Is it less satisfying working in that material than in bronze?

Less? Well, it's a completely different result, of course. No, they could be all right.

But you obviously are not involved in the texture of it in quite the same way that you are with the others.

I don't think I've ever ... well, some of the ... the sort of beasts, shall we call them, animals, they look all right in it.

And what makes you decide to do things on a bigger or small scale? I mean, you've got very very large stainless steel beasts, and we've got little beasts that are slightly bigger than hand-held, and the same with the "Elektras".

I don't decide. I just, I'm either making small things with a view to enlarging them later, or sometimes, if I'm having an exhibition, it's a good idea to have things of different sizes, because if everything is at the same size in the exhibition, as I used to have, have everything

more or less the same size, and all placed together, it looks rather boring, that's all. So I like to have them at various sizes.

But if, in a gallery, I see a little piece of yours that's fitted into a glass cabinet, on a shelf, that is a piece in itself, isn't it. It's not necessarily meant to be a maquette?

Well, I try to get the scale right, you see, so it doesn't matter whether it's big or small, it's the scale is right, that's what I try to do. Whether I succeed or not is a different matter, but, I mean, that's basically the idea.

But the small ones exist entirely in their own right. They're not there just to be ...

Well, they should. They should. There aren't any here at the moment. There used to be some here, but, you know, I'll try and find you one if you like.

But they're not ever meant to be only there to be made into large sculptures?

No. No. Everything should be its own size, but some little things, sometimes I think, "Well, now, that little thing could be big", you know, quite apart from the scale, because if the scale's right, it could be big anyway. But I somehow think, "Now, that would be a good thing to use for a big one".

And with something like the "Elektras", would the little ones have come after the big ones?

I think they did, yes. I think they did. You'll have to look at the dates to find out.

And one thing that we haven't really talked about, am I right in thinking that with some of the bronzes, you've got the texture by pulling some sort of comb through it when it was wet?

Yes, I have done that, yeah. It's a sort of comb, yeah. A plasterer's comb, actually, for sort of ... you do a preliminary smoothing of the plaster with that first, and then you do it with another one afterwards. But that's what I ... I did use that, yes. You see, sometimes, sometimes, also it was, in the beginning, because the Stolit doesn't stick to itself so well if it's smooth, so sometimes I did that to roughen it, so that I could get another coat on. Sometimes. But I think that to give it a bit of texture is quite good, especially for checking the quality of the bronze casting, because they can't fudge anything if it's got detail in it. They can fudge it if it's smooth.

When you say "fudge it", what do you mean?

Well, the ... any, any mistake, any fault in the bronze, they could fill in usually and just cover it over.

You mean if they've missed the surface, or something?

Well, if it's not perfect, they can easily do it, if it's smooth. But if it's got a texture, especially my rods and so on, sticking through, it's difficult to get those right. So you can tell a good casting for that. But I mean, it's only a sort of superficial reason.

And, presumably, there is a, a sort of shared agreement about the thickness of the bronze. Should it be the thinnest possible covering? How should it be?

I think it's better to have it as thin as possible, yes, because then it's lighter, and they get heavy enough anyway, even when they're light.

And what would be the difference in what you're exploring, between doing the seated figures and the standing figures? What is the difference, for you?

How do you mean, the difference?

Well, why would you do, say, the two seated figures that are in the landscape, instead of doing another pair of standing figures? I mean, what is it you're exploring?

Oh, I see. No, variation, that's all. Variation to ... different, so as not to get bored with my own work.

And when we were looking at "The Watchers" that are out in the landscape, you were talking about the surfaces of the faces, that they're not smooth, they're ....

No, that is much earlier work, of course. That's '59, is it? Mmm.

But what did you tell me out there about the ... why they're not smooth, what you were liking to get as the surface?

Ah well, that is, instead of having one flat surface, I sometimes make it out of two different surfaces with a slight distance between them, that is to say, a little step between the two. To define them, to define two.

And the step between the two is, presumably, filled in in the same way we've already talked about, is it?

