

NATIONAL | Life
stories

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH



NATIONAL LIFE STORIES

ARTISTS' LIVES

Mary Fedden

Interviewed by Mel Gooding

C466/05

This transcript is copyright of the British Library Board. Please refer to the Oral History curators at the British Library prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

Oral History
The British Library
96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB
020 7412 7404
oralhistory@bl.uk

This transcript is accessible via the British Library's Archival Sound Recordings website. Visit <http://sounds.bl.uk> for further information about the interview.

IMPORTANT

Access to this interview and transcript is for private research only. Please refer to the Oral History curators at the British Library prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

Oral History
The British Library
96 Euston Road
NW1 2DB
020 7412 7404
oralhistory@bl.uk

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it. Should you find any errors please inform the Oral History curators (oralhistory@bl.uk)

The British Library
Interview Summary Sheet

National Life Stories
Title Page

Ref no: C466/05/01-07

Digitised from cassette originals

Collection title: Artists' Lives

Interviewee's surname: Feddon

Title:

Interviewee's forename: Mary

Sex: Female

Occupation:

Date and place of birth: 1915

Dates of recording: 19/1/91

Location of interview: interviewee's home

Name of interviewer: Mel Gooding

Type of recorder: Marantz CP430

Recording format: D60 Cassette

F numbers of playback cassettes: F1882-F1888

Total no. of digitised tracks: 14

Mono or stereo: Stereo

Total Duration:

Additional material: There are three further interviews with Mary Fedden for *Artists' Lives*. Search via the Sound Archive catalogue (<http://cadensa.bl.uk>) using the references: C466/05/08-10, C466/15/01-02 and C466/195/01-04

Copyright/Clearance: full clearance given

Interviewer's comments:

F1882 Side A

Interview recorded with Mary Fedden at Durham Wharf, on Saturday, January, 19th, 1991.

Mary, could we start, perhaps, by my asking you about how you met, or how you first met Julian, and something about the beginnings of your long relationship with him.

Well, I met him first when I was a student at the Slade. I suppose I was about 18, and I was taught at the Slade by a, a lovely Russian, called Polunin, Vladimir Polunin, who was quite a figure in his day, and had worked with Diaghalev at designing for the ballet. And he was a neighbour of Julian's. Julian lived, he'd just moved into Durham Wharf, and Polunin lived on Chiswick Mall, and wanted to have a great big party for one of his sons, and he asked Julian if he could borrow Durham Wharf to hold this party. So Julian came to lunch with Polunin at the Slade, to discuss the party, and I was looking out of the window, and I saw this great, six foot four man, coming up the path with Polunin, who was very small. And I thought he looked wonderful. And I rushed down to the porter who was everybody's friend, and I said, "Connell, who is that man with Polunin?" And he said, "Oh, he's Julian Trevelyan." And I said, "I'm going to marry him." And Connell, the porter, said, "Bad luck, old girl, he's just got married." And I said, "Oh well, I'm only 18, never mind!" And a few days later, this amazing party happened. It was the first glimpse I had of the bohemian life, and there were amazing people there. The ballet dancer Sokolova danced, and two Prince Galitzines came in tails, and they swam the Thames at midnight. And it was a riot of a party. From my innocent point of view, it was quite amazing. And after that, I became friends with Julian and his wife, Ursula Darwin, and knew them quite well, and used to come here often, to have supper with them, and go to exhibitions with them, and, in fact, I became a friend of both of theirs.

I expect you came to many of the boat race parties then, did you?

Oh I did. Yes, they'd already started having boat race parties and I met a lot more interesting people, and people who I'd sort of hoped and dreamt about when I was at school in Bristol, where I was brought up.

One of the things about Durham Wharf, which is where we're sitting, is that it's actually right on the river. It's a group of old warehouse buildings that Julian prospected and found in the mid-thirties, and lived here for the rest of his life. And we're sitting in what was originally the studio, Julian's studio, and became the living room of, of the, the living quarters of Durham Wharf here.

Yes.

And, of course, over the years, many many people have come to this wonderful room overlooking the Thames, and that whole process began in the thirties, didn't it.

It did, yes. In fact, I, I suppose your question really meant, how did Julian and I get together? Which I haven't told you.

My first question was really ...

Well, after a considerable friendship - mine, Ursula and Julian's - sixteen years later, Ursula left Julian. In fact, she fell in love with someone else, and left him. And Julian came to see me, and said, "Ursula has gone." And I said, "I can't believe it. I expect she'll be back." And he said, "No, I don't think she will." So I rang Ursula up, and said, "What is this awful news?" And she said, "Yes, I have left him. And I'm not coming back." And I said, "Well, I'm just off to Sicily with a friend, and perhaps I should take Julian because he's rather low", and she said, "Oh, that would be wonderful. I wish you would." So I did, and eventually, Ursula married her man and I set up with Julian. So that's how it all happened.

And you married Julian in 1951?

1951 we were married, but we were living together for two years before that. But it was rather strange. When we went to Sicily, of course I didn't know this when we went, but he told me, of course, when we were there, that his parents had met in Sicily too. His mother was Dutch and she had a Dutch uncle who lived there. And Julian's father, Robert Trevelyan, had an aunt who lived there, and they each went to stay with their relations, and it's rather romantic, she was a violinist, and one night, she went out in the moonlight, with her violin, and played to herself, in the ruins of a monastery, called San Dominico, and Julian's father was out for a walk, and he saw this Dutch girl play her violin by moonlight, and fell passionately in love with this strange vision, and, and so history repeated itself. That Julian and I fell in love in Sicily, just as his parents.

That's a wonderful story. It really provides an entree, doesn't it, to something else I want you to talk about, and that's Julian's father, and his father's circle, because Julian was brought up, wasn't he, in a most remarkable sort of household.

He was really. His father was one of three Trevelyan brothers, and the most famous of the three, of course, was G.M. Trevelyan, the historian. Julian's father was a poet, and ... not as the world thinks, tremendously successful, but he was a great Greek and Latin scholar, and he collected round him, a circle of amazing friends. He always seemed to have a friend who represented painting, and one who represented poetry, and philosophy. And his friends were Bertrand Russell, E.M. Forster, Roger Fry, Lowes Dickinson, Arthur Whaley, and others who were constantly staying with Julian's parents at their house on Leith Hill. And Julian was constantly, from a very early age, brought up with these amazing people, who were his friends from when he was a child. And I think, in that way, he was so fortunate to have an amazing background like that. He was an only child, very cosseted, rather spoiled, I suppose, and his father, who was a very sympathetic and poetical man, and very charming, very vague, rather quirky, used to read poetry to Julian from a very young age. The sort of poetry which Julian couldn't really understand. In fact, he used to read to him in Greek and Latin when he was four and five. But Julian loved his father, and liked the sound of his voice, and the fact that he had no idea what his father was talking

about, didn't seem to matter very much. And as Julian grew up, he understood more and more what his father meant.

His father made translations, didn't he, from the Greek ...

Yes, he did. And he wrote one, he wrote the libretto for a tremendously long opera which Donald Tovey wrote. They were great friends. He was his musical friend, Donald Tovey, and they spent 23 years composing this opera together, which, alas, never ever came to anything. I think it had three performances in Edinburgh, with designs, the sets were designed by Ricketts and Shannon. So it was all very grand, but it was never a success. It was called "The Bride for Dionysus", and nobody has ever performed it since.

What a pity.

Very sad, because it was 23 years work.

Robert Trevelyan, Julian's father, was also a friend of Berenson, wasn't he?

A great friend of Berenson. He used to go and stay with Berenson in his house outside Florence, every year. And his, he used to go alone. He never took his wife. I think perhaps she didn't fit in with Berenson's circle, and Robert certainly did. And when Julian became about 15, Berenson used to invite Julian as well. So he used to go and stay there when he was still at school. And Berenson was tremendously kind, and used to send him to the Uffizi, and said, "Go and look at Giotto." And Julian told me that when he first looked at Giotto, he came back and said to Berenson, "I don't see the point of this Giotto chap." And instead of being angry, or offended, Berenson said, "Go back again, and look at the hands in the paintings. How beautifully he painted hands." And Julian did. And from that point on, he began to see the point of the Italian primitives and the Renaissance. And Berenson was a great education to Julian, in that field.

Did you know Robert Trevelyan?

Oh yes. Yes. Well, I knew him from when we started living together in 1949, but, alas, he died about four days after we were married, in 1951. So I only knew him for two years, but we became real friends. He was a dear man and I loved him.

What about this extraordinary circle, Mary, Russell, and I think G.E. Moore was also one of his ...

Yes he was, yes.

And Arthur Whaley and Berenson, of course. Can you tell us anything more about that? Did you get to know Bertrand Russell?

Yes. Indeed I got to know Bertrand Russell. In fact, it was rather strange. When Julian and I went to Sicily in that first, the very first beginning of our time together, we were staying in the house of a friend of mine, in Sicily, and she knew Bertrand Russell, and while we were there, he came to stay with his wife, Peter, his third wife, and their son, Conrad, who was then about 12. And so we had a month staying in the same house with Bertrand Russell. And Julian had known him all through his life because of his friendship with Julian's father. And he was wonderful company. But it was rather sad. He was just on the point of parting from his wife, Peter, and as it happened, Julian and I seemed to be the last straw in that marriage, because we decided, one night, when we were there, to have a midnight, well, not midnight, but a supper picnic on a little island off the coast, called Isola Bella, and we invited Bertrand Russell and his wife, of course, to come on the picnic. But she wouldn't come, she was very cross with him, and she didn't really like ... there were quite a lot of young people staying in the house, Julian and me, and some others, and she didn't get on with us, and found it all rather tiresome. So she wouldn't come on this picnic. And we went in a boat with five or six people staying in the house, and Julian brought his oboe with him, and the fishermen who took us to the island in their boat, caught fish as we went, and when we got to the island, it was brilliant full moonlight. And the fishermen gutted the fish, and lit a fire, and cooked them on the beach, on the spot, and we each had a flat stone for a plate, and each had a beautiful fish cooked by the

fishermen. And Julian went to the top of this little island and played his oboe. It couldn't have been more romantic. And Bertrand Russell said that he thought he'd experienced everything pleasurable possible in life, but this was something quite new, and equal to any other experience. And we were all dressed in shabby old clothes and lying on the sand, and he was in his dark suit, and black overcoat, and Homburg hat, sitting bolt upright, on a fish basket. And he absolutely adored it. And we all drank a lot of wine, and he got a little drunk, and he said, "I'm as drunk as a lord, but then I am one!" And he kissed all the girls, and Julian went on playing his oboe on the top of the island and it was, it was a wonderful, memorable evening. And then, suddenly, Bertie said, "I'm tired. I'd like to go home." So, by this time, the small tide that existed in the Mediterranean had gone out, and we could walk, or we sort of paddled ashore on the sand, and I drove Julian's car up about 15 hairpin bends to the house where we were staying, and dropped Bertie at the front door, and then drove back to pick up the others. And when we'd collected everyone, and got home, it was about an hour later, and there was Peter, Bertie's wife, in the hall, and she was very angry, and she said, "Julian, you've made Bertie drunk." And, he wasn't drunk at all, actually, but she was very angry, and she said, "You've got to put him to bed, I'm not going to." And so we came in, all feeling rather foolish, I can't have been drunk, because I drove 15 hairpin bends up and down. And Bertie was hiding in the loo. [And, is this all right to tell you all this?]

Go on!

And when she'd gone to bed, Julian went to the loo, and said, "Bertie, you can come out now." And he did, and we all had a cup of coffee and went to bed. And we found, next day, she'd gone down to the town and booked herself an aeroplane and left. And that was the end of Bertie's marriage. She left her son behind, Conrad. In fact, she said to Conrad, "Are you going to come home with me, or stay with your father?" And he was very fond of his mother, but he was passionate about volcanoes and eclipses. And the next night, there was going to be a total eclipse of the moon over Mount Etna, which he couldn't bear to miss. So he stayed behind with us. So we had Conrad and Bertie, and another fortnight there with him.

That's a wonderful story, Mary. Going back to Julian's childhood, we've talked about this very brilliant circle that Robert Trevelyan had around him, of friends. What about Julian's mother? Significantly, she's not mentioned at all in Indigo Days.

No. And that was a great mistake. It was unkind, in a way, of him, to leave her out of his autobiography. He, he didn't get on with her, and he should have given the plain facts about her, instead of leaving her out, and I think she was very upset and offended by that. She was Dutch, and devoted to Julian, but as he was an only child, and she very possessive, she tried always to control his life. Tried to prevent him having girlfriends. Told him when he went to Bedales, which, after all, was a co-educational school, that he must not make friends with any of the girls, because girls were so silly, he should never, never have friends with the girls, only the boys. And she tried to limit his life from very early on. And, until he was about 12, I think he was devoted to her. And then when he started being an individual, and finding she objected to all his plans for independence, he turned against her terribly. And it was a great grief to her, obviously. She was a very intelligent and interesting woman. I got on with her well enough, in fact, very well. And I felt sorry for her in a way, because Bob, Robert Trevelyan, her husband, became very independent of her. As I said, he used to go every year to stay with Berenson, without her, and Julian became independent of her. As soon as he went to Cambridge, he ... by that time, did not listen to her advice, and was on his own as far as she was concerned. And I think she was very isolated, and probably very lonely. But she always, always thought that she could control him, and have him do what she wanted. And from that point of view, he didn't ... he didn't honestly love her.

Do you think that his independence of spirit, because I think he had a greatly independent spirit, had something to do with that? With a reaction, perhaps, to that?

I think perhaps so. I think he felt as soon as he grew up, he felt, "I'm on my own, and my mother can't impose her will on me any more." And I think it did make him very independent, yes.

How did his parents take the fact that he left Cambridge without a Degree, and went to Paris?

Well, I think, at first, Bob was, well, I expect they were both disappointed. Bob was very sad about it, because he had a passionate affection for Cambridge, where he'd been himself. And the fact that Julian didn't enjoy Cambridge enough to stay three years, was a great disappointment to him. But I think it was, I think it was Bertrand Russell, or one of his friends, said to him, "Your parents wanted you to be" ... I think it was a solicitor ... "but you didn't want that, and you wanted only to be a poet, and you went against your parents, and you've stayed a poet. You must remember that when you want to persuade Julian into the kind of life that you wanted for him, he should have the same freedom to do what he knows he wants to do, rather than be forced into another channel." Because he had said, early on, when he was a little boy, he thought he'd like to be an architect. And his father had clung on to that idea, and thought it would be very good if he was an architect. And Julian, when he grew up, realised that that wasn't what he wanted at all, he only wanted to be a painter. So I think, in the end, Julian's father took it quite well when he went to Paris.

Of course, he was sent to Bedales quite early. I think he was about eight when he went to Bedales.

He went to Bedales prep school, and he went, before that, to a farm school, it was called The Farm School, and it was run by Roger Fry's sister. I think it was Isobel Fry who ran it, where they had animals to look after, which his mother thought would be very nice for him. But Julian absolutely hated that school. He was miserable. He was only seven. I don't know why they sent him away so young. And he was very homesick, very unhappy, and a total success. And there's a little story which, I think, describes his situation there. A friend of ours who is a musician, forty years later I suppose, thirty years later, was teaching music at The Farm School, and Isobel Fry, aged 90, came down to her old school, just on a visit, and this friend of ours sat by her at tea, and said, "Oh, I know an ex-pupil of yours, Miss Fry. Julian Trevelyan." And she said, "Oh yes. I remember him well. A most unpleasant little boy." And quite soon after that, Isobel Fry died. She was in her nineties. And

Julian said to me, "There, you see, my prayers have been answered." So when he was a little boy at school, he was always praying that Miss Fry would die, but it took seventy years or something, for his prayers to be answered!

Then he went to Bedales.

Then he went to Bedales. And in his last two years at Bedales he was extremely happy, and found himself having friends who remained friends with him in later life, and he started reading Aldous Huxley and Wyndham Lewis, and learning about the kind of current literature, which he'd not learnt about at home, because his father always was more a classical reader. Julian was absolutely thrilled to discover, well, T.S. Eliot, and those kind of poets, and people who he'd never come across before.

One of the things about Julian was that he did have this extraordinary deep culture, didn't he. He had read so much and ...

I think he had.

And he cared a great deal about poetry. He had read poetry, history and essays, and biography, and then, of course, he went on from Bedales to read English at Cambridge.

At Cambridge.

At a time of, when English was a very very dynamic subject at Cambridge. It was the centre of a great deal dynamic academic activity.

Yes. Yes. In fact, his friends at Cambridge were William Empson, Kathleen Raine, Jennings, who made those wonderful wartime films.

Humphrey Jennings?

Humphrey Jennings. John Davenport.

Richard Eberhart, the American poet, was at Cambridge at that time as well.

I don't think he was a friend of Julian's. He was a friend of Wittgenstein. He revered Wittgenstein very much, and he was ... I suppose he was a lecturer at Cambridge at that time. But Julian used to sometimes go for walks with Wittgenstein, and was rather afraid of him, but very, very impressed by him. And he had, who else? There were many friends he had there, who were really quite important figures later on.

Well, he was first of all involved in a magazine there, called, The Venture, wasn't he.

Yes.

Which was edited by Anthony Blunt.

Yes. Anthony Blunt was a close friend of his. In fact, Julian said, when all the scandal was broken about Anthony Blunt he said, "Oh, he would have recruited me as a spy, but I was such a gossip, he couldn't trust me!" And, yes, my cousin, Robin Fedden, who had become a friend of Julian's at Cambridge, he was in the literary world at Cambridge, and I think he edited The Venture. There was Experiment and The Venture. And Michael Redgrave was, I think Michael Redgrave was attached to Experiment and ...

No, I think he was, Michael Redgrave, I think, was actually attached to The Venture.

To The Venture, was he?

And I think that was more of a sort of Bloomsbury type magazine, but Julian then moved on, didn't he, I think, to associate himself more closely with Jennings and Bronowski.

Bronowski was a close friend, of course.

And the editor of Experiment.

That's right, yes.

These are the days of Transition, and, in fact, one edition of Transition, if I'm not mistaken, in about 1930, actually had a whole section of writings taken from, from Experiment.

Yes, that's right.

By Empson, and a very marvellous piece by Julian himself, in which the famous phrase "To dream is to create", is to be found.

Yes. Yes.

Something ... that indicates that, even at that stage, in 1930, that marvellous text of Julian's, indicates an interest in dreams and the unconscious, which was going to ...

Which turned out to be his Surrealist phase.

Yes.

Yes.

To feed his sort of surrealist ...

Which didn't really emerge until he was in, in Paris.

And after really, when he came back.

Oh yes, yes. But at Cambridge, I don't think he had, I don't think surrealism had sort of reached his consciousness. But as soon as he got to Paris, he was deeply immersed in that.

End of F1882 Side A

F1882 Side B

So Julian, Mary, as I said, was brought up with a brilliant circle, and then moved into these ...

A contemporary circle, yes.

That's right. A contemporary circle at, at Cambridge.

Yes.

Among these, perhaps, ultimately, the most distinguished, was William Empson.

Yes. I think William Empson and Kathleen Raine were the two who really made their mark afterwards. But so did many others, like Humphrey Jennings, and John Davenport, and Brunowsky, they were all successful. In fact, Julian was at Cambridge at the time of a very prestigious circle, and Anthony Blunt.

Yes, of course. Because friendship was so central to Julian's life, I think, in one of the obituaries, somebody said that he made an art of friendship.

Of friendship.

He was a great an artist of friendship as he was a painter.

I think he was, as his father was. They were both tremendously fond of their friends, and cultivated them.

This was very much a style of that circle, wasn't it, of that generation perhaps, that one cultivated friends.

Mmmm. Of both circles, of Julian's father, and of Julian.

Did Empson remain a friend, then, after Cambridge?

Yes. But pretty soon after Cambridge, Empson went to China, where he was, I think he was a professor at Peking University. I'm not sure. And so Julian didn't see him. For years he was, I think he was in China for perhaps, I don't know how long, but years and years. And I had been married to Julian, I should think, five or six years before Empson came home and I met him.

How did you find him?

I found him absolutely terrifying, actually. Julian had always told me what a brilliant man he was. What a marvellous mind. What a great friend he was, and how he longed for me to meet him. And he certainly was all those things. He had a wonderful mind, and was brilliantly clever. But I think he was very arrogant. That's the impression I got, because when he came back, we met. Somebody gave a dinner party for Empson in Paris, in, in London, and Julian and I were there, and he seemed to me, tremendously arrogant in his attitude to everybody. And I was just some new woman in Julian's life, who he couldn't be bothered to answer, even if I spoke to him. I never did get on with Empson. I'm sure he was a brilliant man, and his books testify to that.

Of course, a closer friend, and a friend who remained so until the very end of Julian's life, was Kathleen Raine.

Yes. Kathleen Raine was always a close friend of Julian's. And she became a close friend of mine too. She was very nice to Julian at various, difficult times in his life. She was a great support to him. In a way, I think they grew apart in that Julian was a rationalist all his life, always an agnostic. He never had any religious belief, and Kathleen is a very religious person. And Julian couldn't sort of quite understand this, or go along with it. But, nevertheless, he was an admirer of hers, and he was very fond of her, and she read some of her poetry at Julian's funeral.

She came to Durham Wharf quite a lot.

Oh she was often here. She came here a lot. And her two children, Anna and James, were friends of ours. And we had Anna living with us for some time, I think it was before she went, Anna went to Cambridge, Kathleen's daughter, and she stayed here for quite a long time. So we knew Kathleen and her children very well. I think she's a great poet. I admire her poetry immensely.

What about Humphrey Jennings?

Well, I never met Humphrey Jennings. Julian found him tremendously life-enhancing at Cambridge, and he felt that, although he had many literary friends at Cambridge, aesthetically, they were hardly existent. He felt that nobody understood about painting in Cambridge, except Humphrey Jennings, who was a passionate painter, as well as a writer, and was on the brink of his wonderful film career, and he used to paint a picture all through the night, and then rush to Julian's room, and wake him up in the morning, and say, "Quick, quick! Come and see what I've been painting." And Julian always said that Humphrey was his great inspiration, that made him realise that Paris was where he ought to be, and not Cambridge. And he used to have this phrase, "You must live in the 19 .." whenever the date was, "the 1932 feeling. You must be in the 1933 feeling. You must always be contemporary, and always see what's coming next, and not look back at things." And Julian found this very inspiring, and very life-enhancing. And I think Humphrey was a strong influence on Julian, persuading him that he was really a painter, and not a literary man.

And emphasising, I suppose, as others in that circle would have done as well, that what seemed an absolute imperative, the necessity for modernity.

Yes, absolutely. They were up to the minute, all of them, and looking ahead all the time. And that was very inspiring for Julian, I think. I think, well, as I said, I think Humphrey Jennings, in his last year at Cambridge, sent him off to Paris really.

Can we turn to Paris, and you know, obviously you weren't with Julian in Paris. He had been to Paris when you first saw him.

Oh yes.

... at the Slade, so he was already ...

He'd just come back from three years in Paris. He left Cambridge after his second year, and just went to Paris, on his own, knowing nothing, knowing nobody, but he quickly found a studio to live in, and he met, almost immediately, he met Bill Hayter, who had just set up his studio there, for teaching etching, and I think it was Julian who christened it "Atelier Dix-sept", which it has remained ever since. Although Bill Empson is now dead, but only died two years ago, wherever the studio was in Paris, it was always called "Atelier Dix-sept."

You meant William Hayter didn't you.

Oh sorry! Who did I say?

You said Bill Empson.

Oh, I'm sorry, I meant Bill Hayter. Have I said Bill Empson all through there?

No, no.,

No. I meant Bill Hayter, who was a very extrovert and charming person, and a very brilliant artist. And Julian went to him, having met him as a student, and he said, "Julian, what shall we call my studio that I'm going to run, more or less as an art school?" And Julian said, "Well, it's number 17 in the street, why don't we call it Atelier dix-sept?" And so it was always called that ever after.

Even when he went to New York?

Yes, it was still Atelier Dix-sept in New York, I believe. And so Julian started etching with Bill. And Bill was a surrealist, and so Julian learnt about surrealism from him. And through him, he met Vieira da Silva and her husband, Jenec, who was Hungarian, who were two very brilliant young painters. And through them, he met Hecht, whom he studied with for a time. And the sculptor, Zadkine, and I think it was at that time he met Anthony Gross, who was working there at the time, and came to Bill Hayter's studio, and they all etched together. And his circle widened at an amazing speed. He settled in a studio, in the Villa Brun, and on one side of him was Campigli, the Italian painter, with a very beautiful Roumanian wife, Magdalena. And on the other side was Calder, Alexander Calder, who had just started making mobiles, and he rushed into Julian one day, and said, "Come and see what I've made, Julian." And he went into his studio, and there was a mobile. And he said, "I don't know what it is, it's just something I've made." And Julian said, "Oh, it's lovely! Will you make me one?" He said, "Oh yes, of course I will." And he did. And it still hangs above my head at this moment, at Durham Wharf. And I think that was the very beginning of Calder's career, as the greatest mobile maker in the world.

More or less the inventor of the whole ... mobiles.

The inventor of mobiles, yes. So Julian was there at the birth.

Julian had a wonderful timing, didn't he, in this respect. The story you've told us about Atelier 17, and this story of Calder.

Yes. And another beginning was Vieira da Silva who is now, I suppose, one of France's greatest painters. Although she's Portuguese, she has always lived in France, and she's about 85 now, but still painting. And Julian went to visit her one day, and there was the most beautiful painting, in what turned out to be her, her ... the framework of all her painting, pictures done in small squares of colour. And this was a very brilliant one. It was the most coloured one that I have ever seen of hers, because later on, her pictures became much more monochrome. And it was a most amazing picture of small squares of colour, diminishing in size, and then growing big again, which gave the impression of a great room with corridors leading off it,

although it was completely abstract. And Julian said to her, "This is the most beautiful painting I have ever seen." And, "Will you sell it to me?" And she said, "Well, I've never sold a picture in my life." And Julian said, "I will give you everything I have for it." And she said, "How much is that?" And he said, "Twenty five pounds." And she said, "Well, that's a lot of money. All right." And Julian bought it from her for twenty five pounds, and more or less starved for about a month, because it was all the money he had in the world. And it's lived in this room until this year, when it's gone, now it's gone to the Tate, as Julian intended it should. And it's one of her, I think, one of her greatest pictures, although it was almost the first painting she did.

