

## IMPORTANT

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### THE NATIONAL LIFE STORY COLLECTION

#### INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

#### Title Page

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Ref. No.: C466/94

Playback No.: F7831-F7832;  
F8044-F8045;  
F8495-F8498  
F10198

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Collection title: Artists' Lives

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Interviewee's surname: Butler

Title:

Interviewee's forenames: Rosemary

Date of birth: 1930

Sex: Female

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Date(s) of recording: 09.11.1999; 11.02.2000; 29.06.2000

Location of interview:

Name of interviewer: Gillian Whiteley

Type of recorder: Marantz

Total no. of tapes: 9

Type of tape:

Mono or stereo:

Speed:

Noise reduction:

Original or copy:

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Additional material:

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Copyright/Clearance: Full Clearance

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Interviewer's comments:

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SUMMARY OF CONTENTS BEGINS ON CONTINUATION SHEET 1



F7831 Side A

*This is Gillian Whiteley interviewing Rosemary Butler on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1999. Well Rosemary, it might be good if we could perhaps start with your grandparents, if we could perhaps...*

Yes. I think...I can't go back as far... On my father's side, he was born in 1884, so that's going back a very long time. And...

*That's your father?*

That's my father. He was...he would have been a hundred and something now, so it's sort of... He was born in Scotland, in a village called Symington. He was...he went to school in Kilmarnock, and then he went to Glasgow University, he was a very, very clever man. He studied medicine, and he became a biometrician, an anatomist and an anthropologist, and I think one of his big claims to fame was that during the First World War he took all the information about the wounded that came back from the front and their treatment, and the results of their treatment, and this was a huge sort of, amount of work that he did. He was offered the OBE for that but refused it because he felt that he didn't fight and what he was doing was not as worthy as fighting, but of course it was far more...well it was far more important. He also studied...well he became part of the Medical Research Council, and studied measurements. He was also a statistician and did a great deal on measurement, and he worked on some of the old sort of, in the anthropology line, some of the old skulls were brought to him for measurement and that sort of thing. He was given...he worked...he was given a place in University College where, he worked there, and... Stop a minute. Sorry.

[break in recording]

A lot of his work was, he wrote papers on measurements of, especially children's teeth, and women's, sort of measurements on women's thighs for childbirth and all that sort of thing. And one of the things that I always remember, because...was that, he used to, on Saturday mornings he used to take me to London, I must have been

about six, he used to take me to London, into University College, and I was sort of allowed to play around with various things, where busloads of children used to come up from the East End, and these children were, all the measurements were taken for their teeth and their condition of their teeth. And then he used to write, he wrote papers on the diets and how the diet affected the teeth of these children. And after this, you know, after the children had all gone away, I was taken to a restaurant in Tottenham Court Road, which was called Flemings, and my childhood memory, it was sort of tiled... It was considered posh amongst the people, you know, sort of people at University College, and where they all went. And as far as I can remember it was tiled with sort of bench tables. And I was given lunch at Flemings, and then I was taken to London Zoo as a treat in the afternoon. And this happened many, you know, sort of, almost every Saturday I was taken up to this. My brother...I was born in 1930, and my brother was born in 1937, and I don't know, but I think my mother had difficulty in getting something in between, but she did tell me, not so very long ago, that my father felt fully happy, and a completed man when he got a son, which made me feel vaguely...he was of a generation that, one's line. You see when he was...if he was born in 1884, he was a Victorian really, and he was of the generation that, you had to have a son to carry on, and a son was the...daughters were all very well, but you know, all the money had to go into the son and everything. So, my brother was... Very very sadly, my father died three years later, so that was when I was ten and my brother was three. He had...he had tuberculosis, both types of tuberculosis, he had glandular tuberculosis and also pulmonary tuberculosis, and he was, a lot of the time was incredibly ill, I remember him as being ill. But I do remember him a lot also sitting by the fire in the sitting-room with a leather suitcase on his knee, a brown small leather suitcase, and he used to be writing calculations on this in the most minuscule, tiniest, tiniest spidery writing. I still have some of it, because, I mean how do...you don't know how he could have seen it almost, but it was... And he used to sit there endlessly writing, doing his sums and calculations and everything. He was...he was a very modest man, and very kind, and very, sort of, looked after his mother and he looked after his sisters and, you know, that sort of thing. Anyway he...he...I can remember him, as I say, being ill, and he went to, at one time he went to, towards the end of his life he went to Papworth, which was a very, you know, it was the lung hospital. Because he was at University College and because he was very important, very high up in his department, the anatomy

department, he had, you know, treatment, and all the best doctors and everything were looking after him. But he was sent to Papworth, and, this would be in 1938, and, I have letters from him to my mother describing the treatment which he had, and what he had to go through, and before the war it was, to me, I mean I actually read the letters, and I couldn't believe it that, you know, it made you cry, because of the barbaric treatment. And being a doctor, he knew exactly what they were going to do to him. And he had to keep having this treatment done. Perhaps I should go back to my mother, who was born in 1901. She was younger, quite a bit younger than he was. She was born in Hull, and her father and mother...her father worked on the, my grandfather worked on the railways. He was born, the grandfather, my grandfather was born in Cumbria, what's now called Cumbria, and was on a farm up there, but then he moved to Hull and, where the work was in those days, because there wasn't any work in the country.

*So that was your grandfather...?*

That was my grandfather, my mother's father.

*He was born in Cumbria?*

Yes.

*Do you know the village?*

Yes, near Crosby Ravensworth I think it was, near Crosby Ravensworth. Up there. He was William Buckle, and there are still Buckles up there I think.

*Is that B-U-C-K-L-E?*

Yes, B-U-C-K-L-E, Buckle. And, he then married somebody who was also...but she was from Barton-on-Humber, and I think... There's a very interesting story. I think my grandmother was hired out to, almost adopted, by somebody in the big house, because she was one of many and was deprived, so I think...and I think she was also illegitimate, and she was then adopted by this person in the big house in Barton-on-

Humber, and... Anyway, somehow my grandfather met her, and they married. And then, to get...eventually... Oh my grandfather had a, we have cuttings of him, he apparently, while he was on the railways between Hull and somewhere else, he...his train was...he was a fireman, and his train was going in one direction, and he saw a child on the line, and apparently at full speed he leapt off the train and the child then...and he lifted the child out from the oncoming, of another train, and of course was awarded various medals and things. But anyway, they moved down to Neasden, which was near the railway yards. And apparently my... My mother had two sisters, so there were three girls, and my grandfather I think was very, incredibly strict, and incredibly...now you would be calling him Tory, blue, very opposite from what, you know, the normal people were. And my mother can remember, she told, used to tell the story of him, picking up his...during the...when was the General Strike?

*1926.*

It must have been then. That he was, he used to go, he was determined to work and he used to go through the, take his thing and go through the lines, and he was about the only one that went to the train when everybody else was, you know, on strike, and he was sort of, very determined that he should keep working. Anyway, he, he was on the train that went between London and, through Shap Fell, he was a fireman on this railway. And, my mother I think was the one that had all the drive, and she was always determined to get out of her situation, come what may, you know, and so she, she was very clever, and she won a scholarship to the Northern Polytechnic, and then she generally learned typing and needlework and all that sort of thing. And, she, as a typist I think she worked at the Medical Research Council in Hampstead where my father was working at the same time. So, and, they met there. I'm not sure, it must have been about 1920-something, just after the war. Because my mother must have been about nineteen or twenty. And my father, who was again, what, sixteen, seventeen years older than she was, anyway he wasn't married, and was very, you know...by sort of knowing him, one would think that he was too shy almost to get to know women and that sort of thing, but he fell madly in love with my mother. And, I think that his family felt that she was beneath him, you know, not good enough, and my mother was determined to marry him, because she realised this was in a sort of way, a way out of her situation, because here was this, this doctor who already had a

reputation for research and that sort of thing. And eventually in 1928 they married. And, continuously his family in Scotland, who, you know, his uncles and various...and especially his sisters, felt that he was very, you know, marrying for too beneath him, because... I mean Mummy was really a typist, and an engine driver's daughter, so, you know, that was terribly below them. But, my father, I have letters, and he was just passionate, you know, unbelievable, because from this very austere man that I can only remember always wore a hat, you know, and was outside, and was sort of very thin, and very undemonstrative, was obviously desperately in love with my mother, which was... I was born, as I say, in 1930, and... Oh they, they had bought a very sort of nice house in, just outside or near Esher, in Surrey, it was a sort of, in a road, and it had just been built, and it cost £1,000, and if they put the alabaster lampshades in it, it was £200 extra. Because we've got the bill, you know, the original bill for this house. And, it had a nice sort of front garden and back garden. And my mother lived there until she, she left the house in, when she was...about 1987. She lived there all, all the time, through thick and thin.

*So that was a very important place for you in your growing up presumably?*

Yes, well I lived there... And interestingly enough, I've only moved, from there I moved temporarily to, when I was at university and that sort of thing, and then I came here. So I have never, I have only moved really twice in my life. No, it's... Whereas some people nowadays, that's very rare, because nowadays people are moving all the time, you know, when you look at my daughter who has lived here, she lived here till she was about twenty, but now she's already moved three places, you know, and that. It's, you just keep moving, it's a strange...it's a strange position to be in.

*Mm.*

Anyway, where was I?

*Could I just take you back to one thing. You said quite a bit about your grandparents on your mother's side; you said your father...your father came from Scotland?*

Yes, yes.



*Did you not...how much contact with the grandparents?*

They were dead, they were dead.

*Ah, right.*

You see, I... My father was what, 1884 when, in 1930 he would have been...

*Right.*

...already... Yes, I never met his... I did meet his great-aunt, who was a very important person in their lives.

*Were they a well-educated family?*

No, no they were just farmers. They owned their farm, but they were just farmers.

*Right.*

And he had...they had...there were eight children, four brothers and four sisters, and my...two of the brothers went to Australia, and was it...no that's wrong. [pause] No, because there was...I thought there were eight. Anyway, one of the sisters... Two of the sisters[sic] went to Australia, and worked on a farm, and married two sisters in Australia, do you see what I mean, two others.

*Oh I see.*

Which was very interesting. One of my... And one of his sisters went out, and I do remember the story about, you know, when they went out to Australia, it would be 1918 wouldn't it, just after the war I think, and she went out on a troop-ship, and my father had to give her a medical certificate about, you know, because they were supposed not to, the women were not supposed, couldn't be pregnant when they went there. And she didn't tell him that she was pregnant. And I think she lost the baby on

the...I don't know quite, you know, there was... But anyway, so there were three of them went. They were desperate in Scotland, there was no work or anything. One of my father's brothers became Professor of Pathology at Aberdeen, Aberdeen University, and another was just a farmer, so that's...yes, eight children, three brothers, three boys and five girls.

*So were any of them in the First World War then if you...?*

Yes, my uncle, the younger uncle, younger Uncle John, who was Professor of Pathology at Aberdeen, he was in Black Watch.

*Was he?*

And of course this...he went out to fight and everything, and was captured, you know, and we've got pictures of him. But, this bothered my father apparently, because he felt that, you know, he was...he was...couldn't go, because he, you know, the... Where he worked there was a man called... I've got it all. He was working then, he had come down to England, he was working then at the Medical Research Council under a man called Dr Brownley, and this man wanted him to do all this research on all the wounded, and their treatment and how successful it was. So in a way, I mean it's quite...I mean it's the sort of Pat Barker period, you know, he was doing his work at this time. And he wasn't...they really requested that he should stay and do all those things.

*Mm.*

But...

*So it was incredibly important...*

Incredibly important.

*...the work that he was involved in.*

Yes, incredibly important work. But, he felt that all these people were dying and really... You know, as...at that time people, you know, you felt that you had to go out to the trenches and do your bit, you know, because if you didn't you weren't considered a true man were you, you know. There was a lot of criticism of...which people sort of...those that stayed at home were criticised. But no, I mean his work... And it was passed on to, I imagine one could access it now at the Ministry of Pensions, after it had all been done. But it was a huge, huge amount of work, because if you can imagine, all the wounded that came back from the trenches to this country, to the hospitals, and their treatment, and the success of their treatment, is a most enormous thing.

*Mm. How did he actually carry out the research then? Did he...or do you know, did he have to go to various hospitals all over the country?*

I think it was all...I think it was all brought in to him where he was...he was at this time at Hampstead, at the Medical Research Council, and I think all the information was fed in and he just had to... I mean he just had to feed it into, you know, sort of go through it all and... I mean don't forget they didn't have computers then.

*No.*

And you know, when I think, I do remember going up to University College and to his room, and there was this, I can remember now, this adding machine, and you know, you pulled levers and it clanked and it did other things. And when you think what research he could have done now if he'd had access to a computer.

*Mm.*

It was...it was extraordinary.

*So he was at...when was he at U.C.L., when you were a little girl then really?*

Yes.

*Is that where he was working?*

He was in the Anatomy Department when I was...

*Where was that based? Whereabouts is it in London?*

Gower Street.

*Gower Street, in Gower Street is it?*

Yes. He was there... I have got details and things, but I... I suppose from about 1928 on.

*Was he? Mm.*

Till 1940 when he died.

*He died, right.*

Yes, yes.

*And what was his actual position there then? Do you want to have a look? [looking at records].*

Oh gosh.

*It's OK. So we're just looking at... Ah, is this your...?*

That's my father.

*Right, that's your father, Matthew Young, right. We're just looking at the Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology from 1940. And it's obviously an obituary written.*

Yes it is an obituary.

*Mm, about him, about your father. And it mentions his position...*

Well these are the people here who he worked...that was 19... Yes, this is the bit that... [pause]

*I'm just looking if it says there, oh sort of, what his actual position was there. Was he a professor or...? No, he wasn't a professor.*

No, he wasn't...he didn't actually become a professor, he... Later on he hoped to be I think but he wasn't chosen, which was desperately disappointing, but I suppose a good thing, because he died, you know.

*So he taught students?*

Yes, he taught anatomy and anthropology.

*I'm just looking at the photograph, he is quite an attractive man isn't he, he must have been.*

Oh yes, oh yes. Oh yes, extraordinarily.

Yes.

A wonderful man. I mean he was...

*Is that...how do you remember him? I mean do you remember him as being a very...?*

I remember him as a very gentle...not too much fun. I can remember him sitting on the beach in... I mean he used to come and... My mother was completely the opposite, she would have, all the time have huge fun and that sort of thing. I mean... But I can remember him sitting on the beach, we used to go to the Isle of Wight, and he would be sitting on the beach fully dressed in a suit, in his hat, with his suitcase on his knee, in a deckchair, writing, doing his calculations.

*He was always working then was he?*

He was always working. Otherwise, or gardening, he loved gardening. And I think his dream would be one day to become a, go back to Scotland and be a farmer. But the garden was grass and beds and pretty flowers, and roses and apple trees and things. And that garden stayed like it was until my mother left the house.

*This is the house at Esher?*

Esher, in, at Esher.

*Can you describe the house, what it was like?*

The house was built in 1928. It had a bow window, which in those days houses had. Four bedrooms, two fairly large ones, one at the back which was smaller, and then a box room. It was...it had a sort of, through sitting-room with a French window at the back and window at the front, a dining-room, and a small sort of, a kitchen, which had, I still remember the dresser, which had sliding doors and, and to begin with of course it had a stove which heated the water, no central heating or anything, just this stove that heated the water. We did have a maid, again this was...we had varying maids, who used to come either from Scotland, from the very poor areas of Scotland. Because people in those, '28, '29, girls were incredibly poor, so they came down for domestic service. And we had one called Agnes. And then the other time we had a maid from Kerry in Ireland, because again the girls, there was no work at home and they came to England, and my mother had...they used to wear a sort of, they changed their clothes half-way through the day, they wore caps and little lace aprons, and green in the morning and black in the afternoon. And, they just... Goodness knows what my mother did, I don't know. As far as I can remember, she...they used to play bridge, had bridge parties, and the maid just looked after me. She wasn't a nanny, she was a maid, because she had to be up in the morning and clear the fire and all that sort of thing. But when you think what my father was earning, was just pathetically small. In those days an academic was not earning very much. Because when he died he left so little that within three weeks my mother had to go out to work. You know, literally

nothing, I think about £1,000 and just the house. Didn't even have...he didn't even, hadn't even completely bought the house. So you know, they were earning incredibly little. It was all right as long as they were alive, but when they were dead they, you know, didn't.

*But they always maintained having a maid, did they have the maid all through your childhood?*

Yes.

*Or someone was always there?*

Yes, we always had the maid, you know. And then a sort of man that used to come in and garden.

*Mm.*

So it was a sort of comfortable life.

*Were you very close to the maids then? I mean how close were you?*

Not really, not...I don't really remember her as being... I just remember her taking me for walks. But I mostly remember my father taking me for walks round the duck pond and feeding the things, and I can remember walking. We were living in a...the village was Western Green, and there was a golf course between my house, our house and the railway line, the railway station, and we used to walk across this golf course, past the duck pond to the village, and I can remember, my father hated golfers, and a ball did sort of come and, I don't know if it actually hit us, but it was close enough for me to, for the first time ever to see my father really, really angry, you know, and sort of, I think... I think when...I never really saw him angry. I think he got frustrated with my mother sometimes, because she was...she was all out to get the best out of life, or to get, you know, all out for a good time I think. (laughs) You know, I think, having had a very hard childhood, she sort of suddenly...she was... I mean I

don't...she was... I'm not sort of saying that, you know, I just...just think quite naturally she realised that life was easier.

*Mm. So she wanted to hold onto it presumably.*

Yes, yes, yes. And enjoy it, and you know, there were... I do remember that, my brother was born in March 1937, and there was the, I think it was the French Paris exhibition, and I think she had some friends, and I do know she went to the Paris Exhibition, and my brother must have been left with me, my father, me and the maid, to look after my brother. Well he must have been not more than three or four months old. I think, I do...my mother...my father was, did sometimes get cross. But, you know... And anyway...

*So the house was, was quite comfortable really?*

Oh yes, oh yes.

*It was a big garden?*

A nice garden at the back, you know, sort of, with... And it had once been part of an estate, a big house, and then, it was the beginning of the estates losing their gardens and being sold off, and this was a posh sort of area, you know, a smart area with... There were a line of poplar trees at the bottom of the garden which were obviously delineating the estate area, you know. But...

*What about inside the house, were there many pictures or...?*

No, that's what I was going to say. My father collected...my father was an artist really, he could draw, and we have, I have two drawings of his which were done when he was at school, a boy, but they were copies of something else. And he could draw, he knew how to use a pencil and everything. But his passion was etchings, so in the house there were...he used to collect etchings, and there was, in the sitting-room on the main area there was an etching of Glasgow University which he went to, and there



was also one in the dining-room, an etching of Glasgow University. And then, either side and all round were etchings of landscapes. They were all signed etchings.

*Do you remember who they were by?*

I can look it up.

*I'd be interested.*

(laughing) Yes. I could look.

*OK.*

I still have them. But, I think this must have been, the etchings were my, beginning of my fascination for drawing.

*Oh really?*

I think this where, you know, this is where I got the thing. But he just collected these. And for instance when I was born he gave my mother a little etching, you know, and, which I have now. And landscapes and etchings of, a very nice one of Dieppe and... He went to London galleries, a London gallery and bought these etchings. So, so there was nothing bright, it was just very sort of...no brilliant pictures on them, but at least there was something on the wall, there was definitely something on the wall. And then, the furniture I do remember, there was, in the dining-room there was this leather furniture, which I think had been bought, but in the sitting...you know, sort of leather, great big leather armchairs with velveteen cushions with, had sort of, knobs, little knobs on it, round it. I remember that very well, because later on when I was ill it used to be the chair that I always sat in. In the sitting-room there was green, dark green velvet, a sort of sofa and two chairs, and these came from Scotland.

End of F7831 Side A

F7831 Side B

*Right, OK then.*

I mean it was almost the colour of this sofa, but it was green, Victorian sort of plush and velvet. Actually, looking back now it was really rather a beautiful shape, the whole thing had, it was a bit sort of like a Chesterfield and the high backs and everything. And there was also, well it was a sort of chest of drawers with a bookcase on top, and this was filled with books which my father, my father's books. I don't think my mother had any books, but my...and it was things like, Francis Brett Young, John Galsworthy, and these sort of artists. A lot of books on Australia's Aborigines and primitive man, because he was interested in that, and also early, very early books on the skulls and Stone Age man and all this sort of thing, because again he was, you know, his work was to do with this, being an anthropologist. And the other thing that I remember was in this bookcase...no art books, I mean art just didn't enter in our...was, he used to collect geographical magazines for me, and these came in, and one of...these were all stacked in the bottom of this bookcase. The thing that really, I still remember one of them, which was the Mexican, there was the Chac-mool, a picture of the Chac-mool, and drawings of the Mexicans taking out the heart from a man and putting it, you know, into this, this basin of, where live hearts were put, you see. I can still, I can still see this picture in the geographical magazine. And of course going to see the Mexican exhibition in London and actually seeing this Chac-mool later on was quite traumatic really, because, where was the heart? (laughs)

*When was the exhibition that you saw, how much later was that then?*

Oh it was a long time.

*A long time after.*

When I was a student.

*Mm, mm,*

Much much later.

*But you recalled this experience, and it obviously...*

Yes, I still can see the magazine, I can still... And I mean, I... My daughter later on gave me a subscription to the geographical magazine, and I had it for about two years, never did I see anything as exciting in that, or as horrifying, you know, it was really very scary. But, upstairs there was a sort of, on the landing it was a sort of open landing, and there was another bookcase, which were novels, which my father must have read. I mean my mother did read, but, I don't remember, all through her life, I don't actually ever remember her...there were books around, but I don't...they...when you went and visited, they were the same books. So whether they were picked up or moved or whatever, I don't actually remember her too much reading books. But that may be unjust, I don't know, but...

*Did you mother have any particular artistic leanings?*

She was wonderful...I mean she was a very beautiful woman, which was why my father obviously... And she was very...as a child she used to act, and she did actually go to the Old Vic. Who was the woman at the Old Vic, do you remember?

*I don't know.*

Oh gosh. She went for an audition at the Old Vic.

*A director?*

Yes. Goodness, it's...the woman director who ran the Old Vic in those days. And my... [pause] Oh it'll come back to me. And she wanted...I think she got into the crowd, but my grandfather, her father, was so...I mean this just was not what you did, well certainly not a daughter of his, and I think she was very inhibited by this, you know, very sort of...by him. He was very very strict, very very determined that everything should be proper. I mean going back to my mother, she was born in Hull, and she did tell me that, they came down as a family from Hull to Neasden where they

had this little tiny house, which backed onto the marshalling yards at Neasden, and she did tell me that she remembered the day they came down, because as well as all their baggage and everything they carried a grandfather clock in the train. (laughs)

*In the train?*

In the train, the grandfather clock came too.

*Gosh.*

Which is extraordinary, you know.

*And has that survived the family as well then?*

No.

*No. No.*

No. And my grandfather, right up to when he was...he died when he was an old man, he was about 89 or something like that, he was a very...you know... But, and he lived alone for a very long time, but I do remember his, in his shelves in his kitchen when he opened the cupboard, the shelves had, you know how you can make decorations by folding paper, you can cut out decorations.

*Yes.*

Well they were made out of newspaper, and these decorations went along all the front of his shelves. And you know, he made these patterns and things out of newspaper. I mean, by that time, I mean he obviously had his pension and everything else, it wasn't that.

*Mm.*

But, where...I was going back to...where was I?

*It's all right, you were talking about...you were talking about the books in the house, and you were talking about, about your mother being sort of quite creative and artistic in some ways very...in the acting field.*

Yes, she had very good...she had...she had training as a, she did train as a dressmaker.

*So she was very fashion-conscious was she?*

Oh, incr...I mean, she was the beauty of the family.

*Right.*

Her younger sister, who was wonderful, not like my mother, my mother always was very ambitious and very driven, her youngest sister was plain, and gentle and kind and prepared to do what she was told, and, she used to wear earphones, do you know the hairstyle?

*Mm.*

Where you had, on her ears. And she learnt how to be a typist, and she went to...she worked in Dollis Hill where the Post Office, the telephone exchange was, I think she was a telephone exchange, lady on the telephone exchange. And there she met her husband, who was also at Dollis Hill where all these sort of, it was to do with the Post Office and the telephones. And he later on became head of the Post Office in south-eastern England, you know, it was this sort of... He was a very important person in my life later on. And her older sister had always had heart problem, she was a blue baby or something, this is what, how it was...so I always used to look at my aunt Edith and see if she was blue, but I mean you know, the sort of, she had... And she was always in a state, you know, and very fragile and very, definitely something wrong with her heart. But, so Mummy was the, was the most beautiful of the lot, very beautiful and very driven, always out, always, you know, trying to, to make herself better. I mean, they must have spoken with some sort of accent, you know, coming down from Hull, and living in the area that she did, and going to the schools that they

did, you know. Actually they lived in a place called Woodheyes Road, which goes, I think it's still there, and it's all these railway cottages. So she must have... But she spoke, oh, I mean by the time I was born she spoke exquisitely, beautiful, lost it; she was just very sort of, beautiful pronunciation and everything. So, so this was... And as I say she was extremely beautiful, and extremely fashionable, always.

*Do you remember any particular clothes that she used to put on?*

I do remember her evening dresses and things like that.

*Oh right.*

And I also have, actually have now, one of her, her coat, which was, when she was married, which was, you know the sort of big fur that...and came round and had a low button. It was a sort of Twenties. She was a flapper girl. And photographs of her in these wonderful low dresses and... I mean she always said she ruined her feet with wearing these terribly pointed shoes at that time, and you know... And some of...I do remember some of her dresses when I was a child, a green one, which had sort of plaiting. And she made these, she was...she had trained at the college where she had got the scholarship to...it was a sort of overall thing, it taught you how to dress-make, and how to type, you know, seemed to be sort of... And so she did all her own dressmaking. And she was...and she taught me how to dress-make as well.

*Did she...you said she did typing; did she actually work when you were...*

No.

*No. She didn't work when you [inaudible]. No.*

Oh no, oh no, no, very much, no, she was a very...she was a very...stayed at home, she was... She had no need to work.

*No. Did she work up until meeting your father then?*

Yes, she was working until she met him, at the same, at the Medical Research Council, in Hampstead.

*Mm.*

But actually, also, as well as playing bridge she played tennis, you know, at the local tennis club, and she used to win. She used to serve with a most amazing underhand, because she felt that she could never serve overhand, but I mean it was a winner, every time it won. And she won cups you know, and, I can remember sort of, looking through the fence, this sort of, diamond fence, watching Mummy play tennis. And, all these people I suppose... And my father was just going up to London every day and working.

*She had a very good time by the sound of it.*

(laughing) She had a really good time. Extraordinary.

*Which you were obviously a part of, because you were...you were at the home with...*

Yes, I mean I was at home.

*You did not see so much of your dad.*

I obviously went to school, and was sort of... That part I don't remember; I do remember going to the kindergarten school, which you started when you were about five in those days. And then from then, at that time I went to... Oh, we had a, we had...one of her very great friends was a family, she was a lady doctor, called Mavis Gunter, who had three children, same age, Rosy was the same age as me. And of course Mavis was the steady hand I think, you know. But she was our doctor, and, Mavis crops up through life you know, sort of, she was very brilliant. A friend of my father's, and she also was very helpful with my father when he was so ill. But, yes, where am I?

*So you...well, your brother's quite a bit...you've just got one brother who was...*

My brother's seven years...

*...seven years older than you.*

My brother's seven years younger than me. I do remember the period before my mother had my brother, it must have been, I think there were problems with her, and I think she...I know she had to go to a nursing home. I suppose nowadays you would say probably to keep the baby, or at the time, to begin with, because she had, she did have problems trying to get my brother Stuart. I also remember when my brother was born, because he was, those days you were born in... Oh, well I'll say, born in the front room, or whatever. And Mavis Gunter was the person that delivered him. And I was sent next door. I do also remember that I was, it was *Wind in the Willows* that I was, my father was reading to me, and at the crucial point I can remember the next-door neighbours coming and collecting me, and I was taken next door. And when I returned, I had a brother. (laughs)

*Did you expect to have a brother then? Presumably you knew a baby was...*

I don't even remember sort of being told about him.

*Really?*

I don't...I don't remember. And when you think about it, at seven you're pretty well an only child.

*Mm.*

I think it must have been quite a surprise, you know, quite a shock. I don't actually...I do remember that my aunt had got the cot, because she had had a child, so Stuart was put in a drawer, you know, the drawer was pulled out and a bed was made for the child and he was put in the drawer. But, I don't actually remember preparation, which nowadays you would have, enormous preparation.



*Mm.*

I don't actually remember my mother being pregnant, I don't remember seeing her being pregnant, which at the age of seven nowadays, you know, you would know that they were pregnant. But... But there was...when I was born, because my...my father's sisters, they were both nurses, the two that were in...were very anti my mother. Anyway my father decided that because they were nurses, one of them, my Aunt Mary, should come and look after my mother while, when I was born, and I don't...and I actually know that it was a disaster, because there was a point when Mummy's doctor said to my father, 'If you don't get rid of your sister, your wife will have a nervous breakdown.' So my aunt was dispatched. Because I think she was one of these very dogmatic and incredibly unsympathetic people, and... My mother was also very vulnerable, she was very unsure of herself, which also went all through her life. She wasn't...she...this...this pushing sort of, go-getting person was only on the surface, that underneath she was a fearful, vulnerable person that, you know, could be knocked off balance very quickly.

*And that was because of her social background?*

Yes, her social background. And she had lifted herself out of that into, into this world that she didn't know too much about, and so she was sort of treading on glass all the time, and if anything came and, you know, sort of knocked her off, she would be... And that, that went all through life, especially when I met Reg and she had great difficulty with that.

*Mm.*

But...

*So, you went off to kindergarten around about four, the local one?*

Yes, the local kindergarten. And, I was very very bright, incredibly bright.

*From a very young age?*

From a very, very young age. I was, you know, got everything, sort of, good at things. And so much so that I think I got, as far as I remember I got a scholarship to a local school which was two stations up the railway line, which in those days, you know, one did it oneself, one got on the...one was put on the train at Esher, and... I did this with my, Rosy, Mavis Gunter's daughter who was exactly the same age as me. Apparently my mother and Mavis went to all the local schools seeing which was suitable for us, and finally discovered this school, which was at Burwood Park in Walton-on-Thames. And, we got on the train at Esher and got off the train at Walton, two little girls. We sat right up in the front by the driver. And it was the electric train, they'd just come in to this Waterloo sort of Portsmouth line, and it was, the electric trains had just come in. And I do remember sitting on the train and then getting off when we got to Walton, and I think the bus must have taken us to the school.

*So how old were you then?*

Seven.

*Seven?*

Yes.

*Going on the train on your own.*

Can you imagine, two children at seven?

*No.*

Two little girls at seven?

*No.*

I also remember...

*Quite an adventure then?*

Oh, yes. I can also remember, they were going through the station, there were steam trains as well, you know, because it was very very new electric trains, they were very local. And I remember standing on the station and getting a spark in my eye from one of these steam trains, and I remember very clearly that, I had to go to Mavis Gunter again, you know, this doctor, and she had to remove it, and...you know, it was... And it was very very very sore. But that was again standing on the station with Rosy and...

*What kind of a school was it then? Did it have any particular religious connections in your family?*

It was girls. No. Religion, that's...no. My religion, my father I suppose would be, the Scots were Presbyterian.

*Mm, mm.*

Well he would have...my...his parents would have attended church, which was in Symington, which was where the farm was, Hellington Gate, and the village was Symington. And his father would have attended the church, and I'm sure my father would have attended it with the family. But he never, when he came south, he never, as far as I can remember, I don't think he ever went to the church. And my mother took us on Easter day, because it was pretty, but you know, we didn't really go to church. I think she tried Sunday School sometimes but it didn't... We weren't religious as a family. We sort of, we weren't not religious.

*No.*

But we certainly weren't religious.

*So it was just an ordinary sort of secular school?*

Yes, yes I think that certainly... It was in a beautiful beautiful house that had been taken over as a school, it had been a private house with wonderful grounds and everything. I think it, the house may be still there, but again it's a true example of, probably been sold off all round, because it was a very wealthy....Walton was very, is now very wealthy.

*You have happy memories of being at that school?*

Yes, not too many, strangely, not too many memories of that, it's mostly, my memory is mostly of at home, but I do know I, I was good, you know, quite bright. And I also know that later on I became very un-bright, and, I think it was down to the shock of my father dying.

*Mm.*

I think this can happen, that it can...

*So 1940 was when your dad died.*

Yes.

*When you were just ten.*

Yes. I was ten.

*So you were still at the same...?*

No, by that time of course the war had come.

*Oh of course, mm.*

During...during...for the... One of the...some of the summer holidays we used to go up, back up to Scotland, and we used to stay in a hotel in Kilmarnock and go out to my... One of my uncles, my father's brothers, was Hugh, and he lived on a farm

which was owned by his aunt, Marion Stirling, which was a farm called Burnbrae, it was at the bottom of a valley, and it was a little white, I can remember, a white sort of square house with, either side there came the, one side was where the cows were, and the other side was where the machinery was. And in the centre was this courtyard, so you came in and drove into the courtyard and one side was where the dairy and the cows... And, he managed this farm for her. And we used to go up there for summer. And I think the first time I went up there, I must have been about...well I went up to begin with with my parents, but then one time I was taken up when I must have been about seven, no, about eight, I was taken up and left there, and spent the summer up there, which seems to be remarkable, at the age of eight, sort of being dumped, left there, but...with this old aunt, who was again very very, very Victorian, and very strict, and Sundays was just, nothing happened on Sundays, it was just... But my uncle, who was my father's younger brother, I have great affection for him, wonderful memories of him. And so, I...this was about... And this was at the time that also at home my father was ill with tuberculosis and with, with, you know, he was going into hospital to have drains put in him and everything. And he still worked, but he was, now I think about it he was very sick, a very very sick person.

*So that's why you think you were dispatched to Scotland perhaps, to give them a break?*

Yes, I think so, I think so. I think so. And also...

*And they would have had the new baby as well, wouldn't they, your brother.*

Yes, they'd got my brother, who was, you know, again, and I think that's why I was spent up there. But I mean again, I have the most wonderful memories of there, because on Sundays my uncle used to take me to...used to meet...I think he was fed up with my...you know, this sort of Sunday business, where, nothing was cooked, nothing was...nothing was done. Just everyone sat in the front room. And that was very difficult for a little girl.