Well, depends. I mean, it could be filled in with another piece of steel, you see, a sort of flat steel, it could be. It could be filled in or, with ... Stolit ... I mean, I had a choice.

And is there anything else you did, apart from the process with the plasterer's comb, was there any other thing you did to get the surfaces as they are?

Surfaces? Mmm.

The textures.

The texture, you get an automatic texture if you have a sort of fan tracery armature for holding the Stolit in when it's, when it's soft, you see, before it's set.

And do you actually get pleasure from dealing with the Stolit, or not?

It's quite satisfying to work with Stolit, yes, mmm.

And do you, when you're working, do you have silence around you? Do you have music on, what do you have?

No. You see, if I'm welding, I can't hear anything because of the welding noise, and otherwise, no, I don't actually have the music, but I could, I could have music when I'm doing the Stolit, the plaster. I could have music then. I haven't, as a matter of fact, I haven't, no.

And when you were having your what you call your "metronome existence", what sort of time would you stop work?

Well, any time between five and about eight, I sometimes used to work a bit later if I was trying to finish something for an exhibition, but not, I wouldn't, I don't normally work in the evening, like a lot of people do, because I work in the morning, they don't usually work in the morning.

So it takes quite a lot of stamina, really, it's quite a long day that, and it's quite a physical day.

Yes, but you don't seem to notice, I don't notice it much.

And at the moment, you said that you feel rather suspended, that everything's slightly on hold.

Well, yes, because I'm ... for several reasons at the moment, yes. Several.

And have you a vision of work you might do in the future, or not?

Ah no. I never think ahead, I just wait until I'm ready to work, when I'm feeling fit enough to work, and just work.

And just one or two sort of odd questions that are left now. You've got a public piece at Harlow New Town, is that right? Do you remember which that one is?

Yes, I think it, I think it's called "Trigon". Not a very satisfactory one.

Why is it unsatisfactory?

Well, I could do something better for that site, that's why.

Was it made for that site, or they came and chose it?

No, no, no. Someone chose it for it. Someone chose it, I mean, someone who happened to be on the committee for it, they said, "Well, we'd better have one of his work", and they thought, "Well, this will do", that sort of thing. I know that's how it was.

And do you get any pleasure from having work in public places?

I don't know that it is still there, by the way. No, no, I don't know, I don't know. If ... I like them in public places if people are happy to have them there, and sort of if it does them any good, yes.

And there's also a piece in Bristol City Art Gallery, I think, do you know what that one is?

No.

You don't know what that one is.

I've forgotten which one they've got. I think that's, that's a small thing, which was given to them by somebody who bought it from me. I think.

And you started to do lithographs, I think, from about 1971. Why did they happen?

Before '71 I did, I did a lithograph in Paris, in something like '60 ... ... in the early sixties, anyway.

Why? How did it come about?

Well, I just happened to be staying with someone in Paris, and they said, "Why don't you go and do a lithograph?"

And what was it? What did you do?

I did something of sort of "Teddy Boy and Girl", sort of thing. The date of the "Teddy Boy and Girl", you see, just because ... I'd never been faced with a lithographic stone before, and having to draw on it was terrifying for me, because it's so definite, you see, you can't rub it out or anything, it's awful! And anyway, I don't know the technique, so it was rather frightening. And then they showed me the various things you could do to make it interesting. It was all right.

Where did you go to do it, do you remember?

Well, he was a man called Pons - P O N S, in the Rue de Lions - L I O N S, I think. I think. A long time ago you know, it was a long time ago.

And how did you find it? Were you pleased with the result? Was it what you thought it would be?

I was amazed! I didn't know that it would look like that at all! And don't forget, you see, you can have it any colour you like, too, that's the wonderful thing.

And you've gone on and done more?

From time to time, because there are people who collect lithographs. There are other people who publish lithographs, they publish them in sort of portfolios of, of various lithographs, especially on the Continent they do these things. And I was invited to make a portfolio for this person or that person. I did, but I was never very satisfied with this sort of thing. I don't like doing that. If it's anything to do with drawing at all, I like it to be spontaneous, and just do it quickly, and that's the end of it. But to have to think very carefully, "What am I going to draw on this piece of stone?", is not very agreeable for me.