That's a particularly significant picture isn't it.

Very. Very.

And it's now in the Tate Collection?

It's now in the Tate, yes.

Yes, timing.

Julian's timing, by, either by judgement, or by good fortune, was extraordinary. He seemed to be in at the beginning of so many things.

Of course, during the period in which he was learning and working, with William Hayter, at the Atelier 17, it was, of course, a period when Hayter himself was making contacts with Miro, especially.

Yes.

And with Picasso.

Yes.

And many of the great, great panjandurums of the school of Paris.

Yes.

Were passing through the studio at that time.

Yes, they were. And when Julian arrived in Paris, people said, "Oh, you've come too late. The great period of art history in Paris is over." And that was Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, the post ... the post-Impressionists. But, of course, there is always a new wave of talent, and Julian really missed the heyday of those people, but came in on the new wave of surrealism, and the people I've been talking about who were his friends.

In any case, of course, Picasso, Miro and Braque, with whom Julian also had contact later, were still very much (?? CANNOT HEAR REST OF QUESTION - both speaking together)

Oh they were. But they were an older generation. And Julian only hardly met Picasso, only met Braque a few times. They were another generation, and he would liked to have known them, but he, he didn't. But he knew a younger generation who became, perhaps not equally famous, but they were a new wave of artists.

Of course, he did know Arp, didn't he.

Yes, he did know Arp. I don't think he ever met Miro. I think he met most of these people briefly through Bill Hayter's Atlier dix-sept, but he did not become friends with that generation much.

Of course, when Arp came to London, I think in 1937, '36 or '37, Julian did meet him and take him to various places. I know this because, in fact, it was Julian who took Arp to Ceri Richards' studio.

Oh was it? I didn't know that.

In St. Peter's Square, where Arp saw for the first time, before anybody really had seen them, the constructions that Richards was making at that time.

I don't think I knew that it was Julian who took Arp to meet Ceri Richards.

It was, yes. So he had a, a marvellous period, really, didn't he, of bohemian life, essentially.

He did.

In Paris.

Yes.

Which is wonderfully evoked in his book, Indigo Days, I think that's worth nothing.

Yes. Yes. He had a wonderful time with painters and he had a great love affair, which was important in his life. I think the first important love affair he had was in Paris, with an American girl, called Louise. It eventually ended, because a friend of his from Cambridge came to stay with them, and took her off and married her. And that was the end of that affair, and that was very sad for Julian, and persuaded him to leave Paris and come back to England. So it was at the end of his three years that happened. But another friend of his, who I didn't mention, at Cambridge, was Malcolm Lowry, the, the novelist, who wrote that wonderful book, Under the Volcano, and many others. And when Julian was in Paris, for some of the time, Malcolm Lowry was living there too. And, in fact, Julian was best man at Malcolm Lowry's wedding in Paris.

Is that so!

Yes. And they became great friends.

Did you meet Lowry at all?

Only once. He came here to dinner, towards the end of his life, with John Davenport and his wife. And another friend of his called Jimmy Stern, who was a writer, is a writer and a poet, and poor Malcolm Lowry, by this time, was a total alcoholic, and he was completely drunk throughout dinner, and so I never saw him in his heyday. And Julian never saw him again after that evening. That was the only time I met him.

When was that, Mary?

It must have been about 1950, something like that.

In the fifties.

Yes. Or perhaps a little later. I don't remember actually.

So we have now, Julian back in London, and it's at this time that he takes up with Ursula Darwin.

Yes. Yes. I think he must have known Ursula, well, he did know Ursula when he was at Cambridge, because another of his great friends at Cambridge, was Robin Darwin, Ursula's brother, who eventually became the Principal of the Royal College of Art.

During the period when both you and Julian ...

Julian and I both taught there when he was the Principal. And so Julian had known Ursula when they were in their teens, and when he came back to London, they were married fairly soon, I think.

One should say, of course, that during that period of Paris, what we'll call the "Paris period" and just after, Julian did an enormous amount of travelling in Europe, didn't he.

He did. He went to Mount Athos with a friend, another friend from Cambridge, called Ray Parker, and they travelled all through the, the Balkans, and had an extraordinary series of adventures on that journey. And when he was in Paris, he went, with this girl, Louise, this American girlfriend, to Italy and to Spain, and he travelled to Hungary and Germany. He stayed with a Hungarian family he was introduced to by yet another friend from Cambridge, Elizabeth Wiskesmann.

Yes, who later became a very distinguished academic in, I think, German literature.

Yes. She did. In fact, he did, he travelled a great deal when he was a young man. He was lucky in that, although his parents were not rich, they were very generous to him, and all that time he was in Paris, he had an allowance from them, which enabled him to travel, very much third class, but he travelled a lot, and he wasn't having to earn his living in Paris. They, they supported him.

Travel became ...

A passion in his life.

A passion in his life, yes.

It became a passion. And it, when we were together, we went almost everywhere. Well, we didn't ever go to the Far East, but we went to Africa, and India, and Russia and America, and I think, every country in Europe. He was a passionate traveller. And a very good traveller.

Yes. Well, travel in Europe in the early thirties was a very different matter from post-War, and the period when you began to travel with him, although your description of the trip to Sicily, has something of the feel of those pre-War days, doesn't it.

Yes. It was both much cheaper, and much more uncomfortable, and when we were young, we didn't mind the discomforts of travel, and dreadful little pubs and taverns we stayed in, and the extraordinary sort of rough meals we ate, and we did go, on our original trip to Sicily, in Julian's little clapped-out motor car. A little open Hillman, which was a wonderful car, but sometimes we had as many as four punctures a day, going down to Sicily. And he was always having to climb on a local bus, carrying a spare wheel, to find some garage in some village, and then find a local bus back to where I was waiting by the car. Because we broke down all the time. It took us, I think it only took us two weeks to get to Sicily, it might have taken us months by the way the car went, and that wasn't exactly comfortable travel. And the roads were just a series of ghastly potholes left over from the War, because it was only three years after the end of the War.

We shall, I'm sure we shall return to talk about your travel in Europe, because it was so important to his painting, and, of course, to your painting, I think.

Yes it was.

And your work as an artist, so, locale, and place, and landscape, are things we're going to talk about later, I think. But it's important to note that from very early on, this was so central to his life.

Yes.

In fact, when he came back to London, he married Ursula.

Yes.

They found Durham Wharf.

Yes.

Part of which I recall was, had been Kennington, the sculptor's ...

It was Kennington's studio. He worked here. He didn't live here, he just used it as a working studio. And what is now our garden, was a huge great sort of yard, full of pieces of stone waiting to be carved, and general junk. It wasn't a civilised place for living at all. It was simply a place where he worked, and I think he lived in, in Chiswick Mall.

And when they first arrived here, in fact, Len Lye was using one of the buildings.

The other bit of the studio, making his early ...

Experimental films.

Films, yes.

So the place had an odd sort of history already, as ... as an industrial complex, it had originally been Thameside wharfs.

Yes. Yes.

And wharf buildings, hadn't it. But had already a slightly, how can we put it? Arty, antecedents before Julian actually ...

Oh, very much so. And we were told, and we never proved this, that Eric Kennington, who was a great friend of T.E. Lawrence, that they printed The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, on a hand press, in our studio.

Oh really!

The first edition. This is what we were brought up to believe, but I don't know where Julian got this from, and it may not be true, but I think it probably is.

Quite possibly, yes.

And there were two women, whose name I can't remember, who used part of the studio, to print beautiful hand-printed fabrics, and the firm was called Footprints. But I just don't remember what they were called. They were two sisters, I think.

This was in the mid-thirties?

This was at the same time that Eric Kennington was here.

Ah! Before Julian ...

Yes, yes. Oh, before Julian, oh yes. Because when Julian took it over, everybody left. I mean, they, they wanted to go somewhere else. Eric Kennington didn't want it any more. Julian simply walked along from Hammersmith Bridge, looking for somewhere to live, and when he got as far as Hammersmith Terrace, he saw this sign, "To Let". Went straight to the house agent, and took it that day. And it was just a shell. And they made it habitable gradually. And it's gone on being made more habitable ever since, really.

And the, what is now the print studio, or what was Julian's printing studio was, at the beginning, Ursula's pottery studio, wasn't it?

Yes. Part of it was her pottery studio, and the other part was Julian's painting studio.

Around, in this area, at that time, of course, a number of quite interesting people lived, including Ceri Richards that I've mentioned already, and his wife Frances.

And Victor Pasmore.

Victor Pasmore.

Yes. Len Lye.

... was painting his Chiswick, riverside ..

His Chiswick, famous Chiswick riverside paintings.

Yes.

So they were visitors here at that time, presumably.

They used to visit Julian. They were great friends, yes. Victor Pasmore became a close friend to Julian, and so did Ceri Richards, and Len Lye. They were all friends, and in St. Peter's Square, lived, for a time, Robert Graves and his strange wife.

Laura Riding?

Laura Riding, yes. They, they lived in the Square.

Who was, I think, 90 this week, or 91.

Laura Riding was?

Yes.

Was she? I didn't hear about that.

If I'm not mistaken, I think I saw an article about it. And, of course, John Piper.

John Piper lived in the Square. Michael Redgrave lived in Hammersmith, no, in Chiswick Mall. And the great figure, of course, in all our lives, was A.P. Herbert, who lived in Hammersmith Terrace, always from, I think when he was married, to when he died. And his son still lives in the same house. And he was a tremendous figure. There's this pub at the end of Hammersmith Terrace, called the Black Lion, and A.P. Herbert went there every night of his life, to have a drink, and he expected

all his friends and neighbours to go, I think it was Saturday night, it might have been Friday night. And we all used to meet there. It was a kind of neighbours' club, and it really was very neighbourly and great fun. And if, for some reason, we didn't go, he made whoever hadn't come, stand a round of drinks the following week, to punish them for not being there. He always expected his friends to be there every, every weekend. It must have been very excluding for other people who came to the pub, strangers, who didn't belong to A.P. Herbert's group.

End of F1882 Side B

F1883 Side A

After Julian had come back from Paris, and settled with Ursula at Durham Wharf, he was still painting, and making work, wasn't he.

Oh yes. He was passionately eager to make his life painting, and even to make a living out of painting, because he didn't have a job or anything, and that's what he wanted to do.

Now, in 1935, he didn't ... Roland Penrose had met
to organise a major surrealist exhibition in London, the following year, which was 1936, and it was in the preparations for that exhibition, wasn't it, that Julian discovered overnight that he was a surrealist.

I think it was, although he'd been working on surrealist paintings in ... in Paris, and that's where he met David Gascoigne, who was a passionate supporter of surrealism, and wrote that beautiful little book he wrote, about surrealism. I think Julian's flowering of surrealism really continued, perhaps even started, when he came back from Paris, and was living in London.

The actual people who selected the exhibition were Penrose and Herbert Read.

Yes.

And they came to Julian's studio, and selected work for that exhibition, didn't they.

Yes. He certainly showed in it. I think that's how it worked.

He had met Penrose, I think, also in Paris, hadn't he?

Yes. He had.

So Penrose and David Gascoyne, were both friends of Julian from that ...

They were, yes.

That period onwards.

Yes.

Tell us a bit about that, will you?

Well, Julian found the whole business of surrealism tremendously interesting. He also met John Banting at this time, who was a surrealist, I mean, his life was surrealism. And the surrealists all maintained that you didn't just paint surrealist pictures, you lived surrealism. And John Banting used to do outrageous things like leaving a poached egg in a chalice in a church, and very wicked things like that, which seemed to Julian, to justify the fact that he lived his surrealism. Another thing John Banting used to do, was, in a pub, he used to get a glass of beer, and then, if he wanted to go to the loo, he would take his false teeth out, and put them in his glass of beer, so that when he came back, nobody would have pinched his glass of beer, because his teeth were in them. And he painted his toes on the outside of his shoes. And John Banting really lived surrealism, more than Julian, because Julian had two layers of painting. He was a surrealist, and he painted surrealist pictures. But, at the same time, rather secretly, he was painting landscapes, rather ... not exactly straight landscapes, but landscapes with no surrealist flavour in them at all. So he had two strands to his work, whereas a person like John Banting was a surrealist in the bone, and never was anything else. And I think that was true of many of the surrealists. And at this first exhibition, which Roland Penrose and David Gascoyne and Herbert Read organised, I think it was that exhibition at which Salvador Dali came, and was in a diving suit.

That's right.

And there was a terrible drama, because he was supposed to give a talk with his diving suit on, but he became asphyxiated in the helmet of the diving suit, and they

had to unscrew it and take it off just in time to save his life. And Julian was in some fancy dress at that opening of the exhibition. I've forgotten what he wore.

I think you're confusing that. There were two exhibitions. One was the great exhibition of '36 at the Burlington Gallery.

That was the one with Salvador Dali.

With Salvador Dali's lecture in a diving suit.

In a diving suit, yes.

Accompanied by two borzoi dogs.

That's right.

And then the following year, there was an exhibition of surrealist objects and poems, which was, I think, partly selected by Julian, and the work all came to this studio here, to be collected.

That's when the fur ... the fur tea cup was born, was it not?

That's right. I think that was in the '36 show. But the one that Julian opened, he opened with dark glasses and a solar toupee, and he was known as "The Blind Explorer".

That's right.

Or something like that.

Something like that, yes. I'm a little confused about it.

It's very easy, I know, but he was very much involved in the whole adventure of surrealism in this country.

Yes, he was. Yes he was.

And that led to a deepening, I suppose, of his friendship with Penrose and with David Gascoyne especially.

Yes. David Gascoyne and he were real friends. And David Gascoyne was a very, at that time, a very fragile fellow. He was moderately unbalanced, and had terrible sort of hallucinations. And I remember, he was staying with us one time, and he rushed in and said to Julian, "Quick! We must hide, the enemy is at the gates." And we could never quite make out who the enemy was. But he said he'd been on a bus, and he heard the conductor whispering to people about Julian, and how they were going to come and get him. And he was very distressed and upset at that time.

That must have been later, Mary, mustn't it, if you were living with Julian.

Yes. Of course it was. It was much later.

It would have been post-War.

Yes. Yes. This was pre-War.

And during the period of David's really quite prolonged distress period, really, wasn't it.

Yes. Yes. It was. I'm sorry, I've got it out of context.

In '36, he was just writing that wonderful book, and he was only about 18 or 19.

Yes, he was. He was very young, and, as you say, a friend of Roland Penrose, and at the hub of the surrealist movement in England.

And it was, as you've said, he clearly became a very close friend, and has remained so, hasn't he.

Yes. Yes. Absolutely.

Did Julian see a great deal of Gascoyne?

Well, I don't know whether he did in that pre-War time, because I wasn't around. I don't know how much he saw him, but by the time I was with Julian, they were old friends, so I suppose he did.

And that was, of course, the period when David had entered a period of mental instability and ...

Yes, which lasted a long time, mmmm.

And what about Penrose?

Well, again, it was before my time. And Julian was always very fond of Roland. I don't, I don't know how much he saw him. He wasn't a sort of, I don't think he was a constant friend here, but they used to meet in London a lot, and were friends. I can't remember, I think the contemporary ... no, the ... the ICA ...

ICA.

Started after the War didn't it.

After the War, about 1948.

Yes, that's right, yes. Well, that ... but before the War, I don't remember. I don't know how close Julian was with, with Roland Penrose. But they were obviously fond of each other.

Was Julian involved with the ICA at all, during that ...

Well, this is a much later thing. But actually, it was rather sad. Julian had a break with Roland Penrose because, if you remember, soon after the ICA was founded, there was a competition for sculptors to make a piece of sculpture, to commemorate an unknown political prisoner.

Yes.

Do you remember?

Yes, of course.

That must have been in the ...

1950/51.

Some time like that. And everyone was asked to send in a little maquette, as a sort of preliminary for doing a big work if you were selected. And there was an exhibition of these maquettes, and, I expect you have heard about this, but some, a real unknown political prisoner, and a Central European, who had been in prison for his politics, saw the exhibition and thought how utterly sort of, ephemeral they were, compared with what political prisoners had been through. And the winning one was smashed by this man.

It was Reg Butler's.

It was Reg Butler's, yes. And he went into the exhibition and smashed it. It was only made of wire, and Reg Butler said he'd made it in ten minutes, and it wasn't the destruction of a work of art, but it was a, a gesture of defiance, from a very miserable, and you know, hostile man. A man hostile to the situation. And Julian so well understood this, that, that this man who'd been tortured in prison, and had had the

most terrible background, as a political prisoner, should see this exhibition of rather flimsy little works by sculptors who had never suffered at all, and he thought he was quite right to smash it. And the ICA ... not the police, what's it called? He was, he was accused of having ...

Ah, they took a charge ...

They charged him with having smashed this work, and I think he went to prison, as far as I remember. But anyway, he was up in the court, for having done it. And Julian thought it was so terrible of the ICA to charge this man, who had every right to make a gesture. And he wrote to Roland Penrose and said, "I'm resigning from the ICA, because you have made this terrible mistake." And Roland was dreadfully hurt and upset, and the very day he got the letter, he was down here. I remember him arriving, in great distress and said, "Julian, we've been friends for so long, and I can't bear to part with you, because of this. Maybe you're right, and perhaps I shouldn't have let the man be charged. And please forgive me. And we aren't letting him go to prison." Or "we're not fining him", you know, he was being let off. But Julian said it should never have happened. And, sadly, Julian's relationship with Roland was never the same again. Julian felt it was such a dreadful thing. I don't know that Roland himself was responsible, but the ICA was responsible. And Julian thought it should not have happened, and that, you know, the man had suffered enough. And somehow, that breach was never healed. And he was never a close friend of Roland's after that. Which is sad but ...

It's a very sad story, yes.

It's what happened.

Going back, then, to 1936, when I said he became a surrealist overnight, of course that was a joke.

Yes.

That Julian himself said ...

Said in his book, yes.

Because he had been making works which were really fantastic, perhaps, or whimsical, rather than deliberately surrealist.

Yes, Yes.

Unlike Banting, for example, who was ...

Who was a surrealist right through.

Very seriously committed to the politics of surrealism.

Yes.

I don't think that was ever quite true of Julian, was it?

No, because he often said to me that, although he enjoyed the surrealist brotherhood, and the way of life, and all that, he was also very interested in being a landscape painter, which wasn't surrealist at all. And he had these two strands, as I said, in his painting. And when he'd got through the surrealist phase, he realised that painting landscapes, and certainly not conventional painting, but not surrealist, was what he really wanted to spend his life doing.

His work in that respect, I mean, goes back to his, almost to his childhood, doesn't it, really.

Yes.

He made imaginative landscapes, and so on.

Yes. Very often industrial landscapes. He was very interested in Stoke-on-Trent and the Potteries, and industrial landscapes in the North.

Which brings us, of course, to Mass Observation.

Mass Observation, yes.

Which was founded in 1936.

By Tom Harrison.

By Tom Harrison, working with Charles Madge.

Yes. And Humphrey Jennings.

Well, Tom Harrison came back from being an anthropologist in Borneo, where he'd been for years. And I'm not quite sure how he had met Tom Harrison, but he arrived back and had been determined to ... [RECORDING VANISHES]

End of F1883 Side A

F1883 Side B is blank

F1884 Side A

When we were interrupted, Mary, by the fault in the recorder last time, we were just about to talk about Tom Harrison and Mass Observation.

Mass Observation, yes.

Julian was involved with Mass Observation, wasn't he, from ...

Yes, I think from the very beginning. He met Tom Harrison when he came back from Sarawak, and Tom Harrison had this tremendous idea that, having been an anthropologist in Sarawak, he'd like to try anthropology on the British people. So he took a house in Bolton, which he thought was a good sort of central point for, I suppose, the working man, and he got together a team of people, and Julian was his painter, and there was Charles Madge, Humphrey Jennings, the film-maker, Humphrey Spender, the photographer. Who else was there? They were the main ...

Bill Coldstream, I think, was involved, wasn't he?

I think he, I think he came up. He wasn't on the team, I don't think, but he did come up sometimes. And they had the most ... all of them were rather comfortable young men at home, but they led a really rough life in this little back-to-back house in Bolton, where none of them, really, could cook. And I think they all had camp beds, and they just bought eggs and bacon and took it in turns to fry them, and make cups of coffee, and bottles of wine. And that's the way they lived, and were up there for weeks on end, as far as I remember. And Julian was told to go out and draw anything he saw, which related to the life of the working people of Bolton. And also, he was set tasks, like, on a Sunday, go to ... Tom Harrison was the boss, and he was very bossy, and he said, "Julian, you go to all the churches and chapels in Bolton this Sunday." And Julian went to about six services, trying to fit them in together, and made notes on the way the preacher conducted the service. And he came back with reports of choirs and Seventh Day Adventist services, and vicars greeting him on the doorstep, and hoping he was going to be a regular visitor. And this was not Julian's

world at all, because he was certainly not a church-goer. But he did that several times. And then, other times, he was sent to the, the dunes, the sandhills, by the sea, nearby, and told to see what was going on with, with all the people who went to the sandhills and played games, and made love, and came back and reported on all of that. He told me how, another day, he was told to walk about among holiday makers. They used to go to the coast, I suppose it was Morecambe, would it have been Morecambe? Or Blackpool?

Yes. Yes.

And they used to go, and Julian was asked to walk about, and get into conversation with people, and ask them about their dreams. And he managed to get several ladies telling him about their dreams, and he found that there was one who said, "I'm always dreaming I'm walking on the Downs with no clothes on." And they didn't seem to be at all embarrassed at telling Julian their dreams. He got a lot of information that way. And when he wasn't on these assignments, he was making pictures. But, at that time, he wasn't painting so much as doing collage. So he, he must have been a very funny sight! He went out into the streets of Bolton, or on the coast, with a big suitcase full of various coloured papers, and he had a pot of paste, and a pencil, and pair of scissors, and he used to make collage pictures, instead of painting, which would have been much easier. And the paper from his suitcase kept blowing away, and he spent half his time running after bits of paper, collecting them up, putting them back in the suitcase, so it was a very awkward operation. But they had a very extraordinary, and happy time up there, with Humphrey Spender taking wonderful photographs of women hanging up their washing across streets, and he got into houses and photographed women bathing their babies in the sink, and it was all a bit, as we would think now, a bit patronising, I should have thought. But nobody seemed to object to them being there.

I think the, the attitude of the Mass Observation people, although it may seem patronising, wasn't was it. I mean, I think they did genuinely want, they felt that there was a whole lot of information that could be known, that somehow, wasn't being recorded.

Absolutely.

I think they had a great sense, didn't they, of the dignity of the working class?

Oh they did. They did very much. I don't think there was any patronising attitude in their approach, but it was quite amazing that the people didn't feel they were being patronised. And Julian said everybody was amazingly friendly with them.

Julian was very tall, wasn't he.

He was six foot four. He must have been quite a funny sight among the mill workers, I think! And Tom Harrison, who was really the, the creator of this group, the idea of mass observing the people, was an incredibly, I suppose he was very charismatic, and Julian always said he was a great life enhancer. But he was also amazingly bossy, and when he said to Julian, "Julian, you will come up to Bolton next week. Bring your car, we need it. And get there on Tuesday." Julian always went. He never said, never said no to Tom Harrison. Which amazed me, because I met him much, much later, after the War, and I didn't really find his bossiness was very attractive. But even then, Julian was perfectly happy to go along with, with Tom Harrison. Twenty years later, he still did what Tom Harrison asked him to do.

Julian had been to Bedales. He'd come from a very intellectual background, he was an artist, he had lived in Paris. Going and living for weeks on end, and very deliberately observing what was happening in a town like Bolton, must have opened his eyes, to some extent, to a whole range of experience that was new to him.

I think it did. I think he realised what an amazingly sort of sheltered and privileged life he'd had until then. And he had never really come across really poor working class people in his life before. I think it did open his eyes. I think it was very good for him to realise what other people had to put up with, in the way of poverty, and no bathrooms, and hardly any holidays. I think it taught him a great deal about his own privileged life.

Do you think that affected the way he thought about things and felt about things, politically, for the rest of his life?

I think so. From then on, well, maybe before, he was always a Socialist. He, he always voted Labour, and would never have dreamt of siding with what he considered the other side. He never belonged to the Communist Party, but a lot of his friends at Cambridge were Communists. I mean, Anthony Blunt was a close friend of his at Cambridge, and quite a friend also, was Guy Burgess.

Did, just ... this is really a digression, did he maintain a friendship with Guy Burgess until after the War and so on? Did he know him during the period of what we know now to have been Burgess' period as an agent.

Well, before the War, he knew him, but he didn't know him well. He used to meet him occasionally in a pub. But Julian and I went, in about 1960, to Russia. And we took our car, and arrived at Leningrad, on a boat, with our car tied on the deck of this Russian ship. And as we stepped off the boat, a man handed us a little piece of folded paper, and on it was said, "Come and see me the moment you reach Moscow", signed Guy Burgess. It was like something out of a Graham Greene film or something! And he'd been there, in '60, how long had he been there? I don't remember ...

'52.

Yes, he'd been there about eight years. And every day we were in Moscow, we saw him, because he was so eager to talk to English people, and people from home, and he was very homesick, longed to come home, but knew that he would go to prison if he did.

He was wonderful company, wasn't he, Guy Burgess?

Yes. By this time he was not a drunk, I believe he had been earlier. But he wasn't at all. He didn't seem to drink a lot when we saw him. He was good at talking. He had piles and piles of books on his table in his flat, because he had a job which the Government, the Russian Government, gave him, to read endless English publications, and to advise the Government on what should be translated into Russian. So he had all the newest novels and biographies, and every month, Harold Nicholson telephoned him, and they had long, long conversations about literature and what else, I don't know. But he, he was a very interesting man at that stage, and very sad. Lonely and sad. How we have digressed from Mass Observation!