*Mm.*

We used to cross the fields, and used to meet a friend, and so, he used to take me too. I mean I followed him like a devoted sort of... That was an incredible experience, you know, he had dogs, and... And, it was just the, the hay field was collected, you know, with a sort of horse and thing, and you could look out of the window and see the stooks. I remember the front room too, you know, sort of, the curtains draped at the windows. And the...it was wonderful. And I also remember, when they were lifting the, must have been the corn, or was it the hay, from...they used to slide it onto a truck, and then they took it to yard, and then it was forked, and a horse would go backwards and forwards, and every time it was forked up onto the top of the thing. And I always sat on top of this horse, and would be going backwards and forwards with the horse. And I can remember getting off the horse at lunchtime with my legs, you know, in a bow. It was quite wonderful. That time was very important. The family was related to the penicillin...

*Oh right, mm. Fleming.*

Fleming. He was Stirling Fleming I think, or something, that... And there is a relation that goes back, he was some part of my grandmother's side or something. Anyway...

[break in recording]

*So we just got to the...you were having the holiday on the farm in Scotland.*

Yes. And, I don't...my brother was never with me, I don't think, I was always sent up there alone. And one of the things that I do remember, just aside, is that, having been an only child till the age of seven, which is, you know, you really are an only child, and then suddenly to be produced with a brother, I think, you know, I'm not quite sure how, how that affected me, but I certainly, it must have done, because one's parents' affections were suddenly, you weren't...you weren't the number one in the family any more, you weren't number one in the family, because you'd got a younger sibling, but it was also a younger, a boy, which I said previously, but that was... The following summer was 1939, and I'd been, again, sent up to my uncle's. I can't remember how I got there, but I do know that I was, I spent the summer up there. My father was ill,

he'd spent...he'd had, he'd got pulmonary tuberculosis as well as glandular tuberculosis, and I do remember being taken to University College Hospital, he was in a private wing, where he had to have operations on his, on the glandular TB, and I remember seeing him with drains and things coming out of his neck, which was, was quite shocking I think, at that age. But somehow I got up to Scotland again, and there must have been an enormous anxiety at home, because of...I mean I didn't know anything about it, but because what was happening in Europe. My father had a very great friend, a school friend, who had also been, who was in Scotland and had come down south, and had bought a farm near Reading, Grazeley, it was Manor Farm in Grazeley near Reading, and sometimes my father used to take my mother and myself to spend a weekend there, and we called this person, he was James Steel, we called him Uncle Jimmy, and his wife was Aunt Annie, Annie Steel. And these people had a huge effect on me at this period. I'd spent the summer up in Symington at my uncle's farm, and suddenly, I got a message from my mother, and I think it must have been about August the 30<sup>th</sup>, at least my uncle had got a message, to say that they were coming up to collect me, and, to take me back again, because the war was obviously going to be declared. So, my father I think was at Manor Farm with my brother, and my mother and this Annie Steel got in the car. I see to remember it was a Studebaker, but they contradict me and say it was something different. It was a huge car with a roll-down top. And, they drove up to Scotland during the day, spent the night up there, picked me up, and drove straight back again. And that must have been September the 1<sup>st</sup>, because I can remember sitting in the morning room of the farm on September the 2<sup>nd</sup> at about eleven o'clock in the morning and hearing Chamberlain sort of saying about, war was declared, and I can remember where the radio was, and us all sitting round in a circle. And that I suppose is when life started to go slightly different, because, we were...we were sort of evacuated to this farm, it was a case of, when all the children were evacuated, these, Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Annie sort of said, 'Well we'll have, you know, the two Youngs, because we at least know them,' better the devil you know than the devil you don't. And we were evacuated there for the beginning of the war. I was sent to the village school, because, Stuart was only three so he was too young. We...I think, Uncle Jimmy was quite fierce, and I do remember being a little afraid of him, but Aunt Annie wasn't, she was...she was a wonderful, gentle, kind, firm person, but you know, I wasn't afraid. But I was worried a bit by, I can always remember, because I think he, he was, could get quite

cross, you know, especially with a crying baby which my brother was, you know, who was... So, 19...I don't...I can't remember how, but I do remember being at home in May 1940 when my father had come back from hospital, from Papworth, and was in bed at home, and I also remember that the Queen's physician, Sir John Weir, came down to see how he was, and to check him out. And it was too late, because he died very shortly after that. I can remember being, again, taken next door to my mother's neighbours, and I...it's a sort of haze, because, I do remember the curtains being drawn, and it was the time when funerals happened, the curtains were drawn, and, I think my father was cremated, and... But as I say, it was a haze. And then after that, we were sent back to the farm again, to Reading, and my brother and I stayed there for, I suppose it must have been nearly a year. And then, I was...my mother...my mother... Previously, I just remembered, from Burwood Park School, when I was at school, I then went to Wimbledon High School, so I was at Wimbledon High School for about a year before the war. So it must have been up to about 1930...1940 I was at Wimbledon High School. And being a GPDST school, it became a link to the school that I eventually went to, which was Oxford High School, which my mother could get me into, you know, during the war, and I spent the rest of my, I spent the whole of the war at Oxford High School. But...

*So what was it, G...*

GP...Girls' Public Day School Trust.

*Right.*

They still are around.

*Girls' Public Day School Trust.*

Yes. And they're sort of, top-class schools, girls' schools. And, I don't remember too much about the Wimbledon one. But, my father died while I was there, and then... It's funny how one's memory slightly goes fuzzy, because, I suppose it is because you don't really want to remember it anyway, because...



*No. Did you have a sense of how seriously ill he was then? Because you were away at the farm.*

Yes.

*Did you see them a lot whilst you were on the farm?*

I was going backwards and forwards. I didn't realise that, I certainly didn't realise that he was going to die.

*Mm.*

But... No I certainly... I sort of didn't know much about death.

*Right.*

In those days you...it's weird, it never occurred to me that he would die.

*Mm.*

But I did know that he was incredibly sick.

*Mm.*

And, going back a little bit, and I may have said this, but I do know when my father was at Papworth Hospital, and having this horrendous treatment for pulmonary TB, I can remember my mother hiring a car from Esher to take us from Esher to Cambridge, so that we could see him, and, you know, just for a visit. And it interests me now, because of course he would have been in isolation and as children we wouldn't have been.....

End of F7831 Side B

F7832 Side A

*So you, you were evacuated to the farm in Reading, and you...*

Yes, to this farm.

*Right.*

And they had two daughters and a son, and they were...we were much younger, they were about fifteen years older than me, they were going to school, and, they were quite a bit older than us, not old enough for the war but older than we were. And, at the time, when, you know, my father died, and [inaudible] my mother sort of, we went back there and my mother used to come and visit us. Because, within...my father left very little money, I mean, they were...the salaries in that time were, for academicians was low, and, very low, and he left, I think he didn't...he hadn't bought the house, so that was on a mortgage, and also I think he left about £1,000 and £600 to each, my brother. So my mother within three weeks had to find a job, and go out to work. And she went back to the Medical Research Council in Hampstead, and worked there, you know. I mean, don't forget that she hadn't worked for ten years – twelve years I would say, and, I mean incredible courage, just to sort of go off and, and pick it all up again, start off again.

*Mm.*

The journey meant that she was going from Esher to Waterloo, and then crossing from Waterloo to Hampstead every day, going there and back. And, I think, she used to tell us about sitting in Waterloo Station, going right down, because Hampstead has a very deep tube, subway, you know, and going right down there, and then coming, passing through the stations, you know, where the people were, and then coming out at Waterloo and sitting in the train at Waterloo, while the bombs were dropping all over the top of, waiting for the train to go out, to go home again. And, I think this must have...must have affected me very much, because having already lost one parent, was very very aware of the possibility of losing... Having had no conception of losing

a parent before, then, you lose one, then, oh goodness, you can lose another very quickly. And that, that really did upset me enormously.

*Was it hard for you being away from the family home? It must have been, as well.*

Yes. My mother then, the idea was... We were helped a lot by the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, and they sort of supplied clothes, and they came in bags, sort of cast-offs from other people, but we had no, no sort of money to buy clothes for ourselves, so we were sort of, dressed up in other people's clothes. And these people, I mean it was... My father had obviously paid into it all his life, and this is what you got. And they were very supportive to Mummy. And, I think they suggested that I should move on from the village school, you know to... So, my mother went, and managed to get me into Oxford High School, where the people from Wimbledon, a lot of them were evacuated, and you know, sort of, even though I had sort of had a gap from being at Wimbledon, I managed...they got me into Oxford High School. And, I think I must have been about eleven. I was first of all billeted on a colleague of my father's, who worked with my father and did an enormous amount of research with my father, and then left University College and took up a position at Oxford University. And for some weird reason his wife took an intense dislike to me, and it was chaos, it was dreadful, because, I was desperately unhappy, naturally, because...and to have somebody that very very vehemently hated you was, at the age of eleven, twelve, was very difficult. So my mother... In those days it was incredibly difficult to get even a day off, but my mother sort of, I remember coming, my mother coming to Oxford, and going to the headmistress, and begging her to see if she could take me as a boarder, because of the situation of where I was living. I was attending school, but you know, I was accused of stealing and all sorts of dreadful things, and never sort of doing any work or anything. And, the headmistress managed to get me, I think I was on a camp bed, but I was put into the Rainbow dormitory at Oxford High School. And then things started to look up. It was there, my best friend, who I still see regularly and am very close to, she had been, Shirley Korn, she had been evacuated from Hampstead High School under similar circumstances, you know, sort of during the war and everything, and that's where we met, and still have, still very important to each other. My brother meanwhile had been... One of my mother's brothers, who was Professor of Pathology in Aberdeen, he said he would take Stuart,

so, my brother...my mother took my brother at the age of about five, five or six, up in a train to Aberdeen, they were all, bombs were falling, and there was no seating, and my mother tells me that a policeman gave her a seat and she had Stuart on the knee all the way. Left him at Aberdeen and came back the next day. Can you imagine now, leaving your child with a brother, a sort of, brother-in-law and wife who, you just didn't know how they would be, or how they, you know... They didn't respect my mother anyway, because they thought she was one of these flibbertigibbs from... And she left Stuart with them. And, I...I shudder when I think of the emotional trauma she must have gone through, that there was Stuart up there, and myself at Oxford, and she was going backwards and forwards through bombs and everything. In fact a bomb fell two doors away from her house. And, the courage, I cannot, I cannot believe this enormous courage.

*Mm.*

But... So that was war really.

*So what...so you spent a couple more years there at Oxford before...?*

I was at Oxford until I left, seventeen.

*So that's '41 to what, to the end of the war then?*

'47. Yes.

*You left school in 1947?*

Must have been '40. No I think it was... '41, yes, when I was eleven, till '47. So I was there all my sort of major education time.

*Mm. What was the school like, can you tell me a bit about the school.*

It was, well I mean it was in Oxford, so that was exciting.

*Mm.*

I was sort of becoming aware of... To begin with, I mean we were living in the boarding house, and you were considered as, you know, sort of, you had to be very careful and looked after and that sort of thing. But as you went on the freedom, you got more freedom. But it was wonderful, I just...I loved it. But I was also very traumatised whenever I left home, and it was, I mean unbelievable scenes on the railway station.

*Mm.*

And when I got older, my mother would never come to see me off, because she couldn't cope with the, with the tears and everything. I mean it ruined the last week of my holiday to think... But I just, I have a very interesting thing which is, I've sort of remembered going back to my childhood. I can remember my bedroom, which was...at Esher, it was in a sort of avenue called Oaklands Avenue, in this house at Esher, and I can remember my bedroom and it had sort of special white furniture for little girls and all that sort of thing, and a white bed and everything. But underneath my bed was a very large box, wooden box, and in it was a total skeleton of, I think it was a woman.

*Under your bed?*

(laughs) Under my bed.

*That's a strange thing to have under the bed.*

Which was my father's you see. I mean, being an anatomist, he had his skeleton.

*Mm.*

And I mean in the studio now, you will see skulls and things, which were... But this skeleton, I used to...I lived on it for, ever since I can remember. (laughs) I can also remember that, sort of first aid was taught at the beginning of the war, and this

skeleton was hung up on the door, and you know, points, important points, important bones were sort of pointed out, the Red Cross manual. But, I don't know that I ever named it, but I was...I lived on this skeleton for... How that affected me I don't know.

*You were very fond of it.*

And there's one other memory, is, I do remember having whooping cough, and being desperately, desperately ill. I had whooping cough twice, but the first time I can remember it, and being allowed in my mother's bed, and the gas fire going with the bowl in front of it with the water giving off, you know, the...to create a dampness in the room, so that the... But, going back to the...yes, I mean, the skeleton was obviously important to one's life. (laughs)

*And quite fond of it.*

Yes. I don't think, I think my mother wanted to bury it at one point, because she sort of felt it ought to have a decent burial. But I think finally it went to some hospital.

*Mm.*

You know, for anatomy students. But... (laughs)

*Strange.*

I sort of peeped up, and looked inside, you know, it's like a sort of, just to see who it, what it was. It was on a sort of frame.

*Mm. But you were never frightened of things like that presumably.*

No.

*Because they were just part of your life with your...*

Yes.

*...your father's interests, mm.*

Yes, didn't ever seem to be frightened, no, no. No.

*Just to take you back again to this school then.*

Yes.

*Were there any particular...I mean obviously it was a very difficult time for you.*

Yes.

*Because there was all this turmoil with this...*

Yes.

*Everything had changed, your mother going out to work, and not be at home.*

And I mean obviously when you came home for holidays, one was alone...

*Mm.*

...at holidays, because she was out at work and, you know.

*Mm.*

And being at Oxford was wonderful. I do remember, I think I was...my mother had enough money to give me extra lessons, so I...but you know, sort of extra thing. I think now I wished I'd chosen music, but then I chose art. I think art was cheaper than music anyway, so... And we used to go on Saturday mornings and you used to go to this lady's house, and she was Miss Aubrey Moore. She was huge, she was a really colossal lady. And we used to paint her little figurines, she had sort of, beautiful little shepherdesses and their partners. And then every so often we used to

go to the botanical gardens and paint gates with roses over the top. I don't now whether she was...I'd always painted and drawn in drawing books and that sort of thing, I can remember doing that. But I don't...I can't think that she was a stimuli to art, but the real stimuli was somebody called Enid Hardy, who I think maybe recognised that I had some talent, and sort of nurtured it, and... She was young. She took over at the school from Miss Aubrey Moore and suddenly it was like a breath of air came in, you know, and she was young, and had ideas and had seen things, and... While... We used to go the Pitt Rivers Museum, and we used to go to the Ashmolean Museum, and you know, all these... I mean Oxford was a wonderful place for a child to be growing up. But the real, the real influence on my life was, while I was... My mother, who was going out to work every day, had to have a lodger in because she hadn't got enough, you know, she had to try and pay off the house, because, you know, the house wasn't hers and if she didn't keep up the payments she would lose the house, and I think that the one thing that she was determined to keep was the house for us all. And so, a wonderful American woman came in. She was assistant to Eisenhower, who was in Richmond Park at the time I think, she was his chief assistant. I don't know how my mother got to know her or what, but she became Mummy's lodger, and she was a very cultured and New England, from New England, but incredibly cultured, knew music, art and everything, and she suddenly made me aware of art, and she would take me to museums. And one New Year's...no, Boxing Day, she took me up to London, and we walked all through the streets of the City of London, which had been badly bombed, but she took me, and we looked at Wren's churches, and I can remember looking at the fire monument, and she took me to the National Gallery, and all the things. And suddenly, this, she helped me, what to read, and, this Ruth Hooper was the person that I suppose was just, was the person that really made me aware about art. Because previously to that, I really was a desert, you know. The fact that, you know, one drew and painted daffodils and things like that, but suddenly there was van Dyck, or, not van Dyck, van Eyck's two...you know, the two people in the mirror, with the mirror behind?

*The Arnolfini, the marriage of Arnolfini.*

Arnolfini. And you know, these paintings, she very cleverly took me to the ones that would have the greatest impact, and very...



*So she was really important.*

Then, it started. Then, then I became aware.

*Mm.*

And she, she, all through my, you know, through, through that period, was there backing up my mother, with a sort of education, so... And, Stuart, my brother, was sort of coming backwards and forwards from, you know, from Scotland, and then he went to school locally, as, you know, things got quieter, then he stayed at home, and then, you know, this is how it...during the war this is... I do remember in the garden one day seeing the sort of flying fortresses, a whole, hundreds of them going over the garden, because we were on a flight path between, where they were going off. But, I think that being at school at Oxford was an enormous privilege, it was a terrific thing. Then, there was the problem of, what do you want to do when, you know, what are you going to do? My mother's dream was that I'd be a doctor, and my uncle in Scotland sort of backed her, and everybody sort of thought this. But then I said, no, I didn't want to be a doctor, I wanted to be an artist. And when my headmistress said, 'Well she's not got the brains to be a doctor,' my mother sort of started thrashing around, and sort of suggested occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and, all these sort of, all these sort of things. And I still wanted to be an artist. And my uncle from, my father's brother who was in Aberdeen said, you know, 'This is the most dreadful thing, for her to be an artist, she's got to earn her money, she's got to earn her keep. How do you think, possibly can she be an artist?' And, anyway, my mother sort of, having tried everything that, everything else that maybe I would like to be, realised that I was very determined to be an artist, and all credit to her, she started to back me. And, the art teacher at Oxford said, you know, that she is good, and my mother got her to write letters to my uncle to say that she is good, and you know, this is all going on. And, my mother took me I think to, first of all she...she was very thorough in deciding, you know, which are the best art schools if she's going to go to art. The nearest art school was Wimbledon, but she had heard that Camberwell was the very best art school, and so I had an interview. No, the very best art school was the Slade, so I was taken to the Slade, and Nuttall Smith was... 'Oh she's far too immature, she

can't come here,' you know. And at that time I had been incredibly influenced by Belsen, so I was doing sort of Belsen drawings in sketchbooks and things, and terribly dramatic. I mean I was just devastated by...I was old enough then to be devastated by Belsen and that.

*This was the end of the war, yes.*

This is later, this is later. And...and he said, 'No, far too immature.' So then my mother sort of thought again, and said, well, we'll try the next best thing, which was Camberwell, which of course was a wonderful school at that time, because there was Coldstream and Townsend and Claude Rogers, and Freud, and all these fabulous people. But I...just... At the art school. But I had forgotten, because she...one of the things, when I really said I wanted to be an artist, there was the Ruskin School at Oxford, and so, this was one of the places that I had to go and have an interview, and I can remember going...that was in sixth form I think, and had my folio, and, it was Albert Rutherston, I think it was Albert Rutherston, and so, you go... The Ruskin is at the side of the Ashmolean. I went in. And I had never seen a nude, I had never seen anything to do with those sort of things. So I was shown into his office, but I had to go through this large studio with the nude on the platform and all the painters. And I, I can now visualise it, the light was green, and everybody was painting, and I was absolutely gob-smacked, you know. (laughing). Yes, I got a place at Oxford, but then, my mother started to think, well you know, she's got to live there, and money and all those sort of things. So, then she started thinking. So I got a place at Camberwell. And this was terrific, because of all the people like Coldstream, you know, I mean, the top people at the time. This was '47, must be '47/48. And, I can remember, you know, Lucian Freud used to stand at the back of the class and not say anything, just stand, and the others used to come round and sort of crit, criticise, and... And for some weird reason, I'm not quite sure why, I went with somebody downstairs to the sculpture area, and I'd never really, again, you know, I was just art dead as far as what I'd seen, I'd never really looked at sculpture. I'd seen *The Kiss* and various other things like this, and things that Ruth Hooper had shown me, but... And I suddenly realised that this was the, this was the world. And there was a man called Cubitt Beavis there who is in the...he was quite a, you know, was considered quite a good sculptor at the time, he's in the little Tiranti sculpture book. And he had

enormous...not that he...had an enormous enthusiasm, and excitement, and... I started, at the end of my year at Camberwell, I was spending all the time down in the Sculpture Department. Well then, at the end of that year it became difficult. I got a grant from Surrey to go to, you know, to go to the school, to go to art school, but they stipulated after the first year at Camberwell that I couldn't go out of the county, I'd got to stay in the county, so, that was...then I had to go to Wimbledon. So I went to Wimbledon Art, left Camberwell.

*So you were only there a year then?*

I was only there a year, because, as I say Surrey County Council had said, you know, well we're spending this money, it's got to be spent in Surrey. So, I had to leave Camberwell and go to Wimbledon.

*So where did you live when you were at Camberwell then?*

At home, at Esher.

*Oh you went back home, right.*

And, Esher, so I was travelling up every day. Which was quite a long journey. You went to Waterloo and then you got a bus all the way through to Peckham. It was, it was...it was hard work I guess.

*Mm. So was there life drawing classes there as well?*

Sorry?

*Life drawing, you mentioned the life drawing classes at Ruskin.*

Yes.

*What sort of a...*

Ruskin, if I'd have gone to the Ruskin I'd have done life painting and drawing, but they hadn't any, and I realise now, they hadn't any sculpture, it was just painting.

*Right.*

At Ruskin.

*Mm.*

And, I went as a painter, I went as wanting to be a painter, but, yes, you know, obviously I was not going to stay as a painter.

*No.*

But if you go back to the etchings that my father collected, there was no colour, so, I suppose colour had always been vaguely... I mean you know, as I say, you sort of, mix your palette and you do that sort of thing, but it wasn't natural.

*No.*

And going down into the, to the Sculpture Department, making things, and the greys and the whites and the blacks and everything seemed to be much more natural.

*Mm.*

I suppose if my father had had wonderful Impressionists on the wall it would have all been very different, but he didn't.

*You mentioned Lucian Freud.*

Yes, he was there. He was very much...

*Did you know his work at the time? The people that were actually teaching at Camberwell, did...were you familiar with it?*

Yes, you sort of became...you sort of...not till you went there.

*No.*

And then, one really felt that, then I think one had to start going and looking.

*Mm.*

There was... And travelling, living in Esher and travelling to Camberwell every day, it did still, one didn't go to many exhibitions or things, because you were still having to go home every night, so you didn't really have time. I suppose I didn't really start going to exhibitions until I was at the Slade.

*Mm.*

Because living in London at the Slade, then it was different.

*Were you familiar with the work of sculptures like Barbara Hepworth or Henry Moore?*

Yes, yes.

*Would you have known about their work before then?*

Yes, and Henry Moore. But all this was much more when I got to the Slade.

*Mm. So it was really, it was really that, the experience of having the friend who took you around the galleries.*

Yes.

*That was really where you...*

That was my art experience, she took me around, and she took me to the National Gallery. She was more, most interested in art up to the Impressionists I think, so, she wasn't too interested...she didn't...she hadn't taken on board so much the...well, it was Henry and this sort of thing, but...

*Mm.*

So, it was much more classical, the Rembrandts and the, at the National, and, you know, up to the Impressionists.

*So what was it like being at Camberwell in terms of...because at Oxford you'd obviously been in a girls' school, surrounded by just girls.*

Well very, very, very precious and very...

*It must have been very different.*

It was just like being...it was extraordinary I think.

*Mm.*

Because, suddenly it all went to my head, and you know, one started wearing very arty clothes.

*Did you?*

And very long skirts and things. And I can remember, because my mother and I used to have to travel up every day on the same train, and she refused to go with me sometimes because she said I was too outrageous. (laughs) And that of course set me off and made me more outrageous, but, it did go to one's head completely.

*Mm. And did you have friends amongst the students in terms of men friends or girl friends?*

No, I was... No, it was strange again, one... I didn't. And, one didn't. Because coming from a very strict girls' school and then... I didn't have any boyfriends at that time I don't think. Not until again I got to the Slade, and then you sort of, suddenly... It was...it was I suppose living at home as I say and not having too much, too much time for it, and taking your sandwiches and that sort of thing, you know.

*Mm.*

So it was really leaving home about, half-past eight train, and you get...you usually got the half-past five back, you know, it was... And it seemed to be all travelling really, you know, you were on a bus from Waterloo to Camberwell and that sort of thing.

*What was London like at that time, travelling through it, was it...? I mean presumably there were lots of bomb sites.*

Trams, there were trams between Waterloo and Camberwell. And, it was safe. I mean I realise now.

*Yes.*

You know, you walked around, and we wouldn't have...places I wouldn't dream of walking now, we walked around.

*But in terms of what it looked like, the aftermath of war was, I mean, there were still a lot of buildings...*

Yes, that was...there was a lot of buildings... Oh gosh, I'd forgotten something. Yes. There was a lot of...going back to, to when I was at school. 1946, I mean I was a Girl Guide, and I was a Sea Ranger, which was a great jollity to Reg, but I was a Girl Guide and, you know, you were part of these things. And one of the things about being a Sea Ranger is, 1946 we had the opportunity to go to Switzerland. I think it must have been...war ended '45 in Europe didn't it, yes. And so, we were going to the Girl Guide house in Adelboden, and, it was summer, and Shirley, my friend, was

on this trip too. And we went through France on a third-class train, because everything was third class, and there were no classes to trains and all the trains were wooden-seated and everything. And that's when I really really really saw devastation and...because you went across to Calais and then you went through on the train, and the train was pretty stopping, and people got on with everything, their chickens and everything, and, you realised that this is...but even then, I mean I realised that this was dreadful. And we crossed the border into Switzerland, and the sort of, even going through Basle, the luxury and the sweets and the...you know, everything, the richness of Switzerland was such a contrast to just over the border, it was extraordinary. That was an amazing... We went right up into this chalet and spent a lot of time climbing mountains, and I have pictures of myself on top of a mountain. I am terrified of heights, and, you know, we had to go, it was a sort of matter of principle you had to go up in these mountains. It was an amazing, that was an amazing trip for a sixteen-year-old to have done. I think my...I mean, I congratulate my mother for letting me go really, because it was quite...it was quite expensive, but it was the most extraordinary experience.

*Mm.*

Then, that's jumping from school, before which I was...

*Just to go back to that though, I wondered, did you have any other holidays when you were younger, did you go abroad at all?*

No, we never went abroad. I'd never been abroad, that was the first time I'd ever been abroad.

*Right.*

We...my mother... During the war we didn't have holidays, we would go down to the farm, Manor Farm and spend a holiday there, or... I can remember being at school, Oxford High School, when I must have been about sixteen, and I used to come and spend, go back to my Aunt Annie and Uncle Jimmy at Manor Farm, and I remember going, getting on the train, getting off at Reading, and getting a bus to Three Mile



Cross, which was the nearest, and walking a mile-and-a-half, by myself, through country lanes, and you know, I've been down there since, and I...it's unbelievable how, how one did it. I can also remember, going back to when we were on the farm, earlier, during the war, that the, there was a railway line from Basingstoke that went through this, and it was obviously down to, Southampton I should think it was, but went...it was a single line. And you used to see the Red Cross trains going through, and the munition trains used to go through. I also remember going up on the banks of this railway, picking, covered in poppies and Michaelmas daisies, you know, and then the irony of, I didn't realise it then but seeing the banks of the train, the thing, and white and red with these wonderful poppies and Michaelmas daisies, and then these Red Cross trains going through, it was extraordinary.

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F7832 Side B

Wimbledon was not so far from Esher, so it was not such a long train journey. And, it is... Oh I went into the Sculpture Department, and there I met, my teacher was a woman called Freda Skinner, who was, when I think back now, she was again an enormous, wonderful person full of enthusiasm and excitement. And at Wimbledon I did my, what's called the Intermediate, which involved, besides sculpture, lettering and various other things like that. But I spent all the time downstairs in, well along the passage, in the sculpture, and there... Freda Skinner, at the end of that year, my mother had sort of sent...said things, that she really wanted me to go to the Slade, and was there was any way I could get into the Slade. And I think Freda Skinner sort of felt that, yes I was good enough. I was a sort of surprise people by that time. And, she would take me for an interview to see Gerrard, who she sort of knew, who was the head of the Sculpture Department at the Slade. So, I got all my...I think we got we got the stuff. She had a little sort of Morris car, and we loaded sort of various bits of sculpture into this car, and she took photographs of my work as well.

*Can you describe some of the works that you were making?*

Well one of them was a...the really *tour de force* was a mother and child, I think it was about...

*About three feet high.*

Three feet high. A very very much... I think by that time I'd seen Henry Moore, and I'd seen his *Mother and Child* in Northampton. Not seen it, but seen pictures of it.

*Oh right, the one in the church.*

And this sort of Madonna with the little child sitting on her knee. And, this I...it was in clay, and I had spent a long time doing this. And that, that actually is what I really remember from the time I was there. Anyway we went in to Gerrard's, we went up to the Slade in this little car, and she took me into Gerrard's room, and Gerrard's room was an incredible room, because it was... The Sculpture Department in the Slade was

downstairs, in the sort of, lower part of the University College. And this room had sort of cupboards, and he sort of kept things like cheese and biscuits and milk and...it was...it was incredibly...I seem to remember it as incredibly unwholesome, especially since, when Reg went into the Slade the whole thing was stripped out and was made very, not smart but just very functional, whereas this was muddle, piles of paper and messy old desk and everything. And, Gerrard, Gerrard said, yes, you know, he would take me on, and I could go. So everything was packed into the car again. And I was taken by Freda Skinner down somewhere in Charlotte Street where we had a...into a workmen's café, and had sort of a cup of coffee there, and then I was taken back to Wimbledon, and... That's what I, you know... I mean she was a remarkable...her enthusiasm and her support was terrific. So then, the following...that was May/June, and then the following August – no, September, I started at the Slade.

*1948/9?*

Yes.

*So you went to the Slade in 1949?*

Wait a minute, it must have been '49, '49.

*So September 1949 is when you actually started there?*

Yes, yes. And I think for the first...now again I, I lived at home. I still was travelling up to London again to the Slade, because I remember walking over Waterloo...I used to sometimes walk in the evenings from the Slade to Waterloo, walking over Waterloo Bridge. I do remember then, I guess I was very attractive or something, you know, and people, I do remember being followed, and you know... This is a time when it began to get a bit raw and you know, one sort of...unpleasant people on tubes and that sort of thing. I guess it was just because I was pretty and, you know, sort of different and that sort of thing. And then of course one, one...there was...that was the first year that Coldstream became head of the Slade, so he had moved from Camberwell, and had become head of the Slade and brought all his people with him, like Townsend, Claude Rogers, Sam Carter, all these people came to the Slade.

*So they all came round about the same time when you went?*

Yes, they all came...yes, we all began together. And that was great for me, because, you know, having known Coldstream and all these people before.

*What was Coldstream like, can you remember what he was like at that time?*

Oh he was wonderful. Yes.

*What sort of person, what did he look like?*

He was very witty, slightly sarcastic, but very, very kind. Just, I adored him, I thought he was wonderful. You know, he was...he was... And the whole lot of them, Townsend was, was a lovely lovely person. He was a bit like, well he was an Army major I think during the war, but he was very...again, just a remarkably kind person. And what was interesting about the Slade, I was...well seventeen, eighteen, nineteen? About nineteen, twenty.

*Mm, nineteen.*

The people that were coming in were a lot of soldiers, ex-Army, who had got their special grants, and so it was...I was very young compared to the majority of people who were thirty, twenty-five, thirty, and had been, who had been in the war, and had taken up this as their, they were given a grant weren't they when they came out of the war, and they took up these places in the Slade. So there was, there were a great many people who, quite a few, a few people who were as young as I was, and a great many people who were quite, a lot older, about ten years older.

*And did you get on together?*

Yes, we all got on together, but I think, looking back I realise how young I was then, you know, incredibly, mentally, emotionally young, incredibly young. And, it was just the most wonderful, it was great, it was... I remember the first...the first...they

had in those days balls, Slade balls, and they had Slade sort of cabarets, they did terrific cabarets, and the first one was a cancan, and it was...they'd got all these young girls. There was me and about four other of the youngsters, and...and we all were dressed up in these most...and I've got pictures of these most amazing costumes. And, I can't remember the name of the man that did it, but he was a natural, he was really a theatrical...I think that's, a theatrical designer. And he designed these wonderful things. And our routine was quite extraordinary. And, it became famous, these...and I think, I'm not sure if Reg...no, Reg didn't see...I don't think Reg saw the cancan, but I know he saw the next one, which again I was in, which was the flapper period. But...

*But they did them every year?*

Yes, yes. Of course now it's all far too serious, and, I think that it needed this, this...there was a man called Michael Buffrey and a man called Heckford, and it needed these older people to have the idea and to drive it and to organise the whole thing. I think a lot of people thought, well they're putting too much time into this, you know, cabaret business and not nearly enough time into their work, you know, which was in a sort of... Beer, Dickie Beer, he was one of the people who did all the designs, and he was a very decorative artist, and, I mean the hats were like, sort of peacocks, you know, with...I mean they were hell to wear, because they were all stuck with things, but... And my mother I remember had access, because of Ruth Hooper being American, and having access to things like nylons, and extraordinary things, and one of the things she got us was a whole bundle of nylon sort of threads in the most fantastic colours, you know, sort of peacock, and cerise and things. And a lot of this went into the hats, you know, it was all made of nylon in those...I mean they were the first nylon sort of things. And, you know, it...our routine, we spent... The first year, the first term at the Slade was, three-quarters of it was spent working for the cabaret, you know, it was sort of...ridiculous. I mean that was the, that was the attitude, that was the feeling then, you know, it was a sort of...it was sort of not now, when everything is desperately serious; it's almost as if, well we've come through the war, let's have a go, you know, let's have a good time.

*Mm. So there was singing and dancing?*

It got more serious after that, but...

*Yes. So did you...did you actually sing and dance at these things as well?*

Oh yes, we kicked and we danced, and... And we...I don't think we did the splits, but we did pretty well everything, you know. And we had the routine where our legs were going up and down, you know, and...

*Were the tutors involved in it as well?*

What?

*Were the tutors involved in this, the artists?*

They...

*The staff.*

No, they weren't. It was these older students who were really the ones that seemed... I mean they knew how to use people, they knew how to get facilities, they knew how to...because of what they'd been through, their authority was such that, you know, it was just... It was easy for them. And we, the whole...the youngsters that were there, you know, there was a girl called Barbara Braithwaite. The whole lot of us were just infatuated by it, you know, them too, so it was great. Extraordinary period to have been actually.