And can we just talk a little about the ... whether you felt well dealt with by your galleries? You were first with Gimpel?

No, well, I'm, I'm quite happy. I now know of course more about the whole thing and the attitude of a gallery towards artists, I know more about it. But I was always terribly happy to be shown at all.

And how did you get on with, we talked a little about Gimpel at the beginning, but how did you get on with Marlborough, and why did you go to them?

Well, they offered better terms, not only in money, but also they were prepared to do all kinds of things for me, and I thought that was a better offer. But, in fact, I might have been just as well off to stay with the first people. You see, a dealer, art dealer, can only do something for you if your work is in demand. They can sometimes push people, they can, who are ... one or two artists have been supported by dealers in a big way, so that this, what the dealer is interested in is pushing the prices up, obviously, you see. Well, this helps the artist too. But, I mean, basically, he's only interested in artists whose prices go up. It's as simple as that. There are one or two dealers I have met who are actually fond of art, but they're rare. It's a funny world.

Because you had quite a few years where you weren't showing with a London gallery, didn't you, you had a sort of gap period, I think.

Well, I haven't had a show much for a while. I don't know, I had fairly regular shows in Marlborough.

But before Marlborough, I think you'd had a bit of a gap, hadn't you?

Well, only because ... I don't know that there was. I don't know that there was, really, no.

And you've shown more recently with the Beaux Arts Gallery. Are they very good supporters?

In Bristol? I mean, not Bristol, in Bath.

Bath.

In Bath. Well, there again, it's a question of the dealer, he will sometimes think, "Oh, I'd better show that person", and they ... if they're enthusiastic about pushing that artist, they do. And they're very successful. No, that one is very successful.

And presumably, now, you get quite a lot of sales direct, through people coming to you?

No, I don't have any at all.

You don't?

No, no, no. That would be most unusual. It could happen, but it's very unusual. It would be very unusual.

And, I mean, Daniel's mentioned a couple of times, work of yours coming up in auction.

Ah well, that's because people sell it.

Do you tend to be aware of it? Do you feel any interest in it going to auction?

No. It's Eva, my wife, who is interested in that, because she has to think about what ... the prices are that they're getting, because she has to say how much the thing is now, you see, she has to act as a mini dealer, you see, so she's interested in it. It doesn't affect me at all.

And she's really been very crucial in the last few years, in terms of the administration.

She's worked all the time, yeah.

And have you always been in agreement with her about what should happen? I mean, is it amicable, that side of it?

Well, we may have smaller disagreements, but, I mean, on the whole, I leave it to her, because it's much better, it's much better for one person to deal with one side of it, and the other one ... and I'm only just the labourer, really, and produce the work, and that's, that's very much better that way around.

And can you just fill me in on what the pattern of her life is? You said she's actually a counsellor now.

Well, I think she's, basically, interested in psychoanalysis. Well, now, to be a psychoanalyst means at least, apart from your own analysis in itself, being analysed yourself, which may take 10, 20 years, you have also to spend at least seven years in the school in Zurich. Well, that's very difficult for her, you see, to be a real properly qualified one, yes.

So what does she do instead?

She's doing counselling, and still studying psychoanalysis, Jungian analysis.

And did you ever consider having anything like that done?

No. I don't, I don't think it's a terribly good idea, unless, I mean, for an artist working, it's unnecessary. If he's working, he really doesn't need any analysis, because sometimes the mere fact that you have a slight problem there is a good stimulus for the work.

So are your lives here sort of running rather in parallel, with you on, the times when you're not slightly suspended as you are now, you are focused on your work, and Eva's mainly focused on hers, but she's also doing the admin for yours ... a sort of bridge.

Well, ... Eva, shall we say, is more cerebral. She's able to adapt, or use her mind in different ways. I can't use my mind at all. I just can use my intuition and my sensibilities.

So when you stop work in the evenings, what do you do? How do you spend the evenings?

Well, usually, I'm pretty tired in the evening, but it's difficult ... in the old days, I was tired from working, and now I'm tired because my eyes get tired.