So we have! But that was really because we were talking about the way in which Mass Observation may have influenced what we might call Julian's politics, which I think is quite an aspect of Julian.

Yes.

And he wouldn't, of course, have joined Mass Observation, or been interested if he hadn't already been, to some extent, Left-wing.

No, he wouldn't.

Because, in a sense, it was a Left-wing ...

A Left-wing Movement.

A Left-wing Movement.

Yes.

And, of course, as you said, many of his friends at that time, would have been members of the Communist Party.

Yes.

So, and Julian never was?

Never was, no.

But as I said, it affected the way he thought about things, I've no doubt, for a very long time. I mean, he really did see how the working class ...

I think, I think it was a very important experience for him, Mass Observation, and what he learnt living at Bolton.

That led, of course, also, in this connection, to the Ashington Miners, didn't it.

Absolutely. I think he must have gone to stay with the Ashington Miners, because of his time in Bolton. I can't remember who he went with to Ashington, but they were a group of miners who, I think, influenced by a rather wonderful woman called Helen Sutherland, who lived up there, and discovered that these miners painted in their spare time. They had a sort of art club in their, in the village of Ashington, where they were miners. And they spent all their evenings painting together, as a group, and even sharing paintings. And Julian heard about them. I think it must have been through Helen Sutherland, and I think it was Julian who collected together some painting friends, and they went and stayed with the Ashington miners, and painted with them, criticised and encouraged their painting, and made real friends of these men, some of whom, Julian said, were astonishingly good painters. Remarkable primitive paintings.

I wonder, Mary, how far that confirmed for Julian, the truth of the surrealist idea that, you know, which comes from Lautreaumont, that poetry or art will be made by all. You know, the idea that everybody, in a sense, is an artist.

Yes. Yes. I think it confirmed, I'm sure he had that idea in his head anyway, but I think it certainly strengthened that belief, because they were remarkable the, the Ashington Miners, they, they have become quite well known, haven't they.

Yes. Oh yes.

Julian said it was so funny, because he went with these various painters, to stay with them. And they all slept in, I think it must have been the town hall, which was made into a kind of dormitory for staying, and Julian and his friend had awful old pyjamas, or even no pyjamas at all. And the Ashington Miners, because they were all sleeping together, had all got themselves lovely new striped pyjamas. So the miners all slept in beautiful clean pyjamas, and all the painters from London, slept, Julian said, in old rags!

Did you say that it was Helen Sutherland who had helped to organise the project?

Of the Ashington Miners?

Oh yes, the Ashington Miners, yes.

Yes. I think it was. I'm a bit hazy about this, but I know she was closely connected with them. I think she, maybe, had started them painting. I'm not sure. No, I don't think so, I think she wouldn't have come across them if they hadn't already been painting, but maybe she, she encouraged them to have this painting club, so that they painted regularly. And I think it must have been through her that Julian heard about these miners at Ashington, who were painting wonderful primitive paintings. I think it was Helen Sutherland who encouraged him to get people together and to go up there.

What you get, Mary, from this, is an impression of great sort of idealism.

Julian?

Yes.

I think he had, yes.

That was something that remained to be a great sort of aspect of his character.

Yes. Yes, it's true. He was fascinated by other people's work. He wasn't a self-absorbed painter. He was interested in what other people were doing, and particularly, not so much in the ... his own contemporaries, with his own sort of education, but all kinds of people, like Bolton, like Ashington. All those sort of people he was really fascinated by.

And completely devoid of any sort of snobbery.

I hope so. I think so. He certainly wasn't at all a snob, whether it appeared to be snobbish to the people he visited, like the Ashington Miners, I don't know, but I don't think so, because they asked him back several times. And they wouldn't have had him staying with them if he hadn't got on well with them.

This brings us almost to the War doesn't it.

Yes. I think all of that Mass Observation time went right up to the War, because Mass Observation, in a slightly different form, was used by the Ministry of Information, during the War, to test the pulse of the people, while the War was on.

What was Julian's attitude to the War? Can you remember? Did you know anything about that?

Well, I suppose like everybody, he was appalled when it started. But I think he thought it would be the right thing for him to be in some part of the War. He wasn't exactly, well, he wasn't a Conscientious Objector, because he went into camouflage. And camouflage was part of the Army. But he hated the War, as we all did. Whether he would have gone into an actual combative section of the Army, if he hadn't been able to be in camouflage, I don't know. But he was, he was prepared to be in camouflage, and I have to say this, he had a very exciting time in camouflage. He enjoyed it because of the company he was with. He started by going to Farnham

Castle, at Farnham, which was the headquarters of the, of camouflage, where he was trained. And it was full of fascinating people, like, oh, Rex Whistler, and Maskelyne, of Maskelyne and Devant, the magician. And various dress designers, and Cecil Beaton, I think, was one of them. Anyway, they were all people who could vaguely be connected with visual things - painters and designers, and photographers. And he had a wonderful time at, at Farnham, because of the people he met.

Robert Medley, of course, was at Farnham, wasn't he.

Robert Medley was there.

He went to camouflage in the Middle East.

Yes. Yes, he did. Well, Julian, at first was, his area was Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. And he had a motorbike, which seemed very unlikely for Julian, I never saw him on a motorbike, and I can't imagine how he worked it, but he was put on a motorbike, and his job was to disguise and camouflage pillboxes, all down the coast from Corfe Castle, down to Lands End. And he met the most wonderful people doing that, people like John Tunnard who was down in ... what was his little place in Cornwall, where he lived, do you know?

I can't remember. I know he lived there.

He lived there. Well, he had a jazz band.

Was it Mousehole?

No. It wasn't. I'll remember in a minute. He had wonderful times staying with John Tunnard. Wherever he went, if he could, he stayed with friends. And he made a little teashop round a pillbox on the pier at St. Ives. And for years and years that little teashop was still there, with the pillbox inside it. I think it must have gone now, but it was there for ages after the War.

The teashop was a disguise?

The teashop was a disguise for the pillbox. And then he used to make haystacks over pillboxes, and all sorts of imaginary things. Cottages and ... he, he never just put netting over them. He always made them into something like a cottage or a haystack, or something.

This would have appealed to his sense of humour, wouldn't it.

Well, he loved it, yes! And he met down there, an old friend, James McGibbon, who he'd known before the War, who was in the Army, just in the regular Army, he wasn't in camouflage, but they met in somewhere like Torquay, and had wonderfully jolly evenings together. In fact, Julian enjoyed that very much, because of the company he was with.

James McGibbon went on to ...

To publishing.

Publishing, didn't he, McGibbon and Kee.

McGibbon and Kee. In fact, McGibbon and Kee published Julian's autobiography after the War. So that went on for ages. And he had to go and lecture to Army camps, on camouflage, and had to think up all sorts of ideas to make the troops understand the importance of ... if they were camped in a field, to put their tents all round the edge of the field, under hedges, and not in the middle of the field. And Julian had various ways of demonstrating camouflage by ... he tied a small dark button to a piece of cotton, and put it in the grass. And he said, "Can you see anything in the grass?" And they all looked about, couldn't see anything, and then Julian pulled the button, on a piece of cotton, and immediately, of course, they saw it moving - to explain how important it was not to have things that are going to move, out in the open, where they can be immediately seen. And one of the stories he told me was that he used to say to people, "Have you ever been to a dance, and seen a girl

in a velvet dress, and on her back, is a nasty flat patch, which shows on the velvet, where the damp hand of her partner was placed when he was dancing with her? Now that happens if you put a tank on grass. It flattens the grass, and you can see where the tank has been, and therefore you can follow the route of an army." And he had all sorts of marvellous little stories like that. And there was one occasion when he was lecturing on camouflage, to a vast battalion of troops in a huge cinema, somewhere on the South Coast, and there he was, giving his demonstrations, and his lecture, and suddenly at 11 o'clock, or something, these 1,000 men all put their gas masks on, in the cinema. And they all snorted and puffed, and couldn't hear a word he said. And he said to the officer in command, "Could you ask them to take their masks off and put them on when I've finished lecturing?" And he said, "I'm very sorry. Eleven o'clock on Saturday mornings, is gas mask drill. And the Colonel is away, and he's the only person who can cancel gas mask drill." And so, for an hour, Julian talked to a thousand men, all wheezing and puffing through their gas masks, unable to hear or see anything! And at five to twelve, just as he was finishing, they all took their gas masks off, and coughed their heads off!

I've heard that story, because I think McWilliam told me that story ...

Oh, did he?

Of Julian lecturing to a class, a large class of people in gas masks.

In gas masks, yes.

Did he go abroad at all?

Yes. He was sent abroad to, well, really, to observe what, how camouflage was going in the desert, to see if they were doing it well. If the Army in the desert, the Desert Rats, and the ... all the British troops in the desert were camouflaging adequately. So again, he had a very interesting time. He went out on a terrible troop ship in convoy, to Lagos, and it was an awful long and terribly tedious journey, and there were three times more men on that ship than there was space for, or beds for, and they were

hideously uncomfortable. And the troops really suffered on that journey. But they got to Lagos eventually. And there he was held up for three weeks, I think, waiting for a plan to take him to Cairo, from where he was going to do his, his survey in the desert. And he had a wonderful time in Lagos for three weeks, because there was nothing to do, and he'd got, he had his paints with him, watercolours, and paper. And he hired a horse, and this is so typical of Julian, instead of sitting about in the troops canteen drinking, he took his horse and rode it into the jungle, presumably, among the palm trees and the bush. And he came across a completely native village among trees in the jungle, and there, in a kind of hut, a round hut, was the chieftan of the village. And Julian got off his horse, and bowed low, and said, "May I visit you?" And he said, "Come in." And took him into his hut and gave him palm wine, or whatever they were drinking, and Julian drew there all day. And went back to his headquarters at night, and visited this village several times, and became really great friends with the chieftan of this village, who was a really sort of fairly wild man, with not many clothes on. And they became good friends. And then Julian painted wonderful, I think they were wonderful, small, brilliant watercolours, of Africans and jungle, and houses, and in wonderfully bright, strong colours. And, incidentally, when he got home from this extraordinary trip, he had an exhibition in, I think it was the Bloomsbury Gallery, of all these paintings he'd done in the jungle in Lagos, around Lagos. And it was his first, I think it was his first exhibition in London.

Really. I don't think I've ever seen those pictures.

They were all African paintings.

Marvellous.

Well, at the end of this wait which he had enjoyed so much at Lagos, the plane came and he was taken to Cairo. But he came down on the way, in that marvellous wooden, mud city, who, for the moment, I cannot remember it's name - half way between Lagos and Egypt. And it's made ... I'll remember soon ... it's made of, the palace is made of mud, with wonderful patterns painted on them, and there was an airstrip there, where the plane came down to refuel. And a man with a pipe, about six

feet long, signalled the arrival of the plane, to clear the runway, because the runway was covered in people and hens. And he, with this enormous horn, he hooted the warning that a plane was coming, and everybody got off the runway, and the plane landed and refuelled, and flew on to Cairo.

Julian would have loved that, wouldn't he.

He loved it. He did lots of paintings of that.

I wonder where these paintings are? I mean, I'd love to see some of them.

They're wonderful. I could find some photographs of them probably. I haven't got any of the paintings, alas. He just sold them all. I think these too went in this exhibition that he had as soon as he got back.

End of F1884 Side A

F1884 Side B

Then Julian went on to Egypt?

Yes. He arrived in Cairo, and there he came across many friends from his schooldays, and his university, who all seemed to be there on various sorts of missions. There was, well, there was my cousin, Robin Fedden, who was, had been at Cambridge with Julian, and a friend of his, quite a close friend, who was in the Friends' Ambulance Corps. He'd been living in, in Cairo before the War started, working at the University, and he stayed on there in the Friends' Ambulance Corps. And there was Jim Richards, the architect, and Bernard Burrows who was, I think, the British Ambassador there, whose wife, Eunice, had been at Bedales with Julian. And who else?

Was Robert there, do you know? Robert Medley?

I think Robert Medley may have been there, yes.

Because he was in Egypt for a fair amount of time.

I think he was, yes. Anyway, Julian found himself among friends straight away, which was lovely for him. He was there, again, waiting to be taken out to the desert. But that didn't last long. He went off on his journey, which was what he had come for, to go to the western desert and look at camouflage. And that was really a very dangerous trip, because the War was on there, everybody was living in trenches, and being bombed and ... but he found that fascinating. He found they had made a rail head, with a sort of wooden train, and wooden lines, you know the story, I expect, hoping to make the Germans think that there was a railway there, and that they might waste their bombs on that instead of bombing the Army tanks and Army headquarters nearby. And while Julian was actually there, the Germans flew over, and dropped a wooden bomb on this wooden train! Just to show they knew all about it! And he was in tents, you know, living in tents on this trip, and he said, one night it was so touching, his .. his tin hat, his helmet, was hanging up on the tent pole, upside down,

and when he woke up in the morning, there were about 10 swallows who were on their way to England, from Africa, having a rest in his helmet. And when he woke up in the morning, and daylight came, they all flew out and went on their way to England. And he thought that was so touching. He did find that camouflage was all right, I think. But he also lectured to the troops there about keeping the shine off their machines, and always having camouflage nets over everything, and, and he, I don't know really how ... how well he thought it was being done, but he did his, what he'd been sent out to do there. And then he went back to Cairo, and was sent into the Middle East. He went to Damascus, and Beirut, and I think he went to Jerusalem, and met a lot more friends. Wherever he went, he came across friends from university days, and from Paris, and never seemed to be without a friend to have dinner with, or to travel with. And he found it amazingly interesting, and he wasn't only having fun, he was doing his job as well. And I can't remember how long he was in Egypt. I should think probably not more than a couple of months. And then he came back to England, and had to write huge reports on the state of camouflage in the, in the War Zone. He said the most extraordinary thing was going, being ordered to Sandhurst, I think it was Sandhurst, or Camberley, to lecture on the camouflage in the Middle East, and his audience was made up entirely of colonels and above - colonels, generals, air-vice marshalls, and all that - and Julian was only a captain, so he felt a bit out of place. Well, then his War became very sad, because, after having had such a happy time in Devon and Cornwall, and in the Middle East, he was sent up to Inverary in Scotland, and he ... I mean, you weren't supposed to enjoy the War, but he had, by chance, had a very happy time until then, in spite of the horrors that were going on everywhere. But in Inverary, he hated Scotland, and he said it rained all the time, and he was billeted with some rather uncongenial people, and there didn't seem much to do. And he became so depressed that he almost had a nervous breakdown. And, finally, he was really ill, and was up before a medical board, and was, what is it called? He was ...

Invalided?

Invalided out of the Army.

Was he?

Yes. But by this time, it was pretty near the end of the War.

What did he do immediately after the War, or when he came out of the Army?

I think he came straight back to painting again. He, his studio here, Durham Wharf, had been bombed during the War. A land mine had landed across the river, and had taken the roof off, and smashed the beams. And so he started, as soon as he could, to get it mended, and habitable again, and

[BREAK IN RECORDING HERE]

And he and his wife, Ursula, moved back in to the Wharf, and he, I think, plunged straight back into painting, which he'd been wanting to do all through the War. He had this exhibition that I told you about, of his African paintings, and was passionately keen to paint again. And he started a picture loan library in a room here at Durham Wharf, and he got paintings from his friends in Paris, and from all sorts of people. He had John Piper's, and, I think, Graham Sutherland's, and Henry Moore drawings, and all sorts of friends, including Vieira da Silva from Paris, and her husband, Arpad Jenec, and he ran it as a gallery and as a picture lending library. And people used to come, eagerly, to rent pictures. I think they paid ten shillings for six months, and then, if they loved the picture at the end of six months, they could buy it, otherwise they handed it back and got another one. And it was, apparently, very successful. But, in the end, Julian found that every person who came to hire a painting, wanted to stay at least a couple of hours and talk about painting, until they'd decided which one to hire. And in the end, it really took all his time, he couldn't get on with his own painting because he was talking to the borrowers of the pictures. But he loved doing that, because he met a lot of people, and he got a lot of painters' work shown, and for quite a long time it was a great success.

What sort of pictures was Julian painting at this time?

They were mostly rather fantastical landscapes. They were industrial landscapes, but with very curious eccentric figures in them, and he did a few paintings. He did a painting which has just cropped up and is, at this moment, in a West End gallery, of a Greek mythological story. Who was the man who chased a lovely nymph, and she turned into a tree?

Oh! This was Daphnis and Laurel.

Daphnis?

And Laurel.

And Laurel.

Was it?

Daphnis is ...

Not Daphnis and Cloe, no.

No. Who (?? CANNOT HEAR)

Daphis and Laurel I can't remember. But he painted, I saw this picture last week, and there was the tree, with the lady's face looking out of it, and Daphnis underneath in a sort of yellow nightshirt, gazing up into the tree, with a rather beautiful landscape behind. He did curious imaginative pictures like that, but usually with a bit of industrial landscape as well. But he also did paintings of streets in Paris, sort of back streets, old rough back streets, and I think it was at this time, that he became absolutely hooked on the Potteries. He went to Stoke-on-Trent and drew there a great deal. And at that time, all the kilns were that, were the wonderful beehive shaped kilns, and he did dozens of paintings of Stoke-on-Trent and the other Pottery towns, and even up till the year that he died, he was still using drawings he'd done at that time. And I have quite a big, quite contemporary painting of his, of, of the

Potteries, with the beehive kilns. And he also did etchings of this subject. It became a very very important subject for him.

Yes. That finding a sort of beauty in industrial landscape, is something that went back to before the War, wasn't it.

Oh yes. He was always interested.

The discovery of the canal, which he writes of in Indigo Days, when he realised the canal was as beautiful as anything else.

Was as beautiful as anything else, yes. He was very, very hooked, always on canals and factory chimneys, and blast-furnaces. He did several wonderful paintings of ... in fact, I think it was Pilkington's glass factory that commissioned him to do a series of paintings of blast-furnaces, where the glass was made. Which were very remarkable sort of exotic paintings.

You said that he painted in Paris as well, so he went back to Paris after the War?

He went back to Paris, yes, he did. He went back pretty soon after the War, and stayed there for some time, and I think he exchanged his studio with a painter called Michouz. I think he was Rumanian. And Michons came and stayed here at the Wharf, and Julian had his studio in Paris. And I don't know how long he was there. He, he came and went from Paris. He, he was always going to Paris whenever he could. It became his sort of spiritual home.

Yes. And I think his painting, at that time, really, was at that time the closest really to the school of Paris painting wasn't it.

I think it was. Yes, I think it was. One of his closest friends was Vieira da Silva, who had been a student with him in Paris before the War, and I think he stayed with them quite often, she and her Hungarian husband. And ...

You got to know her, didn't you, later?

Yes. I do know her now. She sends me little drawings and prints sometimes, and only last year, she sent me two charming prints. That's one of them, that blue one here.

Yes, yes. It's lovely. And she's a very good artist. of course, Julian had a very good painting by her, didn't he.

Which is now in the Tate.

In the Tate?

Yes.

So, backwards and forwards to Paris. Perhaps thinking quite a lot, then, about French painting?

I think it was important to him, yes.

Did the ... the opening of the, the discovery of the terrible things which had happened in the War, the camps and so on, and the dreadful things that had happened in Paris. Did that, did that darken his spirit at all?

It must have. It was before I was living with him, and we were not together until 1949. But I'm sure, I know he was, yes, absolutely, as we all were, sort of overwhelmed with the horrors of what had gone on during the War. I don't know that it, it didn't seem to touch his painting very much, it certainly touched him as a person.

Then, in that post-War period, he became involved with the ICA, and we've talked a bit about that, actually, Mary.

We did, yes. He was never very closely involved with the ICA, though Roland Penrose was a friend, quite a close friend, but he, he never sort of worked with the ICA.

And then, his marriage to Ursula broke up, this would be in 1948/49?

Yes. But he had his son Philip in, it must have been in ...

'46?

Well, Philip was five when Ursula left him, and that was in 1948. So Philip must have been born just at the end of the War.

Yes, '43/44.

In '44 I think Philip was born. And then, in '48, they parted.

And was it in 1948 that you went with him ...

It was the beginning of 1949.

... to Sicily?

Yes.

Yes.

I don't know if we talked about the parting before, did we?

Yes, I think you did. And we talked a lot about the holiday in Taormina.

Yes. I think I had said before that I had planned to go to Taormina with a friend, and when Ursula left Julian, I knew them both quite well, I'd been friends with both of

them for years. I, Julian came to me and said Ursula's gone, and he was low and miserable, and I telephoned Ursula and said, "I'm just going to Sicily, would it be a good idea to take Julian?" And she said, "Yes, it would. It would be wonderful." I think perhaps we've said this.

Yes we have.

So we went, in 1949.

Now, what we didn't get round to talking about was what happened after that, coming back. So you came back from Sicily. And this really marks the beginning of your ...

Of our time together.

Of your time together, yes.

Well, we set up together then, in 1949. Ursula had another man, which is why she left Julian, and they were divorced, and she and her man were married. But Julian and I didn't marry until 1951. But we lived together from 1949. And so I moved into the Wharf, and we each had a studio, and we just got down to painting. And painted all the time, with great relief, as the War was over.

Now, about '51, of course, this was the year of the Festival, and did Julian do anything for the Festival?

We both did a mural at the Festival.

Ah! Tell me about that.

Well, Julian did a mural for one of the restaurants, which was, I thought it was really lovely. It was, it was a sort of bar with fruit and bottles, and plates of food and flowers. It was very jolly and beautiful. And, alas, it was painted on to, well, it was

fixed, I think he actually painted it on, on a wall, which was part of the Festival. And so when the Festival was over, it was hacked down and disappeared.

As did so many others.

As did so many others. And I painted a mural in the television pavilion, which also was pulled down when the Festival was over.

What was your mural like?

Mine was for children's television, and it was, well, it was rather done for children. It was, it had to have some of the characters of programmes that were the equivalent of what is now "Blue Peter", and things like that. But also scenes from children's life. I must say I was never very proud of it. But we had a very jolly time painting there, because our friend Humphrey Spender was doing a mural, and Leonard Rosoman, and that was where I first met, I think Julian also, first met Hugh Casson, who was in charge of the whole thing. And we all used to have very happy times having lunch together, while we were working on the site.

Victor Pasmore also, of course, did a big ...

Victor Pasmore did one of his very first beautiful abstract designs, a spiral, didn't he.

That's right.

A series of spirals. A marvellous, marvellous mural. And I had a rather funny incident. We had to join a Union to be allowed to work on the site, and the nearest one to painting was the Signwriters Union. So Julian and I both became members of the Signwriters Union, and there were lots of strikes and problems when the Festival was being prepared, and everybody was working frantically to get done by the day of the opening when King George VI was coming to open it. And one day, the chaps who were working on the, the pavilion that I was working in, came and said, "Mary, we're all on strike tomorrow. Down tools." And I said, "Oh, are you?" Having no

idea what it involved. "Well I'm not", I said, "because I, I've got to get my mural finished", in a very naive way. And they said, "Don't be silly, you belong to the Union, you've got to go on strike." And I said, "But I won't be finished." And they said, "Nor will we. That's the whole point." And I burst into tears, and the foreman said, "Oh dear! Don't cry. I'll go and talk about it to the boys." And he went and talked about it to the boys, and he said, "Mary is crying because her mural won't be finished." So they called off the strike! That was rather good, wasn't it!

What a wonderful story!

So we all got finished.

And, of course, what you've described in Julian's work, you know, of a bar with fruit and so on, and your own thing about children, children's lives, and so on. It was all very much in the spirit of that time, because there was a great outburst of optimism in that.

Oh there was. And the Festival of Britain was intended to make life seem at peace again. And I think it, I think, for a time, it was a wonderful lifting of the spirits. It was so frivolous in a way, and yet very beautiful. A lot of it was very beautiful. And so many artists were employed to work on it. And it was a wonderful sight, the Festival of Britain, and I think it, I think it did make for an atmosphere of War over, and peace come, which was wonderful.

Your own painting, now I want to turn to your own painting now, of that period, because you did a number of marvellous paintings in the forties, and late forties, which seemed to me to have a certain sort of, well, can I say, darkness, or dramatic violence to them.

Yes.

Would that be true?

Yes. I think, well, I think Julian was a great influence. You know, suddenly moving in, setting up with him, and we were deeply in love, and his painting was so much more solid and positive. Mine had been rather whimsy before that, and I hadn't painted all through the War. And before that it was flimsy stuff. And Julian's tremendously positive approach to painting was a great influence on me, I think. But also, it was partly things I was reading. I ... I remember listening to In Parenthesis, by David Jones, while I was painting. I remember quite clearly the painting I was doing, which was a rather dark and mysterious landscape, with, I think, a still life in the foreground. But it was, it was influenced very much by that rather sort of tragic book of David Jones, which I read afterwards. And also I was very much reading Dylan Thomas' poetry and T.S. Eliot was a passion of mine at the time. I suppose all this influenced my painting. And then Julian influenced it too. But I think from that time on, it became more serious, and more to the point than it had ever been before the War. I was certainly influenced by all Julian talked about painting, and about the way he painted, and his friends' work, and it was, for me, the sort of starting point of my painting life.

Because Julian had the line to, such a sort of history, I suppose, of really very sophisticated discourse, didn't he.

Very. He'd had a much more sophisticated life than I had. I'd been four years at the Slade, but I don't know if I had made the best use of it. And my friends at the Slade were, none of them, amazingly talented, although they were great friends, very few of them have gone on working, or made a name for themselves. There had been a much more interesting lot earlier than me, and one of them came after. I suppose I was in a rather bad patch. But Julian had made so much use of his young years in Paris, and at Cambridge, and had met such interesting people, and he taught me a great deal. For instance, I had never been to Italy before I met Julian, and after we were together, we used to go to Italy almost every year, for years, and he knew a tremendous amount about Italian Renaissance painting, and Italian primitive painting, and taught me everything I know about painting, really.