*What about the casts that you did then? I mean were you actually aiming to be a sculptor at this point?*

I was doing then, I was going to be, I was going to do the Slade diploma in fine art, which wasn't a degree then, much to my mother's chagrin, because she really was trying to prove to my uncles, to, especially the uncle in Aberdeen, that I was going to get a degree, because... Oh, previously, while I was at Oxford... To get into London

you had to have matric, to get into London University you had... And my...at...my School Certificate hadn't got Latin; you had to have Latin to get matric. And so, I took my School Certificate, which, the results weren't bad, you know, they were sort of, bad at maths and things, but they weren't bad considering. But I couldn't get into London because I hadn't got matric, I couldn't get into the Slade. So, I spent my final year which was the sixth form, first sixth form, going to Latin coaching, and taking Latin, which I did get a credit in finally. But she was so determined that I should get to London University, or a, you know... But, so I just had to take Latin for the matric. And so, when...at the Slade, we took sculpture, also perspective, anatomy, but perspective and anatomy was the thing, and history of art, which, you know, was...we spent... We had to go to go to these classes and take, actually take exams in them, which was absolutely agony to me, because I always felt that, you know, the last exams was my School Cert. (laughs) And, we had...and, I do remember at that, we had the most wonderful lecturers in history of art.

*Who were they, can you remember?*

Wittkower, well he was...Rudolf Wittkower, Grombrich, all these people came and lectured. And there was one of the people, there was a group of people, and one of them was Willing, Victor Willing, he was my generation, he was my thing. And there was a man called Peter Camathe[???] and James Burr, these were rather intellectual compared to me. And this is the first time I'd actually met seminars and intellectuals talking, you know, together and discussing art. I must say that I was vaguely...I hadn't been disciplined enough and I guess I was vaguely impatient. I was far more hands-on rather than idea, was less interested in how, the philosophy behind art and that sort of thing. But these people had very exciting seminars at that time. The first...that was the first year, and we were taught how to, you know, build armatures and work from life and that sort of thing. And the first year also we had to go into the Antique Room, because by that...Coldstream hadn't...Coldstream was doing a total change of the Slade, but he hadn't...you know, moving in, you take about a year to change everything, so we were, we did have to do drawing from the antique, and there was a very wonderful man called Sam Carter who used to help us, you know, and he used to sort of, when you did your drawing of the Venus de Milo or Hercules or

whoever it was, he used to do little drawings in the corner of my page as to how you should do it. (laughs)

*And you had to make sure yours fitted the bill.*

That's it.

*Oh right. So you did actually draw from casts then?*

Yes, yes, in this Antique Room, where there were the sort of aspidistras and the palms and things with these things up on high plinths. And that very quickly went after the first year, yes, the whole of the rooms were made into life rooms, and...

*So they completely changed, mm.*

It was just changed, and you know, you could see Coldstream's ideas were not, you know, far...that didn't enter into it really, they were used as ornaments and things then.

*It's interesting, because you were there from the...you saw the changeover, didn't you, really.*

Yes. Yes, because the previous man was a man called Schwabe, I think it was Schwabe.

*Yes.*

And it was before and after, and I went in as it was being changed over.

*The transition period, yes.*

All the downstairs... Interestingly, Gerrard had been there previously, so Gerrard was the sort of hand-over from, A.H. Gerrard, who was head of the sculpture, was a hand-over from previous sort of, past times, and he was...he was, you know, I mean, one of



his sculptures is in Hemel Hempstead now, you know, it's a sort of, a relief on one of the tall buildings, it's still there, you know. He was an interesting sculptor and had interesting ideas, but, he was more interested in...I don't know really what, what he was interested in. He had his buddies, he definitely had his buddies who used to congregate in his room, you know, it was so...(laughs)...if you weren't one of his buddies, you know, that was bad luck. But I think, during that year Henry Moore and Coldstream obviously got together and felt that the Slade Sculpture Department needed to be gipped up a bit. Because I don't even remember in my first year who were the abstract... Oh yes, one of them was, there was a man called Dick Claughton, who had been a student at the Slade, and was working under Gerrard. He had been Gerrard's student, but stayed on and was working under Gerrard.

*He was teaching sculpture?*

He was teaching sculpture, and he taught us how to put up the armatures and that. And we weren't taught how to weld or anything, we had to do the sculpture, you know, they had to be sort of, they are all hung on on these bars, you know, so that you had a sort of third leg on your sculptures, it was... But he was teaching us. And a wonderful thing, there was a man there who had been there ever since Gerrard first had been, you know, started there as professor, and he was called Albert, and he was deaf and dumb. He was a little chap in a cap, and he used to wear a little cap, and white overalls, and he used to do it all with sign language. And, Reg used to wear, I mean it's a bit out of context, but Reg used to wear leathers on his elbows, so, ever he saw me coming along he used to go pointing at the leathers, and [inaudible] leathers and into the room that he was in, so that this was his sign for different people. But he was...he used to keep the clay wet, and he used to...and he was very important to keep on the right side of as well, he was, you know, if you did things right for Albert, you probably got your armature set up or...

*Right. So he was a technician, was he?*

Yes. And there were people again who had come in from the war, much older, who were more sort of, less content to do their thing on the third, the third...you know, the armature was the third thing. And they, they would teach us gradually how to set up,

how to bend your...there was a sort of forge and you could bend your wire and they would teach you how to bend your wire so that it would stand up without having to, you know, by itself, and that sort of thing. And they, they also sort of, probably if you were lucky would set your armature up for you, sort of thing. But Coldstream and Henry Moore decided that the Slade needed a sort of, a little, the Sculpture Department needed somebody else to come in to shake it up a bit. And Reg had just had his exhibition, or one of his exhibitions in the Hanover Gallery, and everybody was sort of talking about it, and, this must have been '49, '50? And I actually had...yes, it was then.

*Yes.*

I actually, you know, everybody was saying, you know, what a marvellous exhibition it was, and the awful thing was that I'd never actually been to see it.

*Oh right.*

(laughing) Was it '50?

*'49 it would be, 1949, Hanover, the first, the first solo show.*

'49. So, yes, that's it, when the iron sculpture, the Tate figure, and you know, these, these ones, and the one...this is when the... And they sort of felt that this, this man, Reg Butler, would be the exact, would be the person that would shake it up. So he was brought in, and he did shake it up, you know, and sort of... He came in once...to begin with he came in once a week, on Wednesdays.

*So this would have been in September 1950 when he started.*

Yes, it was in September 1950.

*That was just into your second year then.*

Yes. I can't remember the date.

*No, but some time in 1950.*

Yes. Yes. And, I don't know, I suppose the chemistry was there, but anyway... He would show interest and talk about it, and I remember he took me to the... I suppose we just go to know each other.

*So, he was actually working, he started coming in just one day a week?*

Yes.

*And the other sculptor teachers, teachers of sculpture were still carrying on, yes.*

He taught us, he would go around criticising people, and...not crit... He never ever criticised, he would always sort of look at the work and try to see what they were doing, and suggest ways forward from that. He would never, like some people would sort of say, 'Well you ought to be doing it this way, you ought to be doing it that,' Reg would never do that; he would always take quite a while assessing what the person was trying to do and then take it from there.

*You knew about his work before, even though you'd not been to his exhibition?*

No, no.

*You didn't know anything about him?*

No I didn't. I didn't. this was what was so ridiculous, because I hadn't even bothered to go to the exhibition, his exhibitions, so, people sort of said, 'Oh well Reg Butler's coming in.' 'Oh, who's he?' You know. (laughs)

Yes.

Anyway, he started...he did start to shake things up, because he then, Henry Moore came and visited us, and he used to give sort of seminars, and he also actually saw individual...he used to take over the Professor's office, Gerrard's office.

*This is, Henry Moore did?*

Yes.

*Right.*

And he used to come in and, we used to go in one by one and he used to talk about our work. And also, Reg sort of said to Gerrard, you know, we need visiting, people coming to visit the studios, which of course was fantastic, because it stimulated everybody and it got them all working for something. And the visitors, I mean there was Marino Marini came, Giacometti, Lipchitz, Zadkine, all these people would come in and walk round the studios, and we were just sort of... I can remember the intense excitement, you know, as they walked in. And you sort of madly went on trying to work, but you felt them behind you and this sort of thing.

*Can you remember any particular occasions, you know, with any of those particular figures coming in and...?*

I do remember Giacometti, because he was...and I do remember Lipchitz.

*What was he like?*

Giacometti, well he...I met him later on, because Reg was very friendly with Philip James who was head of the Arts Council, and we met Giacometti at his, at their party and that sort of thing. But I mean he was just fabulous, because he had this mass of dark, black, you know, black curly hair and... He would...they were...always I think the visitors were very generous of their comments, and you didn't get a sense of, oh, you know, he didn't think much of my work; you always got a positive sense from them being there. And, this...my timing's a bit bad, but I do remember one day Reg taking me to, to the...there was a wonderful Laurens exhibition in Old Bond Street, in

one of the galleries there. I guess gradually one sort of got to know each other, and that's how sort of attractions happen.

*Mm. So you used to go on your own to exhibitions, did you?*

Yes, and we used to go...yes, and we used to...it grew like Topsy.

*Mm.*

(laughs) And, towards... Now let me see, that's...that would have been in the first, the second year, and...I'm just trying to...I'm just trying to remember. I know that one was...we were...one worked for, was working for the Slade, National Diploma of Fine Art in the Slade, and, I can't even remember if anything, you know, what...it just seemed to be a case of... [pause] No, I mean the following year there was another cabaret, and that was the flapper period. Well that's when Reg first saw me doing, you know, on that. And, I suppose Reg spent more time... No, he was... He gained for influence in the Slade, and with being, you know, with Coldstream they managed to sort of sort out the Sculpture Department a little bit. It sounds rather bad, but you know, a little bit. And then, I got my Slade diploma, but I also got...that was in 1952, and I also got the studentship, which was, you know, the best student was given another year. And I also got the drawing prize, so I suppose I came out pretty well from that.

*Mm.*

I can't remember how I spent the time, the extra year, but I...it must have been about this time that Reg and I, I guess were... Well, I knew... The point about this time is, do I block off myself and then start bringing Reg into it, like a sort of triangle?

*Well.....*

[break in recording]

The point is, the first year I was at the Slade I travelled from Esher to London, but after that I managed to get a place in the Slade hostel, which is Cartwright Gardens. This is...there was a woman's section and a man's section, kept very definitely separate. It was...it was in a crescent, and the houses must have been, well Regency, or...it was very beautiful with...but run down, you know, sort of part of London University. And the men's section had a lot of these sort of people, very, much more grown-up people who were living there, and, they used to have parties, and we used to...we could go next door for parties, but, you know, we always were absolutely sure that we went back again. (laughs) But this is where I first came across jazz, because, and dancing; I'd not actually... I mean when I was at school we had had a sort of, a dance where a whole...I think it was Rugby School were brought in, and the boys were brought in and the girls were brought in, and it was absolutely agony, you know, sort of, not being used to it, and not knowing what to do, and had none of the social graces trained or, you know, you weren't... I don't think...I think I had dancing classes when I was a small child, just as you had riding lessons, but certainly I didn't now how to approach a boy or anything. Well, when we got to Cartwright, suddenly there were these wonderful jazz records came out, and you know, the dancing records of that period, and one of the people, called Nick Biddulph, I'm still friendly, I still know him, still friendly with him, he had the cellar, and he had the most fantastic parties. And that was the first time I'd ever really learnt how to dance, and it was great, you know, it was important, and it was wonderful to be living in London, and that's when I started going to galleries and museums and that sort of thing. And there was a... One of the people I knew at the Slade was Jennifer Somerville, who was the daughter of...

*Lilian.*

Lilian Somerville, who was head of the British Council. And, I mean she, Jennifer was already sort of, my age but much more sophisticated and had been, you know, everything. And there was this huge exhibition at the Academy, well it was underneath, by the Academy cinema, I don't know if there was a big gallery space there, A Thousand Years of Modern Art or something.

*Oh, was it the Institute, was it the I.C.A.?*

The outside... No it wasn't the I.C.A. And outside there was the McWilliam sculpture, it was the first time I'd ever seen Mac's sculpture, because he was a tutor at the Slade, McWilliam was also brought in to teach at the Slade by Henry. So there was McWilliam and Reg. And, I do remember Jennifer...having to...this was the first really big do I'd ever been to, and I went with Jennifer, and I had to have a new dress, and it was...I remember making it, or my mother helping me make it, and it was sort of done on the lines of Christian Dior with sort of long skirt, and terribly romantic. And Jennifer was great fun, and we spent, you know, she was a painter and I was, we spent quite a... She took me around to things, and sort of, again, through Lilian and Jennifer one sort of realised, one began to grow up a bit, you know. I was trying to think of other...there were other sort of people. I mean one, one had friends but I can't, you know, I can't remember their name. But... Gosh, what was I saying?

*Cartwright Gardens.*

Yes, Cartwright. And there you had...it was good, it was a good place to be. And also, you know, I went to, started going to the Tate, and the National, and galleries down Cork Street, and you know, all this sort of thing. And actually going to exhibitions of one's teachers, you know, Coldstream and Rogers and all these sort of things. And there were exhibitions at, oh, Burlington, the Burlington Galleries and all these sort of places. But, no I think probably.....

End of F7832 Side B

F8044 Side A

*This is Gillian Whiteley interviewing Rosemary Butler on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, year 2000. So Rosemary, last time we were talking we more or less arrived at the point at which you had met Reg, in around about 1950, that's right?*

'50.

*Mm. So, it would be good I think if we could perhaps go back now, and you could talk about what you know of Reg's family background, and wherever you'd like to start really, however far you can go back really [inaudible].*

Right. I...I... Sorry, let me think. Reg was born in 1914 – 1913, and his father was, he was born in... [pause] No I think... Could we start, just go back just to.....

[break in recording]

Reg was born in Buntingford in Hertfordshire, and he was born in the workhouse. His father was master of this workhouse and his mother was the matron. And from what I can, from what he used to tell us, it was like a little town, this... The workhouse was in the centre of the town, of Buntingford, and it catered for everybody that, you know, were the vagrants and everybody, and they used to, they had a school, a hospital, a part for mental patients, and... So, so it was like, from, you know, when he talked about it, it was like as if he was...he was an only child, and it was like as if he was a sort of prince in this establishment, because everybody else felt that he was the master's child, and so he had a very superior position. Reg's father was born in 1980.

*His father was born in 19...*

19...1880.

1880.



1880. And, I think he was born in... Well, Reg's mother also was born in 1980[sic]. She was born in Takeley, which is in Essex, and I think his father was born in the vicinity of, around there. [pause] Sorry.

*Is Buntingford in Essex or is...?*

Hertfordshire.

*Is in Hertfordshire.*

Buntingford's in Hertfordshire, east Hertfordshire. And, I...you know, I don't know too much about their thing, but I do know that Reg's father's father, or, going back, was apprenticed to Paxton, and was an under-gardener in Chatsworth, and then became head gardener in, I think Takeley Manor or somewhere like this, and so this is how the, you know, how they met Reg's mother, who also lived... His father was related to, distantly to Yeats, Butler Yeats, and I think originally they came from Sligo in Ireland, and this is when Reg jokes about, that he's Irish, and you know, sometimes when the Irish became extremely difficult he always said, 'Well I'm a Butler' [PRONOUNCED BOOTLER], German[sic] – not...joking, joking. Anyway, they, Reg's father was in the Life Guards, and was invalided out of...because he used to...there are pictures of him outside, in Whitehall, you know, just fully dressed in all his regalia of... I don't think he was a horseman, I think he was a foot soldier, anyway... He, he had to...had one of his fingers removed, because he got septicaemia, a septic hand, and of course with one of his fingers, whether it was his trigger finger or what I don't know, he was invalided out. Eventually, you know, they married, and Reg's mother was trained for social work and for this... He never actually told me about her training, but they, after having sort of other positions in workhouses, they then became master and matron of Buntingford workhouse. And Reg was, I think I've said this, Reg was an only child, and a very precious child, and a child that took a long time to arrive, so, he became, as well as precious, exceptional and all the rest of, you know, this... And as...every whim was sort of given to him, everything he needed was given to him. He was educated at, he didn't go to school until he was fourteen, so he went to a private school, a little local private school with one or two other children, and at the age of fourteen he went to Hertford Grammar School, and

eventually became head boy at Hertford Grammar School. But with, previously, going back to Buntingford, there were...you know, he had, as I said, every facility offered him, and he used to...the coffin-maker called Tom Body, taught him how to make wood boxes, wood, everything, anything that he needed in wood, and we've still got one or two of the actual tools that, you know, were given to him by Tom Body. And this learning about wood at that age, went through all his life, because he made a lot of furniture in the house, a lot of...this, this was all made by Reg, and chairs and tables and things, and when he went actually up Leeds he found his flat, and... I've jumped a bit, but, because of the furniture he went up, he found his flat somewhere, painted the whole place white, carpeted the whole place with coconut matting, and put, like the round table over there, and the chair, and the desk, and he even made the bed and everything. So that it was an extraordinarily stark place with the furniture that he had made in it. So it was a very exceptional place for the students when they came to see it. And he...things like...he used to tell us about the...in this hospital, sort of workhouse place, there was this... The mother looked after, his mother looked after all the illnesses and, of all the patients, whereas his father looked after the gardeners and the wood, the coffin-makers, and organised the schools and that sort of thing. And he used to tell us about, sort of bits of, sort of stories, like the mental part of the house was at the top of a huge flight of stairs, and this woman used to appear who was obsessed with cleanliness, and the only garment she would wear would be white, and she used to appear at the top of these stairs dressed just in this white garment, and sort of, performed and then was taken in. Which obviously had an enormous effect on a child. And he also told us about the time when, I think it must have been smallpox, and the whole place was isolated and there were curtains at the door, you know, wringing in disinfectant, and nobody could come in and nobody could go out, and... And he also... The tramps used to come, they used to go from workhouse to workhouse; they could never stay more than, I think a night, and in that night they were cleaned up and attended to and that sort of thing. And they used to walk from Ware to Buntingford and then they used to go on towards Cambridge I think, so that they were all the time on the move. And one of the tramps had obviously come in, and he'd actually got grass growing out of his feet, you know, sort of, these, these extraordinary stories. He also used to tell us that, near to, near to Buntingford, between Hertford and Buntingford there is a steep hill going up the A10, actually there...I went up the other day and there's this little monument to

the Earl of Shaftesbury at the side of it. Anyway he used to tell us about the first bus, and everybody at the bottom had to get out while the bus went up the hill, and you know, on his way to school. And, he also...you know, I mean these...I just wish he had written it all down, because it was just...

*A very unique childhood.*

It was just the most extraordinary, the most extraordinary childhood.

*Mm. It must have been quite an isolated, an isolated experience for a child.*

Yes, yes. Yes, you know.

*Because he had no other brothers or sisters. Presumably...*

No brothers or sisters, just a lot of older people.

*And he didn't go to school.*

And, he went to school... Well, I think he went to like a, I think there were two or three children from the sort of, the sort of similar class that he was, that they got together, and then... But his father was very, had very definite views about schooling, and always felt that, you know, you don't send your child to boarding school, you send your child to school to learn, and then they come home to be taught by your parents, you know, everything else in life. And so Reg never went away to boarding school or anything like that. And... But he also later on, when he was a little older, his father was determined that he should travel, and so he sent him to, I think he sent him to Germany, and now this would be about 1934, in the Nuremberg Rallies, and I think he was sent to Germany then, and his father insisted...he went on a boat between, wherever it is in England, and Hamburg, and he was, he would say how he was sleeping in, below decks on this boat, and the cargo was mulberries or something, some sort of dye which, he said he woke up one morning and the dye had leaked through onto him, and all his, you know, he couldn't imagine what it was, but he was red with this. But anyway, that was one of his... Could have been, I mean Reg used

to tell us very exaggerated stories, you know. He enjoyed sort of having us sitting there sort of... And he went...and I think this very much affected him, because he went actually to the Nuremberg Rally and saw all this, and saw Hitler perform, and...

*So how old...he would have been about twenty then?*

Yes. Yes, about twenty then, and I think he was very, always sort of very struck by this, and very full of, not fear but very aware that things were going to happen. Anyway, he then... He also used to tell us about when he went up to Leyston I think, which is above Buntingford, his father and mother used to give him, gave him once this beautiful box of paints, and he went up, and took the paints and he took his paper, and looked at the landscape, and felt that, you know, this was the moment I think when he decided that painting certainly wasn't for him. But later on he did do some very beautiful water-colours, when he was, during the war, did some exquisitely beautiful water-colours.

*Were his parents, either of his parents artistic in any way?*

No.

*When he was younger.*

No, no.

*You said he didn't particularly go to school.*

No, neither of them, neither of them were artistic, but they would have encouraged everything that he did. I mean I think he made... But I mean he was a sort of Leonardo, because he, he made the first, he made a camera for himself, you know, by, the pinhole camera, and he made the first...so, believed to be the first television set in Hertfordshire, he literally made this. And he got the first television licence.

*When was the first...he was quite young?*

He just, he just...I mean, in times of great...if things weren't going right here, he would...which I'll tell you about later on, he made these extraordinary things, you know, just... And...

*And do you think that actually came from when he was quite young, sort of...?*

Yes. Yes, he... And I think it came from the fact that, nobody said, 'Oh you can't do it'; everybody said, 'You can do it'. Which is an attitude of, because there were, everybody, there were servants, he had a nanny too, there were, you know, sort of, I think her name was Adie, Ada, who looked after him, and Ada was very important. But, I think Ada was the sort of person that would never have said, you can't do something; she would always have said, 'Try'. And that attitude went through... And he was never expected really to fail I don't think, he would have been expected to have tried to work it out and do it. And consequently he had this slightly sort of arrogant attitude that he could do anything, all the way through, you know. And, I think...I think... But I don't... Ada was obviously very important to him until he went to school and then I think, you know, she became less, you know, less important. He also had, he used to tell us about, he used to be very interested in chemistry, and he used to do chemical sort of things, and he used to tell us how, the piano we have...and I'm not surprised it doesn't work very well, he sort of blew it up at one point and nearly lost his hand. You know, things like... And probably the parents just patted him on his head and said, 'It's all right, you know, do something else,' because... I mean they were strict though, they were very strict. I think he was taught... Granny Butler was quite religious, I don't think Grandfather Butler was, but Granny Butler was, and she was very moral, and quite, a very stern lady, all the way through, she lived till she was 89, and I knew her. I didn't know Grandfather Butler. He was a very very, huge man, about six foot four or something and twenty stone, and Reg would always tell us about, that in Buntingford there were about six or seven men who were all over twenty stone, you know, and none of them could see their toes, which made him laugh. And Grandfather Butler was also very interested in, he ran the bowls club and all this sort of thing. And he was interested, I think he...I've never been able to find it, but I think he did write a lot about vagrancy, and he was very interested in this. Anyway, they also, I think he did, he did do paintings and drawings and things when he was a youngster.

*This is Reg?*

This is Reg, going back to Reg. But I think that...but his parents said that, you can't go and be an artist, you've got to go and have a career. And so, he chose architecture. And so he went to...

*Did he do...can I ask you about his schooling? You say he became head boy.*

He went to Hertford Grammar School at the age...

*He had obviously shone quite well there, didn't he.*

Oh he did, he was very, he was very clever. And very... I mean he had enormous authority.

*Mm.*

Enormous, a sort of sense of secure...of enormous presence, I would imagine, that he would be head boy material. And my daughter has it, she has exactly that same thing, and she was head girl material, you know, she became head girl.

*Was he interested in anything particular at school, or did he talk about anything...?*

Science, I think he was mostly interested in science, but he didn't talk too much about it.

*What about teachers?*

Certainly wasn't very interested in languages, he wasn't very good at French and things like that.

*No.*

But I think he was very brilliant and maths, and, more that side. But, he had a very remarkable teacher, and I think his name was Davies. I know the headmaster was Bunt, and I think the name was, the teacher was, his school master was Davies. Because in those days, I mean Granny Butler was the type of person who would invite these teachers to Buntingford, and entertain them, which now, you know, one sort of can't imagine oneself doing. But the teachers came and were entertained, and you know, became interested, very interested in Reg, and I know that these two teachers he used to talk about them, and these two teachers had an enormous influence on his way of thinking and everything. And we have got an actual, a book on art history that he was awarded for being head boy or something, you know, I mean it's... After...he didn't go to Oxford or anything; after that he went and...he decided to, to do architecture, in the quickest way possible, because in those days architecture was seven years or something. And so he went to the Regent Street Polytechnic, and did it in, the actual course I think in two, working incredibly hard.

*Mm.*

And, and then he followed the normal things of being apprenticed to... I mean this is all in Richard Calvocoressi's taped biography, much better than I could...because he's got the names; I mean I don't know the names of... But... And he, you know, went through the normal sort of thing. And he did design the... I think the architects he worked with were fairly traditional, and he did design the, what do you call it, a pinnacle at the top of...

*Is it the clock tower on Slough Town Hall?*

The clock tower at Slough, that's right, the clock tower at Slough Town Hall. And he did design, he did design some houses, several at Munden, two at Munden Bury and one at Bushy, and...

*So he still lived in Hertfordshire, did he?*

He lived in Hertfordshire then, he lived in Hertfordshire... So this would be '34.

*He went to...so he went to...*

But then... I think we've got to go back a bit, because... He married Jo, who is Joan Child, in 1938, but I think I'd better go back a bit, because his father died in... In 1935 I think there was a health Act which got rid of all the workhouses, quite, a very important health legislation, which got rid of all the workhouses, so Granny, Grandmother and Grandfather Butler had to leave Buntingford, and they then found a house in Brookmans Park, which, I think at that time Reg also lived with them in Brookmans Park.

*So he would have been about twenty, in his twenties then?*

Yes, 1935?

*Is that when he was training? Yes, he would have been, it would have been twenties.*

So he would have got, he would have been still... He would have trained as an architect, or would he be training at that time?

*1934 you said he went to Regent Street?*

Yes, so would have been training as an architect at that time, that's right.

*1933 in architectural practice. Well, in...in this particular Tate catalogue.*

Right, that's right. Yes. Well anyway he was living with his parents at Brookmans Park at that time.

*Right, yes.*

And, one would sort of have to go back a bit, because... Joan was called Jo. Anyway, Jo lived at a farm in Munden, Great Munden, on a farm called Munden Bury, The Bury in Great Munden. And she, her family were farmers, her father, Jo's father was



a farmer, her mother was, she came from, she was a Staniforth and came from Sheffield, and they ran a big steel works or something up in Sheffield.

*Oh yes?*

Anyway they lived on this farm, and Jo, Jo...it was Jo and two brothers, and she, she had a charmed life, you know, hunting and everything, and you know, parties and dances, and everything. And, Jo's youngest brother was Reg's fag at Hertford school, so this is, so this is how they met, and then Jo went, and Reg met, was invited back to The Bury, and this is where he met Jo, and so... Jo and Reg... Reg's father died in 1937, of a heart attack I think, and Jo and Reg married in 1938, September 1938. Jo was a very gentle and kind and sweet and pretty person, and had never sort of moved outside the farm, in a way she was...she had her nanny, Quiddy, and her mother, who was a very social sort of person, could play the piano and had her Steinway and everything, and who shone, you know. And Jo, who sort of, was sort of, her mother's...I think her mother sort of projected a lot of herself into Jo. Anyway Jo was a very gentle person. And they married in 1938, which was, Reg who was not... Oh golly, I've... Yes, Reg, who was not religious at all, didn't want to marry in a church, but I think because of Jo's mother, and Reg's mother, they, Reg said, OK, and they married about eight o'clock in the morning in the church which is across the garden from The Bury, the house. It literally, this very beautiful Georgian farmhouse which she lived in, I mean, and had a sort of parterre garden, and...then across the garden was this church, and the churchyard, and they were married there. And I think they, they knew that things, that, you know, things were...Reg had already been to Germany and he knew, saw things were happening. Previously, Reg had, at school Reg had been in the Army, Officers' Training Corps?

*Training Corps, yes.*

And he used to tell us how sometimes he used to camp up on Berkhamsted Common with his, with all the other boys, and he used to ride, he used to ride his white...he had a white horse for some reason. I mean he was a great horseman. He used to ride this white horse all across the common, and... And I think by that time he was probably a captain or, whatever it is in this, but this was while he was at school, and he got...he

was offered a scholarship to Sandhurst, because, you know, he was just good at it. Everything he did he was good at. Which he decided not to take, because he wanted to be an architect, but... But he used to say how he knew Berkhamsted Common very well, because this was where they used to do all their, you know, camp there and do everything, which is quite funny, because he came to live at Berkhamsted. And, and I mean Jo was a superb horsewoman, they had, at this farm they had wonderful horses, and...and everything. And, 1938, they married, and Reg had previously, during the year that his father had died, his mother, he had to sort of look after his mother and settle his mother, because she was absolutely devastated by everything, and so he settled her in a flat in Cockfosters. And...

*In London?*

Yes, near Southgate, Cockfosters.

*Yes.*

Yes. And, it enabled him, having left the house, it enabled him to, to sort of settle her and leave her there. And so, during the, that...I think he...they, Reg and Jo set up, they had a sort of, bought a flat, or rented a flat, near, near Granny Butler in Cockfosters, which they set up, and for that, again he did what I'd said previously he did at Leeds, he'd sort of cleared out the house and put all this, made all this, all this furniture here for it, and you know, it was...and had these isokons in it, and it was an incredibly modern. Because, I mean he knew all the architects, all, Max Fry and all these, all these architects, and he was in the [inaudible]. But he had also decided that he wasn't going to practise building, he became much more building research and a consultant, and he was a consultant for Poole Potteries and London Brick, and he sort of...I don't know if he was, how he was employed or anything, but I do know that he was...and he earned quite a lot of money there. I think it was... You know, I just wasn't there, so I don't know, it's all from..

*No, no. And that was just before the war?*

Yes, just before the war.

*When he got married, and this flat, and [inaudible].*

They got married, and they got this flat, and then he was going out, doing all this consultancy work and everything. And, then the war came.

*And how did that, how did that affect his life?*

Well, that completely affected his life, because he became, he knew he was going to be a pacifist.

*Right.*

And, interestingly, he decided that he would go through all the...oh I don't know what you call them, where you were called up, and you know, you have your medical. He even, for some reason, had his medical, and turned out A1, and was consigned to the Parachute, Parachutist Regiment. And, then he said, 'I'm not going,' you know, 'I'm a pacifist.' And, Reg and Jo packed everything up. I think they'd worked...they packed up their flat in Southgate, Cockfosters, and had gone back to Jo's farm to work at...he was given one of the out barns and everything, and he set up a workshop, and they went back there for a while.

*And worked...what was he doing?*

Well he was...he had set up his lathe, and, whether he'd actually started to mend some of the machinery and everything at that time, but he certainly had set up a lathe and everything. They'd gone back to Munden, to Great Munden, to Jo's farm. And I think the tribunals started to come, and he...I don't know quite how it happened, but he was advised to have a solicitor called Ambrose Pelby, who specialised in pacifist... And actually I've got, I can show it to you, because I've got...he died just a very short time ago and I've got actually his obituary, which tells you about how he, you know, sort of, what do you call it when a solicitor stood for these pacifists and...

*I don't know.*

For some reason he knew Ernest Bevin I think, this solicitor. And Reg never understood, but he was allowed to...Reg and Jo packed up, went down to West Sussex, East...West Sussex, near Midhurst, I've been there, Midhurst, and set up a small, lived in a caravan in somebody's field, and set up a small business, and started to look after all the, all the farm, farms around there.

End of F8044 Side A

F8044 Side B

*Right, you were just talking about the solicitor who defended the case [inaudible].*

Yes.

*And what's interesting is the fact that he, he didn't seem to have any particular political aspect to his background particularly, did he, so where, what made him really decide, do you know?*

I think... No, because he, as...I mean having a military background in his father.

*Mm.*

And going to, you know, going, having the possibility of going to Sandhurst, and... And having this idea of going all the way through the tribunals, all the way through the... He went through it, whether it was some sort of way to say, well, I'm not doing it because I'm not...you know, I'm doing this because I really believe in it, you know.

*Mm.*

And, he...I don't know quite, I think he just felt that killing and maiming and people fighting each other was not going to be the answer, and I think he probably looked back, or had enough, you know, to, the wastage of life in the 1914-18 War, and seeing that this would happen all over again. And probably wondering if war, actual war was going to be, was any answer. But also...

*Did he have any... Did he have any family who were involved in the First World War, that you know of?*

Well people, Granny Butler's...well actually one of Granny Butler's brothers was in the Indian Mutiny, which was... And, I think, whether one of Granny Butler's... I mean it must have been, 1914, when he was...he was born in 1913, the end of the war, he would be about six or seven, he must have been conscious by that time of people

not coming home, and...and he must have been later conscious of perhaps people coming...I mean perhaps the vagrants and all this sort of thing, picking up people who had been maimed in the war, and you know, that, even the hospital coping with, even Granny's, the workhouse coping with people that had suffered and that sort of thing. But certainly it wasn't through anything, any political thing. I think he just, just felt that killing and maiming was no answer to anything.

*Mm.*

I don't know what he would have, how he would have accepted being occupied, or, by Germany or not, I don't know, we never talked about that. But he did say that if he was faced with somebody threatening his family, then he would have disposed of that, whoever it was, there was no...he would have actually killed, if it meant his family being in a situation of being threatened or whatever. But he was, as always, I mean he was a very, whatever he did, was done with great thought and great...it wasn't done easily. But for some reason, and he never quite understood, he was always, he was...he, after the first tribunals, he went down to, and I'm not sure whether it's, West Sussex it must be if it's near Midhurst, it was in this village called, near Iping, and he, where he stayed on the land of Esme Strachey, who was Richard Strachey's wife, I think Richard Strachey came and went at that time, but, he stayed with Esme. And Esme had two girls, Vicky and Pippa, and Jo and Reg were incredibly fond of, you know, there was a wonderful relationship. I think they actually stayed, the caravan was on their land. And they also knew Partridge, and Frances Partridge had a son, didn't she, who died, beginning with B?

*Frances Partridge?*

Frances Partridge. Her single son. Anyway, I can't remember that, but all around there, so that their...you know, it obviously wasn't a boring time that they had, they had sort of great intellect and that sort of thing going on. And Reg would...Reg spent the rest of the years during the war literally, it wasn't blacksmithing as such, he was making spare parts, and sort of, putting together tractors that had bust, or milking machines that didn't work, or harvesters that were...and he was going all round the country just doing this. Jo I think was also called in front of a tribunal, but she again I

think was exempt, because she, it was, you know, whether it was because she was helping Reg or whatever. And, this is how they spent, this is how they spent their war down there. After the war they came back... Oh good Lord! I'm not quite sure, but I think they came back to The Bury for a few, for a short time, and then they found...it would be 1946 I imagine, wouldn't it, '45, '46 when they returned.