So what do you do?

Well, I try to stay awake until the nine o'clock news, and then that sends me to sleep.

So, basically, you have dinner and relax a bit, and then go to sleep?

Well, relax, yes. I try to relax all the time actually, but ... yes.

Do you sleep?

Sleep? Yes, I sleep all right, yes.

Do you dream?

I suppose we all dream, you can't get away from that, but you don't, you don't usually have access to your dreams. I mean, I don't at all, I hardly ever remember dreams, hardly ever. No. But some people do. Because, don't forget, the only time you remember the dream is when you're waking up, that's the dream that you ... the last one, where your conscious mind and your subconscious mind, are just sort of passing together, and one passes on the message to the other. But normally, we are unaware, really, of what's going on in the subconscious mind. It's only just that in that waking period your conscious mind catches it. It's like, as if it was a continuous movie, video thing going on in your head all the time, and it comes on, it's there all the time, but your conscious mind can only see it sometimes. It's like that.

And, given that there's lots of new technology, I mean, you mentioned videos and movies, but obviously the new technology that we sometimes talked with Daniel about, do you feel any interest in that, or not?

I think that the new technology is beyond a person of my age, and it would be silly for me to try, because, look, our reflexes are so slow as we get older, it would be dangerous. It's like driving a car, you have, really, to be careful as you get older. You may think you're still young, but you're not, and your reflexes are just that teeny fraction of a second too slow. Very dangerous. And it's very dangerous if you think you're all right.

And given that you say, at the moment, you feel rather suspended, how, for example, did you spend yesterday? What did you do yesterday?

Monday?

<u>End of F4565 Side A</u>

F4565 Side B

Monday, yes. Or the weekend, I mean, how have you spent the last few days?

I haven't done anything at all interesting for other people, I mean ... no, nothing.

Have you spent it sitting in the chair you're sitting in now?

Oh no, no, no, no, no. I usually wander about, or think, "Oh, what does need doing in the garden?" you know, "What shall we arrange here or there?", or the valley where we're working at the moment, producing these new arrangements in the valley. I think of things like that.

So do you see people who are working on the landscaping every day? Is that continuous?

Do I see them?

Every day. Are you involved with them every day?

Oh yes, mmm. Mmm.

And at the moment, they're busy putting in more pools, is that right?

Yes, well, at the moment also, yes, they are putting them in, and they're getting things ready for the summer, in the vegetable garden, shall way say. All kinds of things like that are happening. Yesterday was Monday, wasn't it. Was it? Yes. Well, the gardener comes on Monday, the gardener comes on Monday only, just to organise the vegetable garden. So I saw him a bit.

So, really, you're gently administering the land?

Well, I always have taken an interest in it, you know, a little bit, but I'm taking more interest now than I used to, being able to, because I was always working.

And does somebody come in to clean the house? I mean, it always looks immaculate.

Yes, somebody comes in in the morning to do the sort of routine cleaning, you know, one room a day, as it were.

Because it always looks incredibly orderly.

Well, you see, we don't make a lot of mess. It's only houses with lots of children screaming around, where you get a mess, I think. And so long as you put everything away in it's place, it's not too bad. Once you have too many things, and you can't think where to put them, and you just put them down ... I tend to do that in my bedroom, you see, but if you put things where they should go, it's pretty easy.

So you and Eva are both fairly methodical people.

I think Eva's more methodical than I am. But I should like to be, shall we put it that way. To tidy up books anywhere, but where am I going to put it, you see. You think ... well, it's difficult with books, because you need to have a library.

And what is Jean's role in the household?

She is sort of the housekeeper/cook, really, for Eva, so that she can go off and do her counselling without having to bother about looking after me.

So usually, it's the three of you in the house together, really?

And Daniel sometimes comes over, as you saw, and at the weekend there's sometimes somebody else.

So there's plenty of solitude, and just enough society?

Oh yes, plenty of solitude, yes.

And you were saying earlier that you don't really feel you terribly want to see many people.

Ah, no, I do. I do. But the point is, I find it difficult to find anybody that I feel happy talking to. Put it that way, really.