Can we, at this point, then, Mary, go back and talk a bit about your life after the Slade. Because then, if we take you through to about 1951 when you were married, we can then take off from there.

When we were together.

About you together.

Yes. Well, there's not much to say. I, I enjoyed being at the Slade, tremendously. And I think I worked hard, and I used to go theatre a great deal. All my friends were interested in the theatre, and we used to, every week practically, we queued to see John Gielgud, or Charles Laughton, or Michael Redgrave, mostly at the Old Vic, and at Sadlers Wells.

These were golden years, weren't they.

Wonderful. I went to that amazing production of The Three Sisters, with Peggy Ashcroft and Gwen Ffranco-Davies, and Michael Redgrave, and it was the most amazing cast. And I remember every detail of that production. In fact, the theatre was one of my great interests at that time. And after I left the Slade, I went back to my family in Bristol, and I have to say, I found it amazingly dull, living at home in Bristol, having been four years in London. I don't quite know why I did. I, I think my family wanted me to come home. And I painted at home, but I didn't get far really. I did a little teaching in various schools, and I had my first job at the Bristol Art School, teaching life drawing, when I was 21. But that, I didn't do that for very long. It was rather a, a sort of low time in my life, in a way, although I had friends in Bristol, I didn't have painting friends, almost none.

This was the mid-thirties?

Yes. From '36 onwards. And I think I must have stayed in Bristol. Yes, I did. Living in Bristol until the War started. Oh, I had a very patchy War. I did a time in the Land Army, and a time in the Women's, what was it called? The WVS.

The Women's Voluntary Service.

The Women's Voluntary Service. Then I did come back to London, and I painted murals for propaganda exhibitions. And I was sharing a flat with a dear friend called Maire Meicklejohn, who married Lance Sieveking after the War. And she was designing and painting sets at the Arts Theatre, in Great Newport Street, and I had this job of painting murals. And then, every evening, when I left my job, I rushed up to the Arts Theatre and painted sets with her, most of the night, so I didn't sleep very much. And the bombs were falling, the War was at it's worst. We had a rather scary time.

Where were you living?

In Redcliffe Road, off the Fulham Road. We had a ...

End of F1884 Side B

F1885 Side A

....

Oh yes.

You said it was exciting.

Yes, it was dangerous and scary, and quite exciting, and I liked working at the theatre, and I quite liked painting these murals. And then, suddenly, in 1944, I think, the War Office decided that my little job, painting murals, was not important enough as a war job, and I must be called up. It was rather late to call me up, because I'd done the Land Army and the propaganda murals were also a war job, and they sent me abroad, as a driver in NAAFI - Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes - which made all the clubs and canteens and recreations for the troops everywhere in the world, the NAAFI. And I went first to Paris, and the War was raging away, but it had left Paris, and Paris had been Liberated, and it had got to the Netherlands, the Army was in the Netherlands by now. And Paris was in a terribly sad state, but I was there. First of all I was driving trucks with food supplies, and then I was switched to staff driving, and almost at once I was driving the Assistant Head of NAAFI for the whole of Europe, in very grand staff cars, which was really rather exciting. I had wonderful cars to drive. And we used to go all over France at that time, right down to the Mediterranean, and to all the places all over Europe, well, all over France, where there were Army canteens, or Army clubs or ...

It must have been wonderful. I've no doubt you were working very hard, and that it was exhausting. But it must have been something adventurous.

It was an adventure. It was amazing. France, of course, was terribly bombed. We went to Normandy and Bayeux, and Caen, and Dieppe were practically flattened. And I remember, there was still fighting going on in Normandy. And I remember having lunch in an Officers Mess with my boss, and the Army ... the officers of the ... where we were. I think it must have been Dieppe. And there was heavy gunfire

going on quite near, while we ate our lunch. And the towns were dreadfully, pathetically shattered. But the country looked wonderful. And I went on these long journeys all across France, back and forth, while my boss sort of looked at canteens and opened clubs, and it was all quite exciting. Then the Army went up through the Netherlands, and we were moved up to Belgium, and then, as far as I remember, there was something called the "Runstedt Push" (?? sp.), when the Germany Army came back to Brussels, and we were rushed back to Paris again. So we were very near the front line all the time. And then, when the War ended in 1945, I and my boss moved up into Germany, and that was really sad. It was awful. People were hungry and everywhere was bombed, and the Ruhr, we were in the Ruhr mostly at Cologne and Dusseldorf were flat. And people had little food, and nowhere to live and I ... for the first time, I felt really terribly sorry for the Germans, and realised that those that weren't Nazis had had just an awful time. Well, I suppose there did in the end. But I stayed there till 1946.

Did you go to Berlin?

No.

No.

I didn't go beyond Frankfurt.

And in Paris, while you were in Paris during that period, did you in any way come into contact with the artists?

No.

You had nothing to do with them.

I had little ... I mean, I didn't know how to find any artists there. I was living in sort of Army barracks. And all the galleries were closed, and the museums were closed. There were no pictures to be seen. It was ... it was very sad in Paris at that time.

And by the time the War ended, I was moved up into Germany, so I didn't get to see any of the art world of Paris at all.

Now, you have said before that you had known Julian and Ursula for some years before their break up.

Oh yes. Yes.

So you presumably met them and visited Durham Wharf before the War?

Oh yes, I did. And knew them as a couple.

How had that come about?

Well, I think maybe I told you before how a man who taught me at the Slade, called Polunin, lived in Chiswick Mall nearby, a neighbour, and he was my chief tutor at the Slade. He was a lovely man, a Russian theatre designer, who had four children. And one of his sons, Ollie Polunin, who became a very famous botanist and wrote all those books, Mediterranean flowers and things. He was 21 and Polunin borrowed Durham Wharf for a party for Ollie, for his 21st birthday. And that's how I met Julian, because Julian lent the Wharf to the Polunin family for this great party, and I, being one of Polunin's students, came and helped prepare the party. So that's how I met Julian.

You'd already seen him, of course, as we know, at the Slade.

That's how he came to be at the Slade, he was talking to Polunin about the party.

Oh really!

Yes. And then I met Ursula at the party, and after that I used to come down to dinner with them. And I knew Philip when he was a baby, and they were so much part of the art scene in London. If ever I went to a private view at an exhibition, Julian was

always there, and very often Ursula as well. So they became friends of mine. And I must admit, I was very surprised and shocked when Ursula left him. I ... I had no idea.

What sort of things were you painting before the War, when you were painting?

Well, I'd already started on still lifes with landscape, but I was making, I was doing ... I tried, at one stage, when I left the Slade, to paint portraits, because when I went back to Bristol, quite a lot of people who knew I'd been at the Slade, thought, "Oh, we'll get our daughter painted", and that sort of thing. So, not realising that I was hopeless at portraits, I started on a sort of career of being a portrait painter. And I did several, and I knew, actually, that they weren't any good, and that I never would be a portrait painter, but it took a lot of my time from when I left the Slade until the War started. Living in Bristol, painting portraits, and doing landscapes.

You weren't, then, affected by the sort of ... the various modernisms that were ...

No, I ... I used to go to exhibitions a lot in London, but it didn't affect my painting very much. It was very boring painting at that time. Everything I did was, in retrospect, was quite dull, unaffected by Matisse and Braque, and all the people who have affected me since.

So, Mary, what did you do when you were demobbed?

Well, I had a flat which I shared with a friend, called Maise Meiklejohn, who eventually married Lance Sieveking, of the BBC. And that was in Redcliffe Road, and we ... I painted, very passionately in a way. I think it improved. and, as I say, I had these strong influences, like David Jones, and Dylan Thomas, and T.S. Eliot, and I got going much more when the War ended. And Maise was still painting sets at the Arts Theatre, and I helped her. I went on working with her at the Arts Theatre when I wasn't doing my own painting. Actually, at that time, I had my first exhibition, which was in the Mansard Gallery, which was part of Heals shop. And it's a slightly shameful period of my life, but it was wonderfully useful. In this

exhibition I had some rather soft, but fairly sort of authentic flower paintings. And the editor of a woman's magazine, called Woman, came to my exhibition, bought one of these flower paintings, and commissioned me to do covers for Woman, and for three years they literally kept me. They paid my rent, and my food, and it was the way I lived, by doing about eight covers a year for Woman. They bought the paintings, they had to be flower paintings always, and they bought the paintings and paid me a copyright fee. And it was wonderful, because I didn't have to take some other boring job. I did these paintings quite quickly, sort of eight times a year, and in between, I could get on with my own painting, and started selling fairly well. In fact, this exhibition where the editor had bought my painting, I sold out, I think. That was my first exhibition. And then I ...

That was in 19 ...

That must have been 1947, I should think, about then. And although they were very ordinary paintings, it was a wonderful way of earning my living. It paid me well enough to be able to paint in the rest of my time.

Did you do any teaching at that time?

Not then. Not at all, no. And then that went on until 19, end of 1948, when Ursula left Julian, and he came to me, as I've told you, and said how unhappy he was. And he and I went off to Sicily together.

Where were you living before that?

I was living in Redcliffe Road with Maise.

You were still in Redcliffe Road.

Yes. With Maise Meiklejohn. And we were in Sicily for at least two months, and we managed that in a rather lucky way, because at the time there was a very small travel allowance, and you could only take something like thirty pounds abroad, and

we'd spent most of that by the time we got to Sicily. And we thought we'd just have to come straight back. But, by a miracle, it snowed in Taormina for the first time in 20 years, and I rushed out and did a great many small paintings of piazza in Taormina, under snow. And I put them in the window of an antique shop in the town, a nice friendly man ran the shop, and everybody bought them, because they'd never seen snow in Taormina. And I sold them for, I think, five pounds each. And I turned out several a day, and we could stay there for two months on what I made, the profit I made out of selling these very awful little paintings of snow in Taormina.

How enterprising of you!

That was the beginning of my ... I've always said my life has been ruled by great luck over small things, and that was really the beginning of it. It was extraordinary, wasn't it. And then when the snow went, it was wonderfully hot and we could swim. And I think I've told you about our time in Taormina.

Yes, you have, and about Bertrand Russell.

All that. It was wonderful. We had a wonderful time there. And we came back together.

This must have been marvellous for Julian. I know that he was terribly upset by the break up of his marriage.

Yes.

And by Ursula leaving him. You've told us that. And then to have you, and to go there, and to spend two months.

In the spring in ... and it became spring almost, almost at once, you know, when I'd painted my snow pictures, it was spring. And we had a wonderful time, and we drove all over the island. He and I went to Enna in the centre of the island, for Easter, and people flocked in from the country to see all the Good Friday and the Easter

processions in the town and in the church. And Julian and I were the only non-Sicilians there. There were thousands of people, and they were all peasants from the country, and the people of Enna. And we stayed in a marvellous little hotel in the town, and we saw these remarkable, extraordinary, manifestations of sort of almost hysterical Christian excitement. There were ... there were Misericorde.. men in the processions, wearing tall hats with slits, and the tall hats were masks with slits for the eyes, and they carried the symbols of the Passion. They carried ladders and nails, and live cockerels, for the cock that crowed thrice when Peter denied Christ. And a huge statue of Christ on the cross. And then on Easter Sunday there was the risen Christ, and it was incredible. And the shops were all full of pastel lambs made of sponge sugar, which was so pretty. And the fields were full of flowers.

Is that Enna where Proserpine....

That's it.

Well, you know the lines by Milton.

Yes.

"Not that fair field of Enna, where Proserpine was gathering flowers." "Where Proserpine gathering flowers, herself a fairer flower was plucked by gloomy Dis which caused Ceres all that pain to seek her through the world."

That's right. I hadn't got it by heart, but it was there. That was the valley. And the valley of Enna was filled with flowers.

How wonderful!

There were orchids, and sheets of wild tulips, and narcissus, and ... all growing wild, and that is the valley of Enna. It was amazing, it was so beautiful. In fact, it was a kind of miraculous time. And I think I didn't tell you before that we were there at the beginning of Lent, as well as being there when Lent ended, because we stayed so long, and there was a marvellous Mardis Gras festival in Taormina on, I think, Shrove

Tuesday, when they have Mardis Gras. Everybody in fancy dress. And there was a man staying in the house where we stayed, who was as tall as Julian, six foot four. And Julian and he dressed up, we made them ladies dresses to the ground, and we put straw hats on them, and decked their hats with flowers. And these two men of six foot four, with long, long dresses, waltzed, well, marched, paraded through the streets of Taormina. And all the Sicilians are very small, and they couldn't believe these two lady giants, who were walking up and down the street, waving to everybody. It was an extraordinary sight!

It sounds like an ... what with Bertrand Russell and those extraordinary evenings, and this wonderful time as the spring came in. It sounds like an absolutely magical ...

It was absolutely magical. It was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to me, and almost the most wonderful thing that ever did happen. It was marvellous. And Julian was so happy. So was I!

So ...

We came back together, and I knew Ursula would be pleased, because she had gone off with her lover. The only thing that worried me terribly was that Maise Meiklejohn and I who had shared a flat for years, we had just moved from our flat in Redcliffe Road, across the road, and we'd bought a whole house, which was terribly cheap because it had been bombed, but we'd just done it up, and had the roof mended. And I thought, "How awful to leave her with this big house the moment we moved in." And as we drove up to the house, she rushed out in floods of tears, and said, "I don't know how to tell you! I'm marrying Lance Sieveking tomorrow. How can I leave you alone in the house?" So neither of us left the other, we each went off at the same moment. And we just sold the house. As a matter of fact, to Norman Hepple, the RA, who still has it, I think.

So that's really ...

That's another wonderful thing that happened. We neither of us deserted the other, we parted at the same moment.

This must have seemed like an ... an omen, I suppose.

It was a wonderful omen, yes.

Yes. And so you came back, and you moved, at that point, into Durham Wharf?

We stayed, Julian and I stayed in Redcliffe Road for a month or two. I think he'd let Durham Wharf to somebody, and we waited for that man to go, that was it. And then we moved back into Durham Wharf and settled down to work.

So, at this point, 1950-51, you settled in to Durham Wharf. Did Julian have a painting in that Festival exhibition?

He did, yes.

It was called "Sixty paintings for '51."

"Sixty paintings for '51." And he painted his painting, and was very pleased to be included, and ...

May I just explain that this was an exhibition that was arranged by the Arts Council.

Yes.

And it meant that artists who had not been able to work on a very large scale, because of the shortage of canvas in the late forties and so on, were able, actually, to do quite large paintings for almost the first time since the War.

Yes. I think there was a size dictated. They were pretty big. Three foot by four, or something like that.

And even bigger.

Yes.

And they had this exhibition at the Festival, of sixty artists with their ... and it was a competition as well.

It was a competition, and there were prizes. And therefore, all the painters who were commissioned to do a painting, had to be photographed beforehand, so that the photographs and the articles would all be ready when the winners were announced. So, a photographer came down to photograph Julian and his painting, and he was almost stone deaf. And he photographed us together, in the garden and in the studio, and he wrote captions in his notebook, saying, "Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan in their garden." And "Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan in the studio." And Julian, said, "No, not Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan, we're not married." And he said, "That's right, Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan", because he couldn't hear a word we said. And after he'd gone, Julian said, "God! What shall we do? What if I win, and they say, 'Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan' in publicity, when we're not married. We'll have to get married", said Julian. So we did, and then when he didn't win a prize, he said, "There, you see, we needn't have got married!" But he was happy enough to be married, and so was I.

What painting did he do for that exhibition? I think it was "Blast Furnaces at Port Talbot", in South Wales. He did a very big painting of that, and I think that was the one, but I may be wrong, I'm not sure.

I wonder what happened to that. Did the Arts Council buy it, do you remember?

I don't remember.

No.

I'm not sure whether it was the blast furnace picture, I can't remember.

We can check that. So, 1951 you were married.

Yes.

And did you go away after you were married?

No. No, because we'd been together for two years. We just got married, and my friend, Maise Meiklejohn, who was now Lance Sieveking's wife, and Lance were our only guests at the wedding, because we thought we'd get married quietly. And they came to be witnesses, and they brought, as a wedding present, a two foot high magnolia plant. And after we came back from the wedding, the four of us planted it in the garden, and now it's about 30 feet high. It flowers fabulously. And we settled down to paint. And then the Festival of Britain came up. And we each had a mural to do, and I've described about those, haven't I.

Yes, you have, yes.

And that was a very exciting time. Life seemed to have started again, and we all met on the site, doing our work, and we enjoyed it immensely. And I think it was a kind of renaissance at the time.

It must have been something of a disappointment when the Labour Government, who had set that whole thing up, was voted out in the '51 Election, wasn't it.

It was, yes. It was very sad.

So, what, what happened next, I'm tempted to say.

Well, nothing very astonishing happened, except that we worked all the time. We made a great many friends, and met our old friends, and every summer, we went abroad, very often to stay with our friends, the Vivante's at Siena, where we had a wonderful room to work, and we used to go for a month, and travel all over Tuscany,

and we did a lot of travelling in, in that time, in Italy. And we also went to Mallorca, and to Crete, and to Sardinia. We, we went somewhere exciting every year, but nearly always back to Tuscany as well. And I think it was about that time that Julian started teaching at the Chelsea School of Art, so we were bound by school holidays, so it was always at the very hottest time of the year we went abroad, but we enjoyed that.

Travel and place became crucial, really, didn't they, to Julian's work and to some extent to yours.

Oh very much ... oh, very much to Julian's work. I think one of the great virtues of his painting, his landscape painting, is that he always picked up the atmosphere of a place, and translated it into his own sort of painting. So that although they were very much his handwriting, they also felt like Tuscany, or Sardinia, even when they were near abstract, they still seemed to have the flavour of the place. We did, as I say, we did a lot of travelling. And we started, at that time, going to Gozo. No, I think the first time we went to Gozo was in 1960. We also went to Russia in 1960, but we had friends who lent us a house in Gozo, and we went there, I suppose, at least six times, and got to be very fond of the landscape of that extraordinary island, and we got to know the coast very well. And we were both tremendously fond of swimming, and we used to swim every day, wherever we went. In fact, when we travelling through France, Julian always looked out on the map, a place for a picnic where we could swim at lunchtime, on a river, in a river. We used to swim in the Loire and the Seine, and all the rivers we could find. And he felt he hadn't had a real lunchtime picnic if we hadn't had a swim at the same time!

Did, what I'd like to ask you now, a little bit about. When you went to Gozo and ... which meant ... were you going to, that's Malta, isn't it?

Yes.

It's next to Malta.

Mmmm.

Did that mean that you would sometimes see Pasmore or not?

Well, we did ... we only went to see him once, because, I can't remember when he first went there.

I think it was about 1960.

Yes. Well, we only went to see him once. We were told, by people living there, that he had become rather a recluse, and didn't like being visited. But he had been a great friend of Julian's when he lived in Hammersmith. And so when we'd been about twice to Gozo, we wrote him a note and said could we come and see him? And he was amazingly welcoming, and friendly, and so was Wendy. And we went there to his wonderful house in Malta, and the 17 cats, and all that. They, they seemed to match ... their house was made of that wonderful Maltese pale sandstone. It was made out of various farm buildings, which they had converted and built on to. And there was a swimming pool, and these pale cream walls. And I remember they were both dressed in pale, as far as I remember, pale cream corduroy trousers, and sheepskin waistcoats. And they sort of melted into their background. And all the 17 cats kept on running up and down the walls, and appearing over the top! It was very memorable.

Of course, Victor still lives there.

Oh yes. Yes. I remember him saying to Julian, "I love living in Malta, because perspex is so cheap!"

Back in London, you became really, very much part of, I'm not going to call it the art world, you became very much the centre, I think, or very much part of, a world of artists and writers.

We were never the centre, but we knew ... Julian always used to say, when he was young, if you were a painter, you knew all the painters in London. And as we got older there were more and more and more painters, until we only knew a tiny group, many of whom were the ones we had known originally. We were certainly never the centre of any art movement or anything. But we knew a lot of painters, and we used to see them in their houses, or they here.

Well, this is because of, as much as anything else, it's to do with Julian's conviviality isn't it.

He was very convivial. He loved parties. He always said he was the "arch bitter ender". He always left last of everybody!

And, of course, this place, Durham Wharf, became famous during the fifties and the sixties, as, for ...

For the boat race parties.

Now, you must tell us ...

End of F1885 Side A

F1885 Side B

Tuesday, 7th May, 1991

Mary, on, it was Saturday, wasn't it, when we last spoke.

Yes.

We talked about all sorts of things, but we ended with you and Julian settled at Durham Wharf, and we were beginning to remember that a series of wonderful boat race parties that you gave, through the fifties and sixties, at the Wharf.

Yes, we did. It was a kind of spring festival, in a way, because all our neighbours, who were riverside dwellers had Boat Race parties, and people used to come to all of them in turn. We invited people and they came for a while, and then they wandered off to A.P. Herbert, or to the Lousadas or the Mitchisons, and joined in with other peoples' parties, and our party became immense. We always guessed there were about 300 people at it, and it was rather before the days of mass wine drinking, and we always had two barrels of beer from the brewery, which was down the road. And Julian always designed a card every year, which people seemed to make a collection of. I have seen in people's houses, eight, or ten or twelve different versions of boat race party cards, with some funny drawing on every one. And it was great fun. Our house is half way down the course, and as I said, we had, usually about 300 people. And I can remember some of the outstanding ones who came. A great many of Julian's friends from Cambridge, like William Empson and his wife, and his sons. And Kathleen Raine and her children. And the Bronowskis. And Julian Huxley and his wife and sons, and David Gascoyne, and Ceri and Frances Richards, Robert Medley, and Rupert Doone, Eileen Agar and her husband, the McWilliams, Bertrand Russell, Topolski and so on. There were a great many names of that sort, and also hundreds and hundreds of friends. And we also used to have, quite often, rather famous gate-crashers. And one who came every year was James Mason, the, the actor, and his daughter with the strange name of Portland. And every year he used to look in and say, "I'm a gate-crasher, may I come again?" And was quite charming!

And then some years, we had rather, rather sort of famous foreigners. There was that exiled King of Botswana called Seretse Kama, and he used to come with his English wife, and his two children. And during that time, we had great friends who were the Pakistani Ambassador, Pakistani High Commissioner and his wife, who were in London for many years, who had three beautiful daughters, and the middle one went to the Slade, and was always running to Julian for advice and help on her etching plates. And the youngest one, who was at school at that time, when she left school, she married the Crown Prince of Jordan. And they were all very friendly, loving people. The Akramola (?? sp.) family. And Julian and I always loved to remember that one year, when Oxford won, Ikramullah the father of the family, had been to Cambridge, and this little youngest daughter, who was about 12, burst into tears, and she said, "Oh, it's a disaster! My Daddy's university has not won." And her father put his arm round her and said, "My child, you must learn to bear affliction with courage"! Which seemed a wonderful answer when you've lost the Boat Race!

How did you find Seretse Kama? This would be during the period of his exile in London, wouldn't it.

Yes. Do you mean how did we meet him? Or how was he?

I really meant what sort of person.

Well, he was extremely friendly, easy. He seemed not too concerned about his exile. He was relaxed, and a very lovely man. We liked him very much.

He was a very brave man as well, wasn't he.

Very brave man. And then, when his exile ended, and he and his wife, Ruth, went back to Botswana, they became really wonderful broad-minded, very sort of beautiful leaders of their country. And she, Ruth, I believe, is still out there.

Yes. She is.

And he is dead.

What an extraordinary galaxy of people, really.

There were hundreds more who I'm sure I've forgotten, probably equally interesting, but I can't remember everybody who came.

But there are some people on that list which gives me the opportunity, really, to ask you about some of your friends. We've remarked earlier that it was a great gift of Julian's, friendship.

I think it was, yes. He loved all kinds of people, and didn't only have as his friends, fellow painters. He liked all, all sorts of people, and we had a very strange mixture.

This was very much in the tradition, in a sense, of his family, wasn't it.

Yes.

Of his father.

His father was an amazing friend-maker.

Yes. We've talked about his father, and that extraordinary circle of friends that he had.

Yes.

But, as time went by, you and Julian also gathered around you, the most remarkable circle of friends, and you still enjoy this, I know that.

We made, we made a lot of new friends, yes.

Can we talk about some of them? I'd like to ask you about Eileen Agar, particularly, partly because she was, of course, a surrealist comrade-in-arms of Julian's in the thirties.

She was. She was, yes.

Along with Penrose and Gascoyne.

Mmm.

Can you remember, Julian met her of course, I imagine, during the period of the ...

Of the surrealists.

Of the Exhibition.

Yes. I didn't meet her until I, I married Julian. But she was, and still is, she's very old, she's, I believe she's 90 something, and not very well. But she was beautiful to look at. Small and very pretty, and sparkly. And always was a surrealist, all her life. She never wavered from her surrealist work. And her house, wherever she lived, her surroundings always looked exactly like one of her paintings. Julian said, "I step into your house, Eileen, and I step into your painting." Because she had wonderful juxtaposition of objects around her house, and her pictures merged with her objects, and they merged with the furniture, and even her dining table looked like a surrealist painting! She was a very remarkable sparkling person.

She was married to a very extraordinary man, wasn't she.

To Joseph Bard. Yes. Who was Hungarian? Was he Hungarian?

I believe he was Hungarian.

Yes. Who was rather a dilettante fellow. I think she was very fond of him. As far as I remember, his passion in life was collecting stones, semi-precious stones, and early cut stones, and Roman heads cut in agate from rings. And he had a wonderful collection. Certainly not diamonds and emeralds, but cornelians and semi-precious stones. And very often they were card stones. They used to give them to his friends. He gave me a beautiful brooch, which was an ivory hand, and a black, I suppose it was jet, a black stone carved with the head of a Roman empress, which I had set in a ring.

Bard was a poet?

He was a poet, yes.

And, of course, he had edited, I think with Eileen's help, a magazine, I think, in the thirties.

I'd forgotten about that, yes.

I remember someone else telling me that his real genius was for conversation.

He was. Yes, he was brilliant, and funny, and extremely friendly. He used to hold forth at dinner parties, rather, but it was always worth listening to.