*Mm.*

And they took a...that I'm not sure about, but I think they had, they eventually had a sort of, rented a shop-cum-...like, it was two rooms literally, in Hatfield, it was 3 Park Street in Hatfield. It was a front room and a back room, and as far as I can see the loo actually didn't belong to them, it was along an alley. So they lived in here, and a lot of the...

*This is a shop?*

Yes, they...

*What did they sell then?*

They didn't, they then made it into a, they made it into their house. The front room was the sitting-room, where all the furniture that had been in store from when they, you know, before the war, like the isokons.

*That he'd made.*

All the furniture and everything, came out, and the shop part was stripped out and he...and the front room was their sitting-room and the back room was their sort of, a divan bed, and...no...yes... No, the front room was the sort of, had a large bed in it, it was a very big room, and chairs and things, and the back room was where he did his, all these little, little sculptures on the table.

*Oh that, he started making his sculpture, and while...*

So he started making these while he was there, while he was... He didn't make these during the war.

*No.*

These happened, I would think about 1947/48.

*These are some of the actual ones that you've got here, these small...*

Yes, little ones, which were done on... I have a picture of him actually working on a bench. And this was in the back room of this so-called...

*This is in Hatfield.*

In Hatfield, in this so-called shop. During the war he had previously done wood, he seemed to do wood carvings, and I know when he was, after the war he had come back to the farm at Munden, he'd cast a lot of lead, he'd done lead castings, so he was already experimenting in castings.

*I'm just looking at the Tate catalogue.*

This one for instance which is up there, the dog bone.

*[inaudible].*

The dog bone, this is wood.

*Oh sorry. Oh that, that's wood?*

Yes.

*Oh yes, right.*



It's painted wood. And this one, I'm not sure of the date of that, but that would be '37. So this would be before, this was...he would...

*Or...yes, before the war.*

Yes, before he was, while he was living with his parents in Brookmans Park. And this one would be...

*1944, so then...*

No this was done during the war, so he was moving through to a much more simplified form. And the date is, this would be lead. What date is that?

*1946, those are reclining figures.*

Yes, so this was what he was moving through.

*Moving carvings and...*

Obviously influenced by Henry Moore at this time.

*Yes, mhm.*

This would be lead I think, this is a lead head again.

*Mm. And he actually cast these himself [inaudible].*

He cast these himself, yes. He...he was all the time interested in casting, would never...he...these were actually cast by himself at the time. And so, it wasn't until, this drawing here I think would be 1948, that one.

*The figure, the charcoal...?*

Yes. No, the one up...

*Oh sorry, the...*

The charcoal one which is again a repeat of that one.

*Oh I see, yes, the abstract.*

Yes, the abstract one, a family group. These were...this was what he was doing when he arrived at Park Street, at 3... And at the same time...

*At Hatfield.*

At Hatfield. At the same time, he, just up the road, actually it was, I can remember it, it was, you walked up the road and it was towards Hatfield House, there was a bridge that went across the road which was the, it was a high embankment with a bridge going across it, and this bridge was the actual main route into Hatfield House, which the entrance was... And he rented, I suppose, must have been sort of stables or, or, some sort of barn from, from a very big old Georgian house which was just next door. And this was his studio where he did all the things, you know, his...his plate figure, Scottish figure, and...

*And he started welding [inaudible].*

This is where he started welding, and he had a forge there. And, yes, and this is where he started making all...in fact, building, you know, sort of, using some of these maquettes and building them up. He made the maquettes in the little back room at Park Street, and then the bigger stuff was made there. So, that, immediately after the war, he was still a practising architect, and he was still advising...he came back, and did some more sort of advising London Brick, and Poole Pottery was another thing, the people he was a consultant to. But I think gradually he...his heart wasn't in it, he wanted, knew he was going to be a sculptor at some point in time. And...

*He had no, no formal training at all as a sculptor?*

No, none. No formal training in how to do anything, and I mean no formal training in, for instance during the war when he was working, making the most precise instruments on his lathe, because he had a lathe, and the most incredibly precise instruments to make these, you know, things work, these factors work. He just learnt it all himself. He set up the lathe and from then on sort of... I mean, I sometimes think, what would he have done with a computer? You know, you know, sort of, learn, learning, as I am learning, the computer.

*Mm. But was he very...very involved with his hands and so on [inaudible].*

Yes, but I mean the whole thing, as I'll tell you later, when he was working out, about photography and that sort of thing.

*Mm.*

I mean it was all laid out on charts and the whole thing was, you know, worked out mathematically.

*[inaudible] ideas and...*

Mathematically and everything.

*Mm, mm.*

And the most beautiful instruments. Because he couldn't afford anything, to buy these, and he made the most beautiful measuring instruments, to the enth accuracy.

*Mm.*

It was, it was extraordinary. And I have some of these things that he made, and they're so beautiful.

*Mm.*

And made out of steel and, you know, the precision is extraordinary.

*So it was at this point that he [inaudible], he was in Hatfield and he started to make [inaudible].*

So this point would be, and I'm not quite sure... He was at... Yes, I've missed out a bit. He became architectural editor, before, actually just before the war, of the A.A...

*Architectural Association journal.*

Yes. He was...goodness, I've got it confused. He was a tutor at the A.A., the Architectural Association, before the war.

*Right.*

And that was at its peak, because that was when it was a most exciting school, and he was, he was a tutor at the A.A.

*He knew people like Maxwell Fry and...*

Yes, and all, all these...Lasdun, Denys Lasdun, all these people were there. But he, he was a tutor at the A.A. And, also he was working on, what...gosh, it's there, there's a whole...

*That was before the war, he was doing that? Right, yes.*

I'll have to get this dating right. So the lecturing at the...

*So it was before the war.*

Yes.

1937.

Yes. So he was, he was a lecturer at the A.A. And during the war he was doing a whole...gosh, and, Richard's got it here somewhere. [leafing through book] I think I would have to find it, but it...

*What are you looking for?*

He did a whole series of articles on...

*Oh right.*

On... Would you like to turn it off and I can see if I can find it?

*Yes.*

[break in recording]

*We can always come back to that. So there was a series of articles on prefabrication...*

I think prefabricating buildings and that sort of thing. And these articles came out in the building and research, some building and research thing.

*Mhm, right.*

But that needs to be sort of verified.

*Mm. So he was very involved in other areas apart from actually practising architecture and teaching.*

Yes. And there was a period when he was even I believe asked by the Admiralty to work on something like Mulberry Harbour for Singapore or something. I mean, you know, he was, he was an engineer as well as being an architect, he just had a basic... Now, can you cancel that?

[break in recording]

*No, not too sure about that.*

No, no. So, if there's a point you can take it out, yes, take it out. But I'm pretty certain he told us this.

*Mm.*

But as a pacifist, he said there's no way, you know, he would do that.

*No.*

So where am I now?

*Well you were just saying that...*

I've leapt haven't I.

*No it's all right. He was involved, apart from actually practising as an architect, he had also been involved in teaching at the Architectural Association.*

Teaching, yes, mm.

*And also editor of the journal as well.*

Yes, yes.

*For a number of years.*

Yes. And after the war he worked, he became, as he was technical editor of the architectural...

*He continued to be involved with architecture, then? Right.*

Yes, yes. And, he actually designed the pub underneath the Architectural Association, what's his...

*Architectural Press?*

Yes... Yes.

*Was Technical Editor of the Architectural Press.*

Yes, he designed the pub underneath that. There was...

*Whereabouts is that then?*

Queen Anne's Gate.

*Oh right.*

Queen Anne's Gate. Whether it's still there, I don't know, it probably isn't.

*You don't know what it's called?*

No. It'll be the *Architectural Review*, isn't that it, isn't that...? *Architectural Press.*

*Mhm.*

That, at Queen Anne's Gate.

*The building, right.*

Yes, yes. And he actually... But Richard's got it in his bit about Reg, he's got it there. So...

*So it's quite remarkable really that he was making a decision to, to move away from this really, which could have been quite a separate career.*

Yes. I think he must have been doing it the same time.

*Yes.*

Yes, he'd got a terrific career as an architect.

*He'd already got one hadn't he, yes, [inaudible].*

Yes, a huge career. But remind, don't forget that his parents had said, OK, you might want to be an artist, but you've got to do this, and have this as a career.

*Mm. Mm.*

And being Reg, he got to the top of this, to a sort of...

*Mm, very quickly.*

Very quickly. And then he decided that, you know, he wanted to be an artist. And he must have been working, it must have been at the same time as doing this, as, you know, as doing...he must have been working in his studio in Hatfield. And produced enough for an exhibition. But I don't know who saw the stuff, who...I don't know who even suggested to Erica Brausen at the Hanover that he should have an exhibition, whether it was Robert Melville or whether it was, who, who came down, I don't know.

*Mm. And do you know, do you know what sculpture or, any other sculptors that he was interested in at that time? I mean, it's remarkable the work that he was producing, so early.*

Yes. I mean, and it's interesting that this work produced came... You know we were looking at that book, *British Sculpture*, which was '46, '45?



*The Eric Newton book which was 1944 to '46, just a couple of years.*

Yes, '46, which was incredibly traditional...

*That's right.*

...sculptures that were considered to be important sculptures at the time. And then, '48, '49, '50, within that time it was as if the whole of, the awfulness that happened during the war had sort of come, and we realised it, and it was like a sort of, knocked everybody for six. And out of that came these weird sort of, iron sort of, angst-ridden sculptures.

*Mm.*

And Giacometti, everybody was doing it, Germaine Richier, the whole...there was a whole, you know, art wasn't ever the same again.

*Would he have been familiar with people like that? Was he interested in other sculptures, did he find it...?*

He was...had always been interested in art and was always... We have catalogues, and he obviously went to the art exhibitions of, just after the war and, you know.

*So then he thought he'd...*

And he was going to art exhibitions before the war.

*Mm.*

He was very interested in, before the war he was very interested in wood carving.

*Right.*

And has done quite a lot of it, we've got a lot of wood carving blocks. And Gertrude Hermes and Robert Gibbings and all these sort of people, he was very interested in. And I haven't said, just before the war he and Jo set up a sort of hand press thing in which I think he was trying to draw Jo into working, and tried to set her up as a sort of textile designer, because he, we... Like these curtains there, and this cushion here, these were things that he actually, they did on printing, they did on press, but it didn't take off, but, as...the printing part didn't take off, but we have actual blocks of the, of, you know, what he actually, you know, did. And we have bits of material which have survived, including those, I mean goodness, those curtains were done in 1938, and they're still up. (laughs)

*Really? Gosh, [inaudible] isn't it. [inaudible].*

I think they're going to fall off one day. (laughing) They're going to just fall off I think. And they go from place from place, I mean they were in Hatfield, and then they were in another place in Hatfield, and then...and it's almost as if the room is built to hold these curtains. (laughing) I think they really will fall off one day, it's good.

*It's such a strong kind of continuity, because of course it's all around the same place as well, the location, as well as the things that are in the place.*

Yes, and the furniture, all the furniture sort of follows it. I mean, this was all built. And obviously this room was taken to hold this unit. And so one... And that chest at the end. So one can never ever alter this room, as long as I'm here anyway, (laughs) because it's sort of... And just as it is, the curtains, you know, they sort of... But, I'm not...I don't know quite how, how the first exhibition happened. All I can... No.

*No. This was the one at the Hanover then is it?*

Yes, the first...

*In 1949, just before you...*

Yes. In which, I mean it must have been sensational. But the funny thing was that I was at the Slade then, and I didn't even bother to go, and I think there was an element of Gerrard who was our Professor sort of was saying, 'Oh this modern stuff, you know, you don't want this.' And he was a very traditional person, and you know, don't...you know, this Butler man who is just trying it on sort of thing. I didn't even bother to go, you know, and yet it was quite, quite a thing.

*Had Reg had any...he hadn't had any other exhibitions at all?*

No. No.

*So he actually started with a solo exhibition?*

Yes. And...

*Which is quite, quite incredible really as well.*

Yes. I think upstairs or somewhere was, Campigli was also exhibiting at this thing. But also, he was Cotterell Butler, as an architect...

*That's right, yes, we should say that.*

Cotterell Butler was an architect, or R. Cotterell.

*He was actually, what was his name when he was born, was Reginald?*

Reginald Cotterell Butler.

*But he was always known as...?*

Cotterell Butler as an architect. And then, obviously... He changed, he shortened the whole thing to Reg Butler as a sculptor. And I think that people, you know, at the A.A. or, had said, 'Have you heard, seen anything about this Reg Butler chap?' to

him. You know, I mean he was two very, kept the two very compartmentalised, things, you know, sort of separate.

*Mm.*

And of course everybody was, it was a great excitement, everybody came.

*Mm.*

And, I think then was when... I mean Jo... At Park Street, I don't even know, I think the back room had a kitchen, but I think she cooked everything on a, a sort of little Blewitt thing. I mean I don't know how she did it. But, from being a very, a child that had everything, had nannies and cooks and maids and had to do nothing really, to the point where she married Reg, and her life changed completely from, to a caravan in a field, and no money at all, and living... I mean the only continuity was that they were living in the country. And she, she...at Park Street, I mean they had no money. I think his income went down, he said, his income went from something considerable to, he had a profit of £12. And I think, you know, was[??] quite interesting with the tax man, because you know, how to go from, from...to just a profit of £12. He had... And...

*So they struggled financially.*

Yes. At that point.

*Did that affect the way they related to each other do you think?*

I don't think so. Oh no no no.

*No?*

I think so, I don't think so. I mean there are pictures of Jo actually helping Reg hold, hold the iron and, you know, working round the forge and everything. And, I think this is how it really links up, because from this exhibition came the first commission,

the Hatfield *Oracle*, which...or a commission for Hatfield Technical College, which...and Howard Robertson was the architect. And, of course, I mean again, Reg obviously knew Howard Robertson, and he knew all these people as, being an architect as well as a thing, but from...from this commission, from this sort of exhibition came this commission for the, for something for this new technical college which was going up in Hatfield. And, I think, I think, I mean there was...I think...I do remember Reg saying at one sort of point they had Howard Robertson, Philip Hendy, Henry Moore, all these sort of things to lunch, and you know, Jane Drew and Max Fry, they all came down to lunch, because they were all discussing about this project which was going into the Hatfield. And, so he was, you know, sort of thinking what to do. Meanwhile, at the Slade, and this is where it links up a bit, Henry Moore had come in to the Slade as being... I think, going back to the point, Coldstream in 1940...when would it be, '50...became head of the Slade, and he was very anxious to, it had got a bit of a sort of, sluggish, and very sort of, what is the word? Uninteresting sort of backward-looking reputation.

*Mm.*

And he was very anxious to sort of get the whole thing sort of going, and he sort of...Gerrard, who was the Professor downstairs, I mean Gerrard was sort of, had been there for, since man and boy sort of thing, and now was Professor, and, I think Coldstream suggested that Henry Moore should pay a visit. So I do remember Henry Moore coming in, and I do remember as a student going into, he was in Gerrard's room, and you had to take your work in and Henry Moore being there and looking at your work, and you know, he saw all of us. And I think Henry Moore sort of discussed with Coldstream that they needed some life coming into this place, and I suppose said, 'Have you seen the sculpture of this man, you know, Reg Butler? He's a person that needs to come in.' (laughs) So, and he was brought in, and, he started by just coming in one day or so, and then I think he, he was asked if he could be a regular visitor, so he then came in, I don't know if it was once a week or once a month, but he came in regularly. And so this was, he was...it was after his exhibition at the Hanover, but...but that's when I first really got to know Reg. And then it's linked back to, with the *Oracle*, he made this in his studio and he, he made it in clay, and this thing was set up.

*Did he have a studio in the Slade, or...?*

No no.

*No, right.*

He made it at Hatfield.

*Right.*

In his studio. And the whole thing... Just let me try and clear this a bit. I think coming to the Slade, and seeing people work, and, this started him working in clay, or becoming more solid, because you know, here we all were, building up our sculptures in clay and with armatures and everything, and I think, I think maybe, this is maybe why the *Oracle* is as it is, which is that little bird thing, do you see the little...up...the shelf up.

*Yes.*

Is a... And I think this is why he made this solid, because by 19...what date would this be? '50, the *Oracle*?

*Is it '52? 1952.*

Yes. I mean he was already beginning to...

*But was that...it was after the... Oh he was working on it in 1949. He finished it...*

Yes, he was working on it about 1950 I think, he was working on it in 1950.

*Right, yes, but it was actually finished in 1950.*

And the other thing was, going back to the iron sculpture, the work that he did for the first Hanover exhibition was forged, and was very, had very simple, tenuous sort of shapes. And he then, after that exhibition, introduced into his studio oxyacetylene, and, the welder, because these were all... I think he'd got a welder by these, but mostly they were riveted and you know, hammered on the forge and flattened out. And he got a welder with, maybe because the success of the first exhibition he certainly could afford oxyacetylene. And he then started building them, the iron with, welding it together and doing surfaces with the oxyacetylene, sort of building up surfaces, literally almost modelling it. And I think he became, like the Scottish figure is very modelled with oxyacetylene, and I think... And he used to call it... I think he became very conscious that this was taking him over; the act of what he could do with the material that he had got was making him forget the original sort of linear sort of stark quality, and I think he felt that how, he used to call it knitting, it's like knitting in metal, and I think he felt, he wondered how much knitting he could do and how, where it...and I think he was beginning to feel that in a way he had got to move away from the iron. And maybe coming to the Slade and seeing this new material, because, you know, OK, he knew clay was about, but you know, seeing this new material, having the commission for Hatfield, having idea of what he wanted to do, he then sort of put everything together and made this very strange sort of bird-like thing with a wing, using the armature which is held up, which, legs sort of come out, and you've got the... So you've got a coming together of the, of the tenuous sort of metal, and the beginning of the volume, and I think this is where it began.

End of F8044 Side B

F8045 Side A

*OK, so perhaps it might be interesting if we could just talk a little bit about the Festival of Britain, the things...*

Which was 19...

'51.

'51.

*Mm.*

Well following the Hanover exhibition, his first exhibition at the Hanover, suddenly this, Reg became a sort of important artist really, I mean he... And so, then he was commissioned by Hugh Casson for the Festival of Britain to do a sculpture. And this is where the *Bird Cage* came. He made...he set up the *Bird Cage*. And...

*And he actually...you saying he actually made it on the site?*

He made it in Hatfield, in the studio.

*Oh he made it in the Hatfield studio.*

And then it was transported and set up in the... He was over on the, by the restaurant I think. And, interestingly, it was...

*This is it, 1940...it's actually dated 1949.*

No no no, that's Patrick...

*No?*

No no. No no.



*Not that one?*

I'll see if I can...

*That's also a Bird Cage though.*

Yes.

*So he'd already done one called Bird Cage.*

It's not here. [pause] It's not in this book.

*Isn't it? I thought it was in there somewhere. It's this one, is it this one?*

No.

*No.*

That's *Woman Resting*. [pause] That's strange. It's not...it's not...there isn't a picture of it, unless there is... [pause]

*But it was basically, it was a huge piece wasn't it?*

Yes.

*Was it one of the [inaudible] pieces he made here[??]?*

[inaudible] what was it? Here it is. This, here it is.

*Yes. Yes.*

Do you know... Does it say how tall it is?

*It doesn't say how tall it is, but it's...*

It's very tall, and now, now it's on show at the Festival Hall.

*Oh is it?*

Right up on the top balcony.

*Oh right.*

Looking out over the Thames. It looks really beautiful there. It...it must be about eight feet, eight or nine feet.

*Eight? Oh I thought it was more than that.*

Nine feet. Because it is very, it is...yes, it must be, as tall as this room? How tall is this room?

*Oh yes. Well it must be, because looking at the room, at the people stood behind it.*

Yes, yes it is.

*I mean you could probably get four of them there.*

Yes, so you've got...so five, ten, fifteen.

*It could be fifteen feet, yes.*

About fifteen feet, mm. Yes. It would be about the biggest one he did I think, that one.

*Right. And did you see him making that at all?*

No I didn't, no, he doing this before, he was doing this actually, you know, before I'd been down to the studio or anything.

*Right, mhm.*

And this was before the *Oracle*.

*But do you remember seeing it when you eventually went there?*

I saw it, I saw it when I went to the Festival...

*Did you register...*

Yes.

*...ah, that's his?*

No, I didn't even think too much about it.

*No.*

I just didn't. (laughs) I just...

*Did you notice it?*

I did notice it, I did notice it, and, yes, and I did see it, I did see it, I must admit I did see it. Because by that time I was twenty-one, I did know him, so, yes I did, I did see it.

*And you knew, knew of his reputation and his work?*

Yes, I did see it, mm, I did go and see it. Very much, yes I do remember that. But in a sort of way one's life is in a haze then, as far as I can remember.

*Mm.*

But, and so, following that, there was, then came the next...

*The Oracle.*

*The Oracle.*

*Right.*

And, I can't remember, I think, I think he, he actually set it up in his, in his yard, and he had this idea of this sort of bird with the strange neck and the head on top, and this was about the first of the heads on top. Remembering, well, the important thing about this yard that it was, this sculpture yard, was that it was very close to the de Havilland aircraft factories, and every day Geoffrey de Havilland was going over with test planes, you know, sort of flying at different heights, going at great speed over this yard, and one just stood looking up, watching them go over. And obviously this must be where the, one of the places that the head on the top came from, because you know, you spent a great deal of your time looking up to see what was, what was there, what was going across. And the noise, I can remember the, the...because it was supersonic, and the Comet was going over, and all these big jets and everything, and it was a very exciting time with... He had this... I do remember that it was outside, because he didn't have, I don't think he even had...he had very little money and I don't even know that he had sort of trolleys to pull things out, so there's clay. It was in the summer, so that was good, and he had this outside. And then, I was at the Slade doing my last year, must have been my last year, and he wanted an assistant. I mean, at that time I can remember writing to Marini and to all sorts of people asking if one could be their assistant.

*Did you? Oh.*

That's what we all did, you know, sculptors. And he wanted an assistant, and so, I used to travel, I had an aunt that lived in St. Albans, which was near to Hatfield, so I stayed with my aunt and then travelled from St. Albans to Hatfield, and helped him.

So, the first thing to do, because this was in clay, and, you know, when you're trying to keep clay damp with cloths, you lose the surface and it starts to deteriorate, the first thing to do was to get the moulds, so we made moulds of this. And then, he had to...he had to...meanwhile he had been thinking of a way to cast it, because he knew that plaster wouldn't be any good because it wouldn't last, and he, he thought up a sort of cold, a bronze that needn't be poured, and it was...it was called shell bronze, and it was made with tin, copper and lead. And this...he worked out a certain, you know, quotient of each metal, so that when they were made into sticks, he made them into, cast them into sticks, and he worked out that when you had a hot tool, and oxyacetylene, you could paste the stick, the stick at the end would melt, and you could paste it into the mould, do you see? So instead of actually pouring the mould, you had a section of the sculpture with...and you held a stick with your oxyacetylene and then you pasted it with your tool. So you had a very high, a metal with a very high melting point as the tool. And so, and he invented this. And the one that we did with the *Oracle* had a high lead content, so it was...it sort of flowed into this thing as you pasted it, and each time you moved on, the amount behind you had gone cold, and then you moved on, and were sort of pasting it as you went on. And so you finished this with a whole section of, a section of the *Oracle*. And then you knocked the mould off and you had this bronze section. I didn't say that the moulds had to be very very dry, because it wouldn't have taken the metal, so that the moulds had to be sort of baked. And he sort of set up an electric fire with a brick kiln and we baked the moulds, because, if you hadn't have had a very very dry mould it would have bubbled and just not pressed down into the surface. So we then got the moulds, do you see here, if you look at the picture, this, if you can imagine here, this was covered in plaster.

*Mm.*

And then, this...say this is clay, this was covered in, all covered in plaster sections. You lifted the plaster sections off, dried them, and then pasted this metal into the plaster sections, so then when you knocked the plaster away you had a section like that.

*Right.*

And when we'd got all the sections together, we set them up, and then from the inside, you did it in two halves, you welded each section together, so that you had this in a sort of bronze shell, and this is why it's called shell bronze. And in the...the armature of the, sort of, metal armature, the legs and the arms were all made with phosphor bronze, which is very strong. And then, when it was put together he patinated it. This patination was quite... The metal, because it was high lead, was a grey metal, it wasn't the colour of bronze, it was a grey, grey-coloured bronze, so of course naturally you had to then patinate it to get it the right colour, and he did find that one of the ways of doing it was to... He did put, on some of them, I don't...he didn't actually do it in this, but he did this with copper sulphate, which then made the metal a sort of reddy colour, and then after that he put hydrochloric acid I think on. Anyway, he kept on applying these things till he got it the colour he wanted. So, and that was the very first shell bronze. And once we had made that in shell bronze, he realised that it would be possible to have an exhibition of bronze sculptures. I mean this is my problem, you know, how do you get your things from wax into bronze, because of the cost? And he would...it would have been almost impossible to do that in bronze, because of the, you know, the way the armature comes in and out of the sculpture. And the other thing was, when he was putting it together he did leave, in the sections he did leave flanges on and gaps, so that there's a sense of, a very antique, old sort of bird there, sort of... And he used the metal sections for, used it creatively, not just a positive repetition of what it was, he used the bronze in a sort of creative way by, by leaving on bits of flange and, you know, this sort of thing. And adding onto it with this cold, with this metal. So with that, it did make life very very different. I, having...that summer we worked at that, and then I took a studio, I'd got the postgraduate studentship at the Slade and so I took a studio in Harrow on the Hill. It was a shop on the hill, and, had been a shop, and I sort of...it had a cellar, which was very useful. So, we built a kiln in the cellar, a brick kiln, and we, we started by, Reg brought all the sculptures over from Hatfield, and I set up and started casting all his sculptures for the next exhibition. And...

*All in this technique?*

Yes, all in this technique. There must have been...I...there were so many, because, for the exhibition, great, but then since the exhibition was almost sold out...

*Really?*

...and it was in casts of four, so you had to then start repeating it.

*You did four of each, and you sold them all?*

Yes, you had to keep doing, doing casts, you know, and if it was a very... There's, in one of the, in this exhibition there was the girl taking off her vest, which is now in the Tate, and she's on this pronged thing. And there was going to be four, and I think we got commissioned to eventually cast six, all in shell bronze, all done by me. (laughs)  
Oh dear.

*A lot of hard work then.*

It was...it was...it was the most...it was the most... Actually I don't know how I did it. But then, all through one's life living with Reg I look back and think, I don't know how I did it.

*How did you do it.*

How did I do it? I just don't know.

*What was the exhibition then that that was for?*

The next exhibition after the...

*The one where there were forty-eight...?*

The forty-eight one.

*The ones that you did them for, which exhibition?*

Would be the next Hanover exhibition.

*Oh I see, right.*

Which was '50-something, '50...

*Wait a minute, we can... '49 was the first Hanover exhibition.*

Yes, and then the next one is '53, '52.

*'50... Well there's, in 19...it says here, '1952, Form in Industry, an exhibition of photography and sculpture'.*

No, no.

*But it doesn't say where that was. And in the next one, 1954 then actually.*

Yes, it would be that one then.

*Hanover Gallery, thirty-eight works. Oh you must have done thirty-eight then.*

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes, I can't believe it.

*1954 that was, right.*

Yes.

*So you...you were helping him then to produce the works for that particular...?*

Yes. So I was doing this all this time. And then...

*So that was your last year then was it, as a...?*



Yes.

*...as an assistant. When did you become more than just an assistant, when did you get involved?*

Oh I suppose during all this time.

*Through that, through that period?*

Yes, it was during all this time. And...yes. And then... I suppose the last term at the Slade and then during all this time.

*Mm.*

And then, what to do after that? Because in a sort of way I suppose, I'd become indispensable, and also, I mean it didn't...you know, one couldn't imagine not being together.

*Mm.*

And, so he sort of thought about, perhaps... Oh no, that's wrong. And then, the Prisoner. But first I'd better talk about his drawings, because at the time of the first exhibition at the Hanover, a similar time, at the same time, he did drawings as well, but the drawings didn't go with the...he could never draw at the same time as he was making the sculpture, they seemed to be two separate things. So... And so he...a lot of the so-called 'Pink' drawings, which were shown at the Hanover exhibition, were done at, in Cornwall, and Cornwall's always been very important. Are you hot?

*I'm OK. Do you want to turn the...*

No that's OK. Are you very hot?

[break in recording]

.....young boy about the age of twelve, his cousin, I think he was called...they were called the Arundels, his cousin took him down to stay with them at the sea in Cornwall, in Treynon Bay, and, I think it was after the war. Just after the war, he...Jo and Reg sort of decided to get out of this very small place in Hatfield that they had, and so they had a tent, and they used to go down to, during...to Bawdsey, which is just off the Suffolk, on the Suffolk coast, just above Felixstowe, just, between Aldeburgh and Felixstowe. And they used to camp right on the sea, just behind the, what do you call it, where the shingle comes up, and then they used to camp just behind there. And he used to take his drawing down there and draw. He also, during the summer they used to spend the whole of the summer, about two months, three months, and they went back to Treynon Bay, which they'd first been when he was twelve, and they camped on the headland just above the bay, and they spent the whole, they had two tents and one was the cooking tent and one was the drawing tent, and they had the whole of the summer there. And Peter Gregory, who had become a great friend of theirs, he used to go down to Treynon Bay and stay in a B&B, and then he used to go up to their tent and they used to entertain him, and he used to go down for a sort of long weekend, and then... And Jo used to cook on this, well it was called a Blewitt I think, a little sort of stove, and produce amazing meals. And this is where he produced all these wonderful pink drawings. They are done with a sort of carmine... He first of all drew his drawing in a carbon pencil, do you know the type of pencil when you put water on it, it comes bright purple?

*Mm.*

And he first of all drew them with carbon pencil, and then, on the back, flooded the whole page with a beautiful carmine ink, so that you had this wonderful purple drawing with this glorious sort of, purple...pink, glorious pink sort of colour. And he had about... These were...those were the drawings that were backing up the exhibition. I'm not sure which exhibition it would have been.

*Would it be the first one?*

It would have been the second one, wouldn't it, because...

1954.

Yes. Because those drawings were the first ones. So it would have been the second one. 1954.

'54, mm.

Yes. And also, which was quite interesting, while I was at the Slade I, in my last year, had to do an extra thing, you know, you did anatomy, perspective, sculpture, and then you had to do something else, so I chose to do lithography. And I was...I remember going out to Hatfield to help him, I can't quite sort of work out the dates, but I was certainly going out to Hatfield to help him, and he was...he made, he made a small lithography press, just like that, you know, one day he'd set up this lithography press. And I can remember going down from the Slade, and taking, can you imagine, taking a lithography stone, carrying it, and the only way to carry it was on the hip, you know, sort of, this stone. And I used to take them out to Hatfield and then he used to set them up and... And of course I did rather well in my lithography. (laughs) But that, that... He of course started to do lithography, and produced some of the most beautiful, beautiful lithographs at the same time, which were again on the 1954 exhibition. So, without my lithography... But he couldn't...again typical Reg, he had to make a press, and it was just fabulous, it just was a wonderful press. And then, you know, had to work out ways of grinding down the stones, and work through all the grit and all the inks, and it was...with Reg everything had to be done right and completely thoroughly. I mean in a sort of way which I'll explain later on, took it too far sometimes, and you know, you felt like screaming and saying, 'It's enough, enough,' you know. But certainly with the lithography, starting with mine, then he produced these wonderful, wonderful lithographs for, small ones, not very big, but for the Hanover show.

*You were saying about the drawings. He didn't...he didn't particularly draw for sculpture?*

He didn't.

*It was a separate activity was it?*

He always said that his drawings were the things that he couldn't do in the sculpture, you know.

*Right.*

Things that couldn't be done in sculpture, he took it and could do it in the drawing. And he also said that it wasn't until actually with, later on with the painted bronzes, and with his drawings like that one over there, that the two came together, and he could start to draw. But with the pink drawings, and all the earlier drawings, all that for instance, these were all done at a separate time; the studio was cleared, and he would set up his easel and start drawing. And it never went on together, it didn't. And I remember, perhaps for an exhibition he had got the sculptures, and then he would have to clear everything out of the way and start drawing.

*Mm.*

And it didn't go together, it's very interesting.

*Very separate activities.*

Yes, very separate.

*He didn't do any painting?*

He did some painting, but not, none that he would show, because he always said that it belonged, it involved another great problem, colour, whereas sculpture is, at that time was more black and white. He did...and with the pink drawings it was just a, a drawing with a simple wash down, no...you know, it was either just...it wasn't involving different colours, it seemed to be just basic, two colours. So he... But it was always done separately at that time.

*Mm.*

So, then, going back to...

*You did mention, you said they went to Cornwall a lot, and Peter Gregory used to go down.*

Yes, and he used to go down and... I think then, this is where the, the fact that he was going to be a Gregory Fellow. They were... And Reg was very involved, just at the same, he was also very involved with the I.C.A. at this time, you know, Dorothy Morland and Peter Gregory and Penrose, and all these. I think, I'm not sure which year the I.C.A. was started, it would be about 1950 or something like that. But he was very much in the beginning of the I.C.A. And they had this exhibition, was before the Prisoner, in which he exhibited the box. After, after the first exhibition, then his sculptures became solid, but all of them had vestiges of, you know, like the Tate girl with, oh, arms above her head, you know, they all retained this sort of armature that they stood on; it was like lifting them off the ground, there was a three-pronged, a three-prong, you know, sort of tripod thing, and sometimes their legs came down to the armature which was attached to them, and in the case of the Tate girl, she actually had feet on the armature. But this was a sort of, the sort of vestiges, the last bit of the iron, because he said he just wanted to get it off the ground, to give it sort of elevation, levitation, to get a sort of space round it. Anyway I cast...going back to the Hanover one, the second, the second exhibition which was 1950...

'54.

Oh right, there's a lot happened before that then, because there's...

*Before then...*

The Prisoner came up.

*That's right. You mentioned about the Gregory...just to go back again.*

Then came...then...

*He had become a Gregory Fellow whilst you knew him?*

Yes, yes.

*[inaudible].*

Yes, I knew him...yes.

*Because that was from 1950 wasn't it.*

Yes, and he, he went up...I did go up to Leeds once I think to *[inaudible]*.

*Did he spend much time in Leeds then?*

Um.... Yes. (laughs)

*He obviously would have been down at the Slade quite a lot, and Hatfield.*

I think he did, he did what was expected. He did what was expected of him I think.