And what is it you think you're looking for?

Oh, we're all looking for companionship, everybody ... that. I suppose we can have periods when we are obliged to be alone and concentrate on something ourselves, that's all right too.

But generally speaking, most people feel a need of ... that's why the two figures, you see, you need to have two.

And what, for you, is companionship? What do you look for in a companion?

This is sort of sharing, and being able to say something and the other one saying, "I don't agree, but ..." this, that and the other, and gradually sort of discussing a matter. That's companionship. Or sometimes saying, "Oh, look at that. Isn't that marvellous". And the other one says, "Yes, that is marvellous, isn't it". But there's nothing worse than someone saying, "Isn't that marvellous", that's something you've just seen.

And what are you proudest of?

Proudest? Pride is not a thing with me, really. I'm not a terribly sort of proud sort of person. Proud? Gratified, I would say. By what? I don't know. I suppose we're all very pleased when our children do anything out of the ordinary. But proud? No. I'm not a proud person.

And if things were to go as well as they possibly could, how would you like the next sort of five years to go?

Well, I have to answer that quite truthfully, is that I suppose, really, it would have to be fairly quiet for me, quiet. Not too, not too jolly, I think. It would be dangerous for me to try to have an exciting time now.

And what would you like to do in this quiet time?

Well, just sort of wander about with someone who, whom I could talk to, mmm.

And what about work in the next five years, if everything went very well?

Well, if I could find the right conditions, I'd go on working. And I don't know what the work would be, but I could work. There are all kinds of things I could ... I could do sculpture, or I could do drawings, or paintings, I could do all kinds of things, if I was in the mood. And there's no reason why I shouldn't be able to do the work, it's just the mood, I don't get in the mood.

And do you think you need the focus of a big exhibition coming up, or anything like that?

No. Well, that's a good driving force, that's true. That is true. It is true, it is a, it is a driving force, yes, mmm.

And have you got shows lined up at all?

Not in the normal sense of the word, no. There will be all kinds of exhibitions of my work, but it will mostly be retrospective work from now on.

Mainly in England, or not?

No, it won't be England, no. I'm just thinking ... where will it be? Oh, I'm going to have one in London early next year, or, or either late this year, or early next year, or even late next year, which is ever the best time for having exhibitions, because I leave that to the, to the galleries to say when I should have it, what time of the year is best for them.

What gallery is it?

Well, one will be Gimpel, and the other one will be Berkeley Square Gallery.

So you've gone back to Gimpel?

Well, I'm going to have an exhibition with them, it's not a question of going back, because they're not sort of ... I'm not going to be tied to anything.

And are there particular things you think you want to show, or not?

Well, there's, there's my existing work. They're having a retrospective show which is, Gimpels, the likely thing, because that's what they like to do is retrospective. They'll show that. And the other gallery will probably show whatever they think is still available for selling, probably.

And do you feel British?

Mmm?

Do you feel British?

I think that English people do tend to feel British, yes, they tend to, regardless of what they say.

By the way, the sculpture that's ... the 1977 piece, that you called "Jubilee", is that to do with the Royal Jubilee?

Well, it happened to be done in Jubilee Year, yes, to give it a title, I mean, you know how it is. It's best to give a thing a title if you can, rather than "sitting figure" or "standing figure", and this and that, or a number, that's rather cold isn't it.

And can I just ask you one thing. Andrew Forge wrote an article about you at one point, a man called Andrew Forge. Did you know him at all?

I've met him. Did he actually write about me?

Mmm.

I'm very bad at remembering people's names, you see.

And he said he thought that ... I think this was quite early days, that you were slightly influenced by Graham Sutherland. I just wondered what you felt about that.

Well, you can hardly say I was influenced ... what, in my painting? (LAUGHS) No. I, I admired the, the work which Graham Sutherland did during the War, you know, that ... I like that, because, I mean, I was still, in the War as a sailor, and I saw one of his things, and I thought they were rather good. But to be influenced by him, no.

And you don't very much go to exhibitions now, is that right?

No.

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END OF INTERVIEW

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