And, of course, your friendship with Eileen has lasted to this very day.

Which reminds me, I must ring her up! As soon as we've stopped speaking, I must ring her up, because I'm told she isn't very well.

Well, we'll talk about some of the other people on your, on that wonderful guest list. But it occurs to me that somebody you didn't mention, and I would have thought he might have come, and that was J.M. Richards.

Oh, always, yes. Jim Richards, yes.

Yes.

He came every year, very regularly, and later, I suppose in about the sixties, he married his second wife Kit Lewis, who is a painter, and they, they used to come every year. I see them regularly now.

But your friendship and Julian's friendship with Jim Richards goes back to before the War, doesn't it?

Julian's does. I don't think I met him again until I married Julian, and at that time, he was living a bachelor life. He had been married to Peggy Angus, who is a designer and a tile maker. She's still alive. And they had a son and a daughter. And then they were divorced years ago, and he was on his own for many years, and then he met and married Kit Lewis, and they're still together.

She had been married to Morland Lewis?

Morland Lewis, who was a friend of Julian's during the War. They were both in camouflage together, and Julian was very fond of him. And he wasn't killed, but he died, I think he died during the War. I don't know what he died of, but he, he ... it was a great sadness to Julian, because he was evidently a very nice man.

And a very good painter.

I can't honestly remember his work.

Well, I think he was a very good ...

Was he?

I suppose one might say a very promising painter, because he was quite young when he died.

Quite young, yes.

Richards, of course, was immensely influential as the editor of the Architectural Review, wasn't he.

Mmm.

And as the author of a number of books on ...

Yes.

... modernist architecture.

Yes. He was very knowledgeable, he is very knowledgeable. And for a long time he was the architectural man on The Times.

Did Julian have any great interest in architecture?

Well, he thought he did! When he was at school, he'd made up his mind he was going to be an architect. And he used to design, I still have some of them, awful kind of stockbroker Tudor mansions, with artificial half-timbering, and called them sort of "Sunset Close" and things like that! It was a strange aberration in his life, when what he was painting were these early industrial pictures he always did. But I don't think his passion for architecture lasted very long.

I just wondered. I brought it up simply because I knew that James Richards had been a friend for many many years.

Yes. Yes, but it was a professional friendship, they were just friends.

Who else now have we got on that list that you might tell us about?

Well, Humphrey Spender was somebody I haven't mentioned. He and his wife always came. I can't remember whether Stephen, his brother, and Natasha came, but I think they did. But Humphrey was part of Mass Observation, as we talked before about them all living in Bolton, with Tom Harrison. And Humphrey was the official photographer for Mass Observation. I think I said before, he took wonderful photographs of, of sort of mill workers houses with women bathing their babies by candlelight, and remarkable photographs. And then he went on, during the War, to be on the staff of Picture Post, and took again, wonderful photographs for Picture Post, and did air reconnaissance during the War.

He was, of course, during the thirties, during the period of Mass Observation, he was also a staff photographer for the Daily Mirror wasn't he?

Oh yes, he was.

As "Lensman".

That's right, yes. He was brilliant.

Those photographs of his have a ... they're more than documentary aren't they, I've always felt they have a great poetic quality.

Very good. And they've come back. He's now become famous again for his photographs. And he lectures a lot on photography, and has had a lot of those early photographs reprinted and they're around. And he does very well from them.

His first love for many years after the War, though, and really up until now, has been his painting, hasn't it.

He always wanted to be a painter, more than anything else. But, for years, he taught textile design at the Royal College. He ran the Textile Department, and he always, poor Humphrey, he always says he is in the wrong place at the wrong time! And one year he won the Duke of Edinburgh Award for the best textile of the year, and there

was a huge party given for the, this prize giving event. And everybody, everybody got invited to this reception, all except Humphrey, who was the man who had won the prize! And Humphrey said, "Well, that's just typical! That's what my life is always like!" He always says he's in the wrong place at the wrong time! But he's a dear friend, and I see him constantly. He was married, is married to a girl who was an actress when he married her, Pauline Wynn, and I think she was in the Royal, no, perhaps she wasn't in the Royal Shakespeare Company. She studied at Michel St. Denis theatre/studio school, and then they lived in the country always, so she couldn't really carry on her acting career. But over the years she's written several manuscripts for television. And she's a great authority on Thomas Hardy's poetry, and she still goes around, occasionally, with a friend who is also a great authority on Thomas Hardy, and gives recitals of his poetry.

Oh really!

Another surrealist from the thirties, with whom Julian would have had some contact then, and certainly became a great friend after the War, was McWilliam.

McWilliam has always been a great friend, and Beth. Again, I didn't know them until I married Julian. They were friends of his way back, and well, he still is, a very close friend, a lovely man.

Yes.

And so was Beth, who sadly died about three years ago, four years ago. But his, he still works constantly, doesn't he.

Oh yes, he's still very ...

He's had a wonderful exhibition at the Tate, how long ago? Two years ago?

Yes, in '89.

Yes. And never stops, although he's now over 80, is he not?

He's still making work. He's still making very ...

Very strong, beautiful work. Yes. A very dear friend.

And McWilliam, of course, was a close friend himself of the Richards, Ceri Richards and Frances Richards.

Yes. Great friends, yes.

I know that they, I know from personally that they had a very special place in Julian's heart, and your heart.

Very much so, yes.

I wonder if you could just tell us something about your remembrance of Ceri and Frances?

Well, I think one of the things Julian liked so much about Ceri was his passion for music, because Julian also had a passion for music, and played the, the oboe, from his schooldays. And Ceri was a very good pianist, wasn't he. Was he not?

Yes he was. He might have become a concert pianist as a young man.

And sometimes they played together.

Did they?

They played, I think only for fun at home, but Ceri and ... on the piano, and Julian on the oboe, had many happy sessions together. And Julian admired his work so much, and so did I. I thought he was a wonderful painter. And, of course, they lived in St.

Peter's Square, but that was before my time. I didn't know them there. I didn't, in fact, know them until they lived in, in, off the Fulham Road.

Edith Grove.

Edith Grove, yes.

In fact, you have a couple of rather wonderful drawings of his, haven't you.

I have, yes, of Ceri's.

Frances herself was a remarkable person, and a marvellous artist in her own right.

She was, yes. She was a very special character, amusing and very ... what shall I say? She knew her own value well.

Yes.

Didn't she.

She was very direct.

Very direct. And I always felt she, a little bit, felt she was overshadowed by Ceri. Is that unfair or not?

I think maybe she did, although she had a very real sense of his worth as an artist.

Oh, she had.

And I don't think she ever, I don't think she resented it, but I think she did feel that she had given up her own work.

A lot for him, yes.

To a very great extent.

I think she did. But she didn't resent it at all.

I don't have the sense that she resented it a great deal.

No. And after Ceri died, she blossomed out, illustrating those books of poetry.

Yes. But, of course, she did a lot of very good paintings.

Yes.

And quite a lot of work after Ceri died, so she flowered in a way as an artist.

Yes she did. Oh yes, she had a very interesting time. I think she felt she was on her own, and was prepared to get on with her work, and it was very beautiful. And when she came to live with you and Rhiannon, we used to see her quite often.

Yes.

She used to come round here and have a drink, and bring us little books of poetry.

Turning back now, from that, to other things, it occurred to me that when we had talked about surrealism and the way in which that had led to Mass Observation, because a sort of belief in the value of every person is a characteristic of both surrealism, and was implicit in the operation of Mass Observation.

Yes.

And in any case, both, there are aspects of both of those movements that would have attracted the, the political humanism of Julian.

Mmmm.

And he became involved, I know, in another operation that grew out of that set of circumstances, and that's the Artists International Association.

Yes.

Now, we haven't spoken about that, and I wonder if you can remember anything about that? Did Julian continue to support and work for the Artists International Association after the War?

Yes. Oh yes, he did, yes. He was on the Committee for a long time. I think it was most, well, when I got into it with Julian, it was more or less organised by Diana Uhlman, who was ...

That's Fred Uhlman's wife?

Fred Uhlman's wife. Who was not a painter, but she was very, tremendously eager to promote the Artists International. And they had that little gallery in Lisle Street, off Shaftesbury Avenue, and constantly put on exhibitions. And as far as I remember, they used to get painters from overseas to show there. Well, it was called Artists International. And it was quite political, it was very ... they were, all the members were very Left-wing, and they used to get speakers from France, and Italy, to come and give talks to the members. I remember, not that he was a foreigner at all, but I remember Victor Pasmore giving a talk there. I think he found public speaking quite a problem, and he, you know, he sort of hung about a bit. But it was interesting, what he said.

When would that be, Mary, can you remember?

About '51, '52, I should think. But Julian was very interested in the Artists International and he, you know, he was always a Socialist himself.

And he was, it was through that, through that organisation, that he was involved in the organising of the famous debate, wasn't it, between the surrealists and the realists, towards the end of the thirties? Did you know about that?

I don't remember about that.

Which Coldstream took part in.

Really?

Yes.

Oh, I don't remember that.

And then after the War, with the AIA, you must have known the three James's then? James Boswell, and James Fitton, were they not involved at that time?

Mmmm. I think they, they were all members, I think. I knew James Fitton very well, and I never, well hardly, well, I don't think I ever met James Boswell.

Oh really.

And who was the third?

Now, who was the third James? There were three James - Fitton, Boswell, and ... well,

I don't know who the third was.

Well, we'll remember it later.

Another painter?

Yes.

Yes.

But he was also deeply involved in the organisation of the AIA.

Yes. I wonder ...

Was Paul Hogarth at all involved at that time?

I don't remember whether he was or not. He might have been. I think the two Roberts were, Robert Colquhoun, and Robert MacBryde. As far as I remember they showed there. Carel Weight must have been a member, I remember he showed there.

Well, lots of people were. We must talk a bit about Carel Weight in a moment.

Oh we will, yes.

But Gerald Marks, do you remember him? He showed with the AIA.

Yes. My memory of the ...

and was the Secretary for a while.

He was, was he?

Yes.

I'm a little, I mean, I remember the, the gallery, and I remember going to exhibitions there, but my memory of what went on is rather, slightly dim. And I was never on the Committee, so I didn't hear the sort of great arguments that went on. But Julian was always interested in it. But I don't remember the members, and I can't really tell you much about the AIA really. Diana Uhlman was splendid. She gave up so much

time to organising exhibitions, and running the place. And they were always desperately short of money, and could hardly pay the rent.

But, of course, in the late forties, and the early fifties, there were so few places where artists could show, that it was actually very significant to have a small gallery like that.

Oh it was, it was wonderful, yes. Yes, it was splendid. I don't know how they kept going, but I think it was ... Diana was good at getting volunteers to come and sit in the gallery, and nobody got paid anything, I'm sure. They were very devoted.

Well, we're coming, I think to the end of this tape, so we'll pause here.

End of F1885 Side B

F1886 Side A

Julian had a great love of France, and of Paris, we know, and I know that you've shared that with him.

Mmmm.

And of things French. And, of course, his own art was, certainly during the forties, I think, very deeply influenced by French painting. This was, to some extent, stimulated, wasn't it, by his friendship with Alf Green?

Alf Green was an Englishman who lived on a barge here, on the Thames, outside our window, really. For a long time he had this beautiful Thames barge, which he used to sail sometimes. It was a properly rigged Thames barge. And he lived there with his wife and three children. And they were absolutely our closest neighbours because they were just outside our window. And he was rather a remarkable man. He was quite a good painter, and he started a Society, which was in a rather beautiful house in St. John's Wood, called the Anglo-French Arts Centre. And they had exhibitions and concerts and a restaurant where you could eat, and almost immediately after the War, he started getting relays of very eminent Frenchman over from Paris, to talk at his Anglo-French Arts Centre, and he created a very marvellous, small Centre for painting and particularly for French and English people to meet, who were painters. It was, it was a very lovely place, the Anglo-French Arts Centre. And entirely started and run by this man, Alf Green. Eventually, he sailed his boat to Paris, but awful. On the way, it sank on a sand bank, and he lost his grand piano, and all his paintings and all his books. But he got to ... he went to Paris, he was rescued and went to Paris, and got another boat, and he lived, for years, on the Seine in Paris, on the Quai des Invalides, and became a Frenchman practically. And he had a summer house in the Luberon, in a ruined village. There were two or three houses which had been rebuilt. It was ruined from years back. And we were lent another little cottage in that village, for two summers running, and so, again, we were close next-door neighbours of Alf Green and his wife. So we knew that man very well. And we took, actually, we took Carel Weight on those two holidays - Julian and I and Carel stayed there. It was a

very happy time, both summers. Alf Green now lives in Paris still, with his wife, and comes over sometimes. Has quite successful exhibitions. But he was quite an important figure in Julian's life from the painting point of view, because he loved painting, he loved talking about it, a painter himself. And Julian rather admired this bohemian life on a huge Thames barge, with a grand piano, which he played all the time. And in a way, I think Alf Green was something quite important in Julian's life, and in mine too, really.

When would this be that you went to stay with him in France?

Oh, well, we stayed in his village, in the cottage that we were lent by an English architect, but it was in the same village as Alf.

But when?

Now, when was it? My stepson, Philip, was about 17, and he is now 45, so ...

We're talking about the fifties.

The fifties. About in the fifties, yes. It was an absolutely idyllic place, and we loved staying there, and painting there.

And you were with Carel Weight on a couple of occasions?

We invited Carel Weight on both holidays, to stay with us.

Would this be because you were, at that time, teaching at the Royal College?

We were, we were teaching at the Royal College. In fact, it must have been after 1956, I think, because that was when I started teaching at the College. Julian had been there before, and I'm sure I was already teaching with Carel when we went there. And Carel was lovely company. Julian and I used to go out in the intense heat and make quick drawings, and then go back into our cold, cool stone house and paint.

And Carel would stand in the blazing sun all day with his rickety little easel, painting out of doors.

Pleine air?

Absolutely, yes.

And was he at that time a professor?

Yes, he was.

Professor of Painting.

Professor of Painting at the Royal College, yes.

We're going to talk a bit about Royal College days, I think, in a bit, but I wanted just to continue on the French theme, because, after the War, Julian went back to Paris on a number of occasions, and I think he actually had an exhibition in Paris, didn't he?

He did. He had an exhibition, and he was very happy because Braque came to his private view, and said how much he liked Julian's painting, and asked him home to his studio. I don't know how many times they met after that, but ... not a great deal, but Julian was terribly thrilled with that encounter, because he was a great and passionate admirer of Braque.

And I don't think Braque was an easy man to please.

I believe he wasn't. I didn't meet him, but I don't suppose he would have bothered to approach Julian and say he liked his painting if he hadn't. But actually, Julian had other times with Braque because, I think we've talked about Varda, and the house in Cassis, haven't we.

Yes.

Before the War.

Yes.

When Julian used to go and stay with a great many friends, including, well, his chief friend at that time, who had this house, was the Greek painter Varda, and Braque used to come and stay in the house with Madame Braque, and Julian said he used to spend the whole summer holidays trying to teach Madam Braque to swim, with little blown up water wings, and holding her chin up, but she never really learnt! So he did, in a vague way, know Braque fairly well.

Yes.

But a person who was quite important in his life was a French doctor he met in Paris, who was a village doctor, with his wife, who was also a doctor, in a very small village, near the village where Colette was born and brought up, in the Yonne, most beautiful, rolling countryside.

How do you spell that?

Y O N N E. Near Auxerre, absolutely in slap in the middle of France, as far from the coast as you can get. And huge fields of sunflowers and corn, and beautiful little villages. And this husband and wife were the doctors for, oh, 10 or 15 villages. And although they didn't have thousands of patients, they were touring between villages all the time, and they invited Julian to go and stay. And they had this little prim doctor's house, in this very small village, and not a picture in sight. And Julian started painting there. And they were absolutely amazed and intrigued, and thrilled with his painting. And Julian introduced them to other painters, and they started, then, looking about the countryside for painters. And it was fairly close to Vezelaye and Avallon, which were rather sort of painterly centres. And they used to meet painters there, and started buying their work, and sculptors. And in no time at all, their house was full of wonderful pictures. And Julian introduced them to Vera da Silva, and

they bought her work, which wasn't in the millions in those days, it was quite affordable. And most of their patients were farm-hands, and local farm workers. And these rough chaps used to come and sit in the waiting room at the surgery, surrounded by abstract paintings from ceiling to floor! And they must have been absolutely bowled over. And it changed the life of this couple. They, they did their doctoring, of course, very well, but their whole passion was centred on painting, and meeting painters, and having painters to stay. And they formed a sort of art colony in the middle of France, all because Julian went to stay with them. It's very touching.

Yes, it's so much at one, isn't it, with a great deal of what Julian was about. It, the story reminds me of the Ashington Miners, which we talked about ...

Rather like that, yes.

That it's something very deep in him, the belief that, again, it's a surrealist belief, that everybody is an artist.

That sort of thing. I think it is.

Or everybody can love art.

Or everybody can appreciate art, and be brought into it, in the brotherhood of painters, really.

I was reading a Tom Harrison thing about the Ashington Miners the other day, in which he made the statement, "Everybody can paint."

I think that's going a bit far! I don't think everybody can paint. But everybody can enjoy painting, don't you think so?

Yes. Yes. That's what they really meant. And that the insight that comes from that is something that is possible for everybody.

Well, after I settled with Julian, in fact, on our way home from Sicily in 1949, Julian said, "We must go and stay with my friends, the doctors." And we did. We wrote to them from Sicily, and we turned up, and they were tremendously welcoming and nice. And that was the first of dozens of visits there. We never went through France without going to stay with them. And every time, they had more and more paintings, and their garden was full of sculpture, and they always had painters around. It was quite extraordinary. And one wonderful thing happened. There was ... they took us, one day, to a most beautiful mediaeval castle, a chateau like the chateaux in the pictures of the "Tres Riches Heures", the Duc du Berry, with a turret at each corner, and a huge courtyard in the middle.

Yes.

And this castle had been empty for as long as they could remember, but it was their favourite place to go and have a picnic. It was open, you could walk through the great archway, across the drawbridge, there was a moat, and into this great courtyard, and nobody there. And we went there one day, we were with them on this occasion, and there was a frightfully handsome Frenchman and his wife and several children. And Georges, our friend, the doctor, almost said, "What are you doing here? This place is mine." It wasn't his at all, but he had sort of adopted it over the years. And this man said, "I've bought it. It's ours." And at first Georges and his wife Paulette were appalled. They felt, "we've lost our Paradise." But immediately they made tremendous friends. This man was called Pierrelot, and he'd been an actor, and his wife was a singer, and they had decided to retire from public life, and he became a potter, and they turned this amazing chateau into the most wonderful house, with huge bits of wooden furniture, great tables about twenty feet long, where you could sit hundreds of people. And every summer, they had a summer school for potters, and a summer school for musicians. And it became a perfect haven for students from all over France, and some from England. And we went there once when the music school was on, and Julian and I always remembered, it was sort of getting dark, before supper time, and there was a boy lying flat on his back, playing Faure on his flute, on the grass. And then we all had supper with the students, who were music students that time. And then we went a week later with them, and they were pottery

students, and Julian knew quite a lot about pottery, because his first wife had been a potter. And Georges said, well, not Georges, Pierrelot who owned the place, said, "When we've had supper, will you give a talk to the students about glazes?" And Julian was rather appalled, because he did speak good French, but to suddenly give a lecture to 30 students on glazes, out of the blue, off the top of his head, was something rather difficult. But he did it beautifully, and the students were amazed, and asked him many questions, in all kinds of French accents. And it was a wonderful evening. I remember it so well. And these two lived there. They had, well, some of their children were babies when we first met them, the Pierrelot family, but they, they grew up, and the eldest son settled, they bought a farm nearby, and he settled there as a farmer, and is still there, I believe. And then beautiful Pierrelot died, but a long time later. And I think Madam Pierrelot still lives there. I've been there. Julian and I went there with Georges and Paulette, after Pierrelot died, and she was there, giving singing lessons. So it became another wonderful arts centre. And part of this great chateau they made into a gallery. And ever year, they had, in the summer, they had exhibitions, and George and Pierrelot arranged the most wonderful exhibition for Vieira da Silva there.

Oh really.

And it was marvellous, in this great, huge stone building.

It must have looked beautiful.

It was wonderful. The chateau was called Rattigny, and was such a marvellous place.

How do you spell that?

R A T T I G N E Y. So that was a lovely time in our lives. And we've been to stay with Paulette since Georges died, which was about, perhaps 10 years ago. She still lives in her little village. She's retired from being a doctor. But the man who came to take over, is a charming, youngish doctor, with his wife, who lectures in Auxerre,

which is not far away. And three children. And they built themselves a beautiful house in the village, a really lovely modern house. And, having never looked at a picture before they came there, the house is now full of modern paintings. And this is the doctor that's taken over from Georges.

Really.

So it's spreading.

When you mentioned the chateau being like those,

The Duc du Berry.

Duc du Berry chateaux in the, in the Tres Riches Heures... it made me think of, it put me to thinking of Julian's painting really, because it occurred to me that a lot of his painting, especially France, and of Italy, is the painting of landscape with figures.

Yes.

And, of course, those wonderful Limburg brothers' paintings of the Duc du Berry chateaux.

Are always the seasons, or something?

Are always the seasons, and are always figures in fields, with their oxen or ...

It's true, yes, they are. And that was one of Julian's favourite subjects. He painted there a great deal. Georges made us a studio in ... it was a ... it was a charming little French, obviously it had always been the doctor's house in the village, and at the back, there were stables, which is now the garage where they keep their two cars. And above was a sort of loft, which he turned into a bedroom and a studio. And put two easels there for us to work. It was so charming, the way they used to welcome us when, when we went there. And one day, we went, and on one of the easels was an

unlabelled bottled of some unidentified liquid, and Julian thought, "Oh, dear Georges, he's put me some turps." And he took the cork out, and it was the most wonderful, fruity smell. And it was home-made brandy, you know, vin, well, not vin, what is it called when you ... there was a man who used to come round the villages with a little still, which he was allowed to, it was legal in France, and all the local people came to him with however many they'd got, 20 kilos of plums or whatever, and he made them the equivalent amount of drink from their plums, and they paid him a very small sum. So they always had this "Marc" - M A R C - Marc. It was a wonderful home-made brandy, usually plum brandy. And Georges said, "Well, I think it will inspire you to start a picture." And there was this lovely bottle of drink sitting on his easel. It was rather sweet.

One gets the feeling, with Julian's paintings, of, as I said, throughout his life, the paintings are really about working places, working landscapes, aren't they.

Yes. Either industrial landscapes, or country.

Or country, but agricultural, and often with oxen, or tractors or ...

Like that wonderful house we used to stay in in Italy, where they said "Nobody has ever made any money out of the oxen, except Julian!"

And that, plus ... for Julian, seems to have been very important. A sense of a living place, you know, a place where people are working and that sort of thing.

Yes.

That's why this stretch was so marvellous for him, because there was always activity, people playing, or earlier on, of course, people working around here.

Oh yes, until quite lately, the barges that went by, and the tugs, were carrying timber, usually, or coal.

Going up as far as Brentford and Isleworth, and so on.

Yes. Yes. Going up to the canal, the Grand Union Canal.

And when that, that seems also to be important to be combined with him, with some sort of personal feeling, or love, for the actual site.

Well, for what they did, or what people did, I think, yes.

Yes. Absolutely. But also a feeling for the place in a personal way.

Yes. Very much. I always thought one of his great talents, as a painter, was the essence of the place. They always looked like Julian's, but they also looked like India, or Sicily, or the countryside in France, or the industrial landscape in Stoke-on-Trent. They always, he always sucked up the flavour of wherever he was. Don't you think so?

Oh, absolutely. And in the later paintings, I think, where he was ... he would use very simple colour schemes, you know, perhaps two or three really, single colours, always there was some feeling for the place and the colour in which he ...

Very much. Very much so, yes.

So, France. Terrifically important to, to you both.

Yes. Very, because although I ...

And for your painting, I may say so, as well.

I think so, yes. I did, I did paint there a great deal. And although, as I've said before, we went every year, for a great many years, to our friends outside Siena, in Tuscany, we always drove there, so we always stopped off with our doctors on the way. And, driving right across France, you know, we got to know the country very well. And we

always had a picnic at lunchtime, and Julian would never stop for lunch until we found both the perfect place to picnic, and a river to swim in.

Yes.

I think I've told you that.

I think we've talked about that, yes.

So sometimes lunch came at 4 o'clock, or even 5, because we hadn't found the right place!

And I think we spoke also, last time, about Italy, because we talked a bit about Siena.

We did. Yes.

And painting in Tuscany. India.

India, have we not talked about India?

We've never spoken about India.