*Right. I mean was it...did he talk about it a lot?*

He went up, he went up, and I think the students, he had, students came to his house, and did an enormous amount of discussion. But I mean, yes, it was a very busy time, because there was...he was working for exhibitions. Because there was the Curt Valentin... At this time, after the first Hanover exhibition... I'd better have this... Curt Valentin came on the...

*Curt Valentin, that wasn't till 1955 though.*

Oh right. What page is that?

*Oh, wait a minute. Page eighty-one, in the Tate catalogue. It was...well the solo was 1955. Unless he was in...*

Oh right, that's interesting.

*Ah, but he was involved in...*

Yes, so the first... Yes, so the...

*He was involved in a group show though in 1953 in New York, that was Curt Valentin.*

Yes, that was the first one.

*Right.*

1953 was the first one. But... After the, after the Hanover show in '49, then, then came the...there were commissions. Whether it was a commission... I don't think it was. The Arts Council bought the *Boy and Girl*.

*Oh right, yes.*

And, from that...

*Was that actually shown there?*

No, that must have been from the Hanover show.

*Yes, it was shown there.*

It was shown there. And, the commission of the *Bird Cage* came, and the commission of the *Oracle* came.

*So it was a very very busy time.*

A very busy...

*And the Gregory fellowship.*

And the Gregory fellowship, yes.

*And he was to be the first one.*

Yes, yes.

*And that had come out of the relationship he already had with Peter Gregory then, did it?*

Yes. The relationship had started I think when he first... Whether it was the Hanover show or when he first became involved in the I.C.A., because that's when Peter Gregory was very involved with it. And then there was the I.C.A. show, which must have been a group...

*That...you mean 1952, don't you, that was the important one, the Young Sculptors show, do you mean, from 1952...*

That must have been...

*...at the I.C.A.?*

Yes, that would be it. And he...

*And again, that was after the Venice show was it?*

No, the Venice... Yes, that must have been, August/September, the Venice show was earlier. Yes, because he went, he was shown in Venice, the British Council again, you see all these people, the British Council, Lilian Somerville became very involved, and he was shown in Venice with these six sculptors.



*Because that was a really important exhibition, wasn't it.*

That was very very important.

*Did he talk about that much, or can you remember what he felt about it? Because the thing about that one was...*

Again, I wasn't too closely involved.

*No, right. But he must have...perhaps he talked about how he felt about being associated...is it quite... A sort of very strong group identity, wasn't there, at the show.*

Yes there was at that time. Do you know, it's...

*1952 Venice Biennale.*

Yes.

*This was the one where Herbert Read wrote the introduction which...where he...*

Yes. Yes, and I do remember...but it was much more, it was much more that the sculptures were packed up and sent off, and I don't remember so much hearing about, you know, the excitement of working with all these people, it was just much more, oh, Venice, you know, and get, quickly, get everything together.

*Did he go?*

No.

*He didn't go?*

No. (laughs)

*Did he know any of the other sculptors that were working, that showed there?*

He knew all these people.

*He knew them personally?*

Oh yes, he knew all these people, Armitage, Chadwick, all of them.

*Did he?*

Meadows, Moore, Paolozzi, Turnbull. Yes he knew them all, but, he didn't go.

*No.*

No.

*Was he...would he be [inaudible] with any...?*

I don't know whether...I don't think it was so much expected of you then to go.

*No.*

I, you know, don't...I don't know if the others went, to be honest. And it was like, it was an exhibition where your sculpture went to. But certainly it wasn't the same, it wasn't like it is now, which is a sort of huge thing where everybody goes, it was different, different then.

*Oh that's interesting actually.*

Yes, quite different. Different, different attitude.

*So was he particularly friendly with any of them?*

Lilian Somerville went, OK, and galleries went, OK, you know, fine. But I don't...well anyway, I don't know if the others, but Reg didn't go.

*No.*

And this...I think, I don't know whether it was at this time, but, he must have...was there anything in America at this time? It doesn't say.

*No.*

But very shortly...

*Well the year after, 1953...*

Because at this point, Curt Valentin came. He was...he used to arrive, he used to come, and Reg used to pick him up at the airport and he used to arrive, perhaps Christmas Eve sometimes, and, or the day before the Christmas Eve, because he spent, London and Christmas, you know, he used to spend it in the Mayfair Hotel. And so he used to...Reg used to pick him up at the airport, and he would take him back to 3 Park Street in Hatfield where Jo had cooked him this wonderful meal on her single stove, and he was then taken up to the studio and shown whatever else, and then... I think he then went on to Henry Moore, and then went, you know, because he had a group of...whether Henry had sort of suggested that Curt ought to see the thing. And then he selected his sculptures and said what he wanted, you know, and, he used to do this twice a year I think.

*Was this for a show?*

Yes.

*Or, it wasn't for a collection.*

And, or for a group exhibition or whatever. And I mean Curt Valentin was the most prestigious sort of gallery in New York at that time, so it was absolutely the most

wonderful thing to, you know, to be part of it. But, I do remember Reg saying, 'Oh, you know, Curt's coming in,' and everything was sort of, great, great goings-on, you know, because... And he was a very particular gentleman I think. But...

End of F8045 Side A

F8045 Side B

.....1953 there was a [inaudible] exhibition, when he was in...

Oh yes that's when it...yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes.

*Just to go back again though. You actually had some work in the Institute of Contemporary Art Young Sculpture show didn't you?*

Yes, yes I did.

*What was your work like at that point?*

(laughs) Oh it was very, very...I suppose it was pretty naïve, because it was very, just being a student, you know, very, straight out of art school one really hadn't...

*So you were still a student in 1952, weren't you?*

Yes, yes. Yes.

*What sort of work was it, was it figurative, what...can you describe the sort of thing that you made?*

It was figurative. It was figurative. I don't even know what it was. Oh it was, I think... It was a figurative one of a girl standing on one foot. And I do know Peter Gregory bought a sculpture of mine at an exhibition I had later on of a family group. I used to do little figures, I did one with a mother talking to each other and sort of prams done in wire, which was obviously extremely, very influenced by Reg, you know, but they were very obviously perambulators and things. And Peter Gregory bought one, and one of them was bought, a different one was bought by the Arts Council. But they were all very traditional sort of figurative sculptures. And I had the advantage of course that I could put mine into shell bronze as well. (laughs) So it made it possible to sort of show them. And the one in the herb garden would be, you

know, that you saw, that would be one of the ones that I'd also done at about this time.

*Around that time, yes.*

But, it was... I think one had been working for three or four years on the life figure and one really was very influenced by, for instance Gerrard's way of working was taking pellets of clay and putting it onto the surface, so, and madly cutting it and things. I have a large, the large sculpture that I did for the Battersea Park exhibition, which was straight out of the life studio really and, you know, I mean it's quite an interesting sculpture.

*What was that like?*

It was a Jamaican girl, and she's sitting on a sort of stool. And it was life-size, and because Reg had done shell bronze, I again had the advantage of being able to put her into shell bronze, you know. But it was done...I hadn't moved to self-expression, I was still very influenced by what I'd been...you know, and I hadn't sort of moved into anything very creative. I mean it was good, but it was not...I didn't know what I did yet.

*Did you find it quite...I mean how do you feel with...I mean obviously working with Reg, being his assistant, it must have been quite difficult to develop your own ideas then.*

I think this is... I mean, I think... I think this is... My mother never really forgave me, because I think she... Well, I mean, I'm saying this jokingly. But she had always dreamt of me being famous, you know. (laughs) Sort of Elizabeth Frink.

*But your mother was very much that sort of person.*

She said Reg got in the way. (laughing) She never...she sort of, you know, 'You'd have been all right if you hadn't met him.' (laughing)

*Because you've already said, your mother was very ambitious, wasn't she?*

I would have been a famous mother.

*Yes. It's true, yes.*

You know, all the sort of, sort of angst and sort of frustration she felt was going to come into her daughter. Oh! Nipped. (laughs) Anyway.

*Of course you were doing very well, weren't you, I mean, because you did say that you had won the prizes in the, at the Slade, and you'd won the extra...*

Oh I did, I did everything she needed of me.

*Yes.*

You know, I'd come top, I'd got the postgraduate... Oh, you know, I'm vindicated against all my uncles and all the people who said you can't have, you know, you can't have...she can't be an artist, she'll never make a living, you know.

*Mm.*

And... So my mother looked, felt, almost to say, you know, snubs to you. And this of course, it all... Then complications started for poor Mummy, and, you know, she sort of... But...

*So you were assistanted to Reg then.*

*Yes.*

*But did you still feel that you would make your own works?*

Oh yes, I thought maybe...

*Still thought you would...*

Yes, I thought maybe I would. And then... Oh. What...this...this...

*Well we've not...we didn't...we missed, I suppose we missed the Prisoner competition didn't we really.*

The Prisoner. Well now we're coming to that.

*With so many things happening within a few years.*

Yes, it's all at the same time.

*Yes.*

So 1953 this, this sort of idea of a competition was sent out from the I.C.A., you know, and everybody sort of, sculptors were, had, could see what it was, and it was all laid out, what you had to do and all the ideas. And how there were going to be preliminary exhibitions, and then, you know, the final one would be... It was going to be all the world, and all these countries were having their own exhibitions, preliminary ones, and then... So, I think the British one was in the, what gallery was it, the Mall galleries or...one of these galleries. Anyway, I sort of set to and did one.

*So you decided to produce your own entry.*

I decided to do it. Oh yes, I was still sort of...I still sort of thought, maybe, you know, I'd make it, sort of... And I set to and did this sculpture of a, a very obvious one, of a tower and a bloke on top of it with sort of railings and... I mean...

*A tyre, did you say a tyre?*

Tower.

*Oh tower, sorry.*



Tower. And, I mean just, a prisoner, you know, nothing sort of, nothing beyond what was, you know, what was, the prisoner word gave you, do you know what I mean? It was sort of... And it got into the Mall galleries, just as everybody else's did. And, then all this big committee came round and sort of chose the...I think there were twelve that finally went to the Tate, and Reg's, Paolozzi's, Armitage, and... The top lot, you know. It was interesting, because, we all went, you know, we all went round, and...it enabled you to, to sort of, it was beginning to enable me to come out of the art school and to see what was going on outside. I think there was an element of, in the art school, especially the old sculpture school which I went into, you know, you don't want to see that modern stuff. A bit Charles Wheelerish, and you know, what was expected, and, traditional stuff. And it took...it took me to now Reg to realise there was a lot going on out there that was incredibly exciting. Because, Reg, jumping back a bit to the Slade, Reg brought people round, he brought Zadkine round, he brought Laurens round, he brought Giacometti round. These people all came round to the Slade, and suddenly you realised that this was terrific, you know, very very exciting. And, I think the first exhibition I went to with Reg was Laurens in the Arcade, Burlington...not the Burlington Arcade, one of the arcades off Bond Street, and it was so exciting, you know, and, I don't think I had... I'd been to the National Gallery, but I doubt if I'd been to the Tate, which sounds criminal. You know, it sounds absolutely dreadful.

*Well, by then...no.*

But then one started being aware. And, the other person one was very very aware of, very excited by, was Marino Marini.

*Right.*

Who was just...that seemed to be modern and yet we could link, I could link up with it, his wonderful wonderful...

*Was that the same for Reg as well? [inaudible].*

Well Reg...yes, Marini...I don't know quite how Marino Marini came into it. And also, I mean this sounds incredibly confused, but people... The other person that was very important at this time was Philip James, who was head of the Arts Council.

*Mm.*

Now Philip James and his wife Bertha were, they lived in Chesham, just over there, and they were very very great friends, and very supportive and everything. But Philip brought in Giacometti, and you know, when Giacometti came to the country, then Reg sort of was told, and then Reg arranged a visit for him to come to the Slade you see. So all these people came in that way.

*So you were there when Giacometti came [inaudible].*

Yes I was there, yes.

*Did you speak to him?*

I think one was just in a state of, a sort of...

*Awe.*

Yes, yes, you know. And I did meet Giacometti personally... Giacometti came here.

*Did he? Yes.*

Brought by Philip. And I did meet Giacometti at Philip James's house as well, and they gave a party for him. And, I mean Reg knew Giacometti very well, you know.

*Mm.*

He spent a night with him, not a night but...but that's later on when, in Paris and, got very drunk and very ill. It wasn't a night, it was a morning or late afternoon or something. (laughs) But... Anyway, no, so...

*So who was...*

So this was the most incredibly exciting time.

*Oh yes. So, we were just talking about the, the Prisoner competition.*

Yes.

*Just to sort of [inaudible].*

So then, so then...

*So the exhibition were the maquettes, and Reg's was one of the chosen ones?*

Yes, yes.

*So was he surprised, was he pleased do you think, do you remember how, what his reactions were?*

Again, I don't remember.

*Can't really remember, mm.*

Because I wasn't actually living with him.

*No, right.*

So, you know, conversations that went on, one didn't actually...

*No, that's true. Where were you actually living then? You'd got your studio.*

I was...the studio at Harrow.

*Did you live there as well?*

Yes. I mean I lived there, and I had a...I mean I didn't live there but I had, I boarded up the road, you know.

*Oh I see, mm.*

But I had the studio.

*Right.*

So, in a way I suppose the conversation when he came to Harrow was different from what might have been about the Prisoner. Except that he very, you know, very much encouraged me about setting up my Prisoner and getting it in and saying, 'Yes, you must try,' and you know, do it. And so then, then I do remember... Then it was all set up in the Tate.

*Mm.*

And I do remember going there, and then Reg and Jo coming, and of course, nobody knew about us then, so I mean I was very much in the background, and they were very much, you know, sort of, very important people. And then of course I remember as well how it was smashed, the Hungarian who smashed it in the, in the Tate, and all the business of Reg sort of having to go to court. And Charles Gimpel, who had been in Auschwitz I think, he went to the court and spoke for Reg about the Prisoner and what it meant to him, and how...

*What was the case in court then?*

Well this man had, had smashed it, and you know, they were sort of, going to find him and that sort of thing.

*So Reg was actually called...?*

Yes, he had to go to court, and this object was literally like a sort of squashed whatsit, was produced, you know, and then...

*Was he upset, was Reg upset by that, about the whole business?*

I think he was. I think he was, but I...I think... I think he was. I think he'd had a, he got a... I can't even remember whether he had a second one, but he certainly had to spend a long time trying to get straighteners up and remake it and everything, because it was so damaged. And there are two Prisoners, one in the Museum of Modern Art, which would be... Yes, so there must have been two, one of the smashed one which was all made, and another one which was made at the same time of it, so there are two, and one is in the Tate, which we...

*Mm.*

And I do remember that. But also at this time I suppose, we were sort of wondering what we were going to do with each other, and, Reg sort of did wonder if we would build a separate house just over the hill – we'd actually bought some land – and whether to sort of, he would live in two places, have his work here and Jo live here, and then I would have a place up the there, and he could then live there. But, I think Jo, who at this time decided that perhaps it might be an idea if we gave that up as an idea, but all...that I lived here, and you know, made it a sort of, the three of us. Because I think she, she realised by that time that there was, that Reg was too much involved with me to expect to, for me to just go off. And, I think that she...she couldn't, and could never, and I think later on this was one of her problems, couldn't go. She, she hadn't got the confidence or the strength or anything to go. And there was no way that Reg was going to divorce her in any way. So I think in a sort of way, it became that she felt that we, we could all live together. Which worked.

*Mm.*

You know, after a while it worked. So, and that...

*So you joined...you joined their household?*

I joined, yes, I joined here.

*Here? It was here?*

Here, literally here.

*Then, in the house that we are at?*

They moved here in 1953.

*Oh right. That was after...*

'54, when he won the Prisoner.

*So after he won the Prisoner, they actually got this house?*

Yes. Fairly soon. So it must have been about 1956, '56 or '57 I think. '56, because I do remember, we...in that summer we then went to France, to the south of France together, and we used to sort of go off and spend the whole summer down in the south of France, and...

*When was that then, in 1950...?*

That must have been '56, because we did it two years running.

*Oh right?*

So that would be '56 and '57.

*What did you do when you were there? Did you meet any other artists while you were there, or, did you just travel around?*

No, we just, just travelled.

*Had a holiday.*

We just travelled.

*Did you? Mm.*

Just travelled. And, I think... Yes. And we just sort of... After the Prisoner, there came the business of, can we build the Prisoner, you know, and which became very much a part of our lives, because, the idea that the Prisoner could be, would be, should be built, and then came the idea that it should be built in Germany, and then they sort of found a site in West Germany looking over to East Germany, in West Berlin, looking over to East Berlin, which seemed to be the height of aggravation, I would have thought, but there's this huge sort of... Actually it was a huge bunker made by Hitler's, you know, lot, and then this was thought to be able to be their sort of base to the Prisoner, and the Prisoner [inaudible]. And then it meant meeting people like Willy Brandt and Groman, and all these sort of people that were involved with the Prisoner, and a huge amount of going backwards and forwards to Berlin, and...

*Did you go with Reg?*

No no, no no, I didn't go at all. And Jo didn't either, she did all this... And, huge sort of, trying to get it built, and... There was an element of, the C.I.A. were behind it. I mean, there's all sorts of stories about this, but, again, I mean so many people have written so much about it, that...

*But was any sense of that when you were involved with it?*

No, I mean, Tony Kloman and his...wife, Theo... Yes, I think so. I'm trying to think if it was her brother. Anyway, Tony Kloman's wife. I mean they became considerable friends of Reg's, and they often used to come out here, and he arranged all this, and all the money came from America for the prize. And the fact that when Reg won the prize, it suddenly meant, which, it was £4,000 I think, when Reg won the

prize, it suddenly meant that in a way... They'd already left the shop, 3 Park Street in Hatfield, and moved to a flat just up the road, 8 Bells Yard it was, and they'd moved to this house, because they felt that they could at least...previously with the exhibition at the Hanover they had some money and they felt that at least they could afford a house with a bathroom and a kitchen and everything, you know, not living in a shop, they could... So they'd moved. And then I think, then I think Reg suddenly thought, well I've got this money, maybe now I can get a permanent studio, not a rented place, get... So they went all round Hertfordshire looking, and then this came up. I've still got the original sort of Brown & Merry estate agent's blurb, and it was sort of old house attached to mansion, and old kitchen, and sort of, two or three rooms. And he came here, and I think he just said that this is it. So he bought, he bought the house for, about £2,300 I think it was, and with, as I said, he built on this extra wing with, and still had money left over at the time. And the studio, which is the old kitchen, he... Inside the studio there was a huge, when he first came, I mean there was a lot of stuff to be moved out, and there was a huge zinc tank, water tank or something, and the only way to get it out was to cut it up. And, he nearly killed himself doing that, because of the zinc fumes and everything, and I often wonder if that affected him later on, you know, with his heart. But, they came and settled here. Again there was just one kitchen, one sitting-room, and one bedroom, and then a huge studio. And then eventually building it on, it sort of became the house that it is now, you know. But this enabled him to, the Prisoner money enabled him to start to have his studio and everything of his own, and thing. So... I'll have to go back a bit won't I.

*No, you were just explaining about...*

The money, the money.

*I was asking where [inaudible].*

Yes, and, he did say that he could spend all his life trying to get this Prisoner up in Berlin, the monument, and if he had have put all his energy into it, he would have probably got it built, but he wouldn't have made any sculpture, and he had to sit down and decide what, what was more important to him. And he made this, he made the Prisoner, and he said, 'If it's going up, it's up to somebody else.' So he decided to,



you know, just give up on it. He did actually build a maquette, a sort of working model for the Prisoner, which was at the Brussels World Art Fair at some point.

*Oh yes? Mm.*

And this went into this exhibition. In a way to try and keep the interest going. But, it died a sort of death, and I think Berlin probably didn't want it, you know. I don't think it was...it probably wasn't at the time of building monuments, you know, at that time. The initial sort of shock of everything had gone, and by 1960/61 it had sort of blown it. So it didn't actually go up. But he did an enormous amount of work, he took photographs of the site that had been offered, and he put photomontages, put the Prisoner up, put...sort of scaled it down. Being an architect of course, this is what... Put little cars at the bottom, and... So you got an actual feeling of the, as people would see it, you know, and people looking at these photographs, think, has it been built, you know. But he put a huge amount of work into it. And then I think he felt, well this is just taking up too much of my, too much of my life, too much of my sculpture.

[break in recording]

*So, we were just talking about the Prisoner competition, and the fact that it enabled Reg to build his house [inaudible].*

Well yes, to build a house.

*And where in fact you still are now.*

Yes. Yes. And, just going back to the people that were in his life at this time, which was sort of, especially Philip and Bertha James of the Arts Council, he was head of the Arts Division I think, and they had this beautiful office in St. James's Square. And Philip asked Reg to make his daughter, or to decorate his daughter's wedding cake. The cake was made by the nanny, and was delivered, and Reg then went into great detail about icing this cake with the great scientific sort of notes made about icing sugar in relation to water in relation to glycerine, and in relation...how to get the

smoothest ice surface. And he also made a drum with little nude figures all the way round, which was the middle tier, and at the top he made a group of three figures all stretching up together, and all this was done in perfect white plaster, so the icing had to be the same colour as the plaster. And then, very amazing... I think he even designed the nozzles for the icing that came out. Anyway this was, this cake was displayed in the centre of this most beautiful room in which all the people in the art world who meant anything sort of, came to the wedding. And this was, I mean Reg did this with as much seriousness and with as much sort of attention to detail as he did everything else, and it was a wedding cake, you know.

*Did he have any other commissions for wedding cakes, or...?*

No.

*No, he didn't make a career out of it?*

He always said, you know, when the wedding cake was cut, and the inside was tasted, he said, 'We should have done the inside as well,' because it was such...it wasn't up to standard. I felt sorry for the poor old nanny who had made it. (laughing) Anyway, now, back to Ash. And of course, I was...

*Ash is the name of the place.*

Ash is the name of the place that he bought.

Yes.

I'm trying to... I think... He was... Now, it would be '54/55, and to he would be getting ready for the Curt Valentin exhibition, and was there another exhibition in...?

*The solo exhibition in New York was in 1955, yes.*

Yes. And this would be when he was, when...this would be, all the... Did the Hanover exhibition follow this?

*No, it went...that was before. The Hanover was 1954.*

Yes, so...

*And the New York one was 1955.*

So the New York one was a follow-up of the Hanover one, which meant re-casting all the things that had been in the Hanover one.

*Because the lot of them had been sold?*

The lot of them had been sold.

*Right. So you had to do them again?*

Pretty well all of them had been sold, and so we had to go through it all again. And, this was, this was a case of working these. And then he also was making at this time, because of the studio space and everything else, he had a terrific, a terrific sort of excited, you know, moment of creativity, and he, he made a whole lot more sculptures, and one of them was *The Manipulator*, which is about the, well I think he only made about two or three men sculptures in his life, but *The Manipulator* was one.

*Let's...can we just have a look at it, to see what it looks like? Just try and describe it.*

I doubt if it would...

*Oh here we are, 1954.*

It was a man figure holding this strange...

*It was one of the shell bronzes again.*

Yes.

*Mm.*

A man figure holding this strange box in front of him, here.

*What was this...something in front of his leg as well.*

These were all... Yes, sort of, I think they might have been an armature that had been cut off.

*Mm.*

Or something that was there that might have been there that might have been part of the sculpture and then it was cut off.

*We've got the head looking up.*

Yes. Again the head looking up. And this...

*And it's a sort of motif isn't it, the head looking up.*

Yes, it is a, it is a very important part of it. And as in the Tate girl, which is there, part of it's wrapped. This was wrapped there with cloth. Again this figure is wrapped here. And *The Manipulator* is dressed, if you look, he's clothed all the way down, holding this thing. But this, this...I'm not quite sure why he did this man. I should have the catalogues here. Actually that's where I've gone...

*This is one of the...you say he only did two or three men.*

Yes.

*All of his figures were generally women.*

And this man sort of happened...what date is it? '50...

4.

4, yes.

1954.

Yes. And this man... Previously he'd been doing his iron, his bronze wire sculptures, which the Museum of Modern Art in New York had got. They were all beginning to sort of become, to fill in, to become more solid, and so this *Manipulator* was, although there's a lot of base and residue on the base of what might be, of sculptures that had been cut off or bits of him that might have...maybe it was two figures or something, you don't know what these were, but they're all part of the machine that he's working. And he did this, and apparently... I think the story is that, he'd got this figure standing in the studio, without anything in his hands, just standing there, and I think, I think Patrick Heron was coming to dinner or something, and he looked round the studio and found this object, which I think is a bit of something else, which, I can show you in the books, but they're...this object I think was a part of another sculpture, and I think he grabbed it and put it in the hands, and sloshed it with plaster or something and coloured the whole thing down. And then it became the *Manipulator*.

[inaudible].

It wasn't a sort of studied thing or anything, it was... And in fact in the book I've actually got what it was part of, you know, and was sort of picked up, and plonked...

*So it had no great symbolism then actually, no.*

None at all, none at all, it looks...it looks as if it does, but it doesn't. It was just a chance object. It was like assemblage, because all the way along, in later sculptures things were put together and things, and he just managed to pick this up and saved his bacon in other words, because the thing is... But, eight of these sculptures went, eight of those.

*To New York.*

To New York, to America, not...

*Eight of this particular one?*

Yes.

*Oh right.*

And I did all eight.

*Did you? And they were quite big weren't they?*

Yes, they were big, they were big. And there's a, I think it was... I'd better have a look in the book before... I've got a book of... Can you stop it a moment?

Yes.

End of F8045 Side B

F8495 Side A

I was just going to, before you start.....

[break in recording]

*OK that's fine now.*

Yes.

*So we were just talking about the exhibition, all the work that you helped him with for the Curt Valentin.*

Yes. And all the sculptures were done in shell bronze, and, I think you said, there were how many in the exhibition?

*Thirty-eight.*

Thirty-eight sculptures...

*Mhm.*

...were actually cast in the studio at Harrow. Have I said about the...?

*Sorry, forty-two, forty-two.*

Oh well whatever it was. (laughs) Have I said about the studio with the kiln downstairs?

*Yes. Yes you did.*

And having the oxyacetylene and everything.

*Mm.*

Yes, because I had, I had oxyacetylene, and the bench, and all this was, you know, had to...I actually worked, did all these in Harrow, and then we set them up.

*Right. So you didn't actually come to the studio in Ash at this point? No.*

No, I didn't do this casting at Ash.

*Right.*

I was doing it all in Harrow, and Reg was spending pretty well three-quarters of his time going backwards and forwards from Berkhamsted to Harrow, because, you know, I couldn't...we, together we had to set them up with the armature and everything, because it needed...you've got to get everything vertical, and you had to do all the welding and that sort of thing. And then they were brought back here to, to be patinated and finished off. But... So this was...

*Mid Fifties.*

So this all went out to Curt Valentin in 1955.

*So then you continue being an assistant?*

Yes I was.

*A bit more than assistant.*

Yes, yes, yes, yes. And then became much more than being an assistant. And, well, I suppose... Then I moved here.

*You moved into Ash, right.*

Yes, then I moved into Ash. And, I don't know, it just sort of... I can't remember what I actually said about it. Could you.....



[break in recording]

And Reg was making... Then, then I think, after this, after this exhibition, the Hanover wanted another exhibition. I was wondering what time this would... In '50... No, '54. Now the next Hanover exhibition would have been...

*Yes, 1957.*

'57. And it became very very clear at about this time, because Reg had got, had done a whole series more of sculptures, a very big one, which was exhibited in Battersea Park, and the whole series of other...that it became clear that there was no way that we could go on casting, because, you know, we'd got to...the amount of casts and the amount of...just...it was impossible. He did actually, about this time, a little...we did actually get somebody to make the moulds for us, and, an outside person who made all the moulds for us, and then we just continued. But, so, Erica Brausen, who was the Hanover Gallery, I think said, this is the time, you know, we've got to... Because I think Sprenger in Germany had wanted some casts, and Blair Laing in Toronto wanted some casts. Everybody was...and people in Stockholm, Bill Boustedt and people in Stockholm wanted casts. And it just became that, one couldn't do it. So, Erica then brought in Susse, Susse the foundry from Paris. I think it was...well anyway, Monsieur Susse was a very, very sort of French gentleman, and had a wonderful wife called Arletta who was Swiss, and of course Arletta could speak perfect English. And at the same time Rudolph Sprenger, who had a gallery in Berlin, I can always remember Arletta and her husband, and Rudolph Sprenger who was trying to arrange an exhibition, and Erica Brausen who was, you know, sort of, sort of there, all these people sort of talking in English, and I looked at all of them and I said, 'None of you really, English is your natural sort of language,' and I sort of suddenly felt, you know, I really must start learning French and German. Nothing came of it, but... And they, Susse then said...it was arranged that Reg should have his sculptures cast in Paris, which was a great relief I can say to everybody, because, I mean, you know, everything, everything was in enormous demand, and everybody wanted them, and it just, we were drowning in it, literally drowning in it. And however hard Reg tried to, you know, to make the sculptures, he was all the time thinking about the, you

know, the...the ones that were being cast and the quality and whether they were good enough, and did we have...you know. Because his determination to get the sculptures, every single one, which is as it should be, every single one to its perfection, was, you know, and if you'd got four of one, you would sort of, you couldn't hardly see them after a while, you know. (laughs) Anyway, so that was...I can't believe how we did it, it was such a horrendous, it was a horrendous time.

*So it was a lot of hard work.*

Yes.

*Did you have much time to do anything other than work in the studio?*

Not really. I don't think we did anything. I don't think I did...I don't think I really did anything.

*I mean you said you found it difficult to do any work of your own. But did you have any social life?*

Well I think... No.

*It was probably quite difficult, with the three of you.*

I don't think I... I don't remember, I don't remember going to exhibitions or anything. I mean we might have gone out to lunch, or, you know, but I don't remember, I don't remember very much going on. I don't... It's funny, it's like a, it's like a period of time... Well it's a bit like a muzz really, it's a sort of muzz, because one was so emotionally involved and everything else, that...

*Mm.*

...that you can only remember, not very much. I do remember going home to my mother's at the weekend and she said, 'You only come here for your washing and the

gravy,' which is... (laughs) Which is... And, but I don't remember very much more, you know.

*No. Did you see... You still saw your mother then, she was...?*

I saw my...oh yes, I saw my mother.

*She didn't used to come round? Did she meet Reg?*

She came... Oh yes, she knew Reg by this time. Yes, she did. And, it was later when I, I came... I think actually, yes, it was a bit later on, it wasn't until we decided to have children, and Cortina was on the way, that we decided that...and my mother was quite bothered by the whole thing, partly because, and I can understand it, you know, she was very, she was...she was a very professional woman, she was by this time Registrar at the London School of Hygiene, and you know, had worked herself up, and then, her daughter wasn't doing what she ought to be doing, you know, she wasn't sort of... First of all she was being an artist when she should have been, much nicer if she had been somebody that didn't have anything controversial; and then, and then she goes and lives a life that wasn't, you know, expected of her. So I think she was bothered by it, and it wasn't... When...when we knew the children were coming, Cortina was coming, then I wrote a letter to my uncles, who were the people that really bothered my mother, and explained everything to them, and, everybody was, everybody accepted it, you know, they seemed to accept, you know, this was the way I was living, and... Even my, you know, sort of, most strict sort of uncles accepted it, which helped Mummy a lot.

*When was Cortina born then?*

'58, so I've jumped a bit.

*Oh it was quite a few years, a couple of years after.*

So, it's '58, a few years, we've jumped.

*So meanwhile Reg carried on working at the Slade teaching.*

Yes. Yes he was teaching. He was teaching. And by this time, I think, I'm not quite sure when it was, but Gerrard gave, Gerrard stopped being Professor, and Reg was asked by Coldstream if he could take over the Slade, you know, the running of the Slade Sculpture School. But he said he was not going to be a professor, he was going to be, he would...he would be Director of Sculpture Studies. And he, so he organised. And it became a postgraduate school. There was no undergraduates there. And, he had a person who, a sculptor who had been with Gerrard, and had taught me, he'd been one of Gerrard's students, and then had taken over teaching with Gerrard, and taught me, a man called Dick Claughton, and he then became Reg's, he became...Reg only went about, to begin with... I'm not sure quite, but Reg went at the beginning of the term for a week, and at the end of the term for a week, and between times Dick Claughton ran the Slade, and was, you know, if there was anything he needed to know, or was problems or, Reg would always go in if it was necessary. But this is how the Slade actually worked. But this is going right forward to 1960. Reg had been going, all this time Reg went about once a week, you know, just...

*The rest of the time you were both working on the...*

Yes, I'd left the Slade, and was here and was sort of, working, working for him. But I didn't...I think with the, the beginning of the casting, that was my work, I mean there was just absolutely no time to even think; I don't think I even, you couldn't even think. And I think this continued all his life really, you know, there was always a demand on me to, to help. And, it wasn't that he would have...he... You know, he didn't do it purposely, but there was just no space. I don't... And I think we...I do remember us walking once and saying, you know, that if we were going to be sculptors we would have to have two studios and meet in the middle every so often. But, he couldn't work with...he couldn't work with assistants, he could never have people working in the studio with him.

*Are you the only person that ever actually helped him?*

Yes, I'm the only person that's ever been working, worked with him, all the way, all the way through. And even, and especially with the painted bronzes, he could never... And he always found that, people casting or whatever had to be separate, away, and he could never have people just going into the studio. So, so it became...it was a very... I mean I was in an incredibly privileged position, to be able to...to be that person. But it became, you know, that was my role. So there was no space to suddenly say, 'I'm going to make a sculpture,' you know, and do this.

*No.*

And anyway, it sort of, it had gone, it had just disappeared, that and having children, it just, there was no motivation, no energy for it or no nothing. It's extraordinary.

*It is really, yes.*

It is. It just, it was as if all the drive that got me to the art school, that got me... I mean, I don't know if it's because one's a woman. I mean Reg was pretty scathing about women artists.

*Was he?*

Saying that, you know, that they had great difficulty in keeping up the motivation, and that you had to be a very very extraordinary person. And when you think how few there are, there was Barbara Hepworth, Elizabeth Frink, but how happy were they, and you know, how...? They had to stand out from the normal sort of feminine sort of needs I think, they had to be, they were very exceptional people, and I think... I don't know about now, like, Rachel Whiteread and all these people, maybe it's easier now than it used to be. Maybe...maybe the business of, that what's expected of you is different, what's expected of women may be different now. And... But then it seemed to be, it was almost as if, not through any fault of his, he just sucked it away, he drew it out, drew all your energy away from creativity, into being part of a partnership.