No. Well, we only went to India once, which was about 19 ... well, it was about 22 years ago, 23 years go. I think it must have been before Julian had his illness which knocked out his speech, I'm almost sure it was. We were invited to stay with John Freeman, who, at that time the British High Commissioner in India, and his wife, Catherine, who was a friend of ours anyway, we knew her before she married Freeman. And we knew him before, too, so when they came together, they were already friends. And ... well, they invited us, so we accepted. We thought it was a wonderful chance to see India. And it really was a great adventure. It was wonderful. We went in the middle of the winter. In fact, we were in Delhi for Christmas. So the time, it was delicious, coolish at night, in the evenings, lovely in the daytime. And, using Delhi as our base, we went all over India, well, not North,

because it was under snow. We couldn't go to Nepal, or the foothills of the Himalayas, because it was too difficult to travel. But we went all down the coast of Orissa, and to Bhubaneswar and to Agra, and Jaipur, Udaipur, well just a list of names, but we went right down to Madras, to Mahabalipuram and we saw the most wonderful things. We went to Fatehpur Sikri, which is that great Moslem city, which was built, I think, about the same time as the Taj Mahal, and a huge wonderful city, with a great library, and a palace, and a Government House. And after it had been inhabited by the Mogul Emperors for a very short time, it was abandoned, and they think, people think it was because the water supply disappeared. But it's been preserved as a sort of monument to Mogul architecture. And it's wonderful. And we were told that there would be nobody there but a guide, because it's always empty, they said. But we happened to go on the day of the Festival of Eed, which I think is at the end of Ramadan, and it's a tremendous centre for Moslems, on this one day in the year. So, instead of being totally empty, it was absolutely packed with Moslems who came there to feast and enjoy themselves at the end of Ramadan. And there were roundabouts, and snake charmers, and all sorts of wonderful food being sold in the streets. And we were the only Europeans there. There was Julian and me, and Catherine Freeman. And we all stood about two feet above the crowd, because they were all rather small, and Julian was six foot four, and Catherine and I were not small! And ... but they were all, we thought they might resent us being there, but they were terribly friendly. And Julian had an absolute horror of snakes. And we were walking through this milling crowd, and suddenly a man opened a basket, and out came a cobra. And he tried to hand it to Julian to hold. And Julian sort of fainted in my arms, practically! And a friend of his said, "Put it back in the basket. The Sahib fears the serpent"! The Sahib did fear the serpent! So it was stuffed back into its basket again! But it was a wonderful, wonderful occasion, that. And we also went, which was near there, to Bharatpur, which is this wonderful, the most wonderful bird sanctuary in, in the world, with fantastic birds. And it's the only place where Siberian cranes come when they, they, they migrate from, from Siberia, in the winter, and come to Bharatpur, which is the only place Siberian cranes are ever seen outside Siberia. And they arrived the day we got there - all flying in - these enormous white cranes.

These are examples, aren't they, of your wonderful timing.

Well, yes, in a way. I, I have such luck over things like that, I really do. It was a very strange visit, because the Maharajah of Bharatpur was a man with a very bad reputation. He was said to have murdered a good many Hindus at the time of partition, and he invited the Freemans to stay, and John, who was a man of great moral upstanding behaviour, in those days, said, "I wouldn't stay with that man for anything." And Catherine said, "Oh, I would, it would be quite an adventure. Come on, we'll go." And so Julian and she and I went to stay with this chap.

A rather sinister man.

Well, he had a bad reputation. And there he lived, in the sort of iced sugar cake palace, and the palace had whole rooms full of stuffed tigers and things. I mean, really, it had been awful. He must have shot hundreds of tigers. And he said, "Oh, I used to have a tame tiger, but it bit off the head of my gardener's daughter, so we had to get rid of

it." And we had a huge bedroom with little piles of mothballs at intervals, and, and terrible rat holes, and moth holes, around, inside the circle of mothballs. And a sort of brown lake round the loo. It was pretty shabby, but very grand shabby. And at five to eight, he said ...

End of F1886 Side A

F1886 Side B

We were talking, Mary, about the ...

The Maharajah of Bharatpur.

Yes.

And what a wicked old thing he was. He wasn't old. He was more like 45 or something. And he said, "Dinner at eight, and full evening dress please, sir", to Julian. And we dashed to this huge shabby, moth-eaten bedroom, changed in a flash, and Julian had a beautiful new evening shirt, because we'd been warned that we had to dress up for him. And it had, it was called a "Double Two" shirt, and it had gold cuff-links, made of cardboard, and I said, "Quick, quick! We must put your cuff-links in, and Julian said, "Oh, he'll never notice those cardboard ones, we'll leave them in." Of course, we were terrified of being late for dinner. I threw on an evening dress, and we dashed through all these rooms full of stuffed tigers, and rushed into the great reception room, where we'd been before, and there was he, five minutes later, in a gold, sort of wrap-around dress to the floor, and a gold turban, and diamonds on every finger. And he started pouring out great ... huge tumblers full of whiskey, although he wasn't supposed to drink, being a Moslem, and Catherine Freeman who was with us, was all dressed up. And he talked and talked and talked, and he said, "Honestly. I don't know how to make ends meet." And he was constantly picking up ... taking off his diamond rings, and tossing them in the air, and catching them. And Catherine said, "Well, Your Highness, dear, why don't you sell a few of these?" as she caught one as it came down. And he said, "Oh no, family heirlooms. I couldn't sell my diamonds." And he told us how he'd got three daughters and a son. And the son was the youngest, and was only six, but his wife, he said, "was a very naughty girl, and she'd sent him", he'd sent her home to where she came from, because she was very naughty, "So I have the four children here." And we said, "Well, and the little boy came in, with an entourage of other little boys, and he was a very bossy little child, and sort of taking swipes at his little friends. And then we said, "Can we see the girls?" "Oh no. They're just girls. They're upstairs." And Catherine said, "We

want to see your daughters, Maharajah." So, "Oh well, all right", he said, and he sent for these three poor little cowering girls, who were about eight, and IO and I2, and there was not one single female servant in the house. These three little girls were looked after by menservants, and he was mad about his son, and didn't care about the three little girls. Anyway, having said we must be ready for dinner by, eight, dinner was served at I2 o'clock at night, and we'd been drinking all that time, and he was getting more and more boisterous, in his gold lame and his diamonds. And we had an enormous dinner, with three sort of savages, with turbans and bare feet, who waited on us for dinner. And no knives or forks. We ate with our hands. And some of the food was delicious, and some was quite disgusting, and you never knew what the next mouthful was going to be like. Anyway, it was a very strange evening. Very odd. And very savage, in a way. And savage grandeur, you know. And when we were going to bed, he said, "I so well understand your English ways. I went to Bryanston School." We couldn't believe this awful, glorious creature, in his gold lame and a turban, had worn grey flannel shorts, and a grey jersey, and been to Bryanston School. It was too unbelievable. But he had.

I can believe that. And, before the last tape ended, you were just telling us about the bedroom, and circles of mothballs.

Well, there were sort of rat holes in the carpet

We were talking about ...

The bedroom. Yes, the bedroom was enormous. And sort of grand, but very shabby. And all through the night, there were hyenas howling round the house, in packs. It was very frightening. They started to sort of scream, howl and scream. And it rose to a great crescendo and then died away, and just as you got back to sleep, they started howling and screaming again. It was really very sinister. But he told us we must be up at six the next morning, to see the birds, when they, you know, as they were waking up, which was quite right. And the park was mostly swamp, so there were wonderful water birds. And, as I've told you, these Siberian cranes had just arrived. And we were in his Land-Rover. He, he didn't get up. We didn't see him

next morning, but he had a driver, and the Land-Rover, and we saw these absolutely wonderful, wonderful birds. And people come from all over the world to his bird sanctuary, because it's so beautiful. Anyway, that was the whole of our time with him, because we got back and had breakfast, and there he was, dressed in his golfing suit again, or whatever it was. And we said goodbye, and left. And that was the whole of our visit to Bharatpur, but it was well worth it, partly because it was so bizarre, and partly because the birds were so wonderful.

I want to change the subject again, Mary, now, very abruptly. I want to come back to London, and to the Royal College. Julian taught at Chelsea, didn't he.

He taught at Chelsea first, and then he was asked to move on to the Royal College, I suppose, in about 1950, no, not as early as that, more like '54 I should think. And he was in the Etching School, teaching etching. And then, in 1956, I was asked to join the Painting School. So we were both teaching there. As far as I remember, we each did two days a week, and I don't think we went on the same day, so we weren't overlapping very much. But it was very ... Julian had a, a happy time, and very good students. And I did too. And the Painting School, in my day, was very friendly and nice. And Carel Weight was the Professor of Painting, and the Senior Tutor was Roger de Grey, and then there was Robert Buhler, and Ruskin Spear, and Colin Hayes, and Donald Hamilton-Fraser, and that lovely old man that lived at Strand-on-the-Green, whose name I have forgotten, I'll remember soon. And Leonard Rosoman. That was all, I think. And we had a wonderful time, and I hope the students did too. We enjoyed it very much. And it was at the time of the emergence of Pop Art. And we had some very extraordinary students. I mean, our ... our chief claim to fame was that we both taught David Hockney. I taught him painting, and Julian taught him etching.

Yes, it was the years of a very brilliant generation.

Yes.

David Hockney was there for a time.

Hockney, and Kitaj.

Peter Blake?

No, Peter Blake had come and gone. He was older. Derek ... Derek Boshier.

Patrick Procktor?

No. He'd come and gone. Derek Boshier, Patrick Caulfield, Alan Jones, a boy called Peter Philips who I believe is doing very well.

Yes. Yes.

Those were our chief stars in the Painting School. And it was a very extraordinary time, because they were ...

Frank Bowling was there, wasn't he?

Frank Bowling was there. I had quite a time with Frank Bowling because he had come, he rather forced ... forced us all to have him. He was living in Bristol at the time, and he wrote to Carel Weight, who he'd never met, and said, "If you don't take me into the Painting School, I will throw myself from the Suspension Bridge." So Carel, being very kind, took him. And he was excellent as a painter. He was really very good. And finally, when they all left, when David Hockney got the gold medal for Best Painter of the Year, Frank Bowling got the silver medal, second best. But he refused to have a male tutor. The students were all divided up into groups of about 12, and each group had a tutor for a year, and then you got, the next year, you got another 12 students. But I had Frank Bowling for all his three years, because I was the only female on the staff, and he refused to have a male tutor. So I tutored him all the time he was there. And he was very autocratic, and used to say his pictures were too big to bring in to College, so I must go to Lavender Hill, or Putney, or wherever he

was living, to see his work at home. And, which I did. He was quite a frightening fellow at that time. And he was so naughty with the students, and endless affairs.

And he, in fact, married Paddy Kitchen, didn't he?

He married Paddy Kitchen, who was the Registrar at the time, who told me, two weeks before, that she thought he was quite awful, and I must deal with him. And the next thing she said to me was, "I'm marrying him." And she did. And they had a son called Dan, who is a very successful novelist now. And he had many children by other students, and one of them is now a senior member of Scotland Yard! Is that right?

I think that quite possibly is.

And they're all doing well. He's had, they're all sons, he didn't have any daughters.

Bowling himself is doing well, in some respects. The Arts Council has just bought a ... a large painting.

Yes. He does better, really, in New York, than he does in London, I think.

He has done. He went, of course, to New York, and, in many ways, his painting is a sort of bridge between British painting, or English painting, I would say, in some respects, and, and New York painting.

Mmm. Mmm. I find his painting disappointing after the work he was doing at the College, which I admired immensely. And I find it rather formless and a bit empty now. But I don't think everybody feels that. But I don't care for it now, and I used to like it very much.

Now, what about Hockney? How did you find ... how was Hockney as a student?

Well, Hockney was always his own man. But always nice, he was a charming, friendly student. But, you couldn't teach him anything, because he knew what he was doing, and he did it, and he would talk to you about his painting. But other students used to come and ask for advice, and David Hockney never did that. He always had his own idea, and got on with it. And I think, in some ways, his painting from the College is the best he ever did. He learnt a lot from Ron Kitaj who was his great friend, and Ron was much older than the other students. He'd been in, he came from New York, as far as I remember, and I first met him when I was a Visiting Tutor at the Ruskin School at Oxford. He went there when he came to England, having been a painter in New York for some time. Then he came to the Royal College and, I may be wrong, but I think he might have been ten years older than David, he certainly was a good deal older, and David learnt a lot from him, and they were really great friends. And David was a great success. Everybody loved him. I remember, when he arrived at the College from Bradford, he had pitch black hair, and quite early on, he made enough money out of his painting, to go to America in the holidays. And when he came back, his hair was bright gold. And he'd learnt how to dye it gold in Hollywood, or in, in New York, I think. I don't think he'd got to California that first trip. And he was the first person that Julian ever saw with a Walkman. I don't think they were called Walkmans in those days. But he came into class, Julian's etching class, with plugs in his ears, and wires, and a sort of battery pinned to his chest, and Julian said, "Oh, poor David! Are you deaf?" He thought it was a very complicated hearing aid. And David said, "No, I'm not deaf. It's the Light Programme." And Julian had never seen anything like it, nor had any of us! And, alas, I'm afraid, having listened to the Light Programme ever since, he's now extremely deaf, and I should think it's because he's been playing loud music in his ears ever since he was a student.

Really.

But he was very popular, very nice, and got on with his work. He worked hard, produced some wonderfully amusing paintings, and very good ones, serious.

Now, of course, he's a marvellous print-maker, and he learnt a great deal, I think, didn't he, from Julian.

I think he did. He came to Julian's classes and, for a year or two after he left, whenever he'd done a new print, he used to come down here and say to Julian, "What do you think of that?" And Julian was very pleased that he came and asked his advice. But that didn't last long, because he became, almost immediately, successful and famous, and was in America more than he was in England, I think.

How far do you think Julian's teaching ... was Julian the head of print-making?

He wasn't the head. Eddie La Dell was the head of print-making, because Julian didn't want to work full-time, and Eddie said he didn't mind working full-time. So Eddie was supposed to be running the Department, but he got ill, and was hardly ever in at one time, and poor Julian, who was supposed to be only working two days a week, was working full-time, doing Eddie's work. And he was very worried and harrassed by it, because he wasn't in a position to give orders on, you know, on a big scale, and shouldn't have been there, but he was there every day, seeing that there were enough etching plates, and acid and ink, and all the things that weren't really his, his responsibility. And then, in 1963, he was struck down by this terrible virus infection of the brain, which was akin to meningitis, and I think it was caused by stress.

Really?

I really have always thought that. And his doctor said it's a stress-related disease. It was never given an actual name, but they said it's akin to meningitis. And he was just suddenly struck down one day, and couldn't see or speak, or hardly move. And he was rushed into hospital, and, after about three days, his sight came back. And then his speech gradually got better, and his co-ordination improved. But they couldn't do anything for him. He just lay in hospital. And, after about three weeks, he came home. And he had a speech therapist, but that didn't help. Just, over the years, I think speech did gradually improve. People who hadn't seen him for, for a

long time, usually said, "He's talking better than he was." But he never, never, all his life, got over that speech impediment.

No, he always had a difficulty.

You didn't know him before, did you?

No.

No. But it's rather sad, because before that, he was an excellent lecturer. And when he was at Chelsea, he did a constant course of Art History lectures, once a week, with Brian Robb, who was a great friend of his. And alternate weeks, they put in each other's slides, or gave the lecture. And they worked out the whole course of lectures between them, starting with, as far as I remember, starting with, probably mediieval painting, and right up to the present day. And they got on wonderfully well together, and loved doing each other's slides, and they always went to the local pub and had a drink afterwards, and they always said, you know, discussed the world together.

Yes, of course.

And then he couldn't lecture any more after his illness.

I mean, he had taught and lectured a great deal through his life, hadn't he.

Yes.

As a camouflage officer ...

He was doing it then, yes. And it must have been a terrific ...

It was a great blow to him, I think, yes. He taught very well.

If I may say so, he talked, I knew him after that, and in spite of the impediment, he still talked very well.

Talked well.

He was wonderfully animated, and his memory was so extraordinary.

Yes. He was slow. You had to wait for him to get words out, but he was not bad, was he. His speech wasn't bad. And he stopped teaching then. Of course, he was very ill for about six months and never taught again. He couldn't. And I left, I did slightly cling on at the College for another six months myself, and then left, because he really couldn't be left on his own, for whole days at a stretch.

Were you teaching at the College in 1967 when, I think it was '67, when Private View was published? Because, of course, you feature in a photograph, of lunch at the College, but I rather feel you were a guest at that time.

Well, I left in '64.

Oh well, then you must have ...

Was it published in '67? Are you sure?

Yes. I think it was. Yes.

Oh, I thought it was when we were still there. But only feature at lunch or something.

Yes.

Not teaching or nothing ...

No.

And Julian wasn't in it, was he?

No.

No. I think it must have come out after we left.

I think it certainly came out after you left, and it came out, I think, in '67, it must have been the earliest it could have come out. It would have been '67 or '68, and I think the photograph of you, this is in Private View, which was written by Bryan Robertson and John Russell, with photographs by Snowdon.

Yes.

I think you were a guest at the lunch.

I suppose ...

At the Royal College, where Snowdon took that photograph.

I suppose I was. I can't have still been teaching there.

I always think of the Royal College with you! But, going back again, to before Julian's illness and back to the Royal College, I've heard it said that, in some ways, he was a very influential teacher during that period, because he was an adventurous print-maker, and print-making, especially for Hockney, and to some extent ...

Very important for him, wasn't it.

Very important, and Hockney is very, himself, a very adventurous print-maker.

Yes. Well, I think he taught Hockney everything about the beginnings of his print-making. And I, I have to say that Robin, Robin Darwin, who had been the Principal

at the College for year when we were there, and had been the head of Newcastle College of Art before that, said to me once, "In all my years of teaching, I've never had a better teacher than Julian. The best teacher the College, or any other art school, has had." He said that, and he was not a man to flatter people.

So I understand!

Which was touching, wasn't it.

Yes. What made him a good teacher, do you think?

Well, he, I think it was, it might have been you in, that piece you wrote about him, no, I know who it was. When he died, one of his students, Norman Ackroyd, wrote to the, I think it was The Independent, and said that he was such a good teacher, because he treated us like fellow artists, and not like students, and was always so interested in what we were doing. And it was very touching. He, he sent this bit to me. It was when the obituary had already come out, written by David Gascoyne, I think. And then, he said, "Do you think I can send this in, and hope they'll print it, although there already has been an obituary." And I said, "Why don't you try?" And they did print it. Isn't that the Norman Ackroyd bit?

I've got it here, just by chance. Ackroyd says, "His teaching was based on encouragement and complete generosity of spirit. In working alongside his students, who he always regarded as fellow artists ...

That's right, yes.

... he created a tranquil, and industrious atmosphere, in which magic could happen. His contribution was unique, intangible, and academically immeasurable."

Isn't that marvellous.

Yes.

Don't you think?

He goes on and says, "As a student, and later, I made many visits to Durham Wharf for the Boat Race parties, tea parties, or simply as a fellow artist."

I think that's very touching of Norman Ackroyd. Julian always said, "Well, all I do is to prevent the girls getting their hair in the acid, and getting themselves scalped by having their hair go through the rollers of the etching press." I can just see him scooping up their hair!

I would think that was certainly true, and, of course, there's nothing like a teaching where you feel the teacher regards you as an equal. That's marvellous for ... to effort and learning.

Mmm.

But I've heard also other people say, I mean, in fact, it was Frank Bowling who said to me, some time ago, the contribution of Julian, to teaching at the Royal College, was extraordinary.

Did he?

Yes. And he said something else, and you might like to elaborate a bit on this, Mary. He said one of the things about having Julian there, was that it gave you a sense of being in touch with Paris, and with the great period, because he was so in with all that.

Did he?

Yes, he did.

I don't know if he used to talk to his students about Paris. He must have done, or else Frank wouldn't have said that. I never saw him teach, you see. I was never at one of his classes. But I think they felt he was a ... he wasn't parochial, you know. He'd been a part of the Surrealist Movement, he'd been in Paris, he'd been in Mass Observation, and he knew a lot of people outside their world, and I suppose they found that worth listening to, if he talked about it.

Can we turn to your teaching at the Royal College? How much teaching have you done in your life? Not a great deal really?

No. Very little. When I first left the Slade, my first little job, when I went back to Bristol, where my family lived, was teaching life drawing at the Art School in Bristol. But that was a sort of fill-in job, I didn't do that for long. I also taught in a big grammar school in Bristol, for a year or two, I suppose. But, after the War, I didn't teach at all until I went to the Royal College, and then, when I left in '64, because of Julian's illness, I stayed at home for about six months, until he was more on his feet, and then I was asked to go and teach at Yehudi Menuhin's music school, which had only been going for a year, I think. And, being a boarding school, they wanted it to be broadly based, and have a bit of everything, so I taught painting there. And that was so different from teaching post-graduate students at the Royal College, which I'd done for nearly 10 years, and these were little musical geniuses, ranging from seven up to 16. And it was very extraordinary. I think they enjoyed it very much, because the music was such a terribly tight discipline, and they had to do two hours practice every day before breakfast, and very hard work. And so a painting lesson a week, was a bit of fun for them. A bit of freedom.

This meant that you met Menuhin, presumably?

Oh yes. I didn't get to know him very well. He, he didn't honestly come down enough at that time. He was still giving lots of concerts, and the children were always saying, "Perhaps Mr. Menuhin will come today." But he didn't come all that much, and I had lunch occasionally with him, in the common room. But I never got to

know him very well, because I only went once a week, and he came occasionally, and we didn't overlap very often. But, yes, I got to know him, in a sort of way.

Going back, if I may, I want to press you a little bit more on the Royal College really, because you taught painting there at such an extraordinary moment in its history, really. I mean, the Royal College was ... always had good artists passing through, people who were going to become good artists.

Yes. But they go in waves.

Yes, they do go in waves.

And we were there on a rather good wave.

And you were there, you rode a rather good wave, didn't you. And I'm just wondering if there's anything more you have to tell us about that?

Of course, at the time, apart from David Hockney, who was always outstanding, one didn't really realise that it was a particularly good wave, but so many of them have lasted. You don't realise people's stature ...

End of F1886 Side B

F1887 Side A

Durham Wharf, June 6th, 1991.

Mary, we're going, today, to talk about some of your friends and Julian's friends over the years. We've talked about many of them in earlier tapes, but there are a number of people that are very interesting, and who played an important part in your lives, and today, I want to talk, or I want you to talk about them.

Yes.

Can we start with somebody, who I know was very important to Julian, and that's his son Philip. And this will be interesting, I think, because we started by talking about Julian's very distinguished father.

Yes.

And it would be nice to go on, now, to talk about the next generation.

His son, yes. Well, Philip was always very important in Julian's life. They, they were great friends, they got on brilliantly, really, after Philip stopped being a baby. Julian could never manage babies very well, but as soon as he was, oh, seven, eight, nine, that sort of age, they got on tremendously well. He is a remarkable man, really. He's ... about 45 now. He, at first, when he left school, he thought he wanted to be a painter, but he went to Newcastle College of Art, and started painting there, but while he was there, he discovered photography, and how wonderful it was to take photographs and make films. And then he got into the Film School of the Royal College of Art, in London, and had ... had an absolutely wonderful time there. Made some remarkably good films, won some awards. And when he left the College, for ten years, he made a series of, of really fascinating documentary films, which were shown on television, and were shown around a great deal. And he was thought very well of, as a film-maker.

What were they about?

Well, he made one ... he discovered a family of tinkers, really, who lived in a wood, not, not in the wilds, in Sussex, but they lived in the middle of a wood in Sussex. And there was an old father and two daughters, and two sons, and they lived in caravans and sheds, in this wood, and they were geniuses at making and mending, and running steam engines. And they bought bits of old traction engines, and cannibalised them, to make one glorious steam engine, and they could mend anything in metal. They made their living out of mending farm, farm implements, for the farmers around them. But for fun, they were always making steam engines. And they lived in absolute, what appeared to be absolute squalor. The children were ... ranged from 40 down to 25, I suppose, the two boys and the two girls. The mother was dead. They had pet peacocks, and their chief peacock was called Fred, and they used to shout out to Fred, "Fred, come down, your dinner's ready." And this peacock used to leap from the tree, and land up to its armpits in mud, and they would feed it, and then it would go back into the tree again. And they had cats and dogs. And Philip once said to one of the boys, "You know, there has been" it was at the time when the first moon landing happened. And Philip said, "Have you heard that an American space rocket has landed on the moon?" And this man said, "Oh, that's nothing. It's very close, the moon. Every time I raise my sledgehammer, I have to be careful not to hit it. Might damage it." And so Philip called his film, "The Moon and the Sledgehammer." But they lived in close communion with nature, and with beetles, and wild animals, and they were an extraordinary family. It appeared that they were two pairs of incestuous lovers. The father cohabited with the oldest daughter, and the ... one of the sons cohabited with the younger daughter, and there was a boy, one of the boys had no lover at all. But there they were. They went to the village for food occasionally, but they lived on a few vegetables that they grew. And there was a harmonium in one of the sort of sheds that they lived in. And one of the daughters played hymns on the harmonium most of the time. And the other one embroidered terrible sort of jackets and things. But Philip got to know them very very well.

Was that a particular strength of his? To find the unusual, to find strange ...

Yes, he found very strange people, and got intimate with them, got on to very good terms with them. And this film, "The Moon and the Sledgehammer", was a triumph. It was shown all over the place, and still is shown, from time to time on television. And then he met another man who was a potter at, outside Ripon, in Yorkshire, who was quite old, and made wonderful, well, he mostly made things like flowerpots, and, you know, useful objects, tiles and flowerpots and things. And he had clay at the bottom of his garden, and he fixed up a little steam trolley on rails, and he used to take this little trolley to the bottom of the garden, dig out the clay, and put it in this little trolley, and then switch on this, start up this steam engine, and trolley it back through the garden to his shed, where he threw the most wonderful great, not only flowerpots, but huge breadbins, and he was quite ancient, but he could throw pots beautifully, and he'd never been to London, and when the film was finished, Philip brought him down to London to see the film, in London, and there were crowds of potters, rather grand sort of studio potters, and they asked him questions. And he said, "Oh, I don't have any truck with these studio potters, they don't know what they're talking about. They couldn't make a flowerpot if they tried." And that was an absolutely beautiful film.

What is he doing now, Philip?

Well, when Philip, he made these films, he made a lot more of that kind. He made a film on, he lived with a shepherd on the South Downs, and made a film about being a shepherd, and lambing, which took him right through a year, the whole, the whole of the four seasons of a shepherd's life, which was a beautiful film. It was called "Lambing", and it was shown all over the place. Well then he, he got married, and his wife, who is a painter, well, she's an etcher and a draughtsman, and a sculptor. A very talented girl. She and Philip decided that they would like to live in the country. And they had a very ramshackle house in London, which they sold for enough money to buy a farm, and a farm house, and enough land to farm on, in North Yorkshire, near the Vale of Pickering. And now he is a farmer, and a very good sheep farmer, quite successful. But his passion now, is playing the bassoon, which he learnt at school. He has, I think, the only bassoon quartet in England. And people write music specially for them, and they give concerts in Yorkshire, and lately, they've been

giving concerts down here. They've given concerts in Bath, and in Cirencester, and London. And it's, it's the great passion of his life. That and table tennis. He has a farmers' team of table tennis players, and he's turned one of his barns into a beautiful table tennis room. And this farmers's team play against other local Yorkshire teams, and they meet once a week, and have tremendous table tennis sessions.

I can see why Julian would have got on with him. In fact, it occurs to me that his interest in the outside, and in people who make things, and do things, creative things, but ordinary people who do and make creative things, would have, in a way, picks up, doesn't it, on ...

Picks up what Julian's interests were.

Exactly what Julian was interested in with the Ashington Miners.

Like with the Ashington Miners and other people who have been, are untrained, but are full of native talents.

Well, I think we've touched on this in an earlier tape. That thing that's very, seemed to be very important to Julian, which was that idea of everybody having some creative thing in them, and that our dismissal of huge sections of mankind because they're not artists or something, is something Julian had very little truck with because he seemed to think in that ... in a way that I think I pointed out earlier, that relates to the whole Surrealist thing, that every person, every man, every woman, is an artist in some sense.

Yes. I think, I think Julian did feel that.

And I think he would have warmed to this film-making of Philip's.

Philip's. Yes.

In a way, from that sort of centre of feeling.

I think, I think that was one of the close links they had. But everything that Philip did, like playing the bassoon, and making films, interested Julian intensely, so they, they never bored each other. They really were tremendous friends.

Philip now makes films when he's commissioned to do them, instead of desperately looking for the money to make them. But he made the film for Granada Television, which opened the, the Tate in the North.

What was that film about, Mary?

Well, the first film, the first exhibition that was put on for the Tate in the North, was a Surrealist film. It was Magritte, and Max Ernst, and other Surrealist painters from the Tate. And so Philip made a sort of Surrealist film to fit in with that, and it was absolutely charming, I must say. Very good. It hasn't been shown down here. It was commissioned by Granada, and it's only been shown in the Midlands.

What a pity.

Yes.

Did he ever make a film of Julian?

He never did. I wish he had, yes. He never made a film of Julian, and it would have been so nice if ... I don't know why we didn't think of it. But, about three years ago, he, through his bassoon quartet, he's quite closely linked with the Helmsley Music Festival, and Helmsley is quite near where he lives. And he made a very beautiful film about, I think he was Rumanian, pianist, who came over to play Mozart at the Helmsley Music Festival, three years, I think it was three years ago. And he made a film about the week running up to the opening of that Festival, with this pianist practising in the main hall, in the great house, where they have the Festival in Helmsley, and then all the members of the orchestra, who found themselves little corners to practice. The flute was in the cloakroom, and the cello was in the library,

and they each found a corner of this house to practice their, their parts in, in this Mozart piano, I suppose it was a piano concerto. And constantly, the outside sounds of the cows, and the local sheep, and mowing the grass, came in through the windows of this great house, and the Mozart got totally overwhelmed by outside sounds. And it turned out to be another sort of Surrealist film. It was awfully funny, and very, very good, very well made I think. But those are the only two films he's made lately, because he can't spend the time on films really, as he's a full-time farmer, and almost a full-time bassoonist as well. But we used to go and stay. I still go and stay there. And Julian and I used to go and stay on the farm, and he and Philip had lovely long talks about painting, and music, and all the things that interested Julian. And they were real friends. And his wife, Nellie, too, who as I said is an artist, and is the grand-daughter of Gwen Raverat, who was that wonderful wood engraver, you know, from Cambridge, who was a Darwin, and Philip is half a Darwin, and so Nellie, his wife, is also a distant cousin of his.

Oh really. Of course, Gwen Raverat also wrote that thing, a Cambridge childhood, didn't she.

Yes, called A Period Piece.

A Period Piece, that's right.

Yes. A lovely book. Well, she was Nellie's grandmother, and Nellie has her sort of talent. And she manages, with three children, and a farm, to do a lot of etching and drawing, and, in the last year, she has started painting for the first time, and she's very good.

How did Philip meet her? Because that's an extraordinary thing, continuing this remarkable dynastic set of inter-connections.

It is rather strange he married a cousin, isn't it. Well, she was, I can't remember how they first met. I think it might have been through, Philips connections with Cambridge, because Nellie's father, Mark Prior, was a don at Cambridge, and Nellie

went to Cambridge High School, and Philip used to go to Cambridge to meet his Darwin connections. And I suppose that's how they met.

But the reason for my question really, was because one wonders how far that network is still maintained, however distantly or tenuously.

I think, I think it's still, it's, certainly the Trevelyans are a great tribe, and all meet. And, yes, the Darwins overlap with the Trevelyans and meet, I know, at various points. And anyway, Philip met Nellie when she was still at school. And they had, you know, they were devoted from the moment they met, I think. And now they've been married 16 or 17 years. Their oldest son is 15. Two, two boys they have, of 15 and 13, and a girl, which they passionately wanted, who is three. And it's a very close-knit family.

Another great and close friend of Julian's, and I know he is a close friend of yours, James MacGibbon.

James MacGibbon, yes. Well, I think Julian first met him before the War, when he and his wife were first married, and they lived across the river in Barnes, near where you live. I think they lived in Castelnau. And how they actually first came to meet, I can't remember, but they always got on wonderfully well. And Jean MacGibbon, James' wife, always said that Julian was her first link with the world of painters, and artists. And she came here, to Durham Wharf, when she was first married to James. And she said it was a sort of, an amazing view on to a complete other world, all Julian's rather bohemian friends amazed her. She's written her own autobiography, and in this she describes how astonished she was to meet Julian and his, his world, and his friends, and how it sort of changed her life.

That's published?

Yes. It's called, it's got such an embarrassing title. It's called, I Had to Marry Him, by Jean MacGibbon, because she was always madly in love with James, who she met, again when she was a child, I think when the two families were having holidays in

Cornwall, or ... I don't remember very well, I read it some time ago. And she simply adored James, and presumably he her, and they were married when they were quite young, and are still married, and they're ...

Julian thought very highly of James MacGibbon, didn't he.

He loved James MacGibbon. He loved his, well, he was a very, he is a very funny, witty, affectionate man, and Julian always had a great feeling for boats, and for sailing, and we always had a sailing dinghy on the Thames, ourselves, which we kept tied up here. And James had, and still has, a great 40 foot, wonderful clinker-built sailing boat, on which about six people can sleep. And we used to go sailing with him on the East Coast. And we went, about five years ago, for an absolutely wonderful hot sail from Pin Mill, and James was a marvellous sailor, and still is, I keep saying ... he still is. He still sails. His boys have rather taken over the boat now, and they sail across to Holland and down to France. Sailor of boat [telephone call]... during the War, when Julian was in camouflage, his area for a time was down in Devon and Cornwall, and he came across James MacGibbon there, who was in the Army, and he was so delighted to meet him again, having not seen him for a while, because he always, simply loved his company. And I remember, in Julian's autobiography, he said, "When I met James again in Cornwall, I thought 'James is the nicest man in the world' and I put this ..." this is Julian speaking, "I put this in my autobiography. And the publisher said, 'You can't say that. Nobody's the nicest man in the world.' So I had to moderate it and say, 'James is a really nice man.'" Or something like that.

But wasn't James his publisher?

Yes. But by the time it was being edited, James had sort of moved on, as far as I remember. It wasn't James who said he couldn't say that!

Because, of course, James MacGibbon did found, with Robert Kee, MacGibbon and Kee, the ...

MacGibbon and Kee, who were the publishers of his ...

Of Indigo Days.

Of Indigo Days. But it didn't last long as a publishing house. James went then on to, I think, Victor Gollancz, and then to running Curtis Brown, the literary agents.

And his son, Hamish, Hamish MacGibbon, did himself, went into publishing.

Is in publishing now, yes.

That's right.

But on that occasion when we last sailed with James, perhaps five years ago, there was a rather nice, well, it was very nice for us, because it was the time when we first met Victoria Glendinning and her husband, Terence de Vere White, who we were friends with ever after, and I'm still great friends of theirs, and I love them both. But, after a tremendous, hot, exhilarating day, sailing with the MacGibbons, we got back to their house at Manningtree, absolutely glowing and scarlet with the sun, and made dinner for Victoria and Terence, who had been invited to dinner. And Julian and I had never met them before. And, at dinner, I was sitting by Terence, and at first, he was rather silent, and I thought, "I wonder if I'm going to get on with this man." And then he looked at James, who was bright scarlet from the sun, and said, "Oh, look at James, all aglow. I wish I was all aglow. I look like a man who's just going to arrest somebody!" And I thought that was so charming, I immediately loved him. And, and Julian and I always loved him, and Victoria, very much. They are dear friends, they have become really dear friends.

Well, that's ...

That's James.

James.

I would like to talk, just briefly, or mention other friends of Julian's, who we haven't really talked about.

Well, I'd love you to do that. One of the people who I would very much like to hear about is John Verney.

Yes. Well, John Verney and his wife, Jan, have been friends of ours ... we met them first, I think, just after we were together, 40, more than 40 years ago, and have been great friends of theirs ever since, and have seen the birth of their, not their six children, because when we met them, they already had two, but the birth of their four children, and I'm godmother to the youngest, and we were great friends with all of them, as a tribe, the parents and the children.

They had a rather remarkable sort of menage, didn't they, the Verneys, is that right? Down in the country.

Well, yes. They lived, when we first knew them, outside Farnham, and a great big house and garden, and these growing children. One son and five daughters. And the oldest daughter, Sabrina, became a really close friend of Julian's and mine, and Julian and she always sent each other very elaborate and beautiful Valentines. She used to make Julian embroidered Valentines, which she spent six months embroidering, just finished in time for Valentines Day. And there was a real rapport between them. And she now lives in California, married to a Zen Buddhist monk. But apparently Buddhist monks can lead a normal married life, and she's got two children, so I hardly ever see her, which is sad.

It was for John Verney that Julian did the covers, isn't it? I'm sure he did the dust jackets for ... am I wrong?

No. John Verney did his own dust jackets.

Ah.

Yes. Julian did dust jackets for Victor Gollancz, a whole series of young people's guides.

Oh, that's right.

Young People's Guides to Painting, to Sculpture, to Ballet Dancing, to Medicine, to Dentistry. Victor published a huge series of Young Person's Guides. The first one was Julians, A Young Person's Guide to the World of Art. And Victor so liked Julian's cover, that he did the covers for all the others. But John Verney, who I think is a wonderful writer, always did his own jackets.

Of course he did. I have in my mind, one of his drawings which almost could have been done, I think, by Julian, in a sort of skittish mood.

Yes, they sometimes drew rather alike. But he wrote a wonderful book. He was, he was taken prisoner during the War. He was in the Army, and he was taken prisoner in Sardinia, and was put on a prison train to go to Germany, to a prison camp, and he escaped off the train, and hid in a cave in the Abruzzi for, I think it was as long as a year, and local peasants kept him alive by bringing him food, and in the end, he left the cave because he felt he was, well, he couldn't bear it any longer, and he felt he was too much of a burden to these Italian peasants. And he got through the German lines and back to the British Army. But all that time, his wife, who was in America, with her one eldest child, who was born after John went to the War, didn't know if he was dead or alive.

That book was called A Dinner of Herbs?

No. The first one is called, Going to the Wars. Then there was another one about the War, called A Dinner of Herbs, and they're marvellous books. And then he wrote one called Every Advantage, and several sort of children's novels, teenage children's novels, which are very good. But, Going to the Wars is a wonderful book, I think, and oh, years ago, perhaps 30 years ago, he wanted to go back to Sardinia, and try

and trace his route across Sardinia, from ... he had a terrible mission. He was dropped, by parachute, and he had to blow up German planes on an Italian airfield, which were just on the point of invading, going up through Italy. And he did this, this mission, but then he was supposed to cross Sicily, I mean cross Sardinia, on foot, by night, and was going to be picked up by a submarine on the other side of the island, and, of course, he was caught, and taken prisoner. And that's when he went, was put on the, the German prison, prison train, from which he escaped. But he wanted to look at this route again, and so, about 30 years ago, Julian and I, and he and his wife, Jan, went to Sardinia, and we searched, in vain, for his route across the island, because he'd always crept by night, from place to place, and hidden in daylight, and had almost starved to death, because he had no food, and couldn't find anything to eat, and the police station to which he was taken, when the Army caught him, German troops caught him, he kept on thinking he recognised, in all sorts of villages, but he never identified his, his route across the island, but it brought it all back.

End of F1887 Side A

F1887 Side B

... isn't he?

Yes, he's a passionate painter. But lately, he's painted furniture more than painting pictures. He paints very sort of witty pictures on tables and cupboards and desks and mirrors, and he's really best known for his painted furniture, which he loves to do, although he paints pictures also to hang on the wall. They moved from Farnham to Clare, in Suffolk, about 10 years ago, I suppose, where we've often been to stay with them, and he's, he's rather sadly given up working, lately. He doesn't paint much, and he doesn't write much, but he's wonderful company, and a great talker. He loves talking about people and books, and he sometimes rings me up and says, "What are you reading at present? I must tell you about a book I'm reading." And then he goes into tremendous detail about some book which really excites him, which is usually a biography, or an autobiography about a painter, or ...

He sounds like a very rich sort of man.

He's got a wonderful imagination. And he is rich in his imagination and his ... in what he does. He rang me up last week, and he said, "I must tell you of a wonderful book I'm reading, by a man called Collis." Well, I know of this man called Maurice Collis, who was an art critic and also a great friend of Stanley Spencer, and wrote a very good book about Stanley Spencer, and also a book about, I think, about Cortez and Montezuma, I've forgotten what it's called, and the discovery of America by the Spaniards, South America. And this man, Collis, is a brother, apparently, of Maurice Collis, who's quite famous, and I'd never heard of his brother, Collis. And I can't remember now exactly what John said he did. But he's always finding most obscure books and becoming deeply interested in them. And this, I'm going to see them in a couple of weeks, and I will find out what this book is, by Collis, that he's so excited about. But John is always excited about something - a book, or a person, or a painting - and he's a very, very fascinating man.

This would have ... to go back to Julian for a moment, of course, one can see again,
how ...

Julian loved him.

How he would have appealed to Julian.

Yes, he did.

Because of his range, and richness of interests.

Yes, yes.

I remember, very briefly, here, that, I think the Richards visited the Verneys. I
wonder if you had anything to do with that?

Ceri?

Mmmm.

Yes, they did. I don't know whether we introduced them or not.

I think it quite likely that you did.

That was when they were in Farnham.

That's right.

Well, of course, Ceri was dead by the time they went to Clare.

Can I just ask you about Clare? Did you ever meet in Clare, in Suffolk, Leslie
Morton, the Marxist historian?

No.

Who lived at the Old Chapel in Clare.

I don't know about him.

Ah! I just wondered whether Verney had made his acquaintance.

Is he still alive?

No, he died about five years ago.

I'm sure John would have met him.

I bet he did. And Leslie Morton was a wonderful character.

I don't know about him.

And a member of the Communist Party until the day he died, but he was sort of Suffolk organiser for that, and he wrote a book called, The People's History of England.

Really?

In the thirties, which became a sort of absolute classic, of a sort of people's Marxist history. It sold in millions in the Soviet Union, of course.

I should know about him, I don't. I'm sure John would have come across him.

And he was a great folk singer.

Oh really? How lovely.

And I just wondered whether or not Verney had met him, or whether you had ever met him.

I haven't met him, but I bet John met him, mmmm. Well, he was, he's always been a lovely person in our lives, John Verney, a very very nice man. And then another East Anglian friend, who we also met when we were first together, Humphrey Spender, and his wife Pauline. And Humphrey has always lived near Maldon, in Essex.

He lives in a house, doesn't he, one of the first buildings actually designed by Richard Rodgers.

Yes, that's true. He lived in a, in a vicarage, built by Pugin, and then he sold the vicarage, and most of the garden, and kept a little bit of the garden, and commissioned Richard Rodgers to make him a sort of steel and glass house, with a steel and glass studio, in the middle of a ... of an orchard. And they love it. And it is a very beautiful house. It's very good. You've been there, haven't you.

Yes, I have.

You took Francis there?

Yes, many years ago now.

Yes, yes, I remember. Well, they, they still live there.

Because I was interested, at that time, in Humphrey's photography.

Yes.

I know Humphrey is also a painter, and I want you to talk about that, to say something about that. But, of course, Julian would have known Humphrey Spender, as I think we've already recorded, in the thirties, through Mass Observation.

That's true, yes.

When Humphrey Spender was, was known as "Lensman" for the Mirror.

"Lensman", he was, yes.

And he was also ...

And Picture Post photographer.

At Picture Post, yes.

Yes. Yes, Julian knew him then, it's quite true, he knew him before the War. I didn't meet them ... they were married, Humphrey and Pauline, after the War, about the same time as we were. And I don't think Julian had, I'm not sure, I don't think Julian had seen Humphrey during the War, so we met again, together, after the War, and Julian having known him years before. And he is a most charming, touching, difficult man. He's the younger brother of the poet, Stephen Spender, who is also a dear friend of ours, and his wife Natasha. But Humphrey has suffered all his life, from being Stephen's brother. And although he has many talents of his own, and a great photographer, he taught textile design at the Royal College, he ... he couldn't do anything ... he's a wonderful gardener, but the one thing he wanted to be, was a painter. And he still paints, he paints a lot now. He doesn't take photographs. But he's never been as successful as a painter as he would like to be. Nothing like. And his great success of photography is not what he really wanted. And he, whenever people meet him, they say, "Are you related to Stephen Spender?" Which always sort of offends him, because he's not considered a person in his own right, as he should be.

Well, I think he is now, perhaps. I mean, certainly, he was highly regarded as a documentary photographer.

Yes, he was. Highly regarded.

But I always felt, and this was the occasion of my meeting him, of my wanting to meet him some years ago, was that I always felt that although he had been pigeon-holed as a documentary photographer, with connections with Picture Post, and with Mass Observation, and with the Daily Mirror, in the classic period of the late thirties, I'd always felt that his work had a terrific poetic quality. And I still think that.

Mmm. Mmmm.

Indeed, a lot of his work has a sort of surrealist quality.

Yes. Surrealist and poetic. He was a beautiful photographer.

And that surrealist quality, I think, to some extent, carries over into his painting.

Yes. His paintings are rather surrealist.

A real original sort of painter.

And sometimes they're very very beautiful.

Mmm, I quite agree.

He hasn't been recognised enough as a painter, which, I think, disappoints him. But sometimes his painting is ... it's always incredibly personal. Nobody could have done it but Humphrey Spender. And he is, he is very imaginative.

Here is a man of great originality and talent.

Mmm, yes he is. And a very very good, dear friend. He's a very nice person. I wish he didn't feel overshadowed by Stephen, which he does. But he is a very nice person.

Now, if we were to turn to Stephen, when did Julian meet Stephen? Did he know him in the thirties?

I think he must have. But we haven't been anything like such close friends of Stephen and Natasha as we were with Humphrey, though we have, you know, we've been ... we visited him in France, perhaps 20 years ago. They have a house in, in France, in the shadow of the Alpilles, near Les Baux, that part of France, a lovely house. And we, we went to see them there. I suppose we've been friends of theirs for about 20 years, and longer friends of Humphrey's. But I find Natasha and Stephen very warm, loving, dear friends, and very good company. I like them very much.

Did Julian get on well with Stephen?

Very well. He liked Stephen, and he liked, he liked Natasha particularly. Well, he liked them both very much, but Natasha was a beautiful pianist. Natash Litvin, she played under the name of her, her mother's name. But she gave up playing professionally. I was told it was because she never could get over her sort of ... nerves at playing in public. Whether that is so or not, I don't know, but she was, apparently, an absolutely wonderful pianist, and I've never heard her play. All the time we knew her with Stephen, she ... she wasn't playing.

Some think Stephen is a man of great vanity. Have you found that to be the case?

Well, in a kind of ... naive way, he has vanity. I say that, because he is rather a gauche and naive man. You know, when you go to dinner, he sort of opens the door in his grey woollen socks, with holes in his toes, and then he says, "What will you drink?" And he gives, he takes a long time to manage to pour out a drink, and he falls over himself rather. In fact, he's ... he's less suave in his behaviour than Humphrey really. He is, he's quite ... well, I can only think of the word "gauche" in his physical behaviour. But I have heard him say, "If I open the paper, and I am not mentioned anywhere, it spoils my day." He is, what did you say? You said he was vain?

Well, I didn't say it.

Or proud?

I said that there are some who say that he is a man of great vanity.

Vanity. Well, I think, in a way, that is true. But it's sort of counterbalanced by his incredibly naive behaviour, which I find absolutely charming. And if you said, "You're a very vain man", he would probably giggle and say, "I am, aren't I!" Or something like that.

One should say, very quickly, that vanity in a person, doesn't detract from other qualities. It's, it's one of the lesser failings, it seems to me.

I think so. And a really vain and arrogant man, I find terribly unattractive. And Stephen is a very attractive man, and his vanity is ... you can sort of almost laugh at it, and he doesn't mind at all. You could tease him about it, and he would laugh. So, in that way, he's not vain, but he certainly likes the fact that he's well-known and famous. And who wouldn't?

No. He went to China, of course, didn't he, with David Hockney.

With David Hockney, yes.

And they did a book together.

Yes.

On that journey.

Yes. I think he got on quite well with David. I think it went all right, I don't know that it was ... I haven't heard how David found it with Stephen. Stephen got on quite well with David, I think.

But you never discussed it?

Well, when he came back, we did discuss it. I think David took his boyfriend, which made them three, and that was rather sort of awkward company, I think. But I think it was all right.

So, we've talked about the Spenders, the two brothers.

Yes.

And John Verney, and James MacGibbon. And I know, among other great friends, over a very long period of yours and Julian's, you would number also Cecil Collins, and David Gascoyne.

Very close friends, they've always been, yes. Julian met David Gascoyne when he was in Paris.

That's right.

And Julian was about 23 or something, and David was about 17, I think. He was incredibly young when he was in Paris. Am I right? Was he fairly young?

Oh yes, he was, 17.

Yes. And he was very young, I should think about 20, when he wrote that remarkable little book on ...

On Surrealism.

French Surrealism.

Yes. Yes.

And it's been a kind of textbook ever since. Well, Julian knew him there, and I didn't meet David until I was with Julian, in 1949, and at that time, he was amazingly sort of

neurotic, nervous, rather sort of ... almost borderline, unbalanced. And he used to stay with us, not for long, but for nights at a time, and say, "The enemy is at the gate. We must barricade ourselves in." He was always expecting to be attacked by a totally unspecified enemy. He, he had terrible sort of neurotic nervousness about life and about his own safety, and there were one or two nights when he used to come into our room, and sleep on the sofa in our room, because he was afraid of sleeping alone, because of the enemy at the gates.

Well, of course, he did go through a period of great darkness, for a very long period.

Terrible.

A time of great depression.

Terrible depression.

Of block.

And terrible ... and he didn't write, I don't think, at that time at all. And he went back to the Isle of Wight, where his parents lived, and when they died, he was on his own in their house, and, oh, I think this story is well known. He used to be a day patient at a mental hospital on the Isle of Wight, and spend the nights alone in his parents' house. And it must have been the lowest time of his life, I would think. And then as, I'm sure you know, he was rescued by Judy, who used to go to this hospital, out of just kindness, and read poetry to the inmates. And one day, she read a poem by David. And David said to her, "I wrote that." And she thought he was just a mental patient who had delusions of grandeur. But she talked to him, and she discovered he was David Gascoyne. And she fell passionately in love with him, and I believe, almost at that time, her husband, luckily, left her and went off with somebody else. So she and David were married, and he ... she took him home and looked after him, and he was ... I think, fairly quickly transformed into a perfectly rational, intelligent, brilliant human being, which he had always been, but he was always overshadowed by this sort of nightmare of madness. And now he is as sane and brilliant, and ...

Absolutely.

Clear-headed as he possibly could be, and he goes about the world lecturing, and poetry reading. And I think it's all due to Judy who loved him and rescued him.

Now, of course, during that period, one of the things he did write, was a thing called, a piece called, "Night Thoughts".

"Night Thoughts", yes.

And that would have been commissioned by another friend of yours, and ... who was also aware of, of David Gascoyne's great, great talent, I mean genius. And that's Douglas Cleverdon.

Douglas Cleverdon, yes. Who, at that time, was running, I think he was running the Third Programme, or, or ...

Or talks, or whatever.

He was running the literary side of the Third Programme.

That's right.

And he, I don't know at what time he met David Gascoyne, but he saw his brilliance, and great talents, which were so overshadowed by his unbalanced nature.

Well, by his illness really.

His illness, yes. But he commissioned "Night Thoughts" which was the programme wasn't it. It was broadcast on ...

Radio Three.

On radio, and was a great success. And was subsequently published in book form.

That's right.

And I can't remember whether Julian did the cover for it.

I've got a feeling Julian actually did the cover for Night Thoughts, I'm sure he did.

He did, yes. I think he did.

And it was published by, can we remember who it was published by?

Well, I can look it up. I've got it. I can see who it was published by. I don't remember.

But Cleverdon had been very much responsible for that commission, as he had for many other commissions, of course, during that period.

And he commissioned Dylan Thomas to write Under Milkwood, and many other people. Was it Henry Green?

Yes.

He commissioned a lot of work from him. And was responsible really, for all the marvellous literary programmes on the Third Programme.

Well, Louis MacNiece, of course, was another one.

Louis MacNiece was another one, yes.

Did, by any chance, did you know Louis MacNiece?

No. I met him, I think, twice. But I knew Douglas. In fact, Douglas always said that I was his oldest friend, because I met him when I was five, and he was 17, in Bristol, where he was born and brought up, as I was.

But, of course, you're both Bristol people.

Both Bristol people.

You may well, would you have remembered his bookshop?

Very well.

With the hand-painted sign by Eric Gill?