*Is that...do you think, do any of your friends, who you were actually at the Slade with, did they share that experience at all?*

I don't know that any of them had made it as sculptors.

No.

Or painters.

*Did you see them?*

Oh yes, there was one called Diana Cumming, but I don't even know...

*Oh right.*

Do you know Diana Cumming?

*The name.*

Yes. But I don't even know... You know, there were women at the Slade, but I...none of them have, are at the top.

*Did you keep in touch with any of them?*

Not too often. They might have... No I didn't. It's very...it's quite strange, because, Reg was a social person before he met me, you know, Reg and Jo would go to people and people would come to them, but after they met me, and certainly after the children came, it was a very...he became a very un-social person, and very special people came then, you know, it was much more, much less...he said, 'Well the family does that to you.' I don't know if it does, but he always says that it does. But...

*Did he have any friendships with other artists at all, not...?*

Patrick, Patrick Heron.

*Patrick Heron.*

And, oh, I mean he knew a lot of them, knew a lot of the critics, and people, and students, John Davies, do you know John Davies?

*Mm.*

And Mike Kenny. These people were very... There's a wonderful... I don't know if you've got the catalogue, yes you have. But read John Davies's appreciation.

*Oh the [inaudible].*

Have you read it?

*Yes.*

I thought that was just...

*He was one of his students wasn't he.*

Yes, he was one of Reg's students. Reg at the very beginning had always wanted, you know, he came for the interview, and Reg said, you know, 'I want that person.' And he...and then he became one of Reg's tutors. And he is a lovely... Do you know him?

*I don't know him personally.*

He's a most remarkable person. And others, I think... A lot of... There's Cragg, Tony Cragg was one of his students.

*Oh, was he?*

Anthony Gormley was one of his students. Oh all these people sort of went through the Slade, and, you know, Reg was there sort of, I suppose advising them, and... I mean he, he had this great gift of listening, and deciding what the student needed to be told, rather than trying to impress himself upon them. You know, he had a great, great great gift with people, of listening, just listening, and he'd draw them out and you watched them sort of, talking to him, and he'd just listen quietly to them. Great. But I've done an enormous jump, right, to this moment, I've sort of...I've done a sort of great jump. So we'd better go back a bit hadn't we.

*To where you work in the studio with...*

Yes.

*What was it like working in the studio with him, when you first came to Ash?*

Well it's...

*Did he talk much in the studio when he was working?*

Yes.

*Did you talk to each other?*

Yes, and I mean it was a case of setting up armatures, and working with, you know, just sort of...

*Quite businesslike.*

I did actually, worked actually on the sculptures, you know, and, setting them up for him so that he would... Yes, it was... And lots and lots of talk. Really I suppose it was like having somebody to talk to, not necessarily would one reply all that much, but it was like having somebody who was on the receiving end of all the thoughts and things. He did, he did actually...he made notes too, he had a sort of book that he made notes in. But I...I would think it would be a very... I mean, being an only child, this



does enable you to, it has a, an effect on you that you are much more self-contained about everything, and so working away in his studio with, you know, just on his own thing, would be no problem, you know, no problem. He didn't...he lived...he...he...he didn't listen to the radio very much, he didn't even listen...he said sometimes that, depending on the time, that music would be too depressing. He did listen to jazz though, he loved...he loved jazz, and all the way through he loved jazz, and that would...thing. But he was, it was just bang, crash wallop really. (laughs) But, so...

*Did you manage to get out, to go and see any jazz concerts and things? Did you manage to do some of that?*

We did go, yes, we went to... I do remember, there was 100...101 was it, Oxford Street?

*Oh yes.*

With, the first introduction to jazz, and I think he, he took me to Humphrey Lyttelton in that, that was magic, you know. I'd...I'd never even contemplated jazz before, never heard jazz, and of course, going to this, and then this started, then we went to Louis Armstrong, and we went to all these concerts. We went to a huge one in the, not Wembley, Olympia, with, you know, I can... And, yes we did go to jazz concerts, Count Basie and... He collected records. And he did, he talked at the I.C.A. on jazz, he gave a talk on jazz and everything. And it was very, it was... And we used to do an enormous amount of dancing, jazz dancing, you know, dancing to jazz and everything. And, yes, he just loved jazz. He found I think classical music too, too in competition with what he was doing, he didn't listen. He very seldom listened to classical music in the studio. And he very seldom went to concerts, because he found that it affected his mood too greatly, you know, that... He would listen to things like the Beethoven string quartets and that sort of thing, and much more sort of, individual instruments and that. But he did find that music would come right across his thinking, and could affect him a lot. Jumping a bit, but he never liked, he didn't like...as a young man he would walk, he would walk, he walked, spent, walking alone right across the Brecon Beacons, and, he did an enormous amount of walking when he was about twenty, twenty-one, but he hated walking too much later on, because he always

made it, he said all this landscape makes him think too much, and you know, gets across[??} again. And I suppose his life became very limited to what his sculpture would allow him to do, to keep in a, in a sort of state of equilibrium so that he could work on his sculpture. And things coming in would come across it.

*Mm.*

He did go to things, he did go to the theatre, I remember him taking Arlette Susse to *Look Back in Anger* at the Court Theatre, and, you know...

*1956.*

Yes, that would be '56.

*At the Court.*

When Susse came in, and I...to [inaudible]. And he did, you know, do this sort of thing. But, I don't know, going back to our relationship. I never...I would think, I do know that everybody was very nice about us three, but I never stuck my head above the parapet to listen to anything that might... Do you know, you...because of the place, because of the security you had in the relationship and everything, it didn't seem, I couldn't bear to listen to, or didn't want to hear, adverse comments about it, so, I just shut my ears off, you know. And you could hear. Whereas I imagine if I'd, if we'd lived in London, we would have come across all sorts of... I don't know, you just don't know, but certainly it was a...

*Was it a very small village then?*

Here? No. I mean, it only became interesting when one's children went to school, and then they didn't...they sort of... Jo was... People didn't really ask questions.

*No. Was it a small place though, was the village, was it just a village?*

Here, up here? No, there's a town down there, but Reg never went into the town.

*But the town was there, or it...?*

It's over there, you know, we're up here. It's very funny...

*So it's quite isolated.*

You live in a house, with a walled garden, and you come in the front door, and it has the most extraordinary sort of, sense of being on an island really.

*Oh it is actually, yes it is that sort of place.*

You really, the outside world doesn't affect you too much.

*No.*

It's...it's quite...it's...it's strange.

*Mm.*

Well I mean, it's a very very secure feeling, you know.

*Mm.*

So I don't know. All I know that, people, people that knew us accepted it, and were very, you know, sort of, included us as three.

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F8496 Side A

*This is Gillian Whiteley interviewing Rosemary Butler on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2000.*

*So Rosemary, we're going to try and take things up from where we left them last time, and perhaps it would be good to start with the family circumstances.*

Yes. Well, in April, this is going back, 1958, in April 1958, April the 21<sup>st</sup> 1958, my daughter was born. And just previous to that, John Read made a film for the BBC of Reg in the studio, and the time, I'm not sure, I think he'd just had an exhibition. Can you cut it a minute?

[break in recording]

And he came down to the studio, and it was at the time of the very big, wonderful bronzes, the *Big Girl* and, there were three girls, and the studio was filled with these bronzes, and of course the drama and everything, and... It started off... I mean Reg was passionate about cars, and at about 1957 he decided that, I think he'd, he made some money from one of his exhibitions, and he decided that his image required a fast car, so we...we'd previously had a Volkswagon Beetle, but we bought, he bought, a Jensen 541, a green, racing green Jensen 541. And the film starts with this car zooming up one of the roads, local roads, which is called The Mile, and it goes up this road with enormous speed and enormous roaring. And then it turns round and comes back, and comes up the drive, and sort of, revs at the front door. And this is the, obviously the image that Reg wanted to sort of put across, these wonderfully...energy, full of energy, sculptures, and then Reg in this sort of car. Anyway, the film was made, and at the time we had, there was a balcony, it hadn't, the studio hadn't been changed, and the floor was stone slabs, and there was a balcony at the top, and Reg also was... The drama of this was wonderful, and it showed Reg working at the forge, and John Read obviously made great play with the flames and the sparks, and Reg on top of ladders, and all this sort of thing. And looking at it now, it's so dated, and the sort of, the phrases that Reg brings out, which are meant to be sort of casual, are obviously so considered and so weighty that he was almost... (laughs) My daughter looked at it and she said, 'Mum, this is just unbelievably...' well, like Reg, but just so,

now it's so dated, it's incredible. Anyway, I was very pregnant at the time, and then, and a month later my daughter was born, at University College. My mother, who was Registrar at the London School of Hygiene, and knew the, was a great friend of the Professor of Obstetrics at University College, so I was sort of, a VIP person. And, because I wasn't married at the time, I had to be, I had to wear...I had to go and buy myself a wedding ring, and, because, you know, the sort of, this... I mean it wasn't...it was not...it was an odd thing to be unmarried at that time. Anyway, and I think, I was called Mrs. But anyway... And, I was...my daughter started to come, I should think, in the morning, about four o'clock, five o'clock, and we sort of got into this car, Reg and I, the Jensen, and we went up to London. (laughs) I think we went through every light and every, everything, you know, just, great, great speed. And got there, and the Professor who, I don't when he had delivered previously, but he certainly came, and Cortina was delivered with great ceremony, you know. And, so that... In those days you stayed in the hospital six to eight days, you know, it was...

*Was Reg there when she was born?*

What?

*Was Reg actually there when she was born?*

No, oh no. No I don't...I don't think Reg... Reg never changed her nappy, either of their nappies. And Reg certainly wouldn't, wasn't there when she was born. He was, I think he was outside. Came in pretty quickly afterwards. But I don't think I could have coped with him either. Because actually what he did, he left me there, and then came home, and then had a phone call to say that she was obviously coming, so zoomed back again, you know, it was sort of... (laughing) But, there's no way that... I don't know that they really wanted fathers in in those days, it was very... So...

*So how did the new baby affect the life that you had had here?*

Oh rather interestingly, because... I couldn't help Reg in the studio to begin with. So, he really was... He did look around for one or two people, certainly one person to do the casting of the, making the moulds of the sculpture. It actually was the mould-

making that he was needing help with. And, we had...we were beginning...we had come to an end by that time of making the shell bronzes, and they were being sent to Susse in Paris.

*We talked about that last time, the foundry.*

Yes. But he did need mould-making and he did need people making armature and that sort of thing. He was never very happy with people working in the studio, because... And he did...he was inclined to sort of put them in the out studio. And, he was really only happy when they worked at home, and he could deliver the moulds and then they could deliver them back. He hated people being in... That's why it was quite a pressure on me, because, I was really the only person that he could work with in the studio. And then, about six weeks, it must have been June, we decided that we just got somebody to come in and help, and do the housework. So, a wonderful person called Vera Farrant arrived, and Vera Farrant is one of my greatest friends now, and, actually she, you know, she's interested in the children, and, she's been with us ever since. But she arrived and she came every morning, and she did the housework, and later on she helped look after the children and that sort of thing, so... And it meant that I could work in the mornings, so I did help him in the mornings. But, I think, when you have children you're not quite so motivated to help, so it was a bit scatty.

*Did you feel torn, between the sculpture and the children?*

Yes. I mean not as much as somebody would nowadays who goes off to work.

*No, no.*

Because, it was going on in the house, and, you know, one could if they cried or something, they could...you could come out. But yes. And desperately sort of needing to help Reg, but, not having this same sort of drive. It was all a bit of a bind, you know. (laughs) And I think... Anyway, that...we sort of...she was born in April, so it meant all the summer and, you know, that was...she grew up, and Reg was making sculptures, and... And then, my next child was born, Creon, my son, was born

in 1960, again in April. Then, for Creon we had a sort of, we felt that we ought to have somebody, a sort of, what do you call them? A nurse. So we hired somebody from one of these nanny agencies, who came down just before Creon was born. And, dominated us, absolutely scared the wits out of the whole lot of us. And she was only meant to be there for, she was meant to be there for two weeks but we just couldn't... She insisted on ironing everything and folding everything, and the baby was only meant to be fed at certain times, and...and we were so frightened of her Reg said, you know, we can't, can't cope with this, and so he asked her to go after six, five days I think. But, I think it was a sort of Norland nanny or something like that, you know. So that's... Then gradually the, you know, the children sort of, became part of the family, you know.

*Mm. Did you go straight back to helping Reg in his studio again, or did he have another assistant then, or...?*

That became even more complicated.

*Yes.*

Because you know, with two.

*Mm.*

But Vera was there all the time, and Vera was, you know, helping us out. And, now, at this time Reg decided to make... I wonder if, now talking to you, I wonder if this is why he did it, because... This... I mean looking into it, you can think that, you know, that she's not the girl, she's now a woman with children, and it might have been difficult for him at that time, you know, coming to terms with the children and everything. I wonder if that's why he turned to making boxes at that time.

*Mm.*

Because, you know, there was a sort of distraction going on. And, anyway, the idea...the boxes which he made, he first made one in 19...the first box he really made

which was an iron box was 1951, which was when I really first met him and got to know him, and I suppose that was when there was a terrific conflict between him wondering what to do. And he made this box in forged and welded iron, which is now in the Museum of Modern Art. And, he always said that inside this box there is something very secret, which enabled him to put all his worries and all his, everything into it. And then, later on he, after the children had been born, which was about 1960/61, he obviously again, for some reason, went to making the boxes, but they were bronze boxes this time, not iron boxes. And whether it was to do with the fact that he felt that in a sort of way he had lost a bit of me, and for a time he was, you know, sort of somehow coming to terms with all this, I don't know.

*But he never made anything in between of that sort, did he?*

No. He hadn't made...

*No.*

In between he had been making these wonderful bronzes. He'd also been making some of the figures in space. One was 1957/58, in which this... I mean it's really a sort of torturous thing which, this girl is shown on...

*Just look in the...it's in the catalogue, this is...*

Yes.

*Try and describe one of them, one of the main ones.*

Yes. This one. [pause] This one for instance.

*Right. This...ah, I see, yes. This one's Figure in Space, 1957. Right.*

And it's...

*It looks like an acrobat actually almost.*



Yes.

*A figure spinning round.*

And it's pinned onto this trapeze-like... Well I suppose it is like an acrobat, but its legs and its, well, it's lost its arms, it's a torso isn't it, it's no feet, no head, no arms, and it's sort of pinned onto this frame. And incredibly, incredibly balanced on a sort of single point.

*Mm.*

Because he was, he was, as well as everything else he was an engineer, all his sculptures, these especially, the *Figures in Space*, were quite extraordinarily worked out, and the balance was...I mean, you know, this will stand on its bronze base without tipping or anything.

*Mm. And the first tower that you made is this one.*

Yes, the *Boite de Fetishes*.

*Mhm. Ah.*

Which has got interestingly...

*It's not got the pronged feet at all has it? The feet have gone with that one. It's actually stand...*

No no, it's...yes, it's very solid onto the ground. And... Now this, a lot of these, he had as a child, and we've still got it, a Bible which has the most wonderful illustrations in it, I can show it to you, and I think this is the Tower of Babel from this, this Bible. It's a James I Bible or something, and... In his drawings and some of his sculptures, this, this sense of the fiery furnace, you know, as well, came from... And

this influenced him enormously. But he did a whole series of these, there were about three or four. This one, a study for a great tower, which is that, the end of the room...

*Oh yes.*

That, the whole idea of that was that it would go up on a hill, hill top, and be a sort of, another Prisoner.

*It wasn't a commission?*

No.

*Or a competition entry or anything?*

No no, no no, it was just one thing that he wanted to do.

*Just an idea. Right.*

And, there's to little ones over there. Those have a different story, because, these were 1962, and he had received a whole lot of sculptures back from Susse, which, they were for some... I mean he was a very...he demanded enormous standards in his casting, and these, the standards weren't good enough, and they were all sent back. And he went in to the...he just sort of said, you know, I've got to do something about this. And he, having already invented the shell bronze, he then went into the studio and started inventing investment, which is what is the plaster material that goes up against the surface of the wax. So he made these small, two small sculptures, and he invented this investment, and cast them. And the quality of the casting is quite unbelievable. And he showed this, he could show these to foundries to say, 'Look, this can be done, and this is what I'm asking for.' And this, this, the work that he did with this, was also patented, the investment, and, Morris Singer...no, well the people at Morris Singer that then moved to Burleyfield, they used it for quite a long time, because, you know, it was...it was such a good material to use. And, Susse didn't use it, but he managed to transfer all his casting to Morris Singer and Burleyfield. The people from Morris Singer moved to Burleyfield, and they set up another foundry,

and then they cast a lot of his things as well, using actually this, this investment. So, I mean this is, this is... People, I think people were bothered by Reg, because of his huge standards. Also, he knew exactly what everybody was talking about, he knew when they had cut corners, he knew if they weren't doing the job that they could do, and there was a period later on when he was doing lithographs, for the [inaudible] press, and Stanley Jones was just absolutely going spare with Reg, because of the quality he was demanding. And...and the fact that Reg knew about it, and knew what could be done, and was all the time pushing the boundaries of it, trying to get it better, and all the time trying to... And of course people's patience broke because they, you know, they said, 'OK you can do it in your studio and everything, but I don't know that we can do it on a mass scale.' But he was all the time... And I think they dreaded him coming to inspect, you know, if it was, in case it was wrong. But...

*I remember you saying I think last time when we were talking that sometimes, the way in which he could be very meticulous and very particular actually, you felt that sometimes it had gone too far.*

Oh yes.

*Are these the sort of things that you were thinking about?*

Oh yes, oh yes.

*You said it was in future...*

Oh, it goes too...I mean...

*It became problematic.*

He became, it became obsessive.

*Mm.*

And, OK a man that's obsessed is prepared to go to endless, endless trouble, and this, this was... And again with this. And I think people who were trying to produce, you know, sort of, commercially, found this very very difficult to cope with. And at this time, Felix Mann, who was a wonderful, was a very great photographer, I think he was a war photographer, but he was also very interested in art, he, and I can't quite remember who it was with, it was Ketterer Gallerie, could have been the gallery Ketterer in Germany, he organised a whole portfolio of lithographs, he was very interested in lithography. And, this was the first one, the...I think it was one...yes, a portfolio, and he had Sutherland and Reg and Scott and Henry Moore and Piper and all these top artists. And, this was the... Reg for this had to have a sort of, a large stone and a press. Well he hadn't got the press so he made one. And, the gearing of the press and the... I mean, again, this is another of the things where you look now, and why did he have to make his own press? Why did he have to organise on the stones? Because they were so heavy, he had them all cut in half, and then they were all stuck on boards, and ground down. I mean, you...it was a man that was totally driven by what he could do, and, it was fascinating. It was just amazing. But again I say, I think everybody got, a lot of people... I mean I'm sure if you ask Stanley Jones he'll think, oh God! Reg Butler. You know, he was his nightmare. So... But the folio of, the...yes, the folder of all these lithographs, it was a lovely folder to have.

*So we're talking about the boxes, aren't we, mm.*

Yes. Now...

*This is interesting, the ones, the first one you made is quite interesting, because of the title obviously, as well.*

Yes, yes, yes, again, and there, inside it there are four, I think...or is it three? Three or four, little figures from...he'd... Actually they are from a previous edition of single figures, and... He was a very, he was a person that would look around the studio and think, oh, and then put it in, and, assemblage, you know, he...he would make the thing, and then pick up something, and... And this went on all the way through in his sculptures as well, you know, he would...which I'll talk about later on, but he would saw off bits of one leg and put it on the other, and do this. Totally uninhibited about

that, you know. And these, this little figure I think was, he cast four times, and put it in to the sculpture. So... And so inside this, there are these four figures. And then...

*Did it have sort of rooms inside it, or compartments then?*

No, just these... It's like a room.

*Right.*

It's like a large room. I mean you can see the windows. And if you look down, I mean my granddaughter is absolutely thrilled by looking down, she shines a torch down you see and then she can see the, see these four figures inside. But, no. The study for the great tower I think, again, it's his architectural...I mean being an architect, and seeing these sort of extraordinary monuments. I mean, it's like the Prisoner, but solid, you know, I think it could have been on the same scale. I mean, look what Gormley can do now, you can see this on the top of, you know, *The Angel of the North*. Well I mean, how many years ago, Gormley's now, this was done in 1963, but I mean, if the opportunity had been there, and a heap of...well, you know, Gormley's sort of place, this would have gone amazingly on top of that, and would have been like a cathedral in a way, have a totally different spiritual feel. But it would have had the same...in fact I think it would have been...because it's...you can go all round it, whereas Gormley's has just got a front and a back in a way; that you can go all round. I think it would have been more satisfying as a...and have greater mystery, because you know, one looks at it and immediately your imagination starts to move and to work. Whereas... But, no, I mean, in those days there weren't heaps and mounds and...and there wasn't the money anyway. Now when you think, the money and the sponsorship and all this sort of thing, nothing like that then.

*Did he not do any major commissions in the early Sixties then really?*

He didn't do...the only commission that he really did was the *Oracle*.

*Mm.*

There were commissions, there was one for Crystal Palace, the sports...there was going to be a big sportsdrome. I think...is there one now?

*I don't think you mentioned that.*

It must have been about 1960.

*Oh right.*

The one just out there, on that base.

*Oh in the garden*

Yes.

*The figure in the garden on a sort of metal base. Right.*

Yes. Now the figure there was going to be huge, and was going up in this Crystal Palace...

*Was that a commission or was it a cost...?*

Well it sort of was a commission, it had been commissioned, and...but... And he built it, it was...it was made...it was set up, some of these, one of these people that he had helped him set it up and everything, but, I'm not quite sure why it came to an end, but I think, either they got fed up with waiting or the money ran out. I think the money may have run out. And at a later date the sculpture was just demolished, you know, sort of...

*Mm. Was it actually...it was never actually made, that then, the piece was never made?*

No, no.

*And it was for some kind of sports stadium was it?*

It was made...it was made, but it was never cast.

*No. It was for some kind of sports stadium?*

Yes, at Crystal Palace.

*Oh at Crystal Palace, yes.*

At Crystal Palace. There was a sort of mound, and he...he had actually set up models for it and everything, you know, and this mound was there.

*Mm. That was around about, early Sixties you think?*

Yes. I'm trying to...I think...must be in here somewhere.

*It may be.*

But...

*But largely, very few of the commissions, after the Hatfield one.*

The only commission that he actually.. And he always said commissions were never satisfying.

*No.*

Because you were bound by conditions which, when you made the sculpture, you might produce a small one but when you made the big one, the condition, you know, the conditions that they want you to keep, it didn't work, and so he really tried to... And I think he was, you know, the Prisoner never came off, and I think he felt that if you do a commission you've got to work so hard at it, it stops you doing it. So, no, he didn't actually do commissions.

*So he was working on the... He seemed to be, at the beginning of the Sixties at any rate he started to work more on the boxes and the towers and the forms.*

Yes. Yes. And then, in about 1963 he made a sculpture, he... There's a cottage next door which was altogether, you know, so one of the rooms was for drawing, and there's a room at the side, which was a room where they used to hang meat, you know, so it was part of the big mansion, it was a sort of larder I think. And he made this into a small working studio. And, in this...there was a window that had been blocked in. And so he fitted up some shelves in this, and, for some reason, I'm not quite sure whether it was...I'm not sure what time of the year, but he...he made then, he started to move from the towers, he went then to a whole series of very small figures, about, oh, just...oh it gives the size of the cabinet. But they must have been about, what, three inches, two to three inches high. And he made all these things, and they were stuck on these varying shelves in this thing. And then, he suddenly thought, well, I'll take the whole thing, make a cabinet and put them in. And this is called the *Musée Imaginaire*, which, one of them's actually in the Tate. They were very strange figures, sort of, the fetishes, the *Boite de Fetishes*, and they're all, pretty well all, they are all figurative except for one. But their heads... . And again, I do remember, one of them was a little stone which he made into a head, and then stuck a body on, and seated figures, and, extraordinary collection. But this is...they're small, because he did it in a very small room.

*Mm.*

And, so...

*Is that the only thing that he did of that kind really?*

Yes.

*Because it is unusual, and a sort of, whole body of work isn't it.*



Yes. And at this time, there was a retrospective exhibition in Louisville, and Franklin Page was the man that set it up. Reg sort of was a bit bothered because he said retrospective, you sort of feel you ought to be dead. But anyway, he, he did this retrospective, and this was one of them. There were some other small ones that were shown in this exhibition. Just wondering what date it was. '60...must have been about... [pause] I can look it up later and put the thing...but it is a retrospective. Does it...?

*I've sort of written some of them down, but I've not written that one down.*

And this was quite interesting, because it meant that he had to get all his work together, and sort of...

*Was it the first major one he'd had for some time?*

Yes, first major one outside Matisse and, outside...you know, Hanover. He did these yearly ones. But this was work from iron, very very early iron, the first sculptures he did, the first paintings he did, right the way through to what he was doing, you know, just at the minute. And it ended up with these very small, these very small sculptures. Actually his...the introduction, which I think, which he wrote in this catalogue, is very good, saying, now, having gone so small, where do I go next, you know.

*Which Reg actually wrote himself?*

Yes, he actually wrote himself. He wrote a wonderful catalogue, he did for Pierre Matisse, one of the catalogues, I'll look it up in a minute, a letter to Pierre Matisse, which was in one of the catalogues which, absolutely...I think Pierre recognised that Reg was, could write very well, and used him as an introduction to his catalogues. Anyway, this was a sort of, like a point in his life when he could see everything laid out, you know. I think he...he did sort of begin to, to wonder. And at this point I started to be ill for some, you know, didn't know what it was, but I gradually started to be ill, and I had coughing and, just, just was gradually going downhill. And it wasn't until, this was going on for about a year, which was very distressing, because Reg, being a sculptor and a very optimistic sculptor, finding, you know, me being ill

was very distressing. And then, the August, the following August, 1964, they discovered I'd got tuberculosis. So, that's doing a big jump, but that meant, you know, that was a dreadful, terrible, terrible, terrible thing to have happened to him. But....

End of F8496 Side A

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*So, you were just saying that you were diagnosed with a terrible illness.*

Yes.

*Really it must have been.*

Well I mean it was...

*Was it quite a shock?*

A dreadful shock. Because, I do remember, you know, one had been coughing and spluttering, and... And generally run down. But, I'd been told to go to the local, you know, in the car park they used to have X-ray vans, and I was told to...I went to have this X-ray, the doctor had said, 'Oh well I think it's about time we had an X-ray,' so I went and had an X-ray. And then, I was sent a thing by the local hospital that I'd better have a more detailed X-ray. So I said, oh, I said to Reg, 'Oh just drop me off and pick me up later, I'll be fine,' you know. Because he was very busy and... I don't even know...oh yes I could drive. Yes. And so he dropped me off, and I went in, and they...the doctor said, you know, 'You've got tuberculosis, you're going to have to go away for six months. You can go to Midhurst,' which was the other, out of the way, 'or you can go to...' Well he didn't say that. 'Or you can go to Harefield,' Harefield Hospital. So I, I do remember coming out, and going to the telephone box and just... I don't know quite how I phoned up, but anyway, Reg came and picked me up. And then, Reg got a second opinion, he went to University College, London, you know, where all the...again, you know, everybody was rolled out because of him being at the Slade and my father being at University College. And, the doctor then said, 'Well you can go to, University College have a hospital in Devonshire Street, an isolation hospital for TB in Devonshire Street,' which was just opposite King Edward VII Hospital. And so, it happened so quickly, because, the local health people had to come in and test the children, and they were tested, and I was sort of, within three days I think I was just moved out and into hospital for six months.

*Must have been an enormous shock. I mean, because the children were so small.*

And then, and Reg was left, Reg was sort of left with two children, with Jo, who wasn't particularly sort of, certainly wasn't very maternal, and you know, the children... And Vera, so, who came in once, every morning. So they did get a nanny. But what was so difficult was that, you couldn't see the children you see; the children couldn't get close to you. So, what happened was, every Sunday he drove up with the two children and Jo, and they could park outside in, it was a road just off Devonshire Street, and my window was about four storeys up, and Reg got these two children, who were, well Creon was three and Cortina was five. And they used to stand out on the pavement and wave. (laughs) And then, and then drive off again. Because you see he was so determined that, you know, that they would, sort of make sure that they would...you know, Mummy was all right, and... Anyway, that went on, to begin with you went down, I went downhill and then after that the drugs which I had, these huge injections, about...a colossal injection in one's bum every day, and other things called inapas and, streptoducetin[ph] in your bum and inopasse[ph] to take as well. And it did get better. But Reg was left with this terrible problem of the children, because, they'd been in such close contact with me, they had to have a sort of, what's called a prophylactic, a medicine to stop anything happening, you know. And this was a most terrible, a very very sweet syrup. Well my daughter was five and understood more, and she was sort of sensible, you know. In fact, she was six and Creon was four, Cortina was six and Creon was four. And she understood it. It was pretty...actually it was granules that they had to take, you had a spoonful of granules, and can you imagine trying to get a child, having granules? So, in desperation the doctor came, and they found some syrup, because they were under a paediatrician in London. My daughter would take this syrup, but my son wouldn't. And Reg was desperate, because he knew they'd got to take it, you know.

*Mm.*

So, and I remember this, being told this, that Creon, there was...the room where we have lunch was a sort of play room. And so the doctor came, he was a doctor Evans who was really rather a remarkable man and understood, he said, 'What you've got to do is, you've got to take everything away.' So they removed everything from that

room, and this little boy apparently sat in the middle of it, and he found a piece of string. And Reg said he came in, and he saw Creon sitting in the middle of the floor playing with this piece of string. And it went on for two days I think. Eventually he, you know, took it. He wasn't allowed to play with anything, you know, and eventually they got him to take it.

*Terribly harsh.*

Yes. But I mean Creon is still stubborn. (laughs)

*That's an unbelievable story really. Oh dear.*

He's still, you know, a very exceptional person. (laughing) But...

*He stood two days in a room with a piece of string so it's no wonder really.*

But the thing was finding the piece of string. Reg said he cried, couldn't bear it, it was just too incredible.

*Oh dear.*

Anyway, that, that was the... I fortunately didn't know anything about it. But it was quite interesting, because at this time my window looked across to where Profumo and, what was the girl's name? Christine Keeler?

*Mm.*

Was Christine Keeler's house. And of course, you know, all this going on, and the police. I mean that was sensational [inaudible] (laughing). But in the hospital you make, I had a wonderful friend, there were three of us, a French girl and another girl and myself. And there were a lot, quite, also quite a few Indian people who had come in, or Pakistani people. And the thing was that Reg felt that this is shameful, how can you, from, coming from all this, this sort of environment, the good food, and everything, how can you possibly have... It's...it's not our class. I mean Reg used to

say, 'It's not our class.' Forgetting of course that my father had died of tuberculosis, my grandmother had had it, and various other sort of relatives. But this really did disturb him a lot, because he felt he'd let us all down. But it was explained, you know, it was a sort of, obviously hereditary – not...it isn't hereditary, but you are susceptible to it, some people are. But after that, great, I came... I can always remember the... We were isolated completely for six months, and then the six months to the day I think, the first time I was let out, Reg took me to a restaurant to...that was before the children, once before, and we went to this restaurant, and then the second time we went to a sort of Chinese restaurant. And it was quite difficult, because, they'd lost the way of, we'd all lost the way of talking, you know, to each other, and everything. It was...this was quite interesting. We got round it very quickly, but... And, I mean Reg was just wonderful, you know, all the time I was very much kept alive, and Jo was all the time obviously trying to keep me alive. So that, that...but that was an episode.

*Mm.*

And I think Reg found it very difficult, because at this time he was making...or, I'm not sure, there was a sculpture he had been asked to make, of a...and he called it *Spinner*, and it was a very very solid circular piece of, set at an angle, and in it the figure was going to go through it, like, you know, sort of diving into it, so that... We have pictures of it somewhere, but... And this was set up to be...I think maybe it was for an exhibition, or some...for something. But it never came off. He did set it up larger, and he did get somebody to help him, and...but I think, he was such a personal sculptor that I think he felt, you know, he always said his mind was never on it, you know, he couldn't...couldn't sort of think properly. And this *Spinner*, which I actually, I didn't actually see it, it had been destroyed before I came back, as not being... And meanwhile, then, I came out of hospital in '65, and he had been making, there's some in this catalogue dating '64/65, there are the bronze, dark, very dark bronze sculptures, very beautiful bronze sculptures, and these were cast for an exhibition at Pierre Matisse Gallery, and they were cast by Valsuani, who was Picasso's caster in Paris. And the quality of these is fabulous, I mean, he was one of the best casters of the period, and really quite extraordinary. And, I think,

towards...was beginning...it must have been about '66, '67, he was surrounded by these dark, heavy, black sculptures.

*All female figures.*

All females. And he had set up a smaller one in plaster. One of the ones he'd had enlarged, one of the very small ones that he was doing, he'd had enlarged in white plaster, by a French firm, and it came back white, and he then set one of these up larger in plaster. And I think, it must have been about 1966, '67, that he decided to set up one of these large, quite, very big, because he was...and he...it was white plaster, and he painted it down, and then, he thought, why am I painting it? Maybe, maybe there's a way...maybe there's another way to do it. So he brought it, you know, whitened it up again. And I think this is when he started to... Well he...he said he could...he couldn't go on with the dark bronzes, they had just taken him over, and, he...he had to do something different. And I think this is when the painted bronzes, the very beginning of the painted bronzes.

*This was the turning...*

The turning point, about...when he did set up a large sculpture. Because he also felt that he couldn't keep going smaller, he had got to go big. He, you know, having done the *Musée Imaginaire* and these small ones, which were all... I think he almost felt they were becoming pot-boilers, you know, sort of... And he'd got to do something. Not pot-boilers, but you know, they were becoming... Well it was time for a change.

*Actually round about this point it was quite interesting in terms of what was going on generally with the sort of younger generation obviously as well.*

Yes, yes.

*What impact did that have on his, on his thinking or anything. The New Generation show in 1965 I'm thinking about at the Whitechapel, there was...*

Yes.

*Those younger sculptors like Philip King, and...*

Yes, yes.

*William Tucker. That suddenly burst onto the scene of this new abstract work.*

This is the time too... He was never...he would never be abstract, I think he...

*No.*

But I think...he knew Philip King, he knew all these sculptors.

*Mm.*

And he also, while he was at the Slade he was bringing in these people to be tutors, because, the whole point about him was that he could bring in weighty names and they would tutor the students. And so... I mean he obviously respected them very well and liked the sculptures they were doing, but he...he wasn't an abstract artist, you know. Going right back to the bronzes, to the iron sculptures, you know, people were saying they were abstract, but they were never abstract, they were always linked with the human figure in some way.

*Mm.*

Insect. Well, David Sylvester said they were insects, but he said they're not insects, they are related to the human being.

*Mm.*

But I think this is, this is the point where the painted bronzes sort of began.

*And you think it started with this particular, the last...the big figures?*



This dark, black, bronze period which, you know, he'd got all these sculptures in the studio, and they just were sort of, he said, 'They're taking me over.'

*Mm.*

'I've got to, to break away from them.' You know, 'I've got to...I can't...I can't go on making these figures, because there's nowhere to go with them really.' And the other thing is that if he'd done them smooth... I mean quite interesting, later on, when one of them was, the big girl, the bending, big bending girl was cast, she was cast in bronze and she came back, you saw the weight of her before Reg actually put the white paint on her. She was like...

*Which one's this?*

It's a bending girl, I'll talk to you about her. But this one.

*Oh right, yes.*

She was cast into bronze, when she was...

*So which was the first of these?*

This one.

*This was the first one?*

This was the first one, this is the first one.

*This is 1968 actually, isn't it.*

Yes, this is the first one. And, then this one.

*I mean these are so different from...*

Yes, yes.

*And in every sense, from the earlier work.*

And every sense, the surface and everything.

*Mm.*

And I think he just knew he'd got to do something different.

*Mm. What was the inspiration for these in particular, anything in particular, apart from just the general human figure?*

I think...I don't know, just the figure. I mean, this for instance, these are related to the *Figure in Space*.

*Yes, I can see that, particularly this one with the sort of, the limbs standing out.*

Yes, with this. And they are related back to, wherever it is, the... They are related back to the...

*The one that I said looked like the acrobat, with the...*

Yes, that one.

*The frame. They do actually.*

And the way they're thrown across, the figures thrown across this. But thrown across a solid thing now, not...not... And, I mean when we talk about these, these...he felt that he had got...that what it was on, had got to be like a cushion or something, because he couldn't put it on anything else, he couldn't put it on iron or rods or anything because it would immediately look like a torture, like a torture chamber.

*Mm.*

You know, or, or sadistic. He couldn't have...you know, that it could very quickly turn into something that was horrible.

*Mm.*

And... But I mean looking at these now, the amazing, which we'll talk about, but the amazing thing, that Reg did this in 1968.

*Mm.*

And when you think what...and people are coming to painted bronze now.

*Mm.*

But he did it then.

*Mm. It was very stark and very different for the time, wasn't it?*

Yes. Yes.

*But you said he didn't show them until...*

He showed them in America. They've never been shown in England.

*What ever?*

Until the...

*Until the Tate...*

Until the Tate retrospective.

*Right, right, right.*

But they were shown in America.

*So when he first started making these, did he show them to other people?*

Yes. Well, my daughter will say that she and Creon didn't go into the studio for a whole year, they just...

*When was this then? Round about the time when he started to make them?*

Yes, in the beginning of this. And, they were done, interestingly, because he set this up, this bending girl, he set it up from a small bronze maquette he'd got, and the head was down and she was pulling off a shirt, so, you know, you can imagine that it was quite figurative.

*Mm.*

And this was set up in the studio. And then, he started to dismantle the thing he'd got there, and he cut off the head, and then set up another head, and he...what he'd done was, put a screw into it, so that when he set up the head, he could unscrew it and lift it off, so he could put different heads on.

*Oh.*

So, so this is dismantled here, and it's just lifted off you see. He could also then work not on that up high, but on his knee, he could work [inaudible].

*Mm.*

And the arms were sawn off and put in different places, and the hands were...

*Almost like mannequins.*

Yes, yes. Yes.

*Which is obviously...*

And, gradually this thing, from being a head looking down, became a head looking up. And this head looking up goes right back to the Cercy Head and the earlier bronze ones. I mean it's not absolutely...well it's here as well, but it goes back to the original Cercy Head, which was done from, looking up, he always said looking up, he'd done at Hatfield, when it was done looking up at aeroplanes going across. I mean that was, he said, the only portrait of me that he ever did. I just...these look pretty like, you know, they are sort of...

*Mm, mm.*

But this, I wonder where...it's in the Tate now, but the little... I've got...I can...

*I think it is in there, I think I remember us looking at it before, mm.*

It's the same as this head.

*Yes, I do remember it now.*

Done at the same time as the *Oracle*, with the wires coming out.

*Mm.*

Yes.

*The one that [inaudible].*

And it was done at this time.

*Yes. Mm. Yes it's quite interesting how they do relate back in all sorts of ways actually.*

Yes. Oh yes.

*Because, initially you look at these new painted bronzes, which is so meticulously painted, you think they're so different, but in fact...*

This is the Cercy Head. And then these, which are a little bit later, again, this base, which could be, as I said, wire or metal or the three-pronged thing...

*Mm.*

It's lifting it off the ground you see.

*What were these bases made from then?*

Bronze.

*They're all bronze?*

He modelled them, they were modelled, with the most extraordinary sort of... I don't know how he did it, but this...it's...it's balanced with lead I remember, and the plaster is, you know, was done in a sort of frame, and, poised on a tiny thing at the bottom.

*Balance again, that's really very important.*

Balanced again.

*Yes.*

And then the figure is balanced on that.

*Mm. And, what was your role in these? Again you were working on these with him?*

Oh I was working on the figures all the time.

*Right.*

We worked on everything.

*Mhm.*

And again, you can imagine with such an intimate sculpture, that it was just him and me working. And these were, to begin, this one was cast in, was in plaster of Paris, so she was...all of these started in plaster of Paris, and, they became too heavy. So we had them cast into polyester resin, which was, made them much lighter, you could sort of move them about much more.

*Mm.*

And, that became very difficult to work with, because, polyester resin is pretty grotty...well, horrible stuff, especially with glass fibre, and sometimes, when I think now, it's a wonder we're alive at all, because, I mean I know Elizabeth Frink died of it. Sometimes the studio, you couldn't see across the other side of the room with the dust.

*Really? Dust?*

Dust.

*Yes.*

And, it was in our clothes, it was in our hair. It was in everything. You just, you just... And there was no extraction, nothing, you know, and just obsessive working. OK it's just...

*Considering you'd just had TB. It can't have done your chest a lot of good.*

(laughs) I know. Now thinking back, I mean it was total madness.

*It would have been terrible. Yes. Yes.*

Absolute madness. Yes, because it was only four years after that that we were working on it.

*Mm.*

It gets worse when you think about it. (laughs) Absolutely gets worse. And you could hardly...

*So you actually worked with the materials, you didn't...no one else actually worked on these?*

No, we did.

*You cast them and everything?*

Yes. No, they were cast, but then he did enormous alterations, so he might cut off a leg, and you had to reposition it.

*Right. So that was all the sawing of the legs and things.*

And the smell. And then he was painting them, and he painted them with car...acetone, car paint.

*Oh right. More fumes. (laughs)*

And that cellulose. And that, I can remember...

*More deadly fumes.*

And more deadly fumes. And I can remember coming out of the studio, ah, I've got to have milk, must have some milk to drink, you know. Because he was spraying, and...he was obsessed by it, he never stopped.



No.

I mean he died of a heart attack, but he didn't die of this, but it was a sort of...

No.

It was mad.

*Perhaps it was a good job the children weren't allowed in the studio.*

Yes.

*Because this was the period when the children weren't actually going in anyway.*

Yes, they weren't allowed, yes, yes.

No.

And it was all experimental. And can you imagine, you know, this thing was... I don't think we've even got a maquette for this, so it was done on situ. There's no maquette for any of these, these three.

*They were just done full-size?*

Yes, they were done full-size, and one was heaving them around, and... And to get this smooth, you were using grinders and everything to get it, you know, to get it looking like this. And...

*A lot of work went into each of these presumably.*

A huge amount of work.

*The detail.*

Yes.

*I've never actually seen any in the flesh though.*

No.

*What's happened to them? Have you got some?*

I've got them in the store. I've got the masters. But look, you can see here...

*Mm.*

I mean my daughter, she was, '68, how old would that be? '58.

*Ten.*

Ten, eleven. Must have been a bit... Because she...actually she must have been older than that.

*Mm.*

When we were casting them for Pierre Matisse, they were shown in...she must have been twelve, when we were doing the final casts, she actually... The whole of these bases are striped; they're bronze, but they have got fine, fine stripes on them.

*Mm.*

And, they were all done with Scotch tape. So you had to Scotch tape them all over, and then he sprayed it, and then you took the Scotch tape, and then you had to Scotch tape it. It took days. I can remember my daughter was twelve, and we did it together.

*Oh right.*

And she was allowed in then. This was when the final thing, before they went to Pierre Matisse for the exhibition, when they were cast. They all experimented. And, just...and she still remembers now. I mean she will never forget, this, this sitting there doing these...this...

*And they're rather bizarre shapes as well perhaps for a twelve-year-old.*

Yes. I mean these extraordinary bases, which are sort of mattresses. And people now touch them and think that they are...

*Yes, mm.*

...you know, soft. But they're not, they're hard.

*Mm.*

And this wonderful...do you see this, it was this sort of... Do you see that foot?

*I do, yes. A tiny foot.*

Now, this little foot was the sort of colouring that they were.

*Right, mhm.*

And, the...they were painted and rubbed down and painted and rubbed down, and the paint had a lot of French chalk in, so they were rubbed down again, to give this surface. So it was a thick surface, and then they were...they were done... We were driving down to Cornwall I think, and we were passing Exeter, and you know the roadside at Exeter, it's very red, so we stopped and picked up bagfuls of this red mud. And to begin with... We brought it back and it was all strained and all this sort of thing. Well to begin with he used this. And then it became...that was a bit much, so he did turn to, what is it, this...burnt sienna I think. One of those. So then, this was made in buckets, and this was thrown all over it, so, where it sort of filled in the crevices and everything. Then more paint went on, and then more. It was just

endless, and every, every sculpture was different. And I don't think, I mean although they're an edition of eight, they can never be done like that.

*Mm. They were done in edition...?*

No, they are...

*They are an edition of eight?*

Only one was made.

*Right, yes.*

And somebody the other year said could they be made again. I don't think so.

*No, no.*

They couldn't be made again.

*How many of these were made then?*

One, one of each.

*How many is in actually the whole series of the painted figures, how many roughly would you say you made? Of this kind.*

Of the big ones?

*Mm.*

There's two of her. Because she, she was cast, and, there's a, in Japan, at Hakone, there's an open-air exhibition.

*Mm.*

A huge exhibition. And Reg was asked to send something, and Reg being Reg said, 'Well, I've got to send the best and the biggest thing I've got.' The prize was £8,000, and Reg won the prize. But, I mean there wasn't too much over from casting it and all the work that went into it.

*No.*

Anyway, so they've got the first one.

*Right. This is Bending Girl.*

This is *Bending Girl*. And then the other one went to the Pierre Matisse Gallery for his exhibition in New York. So, and those, they were four. And you can imagine in New York, it was quite, quite something. There were some very, you know, some very good crits. There was a man called John Canady who at the time was the top critic, and he gave a wonderful, a good one. Other people sort of said they were pornographic or obscene.

*Mm.*

But going back to the girls, on each of these girls, the eyes he made on the lathe, so the eyes...and that took months of experimentation to get the lens and the colour and the eye colour, and everything going into each other. And the hair, which I did, the skulls came off separately, do you see here, this is where...and it was fixed invisibly later. But each... Came off separately. But each one was minutely drilled, into bronze, all the way around it, all over it, and tufts of hair were threaded through and fixed on the back.

*Was it real hair then?*

Real hair. And then we went into terrific... He discovered that, he had to have real hair. The original, the masters were done with plumber's tow, you know, a sort of... But real hair, and we went to all sorts of wig makers and all sorts... I mean it was

fascinating, all sorts of places. And discovered that Asian hair is much stronger than, you know, sort of European hair, Caucasian, Caucasian hair? And so we had boxes of this, it's cut into strands, and boxes of this hair. And, I made tufts with Uhu. And each of this hair was threaded through. And then he styled it. Cut it and styled it. You can imagine the agony of... Oh and this, this one I think is...these are tied back, because in that position it would have fallen down, so, so the hair is tied back in a knot at the bottom.

*Mm.*

In all these cases. Then... Here it is, do you see? You can see actually.

*Mm.*

You can see here the hair. Oh these, these are later, I can tell you about those later. But there, you see, this is the hair here.

*Mm.*

It's all through. But, you know, I don't know... That looks like tow, that's not real hair. Anyway, but the real, the real ones were done with this wonderful...

*Mm.*

And it had to be the right colour, because if you'd have had dark hair, red... This, the colour of this hair, when you look at the whole thing, was blended in with the whole, you know, it didn't...it was like a, it unified the whole thing. And the other thing is that when we were painting, he did an enormous amount of experimentation with the bases of the lying down ones, and he painted them in glorious reds and greens. Because he knows, he knew an enormous amount of colour, the juxtaposition of the colours and everything. But again, he came right back to the bases, which are a grey, a greeny-grey colour, or a greyish colour, with these stripes. And... Because that again, the whole thing wasn't jarring, you could see it as a total, total thing, and it didn't jar.

End of F8496 Side B

F8497 Side A

*Right, we were just talking about the painted bronzes that Reg was working on in the Sixties, and the bases.*

The painted, the bases which were painted, striped... Oh, could you just... Have I talked about how it was painted? I did talk about painting the bronze.

*You talked about...you did.*

How they were cast into bronze?

*That's right, mm.*

Right. OK. At Susse. We did talk about Susse, casting them into bronze?

*Oh wait a minute, no. No.*

Right, well I'll go back a bit.

*Yes. No I don't think you did. Not about Susse casting the painted ones, no.*

No. But when the, when the time came for them to be cast into bronze, it was decided that Susse would do it.

*Mhm.*

And it had to be done very quickly, because Pierre Matisse wanted it, you know, it was going to take longer than he thought, and the exhibition was going to be earlier than we thought. So, so it was decided that we would take them over to Paris ourselves. And so we...we... I'm not sure, I think it was... No, three of them went and one of them hadn't gone, and we had to take one over, so, I took...we put the figure in the car. And, we had a Citroen Safari, so it fitted, just. And I said, we need it to be covered, because I felt this very pink, white, voluptuous lady... Reg insisted



that it wouldn't be covered, so the whole journey across I was in a state of absolute apoplexy, because I felt, you know, that we would be carrying... Because he was bottoms up anyway, and it was... Anyway, these were cast at Susse. And when they came back they were in, of course, bronze colour, and the, the difference between the sculpture when it was painted and, in polyester resin and painted white and all the colours, you know, the colours that Reg wanted, and when it was cast into bronze and dark colour, suddenly made one realise the reason why Reg had left the bronze sculptures behind before, why he had got so depressed, because the heaviness of it and the weight, and the smoothness of the surface which was essential for the sculptures, again made them even more gross. And they, you know, one, one knew, Reg knew at that point that he had done the right thing, to, you know, do... So anyway, they were brought in, when they came back they were brought into the studio, and then he started to paint them. And these massive sculptures were so heavy, and we had to move them from the yard to the thing, and wash them down and heat them, and paint them and everything. It was...it was really, looking back, a miracle that we did it. I don't know how we did it. But now, going forward again to the actual bases, when these, the time came for these to be done, they were painted...the paint he used was car paint, cellulose, which was put onto the figure and the bases, and then it was rubbed down, and the cellulose paint had quite a bit of French chalk in it, which formed a surface on the sculpture which filled in, as it was going along, filled in quite a few of the blemishes in the bronze. And each time that a coat of the paint was put on, then it was rubbed down with wet and dry, and then put on again, so it was a continuous build-up of the paint and rubbing down and paint and rubbing. And then finally he put a very fine French chalk on for the final coat. And then, when the...this was white cellulose paint, and when he felt that he'd got to the point of the surface being good enough, he then mixed a bucket of poster colour paint, water-colour paint, and water, and a little detergent to make it stick onto the thing, and threw it, literally threw it over the sculpture. So where it landed on rough places, it stayed, and where it landed on smooth surfaces it fell off, and it fell...if the sun was out, it came in rivulets and dried, and if the sun wasn't out it did different things. And if the sun was out and we were outside and the sculpture was hot, then it became too pink because it dried too quickly on the surface. And all these things. And then you had to go right back to the beginning and start rubbing it down again and building it up. But eventually, a sort of period of throwing this water-colour paint on it. And

then, having got that on, we then did a very very thin coat of white car paint which we painted again onto the sculpture which, to blend in a bit this, this reddy coloured paint, the water-colour paint. And finally he put on a, a clear sort of varnish colour. Actually no, he didn't, he sprayed the whole thing, finally, with a sort of fixative to hold it all together. So, you know, this was how, this was how it happened. Did I say, was I...I don't think I was talking on tape about how he did the hair, did I? Or was I...

*You did, yes, you did talk about the hair. The real, the...*

Yes, putting in tiny...

*Stand by strand, yes.*

The base, as I say, was striped, and these stripes, one of Reg's most favourite artists was Cranach, and the...the one at the Walker Gallery I think in Liverpool is the woman by a fountain, and she's on a green and white striped cushion, and the stripes, the idea for the stripes for these sculptures came from this, from this painting. Also the...he did try varying different colours for the, you know... I think I've said that too. Some of it I said off tape, but, he did try brilliant greens and brilliant reds and everything, but he came...he eventually came down to a sort of tonal thing, whereas the hair and the figure and the bases were all in the same tone, so that when you looked at it from wherever you were, you would see the whole, the total whole, and you wouldn't see sort of suddenly black hair coming off, or a bright red base, which would separate it out from being a whole. So this is how he came to these colours. But he broke up the solidity of the base, which was very very heavy; if you painted it all over just grey, he broke up that, with, by striping it, because this suddenly made it lighter. And it also suddenly made it look like a *trompe l'oeil* really, because people have been up to the base and put their fists on it, and, quite hurt themselves, because it looks like a cushion, it looks like a soft cushion. But, the other wonderful thing about these sculptures is how, that each of the three girls that are lying on their bases, the base comes down onto the final base, to a very tiny point. The whole thing, the base, and then the sculpture, are all balanced all the way through. And, I don't know quite, you know... It would almost stand if it wasn't screwed to the base, you know, this is

the way it was done. And each of, the base, the figure and the bottom base are all separate and they're all locked on to, you know, it's not a whole casting, each one of them is a separate piece. So, these sculptures... Yes?

*I was just going to say, in the catalogue, just have a look. So he was making these from, round about 1968.*

Yes.

*'68 was the first one.*

Yes. I think the Pierre Matisse...the Pierre Matisse exhibition that these were shown in, was 19...

*Ah, that's why you fetched it, to see what year it was.*

That was...is it this one?

*Not this one.*

Is this the Pierre Matisse? Yes. Tony Snowdon. Interestingly, they were first...

*Not the '63 one? No.*

No no no.

*No, that was a different one.*

They were first, or, only time they were shown was at the...

*Right, was it '71?*

1973.

'73, *right*.

These were shown. So that's why, when my daughter was stripping it, she would have been fourteen.

*Yes.*

A bit older than than I thought.

*Yes. And that's the only time they were actually shown?*

Yes, the only time.

*With everything.*

Beside the one *Bending Girl* which was at the Hakone exhibition.

*Right, mhm, that one.*

So they were...yes, they were shown at the Pierre Matisse, and Pierre Matisse was so excited by it that he commissioned Tony Snowdon to take the photographs.

*Oh I see, mm.*

So the photographs in this catalogue are, these were all by Snowdon. This is Reg pulling it out.

*Mm.*

I think that was...I think... Well, that's him.

*Mm.*

But... (laughs)

*No, carry on. So...*

But Reg did use the ones he had taken mostly...

*Oh they're wonderful photographs aren't they.*

And then, they...

*Because they weren't... Did he try to show them in London, or...?*

No.

*Did he show them to people, or...?*

No they went to...

*Was there just not so much interest in them in this country?*

I don't know, it's very interesting, because whether people knew... He actually at that time hadn't got a gallery in London, because Hanover Gallery had given up, oh, about...Erica Brausen had...about 1960...oh, 8 or something. They'd... I must... I can look this up for you, the date, but they'd given up. So he hadn't a gallery in London. So Matisse was his only gallery, and Matisse, you know, felt that these were going to be... But they didn't get sold.

*Right.*

Matisse bought them from Reg, but Matisse didn't manage to sell them. And he always said to Reg, 'I don't know quite why I didn't sell them, I must have been a very bad salesman.' Because they weren't sold in New York.

*No. So what happened to them?*

They were... And, at the end, when Pierre Matisse died, the Gallery Freitas from Venezuela, Caracas, bought all Reg's work from the Pierre Matisse Gallery.

*Ah.*

And so they were in Caracas. And one of them, the smaller of them, is in, in the Caracas Museum of Modern Art. And then, about four years ago they were shown again in New York.

*Wow.*

And, they were, you know, very excited about it, and again, people sort of realised that these wonderful sculptures were about.

*Mm.*

But...

*How were they received at the Pierre Matisse Gallery show then?*

Very well, very well.

*Was there any...were there any reviews?*

But people actually didn't, or weren't able or didn't feel able to buy them.

*No, no.*

But the critics were very, you know, very congratulatory about it, and you know, thought they were very good. So, I mean that I think probably depressed Reg a bit, you know, he just felt, why...this is my life, this is what I am doing. And they, you know, nobody's buying them.

*So how did he deal with that at that point then?*

So, I mean he...

*That was '70...*

He'd had a whopping cheque from Pierre though for them.

*Obviously, he bought them.*

So... And he didn't have to pay for the casting or anything.

*No.*

But I think he would have liked maybe more, you know, to have been sold or whatever.

*Mm.*

So that was '73, that exhibition.

*Mm.*

And then from 1973 until he died, he was making...he'd gone back to making small, little sculptures of the painted, small painted bronzes. But these were done totally by assembling bits. He had boxes full... If you turn over. These.

*So these are quite...oh they are small.*

Yes.

*About fifteen inches.*

Yes.

*Just over a foot long most of these then.*

Yes. And... Yes, here they are.

*Mhm.*

And he had boxes of bits and heads. Ones were Japanese, these... He was very fascinated by the Japanese features, and the slit eyes and everything.

*Had he been to Japan?*

Yes, he'd been to Japan in 1966. They were sent by U.N.E.S.C.O., to a conference there. And he said that this is the...this is the only place he'd been far enough away for it to be different from, you know, Europe. Yes, he was fascinated. He only stayed a week though, he needed to get back.

*Mm. So all these small ones...*

And now these, he, after his, after the show he came back, and he started...and they are a sort of, the torsos, these, each one of these he's cut off at the leg, cut off at the knee, and the head, and the arms, and the torso has screws in it. And then he started to manipulate the legs and turn them round, and so, I don't even know, some legs, if it was straightened out, is the right leg for the body, do you see what I mean?

*Mm.*

I mean if this figure straightened that leg out, it's the wrong leg.

*Mm.*

But it doesn't worry one really. And each...you know, each, each sculpture is different. But they're all done by assembling with little, you know, with parts, spare parts.



*So you worked on a lot of these pieces then?*

Yes, I did a lot. I was working on those. Interestingly again, with the feet, you know, these feet, he would say, 'Do a foot,' and I always did...for some reason, and I should have learnt by the time he'd finished, that he liked his big toe longer than his second toe, and I always for some reason did the second toe longer than the big toe, and off came the second toe. (laughs) It was a sort of, time after time, you could spend days on getting this toe right. And so it was always... I mean he would... Really what I did was none of the finishing but just the building up to...

*What about the hands, were they equally difficult to get them just right?*

Yes, yes, equally. And the face, I never touched the heads.

*Oh right.*

Never touched the heads.

*And the eyes.*

But again, the ears were all cast, they were all...he had a box of ears. And a box of, everything, you know, a box of heads. I did all... So what actually happened, he was working on these right the way up to when he died. One of the problems while he was working was what...to put them on the bases, you know, the bases.

*Mm.*

And so he made these cushions.

*These are actually cushions, not bronze?*

Yes. No these are actually cushions.

*Mhm.*

And, then what colour to put them on, this sort of tonal sort of, all over tonal colour, or, one of the colours he put them on quite a lot was dark, a sort of, wonderfully rich purpley colour. And so he was fiddling around with the bases, and not quite happy with... I... You see these, which are much more torsos, are without bases, but these... And so he was fiddling about with the bases. And then, well, he... Yes, he was ill in, that year, I think it started about May, he got a virus, a cold, which he didn't... May, this would be in 1981. And he didn't...he didn't throw off. And every year we went down to Cornwall, to the same place, Treyarnon Bay, and we had been doing this... I don't know if I've said this before, but he went down there when he was a child. And we still, we went down there to, we took a house. Sometimes, we gradually moved round the bay as the houses became, not vacant and more vacant, and so we moved down there. And this year we were, it was the year of the royal wedding I think, and he wasn't well, and he couldn't keep warm, and I remember, Cortina came down the first week, and Creon came down the second week, and one of them had to bring an electric fire and one of them had to bring plugs, and one of them had to bring... Because he couldn't get warm. And, you know, at night he slept with fires on to try and keep... When we got back, he...we drove back from Cornwall, my daughter and Jo and myself and Reg, and he insisted on doing the whole thing in one day, and we knew that, you know, Cortina and I were sitting in the back and we just knew, he wouldn't let anybody drive, and he just had to do it. And it was...it was becoming irrational. Anyway, eventually we got him to go to the doctor, and that's when it started to, the doctor sent him to Harefield, and they sort of... Well, actually the day before he died he had been to Harefield to have, I think they can take a sort of X-ray of the whole heart and all the way round. And whether they told him or not, I think, they must have said what was wrong, because, I didn't know but I think he must have said... Because that afternoon he came back, and we wanted a new car, and so we went out test-driving, and he scared the woman witless by his, the way he was driving, very irrationally, and when I think back now, I think the whole thing was sort of adding up to a very distressed person. And, he was all right, we went to bed and everything, and the next morning I...I always take the dog out fairly early, and I just said, 'I'm taking the dog out,' and he said, 'Yes,' and took the dog out for about an hour and when I came back he was dead. So, you know, that's the way to go.

*Mm.*

That's the way for Reg. I mean he did it in, he did...he went in the only way that he should go, you know, no sort of long illness or anything, just...it was the most dignified way of dying really. Just, like that.

*Mm.*

So that, that was that really. And then, after that there was this studio full of these sculptures. And previously, in the previous summer, the people...there is a gallery in Venezuela who had already bought one of...the smaller of...one of the small painted...not the very small ones but the smaller of the group of four, painted bronzes, and they had sold it to the Museum of Modern Art in Caracas, and they'd been down that sort of May again, and were looking at these, and wanted a complete set of these sculptures, which Reg was very pleased about, because he was very, you know, a bit despondent about the sort of, ones not selling before, and felt, you know, he'd got to stick at this, and he was very pleased that people were actually wanting these small ones. So I'd got this, this order really. And so, I took them to the foundry and they cast them, and then I completely finished them. I did everything, the hair. Having done the big ones I knew exactly how to do it. And, he had already painted the masters, so I knew how they looked. But they hadn't got real hair, they'd only got tow, and so I...I did them, and got them a set to... So there's two sets of these, I've got a set of these in bronze.

*And how many is actually in a set then?*

Six.

*Oh there are just these six?*

These six. And Venezuela have got a set of these in bronze, and so that's it.

*Mm.*

And...

*How many of these big, you know the big, the ones that were sort of '68 to the early Seventies...*

Yes.

*How many of those were there? Not in terms of editions, but roughly how many figures did you make?*

There were two, the two of the *Bending Girl*, there were two made of the *Bending Girl*, the big one, this one [inaudible].

*Oh is it? Yes.*

And two made of the smaller of the, when you get to the pictures. Two made of that one. Oh... [inaudible]

*So did he only make five though?*

There's five sculptures.

*Five separate sculptures.*

Five separate sculptures, yes.

*That's all?*

Five, only five.

*Right.*

Of that period.

*I thought there may have been others that weren't actually in this catalogue.*

No, no, that was all. Just those five.

*That was all, right.*

But they were all fairly big, they were all big fives.

*And you spent a lot of time on each one of them obviously.*

Well he spent from 19...yes, '73... 1968, and the first ones went out in '73.

*Right.*

So he spent that time on them.

*Mm.*

And then, the rest of the time after they'd gone he spent on these really small ones.

*On these small ones.*

And he did some drawing.

*Right. And the little...I've just noticed the head there.*

Yes, that is one of the heads.

*Is that that one? The Scalene Head from 1981?*

Yes. Yes.

*That was one of the last ones you did then isn't it.*

That's one of them too.

*Oh did you do that one? Did you finish...?*

No he did that.

*Right.*

But I took all these photographs.

*Mm.*

And after he'd died I sort of thought, well, you know, I've got to take all these colour photographs, and all these black and whites and everything, so I sort of got everything and took all the photographs.

*Mm.*

Because, you know, you had to do it then, otherwise, now it would...I couldn't...after, I probably would take more time setting it up and doing it. (laughs)

*But it was important that you did it then.*

Yes, yes, yes.

*To have a complete record of the work as it was.*

As it was.

*Fresh.*

So now there is... Yes, it was done immediately after he died.

*Mm.*

But did I... So, I mean that is the... I think that's taking it up to date.

*In terms of...*

This work.

*...the work that he completed.*

But, thinking about this, and thinking, realising that, the business of taking all these photographs, because, I'd...you know, they had to be colour and black and white and everything.

*Mm.*

Have I said in this how he made the camera?

*No. There are quite a few other things perhaps aren't there.*

Right, yes. Yes.

*The things that he made, is obviously one of the things that you were going to talk about.*

Yes, yes, because, I mean that is another of his amazing things.

*Mm.*

Previously, at some point... I think he, the very first time when I met him, when I was still a student and he took some photographs of my sculptures for, for the exhibition I had at the Hanover Gallery, he took this photograph, he came with this funny little box with a lens on the front, you know, and sort of, slide holders and things, and took really beautiful photographs, and the early ones in the book. Then, as time went on he realised that this wasn't good enough, so he made himself the most beautiful, amazing

camera with...and bought himself a very high quality lens, and went into... It's...it's like a sort of, it's got extension tubes, and to focus it you've got a sort of steering wheel, which, you know, you sort of, do like this. And, he went very deeply into development and development sort of techniques, and the right sort of chemicals to use and everything. And the quality of his photographs, again this obsession, had to be absolute perfection, you know. And, the coloured photographs he took, he drove the local photographic man totally barmy. And in the end we were developing our own colour photographs, you know, we spent days getting the right temperature, and you know, the chemicals and everything, and produced some really beautiful colour photographs. So, so that was, you know, he could never have found a camera, or... He did look into cameras, and sort of Hasselblads and all these sort of things, and felt that none of them could... I mean he sort of, sometimes his evening reading was cameras, and he felt that none of them could do the quality of this Schneider lens he'd got, and the...and all the rest was pure engineering really, you know. And the lathe, I mean he worked on the lathe, had this lathe, and did the most amazing things working on the lathe, precision things. And the lathe, he had a small hut down at the bottom of the garden, and I think, it must have been, it was a very sort of wet, watery place, and he, at some point, I think when the children were very young, he decided to waterproof it all, and double line it, and put his lathe down there. And he used to go down there in the evenings and work on the lathe. But, incredibly, incredible precision.

*He made other things as well, you mentioned a radio, did you.*

Oh yes. He...that was at the time of Suez.

*Oh yes?*

And, I think he was very distressed at Suez, and you know, Eden and all this business of the thing, and he set to and, he made an FM radio. And, I can remember the noises and the squeaks, and all the radio valves and everything. And, short wave and...I think, a little later on my daughter went on one of her tours and he used his short wave radio to try and get...you know, she was going on one of these cruises that children did, and you know, to reach Turkey, and all this sort of thing. But no, he



made the most wonderful, very high quality radio, with... And we've got boxes of that, boxes of... And of course the trouble, one of the problems when he died was that everything that Reg had done in the house, like the radio, oh, like other things, I mean even in areas where he'd sort of done levelling of concrete outside, he'd done it with a mixture of Portland cement and cement fondue, so after a while it disintegrated. But I mean everything, everything in the house has been, the central heating, electrical works, nobody else understands it but me, because Reg did it, you know what I mean?

*Mm.*

All round, everything, he did. And so gradually since he's died one sort of gets it all normal. (laughs) Sort of, you know, you get...you get it so that other people can understand it and not just Reg, which is a very important thing.

*And you've got this wonderful electric fire.*

Yes, his electric fire.

*Which he made.*

Yes, this is what he made.

*That's amazing.*

I mean all this furniture he made.

*It looks very sort of sculptural anyway.*

Yes. Yes. He did, when the children were born he did agree to put the guard on the front.

*Oh right.*

This sort of thing.

*He didn't make a TV did he, a television?*

Yes, he made the first one in Hertfordshire when he was a boy, at the age of twelve.

*He made one, he actually made a television?*

Yes. Yes he actually made it. I mean, you know, sort of, got the first image in Hatfield.

*And it actually worked?*

He got the first image coming through. He made the most amazing... He was asked... Did I... He was asked to... When Philip James, his daughter, Caroline, married, there was a huge wedding party at the Arts Council in St. James's Square.

*You did mention that, the cake, about making the cake.*

Yes.

*Yes, you did mention that one, that's right.*

And, he, for instance another time he...did I say about the kites?

*No.*

How he made some kites. And to get the right weight he had to use a very special silk scarf that I had, you know. I mean it was...

*Was it a prized one?*

And you had no...if he knew you'd got it, or, he'd earmarked it for this... Like the teapot, have I said that, about the teapot?

*No you've not mentioned that.*

Well if he, if he knew you'd got it, you couldn't save it, you couldn't do anything, you just had to hand it over really, because you know, it was...it was... It was for a kite, you know, this was... And he made these beautiful kites with bamboo stretchers, and wonderful... And he went into the balance of the kites, and the bigger the kite the better. And then another time he was casting, he had a small, very small head he wanted to cast, a sort of, funny shaped head, and, he hadn't got the right metal but he knew I'd got a pewter sort of teapot, and that's what he wanted, that. And, it belonged to my father. And, I knew he'd seen or earmarked this teapot, that it had had it. Because he made you feel incredibly guilty and incredibly sort of mean. Because he had no, no sense of precious things really.

*Mm.*

It was... If he was going to do an experiment, everything else...

*Everything was game.*

Yes, everything was game, absolutely, you know.

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.....painting it, repairing it, the courtyard.

*No, no you've not talked about that.*

I mean it's just endless again, you know.

*No, right, OK then.*

So what shall I start with?

*C.N.D.?*

Yes. Yes. Yes, that would be 19...I think I was pregnant with my daughter when we did the first march, which would be 1958.

*1958, mm.*

I think that would be, the C.N.D. He was very...we did the Aldermaston march, round all...or, we didn't actually march, but we gathered at Aldermaston, and then...and then, you know, made a noise and everything.

*And was it...was it fun, a fun occasion, or was it...?*

Yes, it was all right. It was... I think because everybody was there. I'm just trying to remember, quite a few of the artists were there. And everybody was sort of doing it. Yes, and you felt, you felt scared, we were scared, we were really scared, and, you know, it was some way to, to sort of protest and do something. And, 1961 or, 1960/61, Bertrand Russell had this idea of the Committee of 100, and they asked Reg to go on this, which he did. I think we were actually, it was '61, because we...we went down to Cornwall, and, we used to go down there, especially at that time, pretty well every summer, and Reg used to take his drawing in the car, or his sculpture in the car or something. I mean we used to down, because the children were very small we

used to go down with the spin-dryer, because of the nappies and things, and loaded with his drawings and his drawing-boards, and paper and pencil and everything. And we stayed that year, because I remember, right to November the 5<sup>th</sup>, I can't think why because it was pretty horrid, I think we might have gone down late September and stayed there. And he had to come back, we all had to come back, because there was a meeting of the Committee of 100 with Bertrand Russell, and he had to come, you know, we came back. But we did see the November the 5<sup>th</sup> fireworks, so... I should think Cornwall at that time of year was pretty ghastly, but anyway... (laughs)

*Probably.*

And, I think he disagreed with them, I'm not sure whether they were doing, going to do violent things, because he was a pacifist, he wouldn't have wanted to have done anything like that. And I think there...there are letters and things in which he opts out after a while [inaudible].

*Mm.*

And, at that time, it must have been about 1961/62, there was a terrible scare that there was strontium 90 in the children's milk and everything, that we were all told not to drink milk and not give milk to your children, because there was this stuff in it. And, it didn't last too long, but we were, we were very scared. And this point Reg decided that the only place that was safe in this place was Tierra del Fuego, and that as a family we'd have to go down there. Well, I was absolutely horrified, and... But I mean, with this same sort of sense of, if we don't do this, our children will die, and if we don't do this, you know, how can we ever live with the fact that we haven't done what we could do. And he was going, looking into sort of Argentinean consulates and things. Fortunately, for some...it fizzled out, because I certainly would have been dead if I'd have gone down there, if I was going to have TB, and various others would be dead. So, fortunately it sort of gradually fizzled away. But that was a time of terrible stress, because I...I couldn't imagine Reg, two children, myself and Jo, all down in Tierra del Fuego, I couldn't, I couldn't think of... And interestingly, my brother and his wife had just been down there on a sort of grand tour, and, it's pretty

cold and pretty bleak, and pretty horrible. (laughs) They would have been visiting us, or the remains of us. And we would have had to have left...

*You avoided that well then.*

And we'd have had to have left this place, the whole thing. (laughs) There were other things in his life when, for instance I can remember him sitting in the yard, when it was pretty cold and he wanted to...well he was determined to go and live in the south of France. Actually, this happened the year he died, he was determined that he was going to up and live in the south of France, he couldn't take this weather any more, couldn't take... And at the time it was a heat wave, so, I'm not quite sure why, but he was...and I just said, well, I'm not going this time, I'm staying. Because... But he was so passionate about it, I thought, crumbs! And this, this awful sense of guilt that you had thwarted him from doing it. But, that, I mean that was that, you know, because, he died on... He was pretty irra...fairly unreasonable, when he was ill, and totally... Nobody knew he was ill up here, even the neighbours didn't know he was ill, because he never went out, and, I mean they were so shocked when he actually, when I told them, they couldn't believe it. And the other interesting thing is, towards the end of his life he had very few, we had very few visitors, and he always said, you know, 'What you get, people come here and they expect to see the studio, and, I've got nothing to show.' And I used to say, 'Well they don't necessarily expect to see the studio.' 'Oh yes,' you know, 'they come all this way and they've got to see it, and I'm not going to let...' So, so towards the end of his life we had very very few visitors.

*Mm.*

And it was quite traumatic when we did have them, but...

*Was he, he was still working at the Slade up until...*

He finished at the Slade a bit earlier than this, about 1980...I think it's in the... I think roughly 1960.

*Yes.*

'65 would it be?

*Oh.*

He was sixty-eight when he died.

*[pause] I can't find it.*

[break in recording]

*Right. So you just think it was...*

Well, we'd better go back to the Slade, that, he...

*Mm.*

He took over from Gerrard, A.H, Gerrard, who was the head of the Sculpture Department at the Slade, and, A.H. Gerrard resigned, or, I mean retired. And that again, 19... Well he first went to the Slade in 1951 as a visiting tutor, but he took over from Gerrard, and then he started to gradually make the Slade into what he felt it ought to be, and he made it into a postgraduate place, so that there were only postgraduate students there. And he had people like John Davies, and, I think Tony Cragg, Anthony Gormley, Michael Kenny, and, oh goodness, there were a lot of other people there, but he brought them in as teaches. So that it got a, a very very good standing amongst art schools at that time. And he had one...had a deputy that ran the everyday things at the Slade but could always get in touch with Reg when he wanted. Reg to begin with went once a week, and then gradually he went for a whole week at the beginning of the term, and a whole week at the end of the term, and then talked to the students between, you know, each student he would give a tutorial both at the beginning and the end of the term, and then between times this man Claughton, who was a, had been a student at the Slade and had been under...he had actually been my, one of tutors, so had McWilliam been one of my tutors, but Claughton ran everything

in the Slade, and any problems then he came back to Reg. And, the real sort of time was towards the end, in the summer when the exhibitions were put on by the students for their final diplomas, and, you know, sort of, trying to sort of calm the students down and trying to fulfil their needs, and you know, sort of, when they were sort of really very hyped up and sort of, going over the top, then Reg would come in and sort of try and make things possible. And once we got a sort of telephone call from Claughton, a panic-stricken telephone call, to say that Anthony Gormley had, or wanted to make...wanted to sink one of his sculptures into the floor, and what should he do about it, because the floor was concrete. (laughs) So, Reg said, 'Well, if he wants to do it, he's got to pay for it to have it mended again.' So, I mean, this, this was really, upset Claughton enormously, but Reg sort of said, 'OK.' And so, Gormley did have a very large bill to pay, he did dig a hole in the concrete floor. Oh I think, whether he'd done it by the time Claughton had come, I'm not quite sure, but it was...and the sculpture was set in it, and then the floor was resurfaced when Gormley had finished. But, I think that's a lot of sort of adding up to what Gormley is now really, you know, this sort of... (laughs) I think Reg would have admired his, his drive enormously, his sort of purpose. And sculptures probably. But, so, and during the time, well towards the end of the...oh during the time, in about 1961 I think it must have been, '61 or '62, he gave a series of lectures to the students at the Slade called 'Creative Development', and these were later published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, and I do remember there was somebody called Patrick...gosh. No, I can't remember the name. Who used to come down here and used to sit in this room and they used to argue through each point of these things. It was one of the students who Reg obviously considered very bright, and they used to throw off ideas against each other. And then...and then, this was really on how he felt art students should be taught, and what their aspirations should be, and what use they should make of the art school, and that, you know, the art school was a preparation ground for what was coming, and it should be much more in that line, preparing for outside. And giving them opportunities to do things rather than necessarily teaching them, because by that time, if you're a postgraduate student you should be knowing more about what you're wanting to do. And also giving the facilities for, for just learning about art generally, and... Then in 19...I think he was, had either just retired or was about to retire, he gave a most wonderful lecture to the college, and it was the William Townsend lecture. Now William Townsend had been a tutor, he was a very great friend of Bill



Coldstream's, and Claude Rogers, Will Townsend and Coldstream were like a sort of trio who all went to the Slade together in about 1951 or 2, whenever they did. And, Townsend died, and this lecture was set up, and Reg, 1980, gave this Townsend lecture, which is actually in his catalogue. And, always with his lectures there was the most enormous preparation, and typing and retyping and cutting and splicing and...and, to his standards again, you know, it had to be perfect, it had to be as perfect as it possibly could be, and endless slides, and the preparation of these slides. But it was a wonderful lecture.

*Did you have any involvement in the preparation for it?*

Yes, I was sort of typing on a rickety old... I mean, golly, if we'd have had a word...oh, if we'd had a word processor... (laughs)

*A lot easier.*

I think back and think about the poor old typewriter, which went wrong once and he took it to pieces, and then put it together again, as usual.

*Mm, as he would.*

It was sort of, an essential part of our lives, because we used it an enormous amount, but it wasn't considered one of the things you would go out and buy. It was the typewriter that he had had for a long time, so, let's go on using it. It's like one of these things that, Agatha Christie could tell immediately who was the criminal, you know, sort of thing. (laughs) But...and everything...because he had been an editor, with the *Architects' Journal*, everything was cut and spliced and trimmed, and the phrasing was all done and everything, it was...I mean it was masterly, it was great. And yes, I did do all the making of the slides and everything.

*Mm.*

In 1974 there was a series of films on television about artists, and, I think John Drummond, who was later to become head of the Edinburgh Festival I think, he ran it,

and he, he did this thing, and it was filmed by, directed by Lorna Pegram. And, that was at the time of, just before the sculptures had been sent off to Pierre Matisse, for the exhibition, so that they were... I saw the film the other day, and I sort of thought, Drummond was rather, sort of, pessimistic about it; it seemed to be rather odd, because these wonderful, amazing images on the film, and then some of the questions he asked seemed to be...anyway, not very, not very necessary, but you know. I also hadn't looked at the film since Reg died until about a couple of weeks ago, and you sort of could become critical, you know, at that time. Again, like the first film, Reg had obviously got all his phrases, all the script had been very prepared, and, although it was sort of, ad libbing, it had, everything was profound, you know, it was a sort of... (laughing) That was a good film, that was...so we've got two, two good films of Reg.

*Mm.*

And I'm glad we've got this one of the, of the painted bronzes, because you know, it was marvellous.

*Was it filmed here?*

Yes.

*Right.*

And actually sitting in that red chair, you know, he was talking.

*Right.*

And then in the studio.

*Mm.*

They filmed. Yes.

*And that went out on the television?*

Yes.

*On B.B.C.?*

Mm, yes.

*There was one other thing that we need to come back to, which...*

Julius.

*Yes. Because Reg largely didn't make any portraits.*

No. Rosamund Julius and her husband Leslie were Hille furnishing, Hille furniture, which was at the time the most avant-garde furniture manufacturing company in this country, and the chief designer was Robin Day, and his wife Lucien Day who was the fabric designer, but his chief chair designer and furniture designer was Robin Day. And these two wonderful people, I think they'd always, they'd previously admired Reg's sculpture a lot. And they, first they put on, they put their furniture into the Milano Triennale, and they wanted some sculpture, and so they wanted a Reg Butler, and this is when they first met with Reg, putting one of his sculptures with their furniture. And, then after that, they used to come here quite a lot. I didn't know Jo then, so Rosamund knows Jo and Reg more than I do, I only knew Reg because I'd just met him.

*And this was sort of, the end of the Forties, or was it?*

Yes, it would be 1952, '53, whereas I had not, didn't meet Jo till about '53, till the Prisoner, you know.

*Oh right, yes.*

And Rosamund, who was, has always been very beautiful, I think Reg said, 'Could I do a portrait of you?' And so, Rosamund said yes, and, they weren't living here at the time, they were living in Hatfield.

*Yes.*

And, so Rosamund used to go down there. I don't know quite... She did tell me how many sittings, I think there were a lot. And, and obviously got to know Reg through the sittings. And this, I do know it, because I then cast it in shell bronze, because I was in my studio and this head was brought over and I cast it into shell bronze for them. But she, she was a really wonderful person. And this, this is the only published, the only sort of portrait out, but he had previously done, in the same sort of period, locally there lived two boys, twins, and he had set these up, and they lived in a sort of house in Hatfield, and, I think on the top floor, and it was in the summer, and he'd done them in wax, and these... It was very interesting about the twins, they were identical twins but the sides of their faces were slightly different, the size of their ears and all this sort of thing, he'd done... And, they melted.

*Oh.*

(laughing) So, so that is the only portrait that he's ever done. And Rosamund has since, she has...we've always kept in touch, and we have her wonderful furniture. She has some sculpture, and we have her wonderful furniture.

*Mm.*

But... No, she's a lovely person.

*Mm.*

So that was the.....

[break in recording]

*I think it would be interesting if you could talk a bit about how you actually started to go back to making things yourself.*

Yes. Well, after Reg died, in fact I seem to remember... I think Alan Bowness had talked to Reg before he died, that it would be nice to have a sort of retrospective. You know, it had been sort of muttered about.

*Before he died, they were talking about it?*

Before he died.

*Right.*

And then I can remember, Reg died in, October the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I think Alan Bowness got in touch fairly quickly, because, I do remember Alan and, somebody, two or three other people, I know Creon came to give me moral support, but they came down to lunch and talked about the, about having a, a sort of memorial, a retrospective memorial for Reg. And that's when... So then, this was discussed and the date was made, and then... So then one sort of... It was really rather a wonderful thing, because you know, you'd got this empty studio, and no Reg, and... But... Yes, and then... So I sort of thought, well, into this exhibition must go, apart from the Matisse painted bronzes, he must have a group of these small last, which he had spent his last ten years on, the small painted bronzes. So, at the same time as... So I'd ordered another set from the Burleyfield... I'd done the set for...

*[inaudible] Tate.*

Yes, for the...yes, for the Venezuelan...

*Caracas.*

Caracas. And so I did another set for, for the Tate to have it. And so, in a way I was preparing the bronzes and everything, and sort of getting them ready for the exhibition which must have been what, two years, '63 I think it was, '83 was it? '83.

*Yes.*

So, and my daughter said that this was, having this exhibition was a sort of way of putting all one's energies into grieving, you know.

*Mm.*

That it was a positive thing.

*Mm.*

It was absolutely vital that the last years of his life shouldn't have been wasted, so I had to, I had to get these things cast. I could not now cast them, there is no way, I wouldn't have the motivation, I wouldn't have the... I'd have the know-how, but it would be, one would have to work at it very hard, and then, when I did it then, it just flowed, you know, everything was right. And so, and then, Richard Calvocoressi came down, and we did a huge amount of getting of photographs together, and so that was great. So, after...and so then, I had got this huge studio, and easels, and everything, and, I started to draw, and I started to draw, and, rather strange surrealist thing, because, of situations of gardens with... Always my dog with it, which I'm not quite sure why, but my dog was...my dog was essential to me after, I mean, Reg had died. Weirdly, the business about dogs is that, as a child I'd been terrified of dogs, absolutely terrified, and when Reg, when we realised we were having a family he said, 'Well we've got to get over this, we can't have, you know, terrified of dogs, we've got to have one.' So we got a dog, it was a Cardigan corgi who yap. I mean I was told by...

*Called Yap? Was that his name?*

No, they bark a lot.

*Oh I thought you said he was called Yap.*

I was terrified of barking dogs anyway, and you know, I used to drop things every time... So, since then we've had five Cardigan corgis, who are all, you know, they... And I must say that, the one we had after, when Reg died, was so important. Both children, although they were, they were living away, but you know, they came back a lot, and really sort of...but I did have Jo at home, all that time, Jo who was, who was a manic depressive, and she was living at home for the first year, so I had to look after her, so, with the looking after Jo and the preparing for Reg's retrospective, it was quite a busy sort of time. And Jo eventually went into hospital and went away into a home, so it was all right. And, I then sort of found in the bin, out in the yard, a huge dustbin full of wasted wax. And, I had met Erica Brausen somewhere, and she said, 'Now darling, what are you going to do?' So I said, 'Well I suppose I, I can make sculpture.' She said, 'Well, go back to where you left off.' Which had been literally about thirty years previously. But that was a great thing to have said, because, although, I was still the same person that made the things thirty years ago. And lo and behold there was a bin of wax, and so I started to make armatures and started to make small sculptures. One of the rather strange and ridiculous things is, because of working with Reg in plaster and polyester resin, and the dust and the dirt and the feeling of, you know, getting it into your lungs and everything, I am totally unable to use those materials now to cast in. I have a sort of, a block, you know, I've only got to smell resin and I sort of feel sick. And so, I have...I have difficulty in casting them from wax. But that's my problem. And I'll never get over the sense of the awfulness of the polyester resin, and I'll never get over seeing the studio so full of dust that you couldn't see Reg hardly on the other side of the room. You know, it was...it was just awful. And the smell, I've only got to smell cellulose paint and... But that's since, I mean I did Reg's sculptures, in fact I did the two sets of small bronzes, and it's since then that I've had problems with the, not being able to do the... That was, I was motivated to do that, determined to do that, then that material, after that, not for me thank you very much. So, the exhibition, Reg's retrospective was in...wonderful, it was a wonderful exhibition, there was wonderful things collected together. Some of the iron I'd never seen, there was a Scottish figure, and then there was a wonderful reclining, early reclining iron figure which is just, it's owned by I think Gordon Bowyer, an architect, and it's just, so simple and so beautiful. And to see all these early sculptures, and to see then the late bronzes, which came back from Pierre Matisse, it was just a most exciting, a most exciting exhibition to see all through. And

his drawings, you know, to see these... I mean he was a great draughtsman, he was a fabulous draughtsman, and what he could do with...he used the huge big sheets of hot pressed paper, Saunders hot press paper, and he used pencil...these are the later drawings I'm talking about, he used three pencils, a 2B, an HB – no, 2B, HB, H, and I think he sometimes used a 4B, just those four ranges of pencil. And he created amazing, you know, amazing drawings.

*Mm. He never did any more painting at all?*

No. He did earlier, he did water-colours and that sort of thing. And even the water-colours were brought out and exhibited, you know, these wonderful, very very early water-colours, which he did when he was, during the war in East Sussex. No, he... And he did these separately, his drawings were not for sculpture.

*Mm.*

They were drawings, you know, quite separately from the, from the sculptures. He said he never really worked on paper for his sculpture. He might have done one or two small sketches, but, he didn't do drawings that you would sort of frame and call a picture for his sculpture. And these were all pictures in their own right really. So, after, after the exhibition, the retrospective, the, you know, at the Tate, I then sort of started thinking about what to do for myself. So I set up, did all these, started wax sculptures, and I did quite a lot of plaster on works, and did some very large sort of surrealist drawings of odd situations, and, oh Gardens of Eden, you know, and sort of things like that, and, strange... I was very interested in animals, I lived near Whipsnade and did a lot of drawings of animals and did animal...did a series of zoos which, the animals are in boxes and that sort of thing. And then in 1990, suddenly somebody said that there were drawing...she knew of somewhere where you could go and life draw without any problems, so I went, and then started to draw again from life after about thirty years. And, I suppose that...I draw from life and just make sculpture, and that's, that's what I do.

End of F8497 Side B



F8498 Side A

*OK. Yes, you were going to talk about the summers, the summers [inaudible].*

What?

*The summer activities, with the car.*

Oh yes, in the summer. Well going back to when...Reg, Reg was always interested in cars, so we did have the very first of the Citroen Safaris with the snout nose and the rise and fall of the body, and it was a very big car. But, we had...our summers, I mean, sort of reckoned that six weeks of every summer was going to be, to keep the car going. Well one of the, the very first, when I very first met Reg, we had a Morris 8, which he had had all through the war I believe, and, he'd painted it grey, and there was a point when he decided to re-style it, and it was the time of the shell bronze, so we did a whole new shell bronze bonnet, the whole, the whole bonnet came off and it was re-styled, this bonnet. Goodness knows, whoever bought it would be wondering whatever was on the bonnet, because it was completely re-styled. And then...this always in the summer, especially when the Citroens came along, because the Citroens weren't exactly known for their sort of rustproofing and that sort of thing, and we didn't really have enough money to change the car every two years, so they lasted about seven or eight years. So, the doors came, all the doors came off, and all the undersides were re-welded, and all the...sort of filled with resin and that sort of thing. And this was actually, and I realise now, this was actually before the painted bronzes and before he started to make the big white, the big girls in [inaudible]. But he had already introduced into his life polyester resin, and this thing called P38, which is the thing that is called a filler, and we then sanded it down and sprayed it and sanded it down. This was done mind you outside, so you didn't have the awful problem of the smells and the gassing of your... And everybody knew the courtyard was going to be totally occupied by paint sprayers and everything. And then for another year, we polished it and it was beautiful, and then it would be new for another year, and we'd got the car going again. And then, the Citroen started, by about April/May, rust started to show, and then, out came all the gear again. And when Reg made, I realise now, when Reg had the big girls, and they were plaster-cast into, first of all plaster

and then they were cast into resin, we worked with P38, the whole of the sculptures were built up with this P38, which is body-building, car body-building thing, and, which of course you could file down and you can build on again and keep filing. And it must have been...well we were so used to the material from doing our car thing, and the paint spray was there, you know, there we were, using cellulose spray, painting the car, and in it came to the studio to paint the sculptures, you know. And the other thing is that, you know, Reg was painting bronze, painting...he was painting...these sculptures, these big painted bronzes, could have been in, left in resin and cast in resin, but he felt that the... The thing about the painted bronzes was, as time went by the paint would rub off, and you would get this wonderful sense of the bronze underneath, and also the sense of coolness of the bronze coming through all along. And he had always sort of, you know, felt that, like the wooden statues in the churches where the gold paint, they'd been painted, and the reds were just showing, and the gold was glinting through, just left vestiges of the colour, he sort of thought, well in hundreds of years' time maybe this is what will happen. And interestingly, a little while ago, about two years ago, the people that owned the painted bronzes, this gallery in Caracas, the Freitas Gallery in Caracas, were going to take them out of... They'd bought...they'd bought them all from the Pierre Matisse Gallery when Pierre Matisse died, and they had been in store in America for quite a long time, and they wanted to take them out of store, and they were going to show them in New York, in this gallery. And, so I got a letter from the New York thing saying, 'We've received the sculptures, they're pretty damaged,' or, no, they're not damaged, but they're very dirty, 'could you tell us what chemicals to use to clean them off?' So I sort of wrote...actually, I telegraphed back, 'For goodness' sake, don't use any chemical at all, because you could destroy it, totally destroy it. All you've got to use is soap and water,' or, you know sort of, not even... 'and sponge them down, and not try and repair any of the dirt that doesn't come off.' Because this is the whole point about them, that they've got to sort of weather and gradually, you know, sort of, deteriorate as time goes by. And don't start sort of, don't mess around, and certainly don't use sort of things like thinners and that sort of thing to clean them up.

*Mm.*

Because, could be...you know, it could immediately start removing the paint. But...

*Destroying the art work.*

Yes.

*This is a continual problem isn't it really.*

Yes, yes, you know...

*Just lucky that you were around to say that. Or else it would have perhaps already been done.*

Yes. You pack them, and they get rubbed and that sort of thing. But... I don't know. So...

*The other thing perhaps you could talk about is, you mentioned the relationship...*

Oh my mother.

*...of the three of you, and your mother's attitude towards them.*

Yes. After my, after my daughter was born, my mother found it difficult to accept it, but after, after about a year she realised in her wisdom that she was missing out on a wonderful grandchild, and so, after that it all settled off and we seemed to get on very well. My mother was a very strange woman, a very powerful woman from, as I said previously, she started from nothing, she ended up retiring at about 67 as Registrar at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. And, she was a sort of, after that she went to become a sort of guide in Westminster Abbey, and doing all sorts of things like this. And I remember one of the most wonderful experiences is, I went with my school friend Shirley who, you know, together, always sort of together, and Mummy taking us round Westminster Abbey, and giving us the total guide talk. And it was just so...you realise that, she was so sort of clued in and everything. She finally sort of, died at the age of 90, which I think...she was getting muddled towards the end

of her life. But she was a most powerfully strong, and yet timid at the same time, person.

*Was she pleased about you actually starting to work again?*

She was very... After Reg died, I think... She never really forgave Reg for stopping me from working, because I think she always felt that I should have been...I'd got all the possibilities of being a good lady sculpture, you know, and sort of... And her glory would be reflected through me. And then, after Reg died I did start to work, and she did come and see some of the things I did, and she, she...I think she realised that, you know, that there was maybe a chance that I might become famous. (laughs) Not famous for all the wrong things, but famous in my own right.

*Mm.*

But... No. I mean it was her drive, and her...her sort of determination that got one to even, well, to the art school and everything.

*Mm.*

It's scary. But, I think, I think we've covered most.

*Mm.*

[break in recording]

One of the...the contemporary, out of the contemporary artists that Reg really admired was, one was Balthus, the French artist, who was at the same time exhibited by Pierre Matisse. But Balthus did these extraordinarily naked girls in darkened rooms, which gave a sense of, a sort of erotic sense, which Reg was after I think, he admired it, and he was also after this in his painted bronzes. And the thing about...he was accused of being pornographic, and you know, obscene and everything, but there was nothing further from...you know, Reg was surprised at this, because they were not in any way

pornographic, and they were never obscene; they were... But people couldn't sort of... I think people were genuinely shocked when they saw the painted bronzes.

*Mm.*

That, to have been so explicit, seemed to be, after for instance the rough bronzes and the people that had been, the figurative artists that had been before, seemed to be sort of, what has Reg done, where...why didn't he stick to iron? Why did he go and do this? You know, this is... And the interesting thing is, when people...people...women were absolutely fascinated by these sculptures. There was a woman whose husband collected sculpture in New York... [telephone] That can go on. Who collected sculpture in New York, and she, she was a little dumpy, sort of dark-haired lady, and she walked in, and she just, just was amazed, you know, just sort of, thought how absolutely brilliant they were. And yet other people, men, some of them found them quite embarrassing, they couldn't face up to it at all. It was...it was a very positive reaction to, you know, against or for it, you know, people that went into it, either thought they were fabulous and just so wonderful, and other people couldn't take it at all and walked out. It was quite...it was most interesting to see, to see the...

*Mm. I suppose I was thinking about, I mean, I asked earlier on if he related his work, or if other people related his work at all to sort of Pop art that was around.*

Yes.

*And of course there weren't actually shown until '73 were they?*

No, no.

*So I suppose that was later anyway.*

They were...the Pop was...

*That was much earlier really wasn't it.*

Yes it was.

*But then there was lots of sort of, work around then that was quite explicit in the same way.*

Yes, yes, yes.

*But Reg didn't really show that work at that time anyway, did he? That was a bit later I suppose.*

But the fact these were never shown in Britain until the Tate exhibition which was 1983...

*Mm.*

...people were not, literally not aware of them.

*No. No.*

And somebody wrote the other day that, somebody had done a sculpture and painted, a painted bronze. First painted bronze. But Reg had done it in '74, '73.

*Mm. Mm.*

And, and people just don't know. And that's why, you know, there's going to be a book, and that's why, it's just so important that this is pointed out to people.

*Mm.*

Because, it's lost otherwise isn't it.

*Mm. I think, I mean there was an enormous amount of technical innovation in it.*

Yes, huge.

*Apart from the sort of creative and imaginative side of things, the technical innovations that he actually worked on and developed throughout his whole life is quite amazing really.*

Yes, and...all through. And using the varying things, like he used his architectural training, his, all the things about, the balance of the things, his engineering, working... I mean he could make these amazing things during the war to make the machines work from scratch, and he did building research and all the things that he worked for with that too. All these came in, but they were all, none of them...they were all used to make the sculpture do what he wanted it to do, and none of them were overstated, nothing sort of shouted at you, it just was used to make it stand up at a certain angle without falling over, and all those sort of things.

*Mm.*

And, his whole attitude, you know, the way he sort of worked... Well, the way he put things together, and, it was just, his training, what he had learnt, and he, he was always learning, he was always reading up, he was always finding out.

*Mm.*

He was always writing to people to find out if they'd got anything that would do what he wanted this thing to do, and, you know. And people were always fascinated by his demands, you know, the people.

*Mm. I'll just ask you one final thing. Because you were obviously so close to the work that he was making all the way through, and knew it so well, and still do. What pieces for you are the most important that he actually made and that you, you know, you worked on as well? I mean if you're going to pick a few out, could you do that, or is it quite impossible?*

I think one of the ones...

*Anything that stands out.*

I think one of the ones which is the most...one of the ones which is the most full of energy, is the big girl, *Girl 5354*, who, she is about seven foot, she's got her arms up.

*This is one of the painted bronzes?*

No, this is one of the ones, earlier ones.

*Oh right.*

I'm going...

*Oh sorry, 1953.*

Are you thinking over the whole life, or are you just talking about the painted...?

*No, no, just the whole life, yes.*

This girl is on the, a grid on the prongs.

*On the prongs, mm, yes.*

So it's left over from... I mean I can go through, there's even earlier, there's the Tate iron woman, which seems so simple and just so, so inventive, so innovative, it just stands there, it's just so...so wonderfully... Then this girl. Then, coming up to the painted bronzes, the one, one of the ones on the, the base, with her legs up in the air and she's just sort of, tipped up, and then there's another one that's lying across it. And you just feel she's, she's slammed herself down on it. I mean, those painted bronzes are just amazing.

*Mm.*



When they were first done I was quite, not dubious about it, but, I was bothered about what people would say, and, you know, this and that. I mean Reg was never bothered about what people would say, ever. But I was...I was always a bit bothered about what people would say. And... But now, looking at them... I think the ones on the bases, the flung ones, are just amazing.

*Mm.*

You know, I think they just knock you back for their originality.

*Mm.*

And... I think the thing about Reg too is that, he moved...he was making, from the very beginning, he was on a journey, but all through the journey it was dependent on what had been. Everything... And if you look at his total journey, it's linked up, it's not by any...by one man, and you can see, as we were discussing before, we can see influences of heads looking up, flat areas, areas on which, supporting the figures, might have been in iron at the beginning, but were now painted cushions, they're all by the same man, they're all by the same...they've all got the same balance, the same simplicity, the same certainty, the same conviction, everything. And it's a most exciting adventure, it's not...you know... And the more distance you get, the more you realise it's all linked, I think, as you go through.

End of F8498 Side A

End of Interview

## F10198 Side A

Artists' Lives. The last tape. I'm recording this tape because I realised that I had admitted to speak about Reg's last and largest painted bronze. I was sitting down looking at Reg's Tate catalogue after I had dropped Gillian, my interviewer, off at the station, and there, shouting at me from the page, was the sculpture I had completely forgotten. It is a total mystery, and very shocking, that this could possibly happen, but it did. Reg exhibited the full large painted bronzes and drawings at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York in 1973, and after this there was a sense of, now what? We had lived with these four sculptures for about four years, with all the dust and dirt and fumes. And then the studio was empty. Reg decided to make a small sculpture, a small maquette, with the idea that he would make it larger when he had solved many of the problems. In the case of the four large painted bronzes, there were no maquettes, and so when there were any changes to be made it was a major operation using the crane and large saws and drills and blocks, and a huge amount of energy and muscle. He realised that he would lose the sculpture each time he wanted to make an alteration, and if he took casts of the torso, arms and legs, and the head, he could make the alterations with another sculpture and still have the original, and this led eventually to the series of small painted bronzes. In 1976 Reg was invited to take part in the Queen's silver jubilee exhibition to be held in Battersea Park in 1977. This was the trigger he needed, and he immediately started to finalise the maquette. Reg decided that it would be larger than the four earlier painted bronzes, and since we only had less than a year to do this, it was a very frantic time. As far as I can remember, Reg felt that the only way we could possibly make it in the time would be to take the maquette and enlarge each section in plaster, and then cast it into polyester resin, and finally assemble the whole sculpture. We cast the sections ourselves into resin, and each section had a socket joint which was screwed into position. The parts consisted of a head, arms, legs and torso. The torso was set in the correct position, and the limbs and head were then socketed into it. After the final large sections had been assembled, we had to do a very great deal of work in polyester resin, and a lot of readjustment. The size of the sculpture meant that it would have been almost impossible to move if it had been in plaster. Since we hadn't worked in this scale before, there were many problems, including the hair. We still used human hair, but each hole that the hair was threaded into had to be larger, so with the bunches of the

hair. It wasn't so fiddly for me to do, but it required a great deal more hair. And then finally there was the problem of the base. The four painted bronzes in the Pierre Matisse Gallery had been on bases which, although in bronze, looked as if they were made of soft material, and Reg felt that the scale of the sculptures suggested a more architectural base. I was talking with my daughter about the sculpture, and she remembers it being wheeled out onto the lawn, and pieces of hardboard being laid out all round it until it looked right. And then I remember casting these shapes into white cement. My daughter, my son and myself remember with great clarity the tension and terrible anxiety at this time, because we were sure that it wasn't going to be finished on time. Reg was absolutely certain that it would not go in if it wasn't right. As well as the tension with the sculpture, Creon was taking his A levels, and Cortina was working during her year off between school and Oxford, and Jo was very seriously ill with manic depression. I seem to remember that the sculpture arrived in Battersea on the day before the press preview. We were touching up the sculpture and trying to take photographs all that day and into the next, and I remember Reg answering press questions with a paintbrush in his hand. After the exhibition the sculpture was returned to Ash. She was wrapped up and put in a store, and she's been there ever since. She has never been cast into bronze. She is waiting. After the sculpture returned, Reg started to work on his ideas for the small sculptures, using jointed sections. I remember he had boxes of spare parts which he used for assembling the sculpture. This was a time when I was madly casting the pieces with gelatine, because Reg always felt that this gave the finest detail, and he was assembling them into extraordinary contorted figures, sometimes the right leg on the left side, the arms upside-down, and the head back-to-front. It was a sort of fast roll, an exciting adventure into what would work and what would fail, and he always knew how far he could go and what was possible. At the time of his death he had six small sculptures finished and ready to be cast. These had taken four years, and during this time he produced six beautiful sculptures which, when they were made were considered shocking and were very much before their time. I had these six sculptures cast after his death. I don't know why we have difficulty remembering this sculpture, because she's too large to forget. I can only think that the anxiety and tension that we were all going through, both with the sculpture and on the other side of the studio door, was so great that it sank to the bottom of our minds and stayed there, because Cortina and

Creon have the same problem with remembering her. I find it sad, because as far as Reg was concerned, this was his most important sculpture to date.

End of Recording