That's right. I knew it very well. He had this wonderful bookshop, of mostly first editions, of all sorts of poets. It was an extraordinary little den of beauty, and full of ... a little dark shop full of the most wonderful books. And he, at that time, met Eric Gill, and they worked together. And he was a great friend of a wonderful typographer, called Will Carter, who, I think he is still alive, and they worked together on many beautiful hand-printed editions of poems and other things, all his life.

Yes, well, Cleverdon, of course, became a remarkable publisher of fine editions.

Fine editions.

Of poetry, with a, with illustrations, commissioned by people like ...

Anthony Gross.

Anthony Gross, and Michael Ayrton.

Yes.

And all sorts of other people. He was also a friend of the Richards.

Yes.

And his press was called Clover Hill Editions.

Clover Hill, yes.

And I believe that was the address of the original bookshop, wasn't it, in Bristol?

No. The bookshop was Great George Street, in Bristol. I don't know where Clover Hill came from. It was a little, it was in an 18th Century house, off Park Street in Bristol, it was called Great George Street.

He must have been a very young man then?

Very young. Well, when I first met him, he was 17. I think he then went to Oxford, it was Oxford wasn't it, and not Cambridge.

Mmmm.

And I think he started the bookshop very soon after he left Oxford. And by that time he met, had met many sort of interesting people, mostly in the ... well, typography was one of his passions, and Eric Gill became a great, great friend of his. There's one story when there was an exhibition of Eric Gill's drawings. And one drawing was of, simply of the private parts of a man, and this was one of the pictures in the exhibition. And Douglas was looking round the exhibition, and he said, "Ah! I recognise myself!" (LAUGHS)

(LAUGHS) Well, Gill was famous for drawing the ...

Private parts?

Private parts of his friends, yes.

Absolutely, yes! But I knew Douglas, and his wife, Nest, and their three children, always. And still see ... Douglas died, say, five years ago. And I still see his wife and his children quite often.

Well, his son, Francis, himself a printer.

Yes.

Actually printed for me, an edition of a poem, one of the poems by Virgil, a Georgic by.

Oh really? Did he?

Virgil, which Francis Richards illustrated.

I remember, yes.

That was the first thing that Francis did then, as a typographer.

As a printer. And he did, well, he did headed writing paper for me. He's not printing any more. He's ...

I think he's a bookseller now, himself, isn't he.

He's a bookseller, yes, on the South Bank.

That's right.

That's right. A bright, clever boy. And ...

Douglas was a remarkable collector, wasn't he.

Wonderful pictures he had, yes. He had ... he was a great friend of David Jones, and Eric Gill, and, I can't remember who else. He had a house full of marvellous drawings and paintings. Some of Julian's, some of mine.

Going back quite a long time as well.

Yes.

Did you entertain him here?

Oh, many times. Oh, he often came here, yes.

How did you find him as a person?

Wonderful at talking. He, he was a wonderful conversationalist, but always about ... either about people, or about some wonderful first edition he'd found in some back street, or about some wonderful denouement about books, or people. He was awfully good. I went to see him once in hospital, when he'd been frightfully ill, and usually, when you visit people in hospital, they tell you every detail of the operation, and what the nurse said, and ... but the moment I went in, he had manuscripts all over his bed, and he said, "I must show you these beautiful illustrations I've got for some poem I'm doing a fine art edition of", and he, and I said, "How are you, Douglas?" "Oh, I'm up. I'm perfectly all right", he said. He wouldn't talk about his illness or himself at all, although he'd been very ill. He was only interested in the next job, and what he was working on, and what interested him.

He was physically the absolute antithesis of Julian, wasn't he?

Yes! He was very small, perky little fellow! Very small, and he was the opposite of Julian. Julian loved him. They seemed to love each other. They always had a great deal to talk about. But Douglas was a, a fascinating fellow.

I mentioned Cecil Collins.

Yes. Well, Julian knew Cecil Collins from very early on. I don't know where they first met, because it was before I was with Julian, but when I first knew him, he was living in Cambridge with his wife, Elizabeth. And he and Elizabeth had been married as soon as they left, or perhaps when they were still at the Royal College, I think. And they'd been together for, when he died, about 60 years.

It was from the very beginning of the thirties.

Yes. From when they were students.

That's right.

And we always found Cecil very entertaining, madly hypochondriac. He always thought that a little breath of air would kill him. He always wore hats and coats and scarves, indoors and out, and was terrified of being poisoned by some bit of food, or some little drink. He always feared the worst. But he was very seldom ill, until he died, he was all right. But he never thought he was going to be all right! He was really very careful with himself. And Elizabeth, who supported him wonderfully, through his ... all his ups and downs in his work, and with himself, I think she's a very good painter, but tremendously overshadowed by Cecil. And she's had several exhibitions. She had one at the same time as his marvellous exhibition at the Tate, during which exhibition he died, when it was still on, as far as I remember. And she had one at the same time, which was simply beautiful, on a much smaller scale. And she's still working, and is a very, very good artist. But somehow, never made a great name for herself, because she was all the time, sort of, helping him in his career.

Was he, do you think, an egotist?

Yes.

In that way?

Absolutely.

End of F1887 Side B

F1888 Side A

6th June, 1991

Mary, we were talking about Cecil Collins, and you were saying he was a man of great egotism, but as a friend, very charming, and fun to be with, I think.

He had the wonderful fund of slightly naughty stories, which he told with such charm, and the sort of stories which you wouldn't expect from him. And yet, when he was in public, or teaching, he seemed a very sort of solemn, pious man. I'm told, when he was teaching, his students used to have a little prayer before they started their class. I can't vouch for that, but that's what I was told by a student or two. But when he was here, having dinner with us, he was full of really extraordinarily funny little anecdotes and stories about animals and things.

About animals and things?

Yes. All sorts of stories about zebras and sheep and ...

You mean jokes?

Jokes. Jokey stories, yes. And he was quite a giggly man, in private, and very serious and pious in public.

That sort of high-minded spirituality, would that be a fair description

Absolutely, yes.

It's sometimes, isn't it, combined with a slightly risqué humour in private, isn't it.

It certainly was with him. I suppose it was with Eric Gill.

Well, I was thinking of Gill.

Yes, though I didn't know Eric Gill, but I believe so.

How did Julian take the mystical, spiritual side of Collins?

Oh he, he wouldn't go along with it at all! He thought it was absurd! But he liked him so much, as a jolly friend, that he just dismissed the other bit, and took no notice of it. But he wasn't at all mystical himself, and he thought it was rather a ridiculous way to carry on.

I would have thought so. Again, one might say it's the very opposite, in a way, isn't it, of what one might call Julian's modus, his way of being ...

Absolutely, yes. But he didn't mind, because he knew that Cecil had this funny side, and enjoyed that very much, and just ignored the, the high-minded part.

What did Julian think of his art?

He liked ... he admired it and respected it very much. In fact, we have three works by him. I think he liked his late work less. The ones we've got are sort of forties.

Oh, from that rather

Beautiful early period. Thirties and forties.

Of fools and so on, from the thirties and forties.

Yes. He didn't like his later work very much, but then it was a long, long life of continuous painting, and one could hardly equally admire the whole ... the whole life of the work.

What do you think Collins made of Julian?

He was terribly eager and pleased to see him when we met. I think he was as fond of Julian as Julian was ... I think he found Julian funny too. They found each other, a couple of eccentric, quirky old men, I think. And liked that.

But their relationship, of course, went right back to the thirties.

Oh it went back to when they were quite young, yes. But Julian always liked him very much. I mean, he laughed at his ... there was one thing ... he would never go on an Underground ... Cecil would never go on the Underground railway. He thought it was inhabited by evil spirits, and he would never let a painting of his be carried on an Underground. He said, "If you want to take my paintings anywhere to show them anywhere, you must take them above ground. You must never let my paintings suffer the indignity of being taken underground." Well, Julian thought that sort of thing was just sort of dotty, but funny. He didn't mind. He didn't ... he enjoyed Cecil very much.

Yes.

And I think Cecil enjoyed Julian too.

Well, that would be, certainly on Julian's part, it would be a reflection, wouldn't it, of his great tolerance, and love of diversity.

He was tolerant. Yes. Yes. They entertained each other. They were good friends.

But I was partly interested as well, in what you think Collins might have thought of Julian's art.

I don't know. I shouldn't think he liked it very much. I never heard him ... I can't remember him looking at Julian's paintings. I can't remember him expressing an opinion.

You see, Julian's art is a celebration of the real, the physical ...

The real thing, yes.

Yes.

Yes. I think Cecil would have found it much too ... sort of pedestrian.

And material, perhaps.

Material. It wasn't pedestrian, but it wasn't spiritual at all. And I don't expect he liked it. But I don't remember him ... he'd have been too kind to say he didn't like it. I don't remember him talking about Julian's painting at all.

I ask this, because, of course, it's a fascinating conjunction, isn't it, really.

Yes.

Because you have, in Julian, a great rationalist.

Yes.

A sort of Left-wing person, anxious to celebrate the real world, anxious is the wrong word, happy to celebrate the real world.

Yes.

A lover of diversity in men.

Yes.

A great egalitarian in his own way. A lover of working people, and what they did, and how they did it. And on the other side, you have Cecil Collins who is "other worldly", and spiritual, and perhaps even, perhaps vainly spiritual.

And a bit pious.

And a bit pious, yes.

Yes.

And yet they got on so well together.

They did, because he was really quite frivolous and amusing in private. We used to have tremendous jolly evenings when he came here.

Moving on now, Mary, I wanted to ask you ... I know that Elizabeth Frink has been a great friend of yours for a long time.

Yes. Well, Julian taught her at Chelsea, that's how we first ... that's how Julian first met her, and I first met her too. And we have been great friends over the years. She lived, for a long time, in France, with her last husband, her husband before the present one, in the Cevennes, and we used to go and stay there, many times. We went once for Christmas, which was very, very nice. It was cool, but not cold, and wonderful weather. And we had, really, the jolliest time. She lived in a huge, sort of 14th Century, kind of silk-worm factory. It was an enormous fortified place, and it had been a medieaval factory for making silk. And it was huge and comfortable, and rambling, in a forest, or on the edge of a forest. And there was a marvellous river to swim in. And we used to all work, we all were painters, or sculptors, and have tremendously big and lovely meals in the evening. And usually, when we stayed there, there were several of us besides Liz and her husband, Ted, and Julian and me, there were other people. And we used to have a day each in the week, to do the shopping and the cooking. And so, if there were six of us doing it, Liz only had to see to the food one day a week, which was a wonderful arrangement, because we all enjoyed deciding, you know, that my day would be fish, and somebody else's day would be ... Julian's was always boeuf bourgignon, because it was the only thing he could cook! And he wasn't even very good at that, I had to help him! But we had

wonderful meals. And once, when we were staying there, the Irish sculptor, Hilary Heron, was staying, with her husband, who was a great big, sort of gruff old Irish, I think he was a professor at, at Dublin University. He was called Green, what was he called? Geoffrey Green, or something, and he always made Irish stew. Julian always made boeuf bourgignon, I made, alternate, all sorts of different things. And so we all had our days cooking, and it made, for Liz, having a house party perfectly easy, because she didn't have to worry at all about the housekeeping, except one day a week, when she had a go, which was a very good arrangement. And we had wonderful times. We used to go down to the sea, at St. Marie-de-la-Mer, through the Camargue, and visit various friends. But we spent a lot of our time drawing, and, and talking and drinking, and it was a most happy time, staying with Liz.

How was she working then? What was she doing?

She was doing, what we called "Ted heads". She was married to Ted Poole at the time, and she did, she was doing some of those big heads with goggles, and also horses. I think she got past her abstract bird period, they were mostly rolling horses, and standing horses, and huge heads. And she worked out of doors a lot of the time, in a bikini. It was very hot when we went in the summer. And she was, she always has been wonderfully easy about getting on with her work, but always, when lunchtime came, or when there was a break, be able to cut off, and be as jolly and friendly and lovely as, as a companion. She never sort of over-stressed her need for time to work. Although she took time to work, she was always happy to break off and have fun.

She was very unpretentious.

Very unpretentious. She's a lovely character. And now that she lives in Dorset, I often go and stay with her there.

Do you?

And she's just the same. She has a studio apart from the house. And she goes down after, after breakfast, and works. And then always turns up at lunchtime, as cheerful as anything. And she's always happy to show you what she's doing, even when she's in the middle of drawings, or a piece of sculpture. If you say, "Can I come and see what you're doing?" "Oh do!" she says, "I'd like you to tell me what you think." She's not at all precious about her work.

No mystique to it.

No, not at all. She's wonderful.

How did, I mean, did Julian recognise that she had such a, a wonderful talent, when she was at Chelsea?

Well, I don't know how much he actually taught her, because she was in the Sculpture School, you see. Julian did life drawing and painting, and art history lectures. And I expect she went to his lectures, and he knew her because she was a lovely bright student there. But I don't think, I think he may have taught her life drawing, but he didn't teach her sculpture obviously. I don't know how much he recognised her talent then. But we've been friends with her really ever since, and she's a ...

Because she was quite, quite soon picked up, wasn't she.

Oh yes.

It was quite soon recognised that there was something special about her.

Yes. I think she had her first exhibition as soon as she left Chelsea, really.

So, you know, it's a bit like David Hockney.

David Hockney.

At the Royal College, you know.

Yes.

You were aware fairly soon.

You were absolutely aware that there was something special, yes. I'm sure it was recognised with Liz, but Julian taught her sort of generally, he didn't teach her sculpture.

Now, do you know if McWilliam taught her at all?

I think he, I think he did, but where. I can't think where, because ...

I think he did, but I'm trying to think where. Did she go on to the Royal College, or to the Slade?

No, I don't think she did. I think she was only at Chelsea. I'm sure she wasn't at the College, and I'm sure she wasn't at the Slade, and yet Mac knew her very well, and knows her well now, and likes her very much, and they're great friends. But I don't ... I may be wrong, I don't think he actually taught her. I don't think so.

I know that the Richards certainly knew of her, and realised that she was ...

She was a talented girl, yes.

Because they were both, I think, teaching at ...

Chelsea. They were, yes. Yes, they must have taught her.

And Julian got on well with her, presumably?

Adored her. Absolutely adored her. I think she adored him too. They were very good friends, close friends. And he found her entertaining and charming, and affectionate. But she's, she's a sort of ... do you know her?

Yes, I have met her.

Yes. But she's a sort of, I was going to say sort of off-hand. She has a kind of throwaway manner. You know, when I went to stay with them a month after Julian died, she was very kind and affectionate, but found it hard to express it. Whereas her present husband, who is Hungarian, threw his arms round me, and his tears tricked down my neck. I could feel his tears running down the back of my neck. Whereas Liz would find that hard to do, you know, she's, she's ...

More reserved?

A bit more reserved, yes. But she was devoted to Julian, and he loved her.

One of the things that comes out of this long conversation that we've had, is just how many people did love Julian.

I think they did. I don't think it's my own wishful thinking, or my own bias, I think ... I think he was a very loved man.

Certainly.

Wouldn't you say so?

Oh, absolutely. Well, I don't know anybody who didn't absolutely love him, who knew him.

No, I think they did.

Which really, in a way, brings us to something else that I'd like us to, to talk about, before we end our conversation. And that's about the circle of remarkable people who lived actually around here, around the Wharf, in Hammersmith Mall, and along Chiswick Mall, and ...

And the Square.

And in St. Peter's Square.

Yes.

We've talked about that colony of artists and writers who were there in the thirties, that Julian knew from that time onwards.

Well, Ceri was one of the chief ones. Ceri and Frances.

John Piper and ...

And John Piper and ... and the writer ...

Laura Riding.

Laura Riding and ...

Graves.

Robert Graves. And Victor Pasmore. And ... anybody else here? There was also that Irish painter, Nora McGuinness, who lived in Hammersmith Terrace, who was a great friend of all of theirs.

But now, I mean, in the last few years, in the last ten, 20 years, there grew the tradition along the Mall here, of open studios. I can remember you saying earlier, in

our conversation that the Boat Race parties that you gave, sort of gave way to the, to the open studios.

In a way, because Boat Race parties became out of hand, and became so big that we sort of, more or less, gave them up. And the sad thing is, in a way, about open studios, is that now that we have them, there are so few really good painters down here. There are masses of people who paint, and are very nice company, but we don't have the Ceri's, and the Victor's, and the McWilliams, and the people like that here, any more. Which is a pity, since Open Day has become a feature, but a lot of the people who open, are sort of retired businessmen who paint.

And amateur artists.

And amateur artists, which is nice enough.

Absolutely.

But, but it isn't what it would have been in those days.

Well, you had professional people.

And of such standard, like Ceri and Victor, and people like that.

Let's talk though, about your more recent circle of friends, and the people ... one of the things we've talked about, I know, a great deal, has been that when you married Julian, he brought into your life, a lot of people you hadn't known, or hadn't known particularly well, who had been friends with him, and friends through the family, and all that sort of connection. But, of course, there are many friends that you've made in the last few years, which are, were friend of, that you made together, or friends that you brought into Julian's life.

Yes. Well, we've talked of Douglas Cleverdon, he was my friend, and the Sievekings, Lance Sieveking and Maise, they were my friends who Julian didn't know before.

And we left the Sievekings just as they got married. And Maisie went out of your life, out of our conversation, not out of your life, at that point, when you were worried that she might be stuck with the house that you were buying together.

Yes. And I was worried that she would

This takes us back to 1949.

Yes.

And then she disappears, but in fact, she has remained a friend of yours, hasn't she.

Oh always, yes. She married Lance Sieveking, and they lived at Snape in Suffolk, and we often went to stay with them. And Julian is godfather to their son, Paul Sieveking, and we used to have wonderful times there, and go to the Aldeburgh Festival, and go and watch birds at, what's it called, that wonderful ...

Minsmere.

Minsmere, that's right. And so we started a sort of new holiday life in East Anglia, which we hadn't really had before.

Now, that must have meant that you met, if only briefly, because of the people you were mixing with there, and, including, of course, Mary Potter.

Mary Potter, we knew, yes.

Who lived in the ...

In Benjamin Britten's garden.

Yes.

In a house in their garden, yes.

So you must have met Benjamin and Peter?

We did. We met them. But we were usually there at Festival time, when they were up to their eyes in musical company, and so on, so I never got to know them really.

Did you ever go to the Red House?

Yes. Yes. I went to parties there once or twice, but they, I can't say they were ever friends, because they were in another world from us. I don't think even Lance and Maise knew them very well.

Let's go back to Lance and Maise in Snape. Tell us more about them.

Well, by this time, Lance was retired. During the War, he ran, I think he ran BBC Radio in Bristol, and that's where Maise met him, because Maise and I were both in Bristol at one part of the War, and that's where she met him. And he was, in fact, I believe he directed the first play ever done on television.

Yes. Go on.

I don't know what it was called, but he did. But after that, he became a radio man, and he, he ... he did, he directed the Radio West, Bristol West radio, during, through the War. And he wrote dozens of novels, but one can't say they were marvellous. I've got several of them. He was ... he hoped to be a great writer, but he wasn't a great success as a writer, but he published, I should think, 20 novels.

Really?

But he was in the BBC for years and years and years, until he retired, which was about the same time as he married Maise, I suppose. Maise was his ...

So he was a lot older than Maise?

A lot older than Maise, yes. She was ten years older than me, and he was about 20 years older than Maisie, I suppose.

Oh, I see, yes.

And he'd had one, ... two, three wives, before Maise, is it three?

Three?

I think Maise was his fourth wife. But they were devoted. And she loved him, and he doted on her. And he died a long time. Maise was a widow for a long time, and then she died about 15 years ago. And she was, I should think, my closest woman friend, from when I left the Slade, until she died. I loved her very much.

And Mary Potter, whom you met.

Well, I didn't know her well. I used to meet her, she was a friend of Maise's, and I used to meet her when we went to stay with them, but I can't say that Mary Potter was a great friend. A lovely person, but not a friend. I mean, I didn't see her often enough.

Did you like her work?

Very much. I liked her and her work very much.

She's enjoying something of a sort of succes d'estime now, isn't she.

Yes. But I think she always had a succes d'estime. I think people thought of her as a very sort of special, and refined painter. Maybe not very well-known, but extremely special. People thought of her as somebody very special.

A bit like Winifred Nicholson, perhaps.

Yes. Yes.

Was Winifred Nicholson ever a friend of yours?

Yes. She was a friend. Julian knew her. The person we have left out in Julian's life, is Kathleen Raine, who was a great friend of Julian's. Perhaps we didn't leave her out.

I think we have talked about Kathleen Raine.

At Cambridge with Julian.

We have talked about Kathleen Raine, of course.

And Winifred Nicholson was a friend of Kathleen Raine, and Julian met her, well, I suppose he met Ben, probably during the War, but he knew Kathleen long before that. I don't know when he met Winifred. She came here several times. I admire her painting very much. I think she's a ... a very good, lovely painter.

Rather special.

Don't you?

Oh yes. Rather a special sort of painter.

Of course, Mary, McWilliam, of whom I know we have spoken on several occasions, remains, doesn't he, a very special friend.

A very special friend. He's always been a lovely friend. Julian knew him, I don't know when they met, but way back, and, and his wife, Beth. I didn't meet them, again, until I was with Julian. But they've always been the warmest, kindest, most

friendly friends we've, we've had. And I've always admired his work, and himself, and I'm still a close friend of Mac's, and like him very much.

But there would be a great sympathy between Mac and Julian, in terms of their outlook, wouldn't there, because, I suppose, for example, to Cecil Collins.

Yes.

Mac would share almost,

Yes,

Almost identically, Julian's rational ...

The sort of Left-wing, agnostic, yes.

Left-wing, agnostic, rationalist, a wonderful rationalist.

Yes. Yes.

And wonderfully diverse, and unsnobbish.

Yes. Absolutely. I think he's one of the most unpretentious, unvain men that I know. He's totally without pride, isn't he. I mean, without vanity, Mac. And such a constant worker. He's always on some new approach to his sculpture, always going up new avenues.

Renewing things.

Renewing things. So imaginative. And such a dear friend.

And, of course, a surrealist.

Yes. He was a surrealist with Julian, that's when they, probably when they first met.

Yes, because at that time, they would have shared political outlooks, wouldn't they.

Yes.

Because they were both involved in the anti-Munich demonstrations.

Absolutely, yes.

And both, of course, committed to the Spanish Cause.

Yes.

In one way or the other.

They were, yes. And when they both marched in a May Day procession with ...

Wearing Chamberlain masks.

Chamberlain masks.

With Penrose.

Yes.

Roland Penrose was also there.

Roland Penrose, Julian, Mac, and who was the fourth?

I think it was James Cant, was it?

I think it was. And they all wore masks made by Mac. But you could tell which Julian was, because he was two foot taller than all the others!

Yes!

Yes. But he always loved, Julian loved Mac. And Beth, too. We had a very lovely, happy relationship with them.

Did you maintain that relationship right through? I mean, when you met Julian, or, not when you met him, but when you began to live with Julian, was Mac already a sort of ...

A close friend of Julian's, yes.

So all through the period of the fifties and the sixties, you would have been close to Mac in those various sort of styles and diversities of approach that he adopted?

Yes. I think we did. We saw them regularly, and always loved seeing them.

Did Julian like his sculpture?

Well, Mac's sculpture is so wide in its approach. He's got so many sort of styles, and he went through so many periods. I don't know that Julian liked them all, but he admired him as a worker, very much. You know, he thought he was such a

He would also like the humour in the work, wouldn't he?

Yes. Yes. I think he liked his surrealist ones very much. Yes, he liked his work. As I say, I don't think he sort of liked it all equally, but he certainly liked it. Admired it very much, yes.

And Beth, of course, was a remarkable person in her own right, wasn't she.

Yes. Yes, she was.

They came here often?

Yes. And we often went there. Yes, we were on close friendly terms with them, always.

End of F1888 Side A

F1888 Side B

A long way back is Jocelyn Herbert.

Indeed, yes. In fact, we were at the Slade together. And we, I think we've, we've hardly had a break in our friendship ever since. I admire her work enormously. I think she's one of England's greatest theatre designers. And she's a dear friend, a lovely person. And for a long time, we were close neighbours, because she was married to Anthony Lousada, who lives in Chiswick Mall.

Lousada, of course, is a lawyer.

Lawyer. Yes, he's a lawyer.

A solicitor, of great distinction.

Yes. Yes, a great, a very distinguished lawyer, and also became the Chairman of the Tate. He was the Chairman of the Governors of the Tate, and has always had a passionate interest and love of painting.

You meant the Trustees of the Tate, didn't you?

Yes, yes, right, yes.

And he lives along ...

He lives in Chiswick Mall, now.

Just along the road from here.

He was married to Jocelyn for about 25 years, I suppose, and they had four children. And then she, eventually, left him, and was madly in love with, and lived with George

Devine, who had revived the Royal Court Theatre, and was a great figure, as you know, in the theatre world. And ...

Who also lived on Hammersmith ...

He lived at Lower Mall, near the bridge, yes, near Hammersmith Bridge. And I think that was really when Jocelyn's career, as a theatre designer, started. It was rather late, because she didn't ... I can't remember, I don't think she did much when she was with Anthony, but when she moved on to live with George Devine, she then started doing sets at the Royal Court, and almost at once, she was doing them at the National Theatre, and at the Met in New York, and the Comedie Francais in Paris, and all over the world, really. She became, and still is, absolutely brilliant at theatre design. And Anthony ... her four children were grown up, more or less, by this time. And Anthony married an American ballet dancer, Pat ... she's called Pat McBride, Patricia McBride. And she had been a prima ballerina in the Balanchine Company in New York. And, but she'd stopped dancing some time when she married Anthony. And she's absolutely lovely. In her way, she's as much a friend as Jocelyn, and she has written lots of cook books, and keeps Anthony going. And Anthony's now 83, and is a passionate painter, having retired from his firm as a lawyer, and having retired from the Tate, he now paints and draws all the time, and is a very talented draughtsman. And they've had two children, and they are a perfectly happy set-up I think.

Let's get back to Jocelyn Herbert, though, because she's a great ...

Jocelyn, she's might great friend, and a person of great talent, and distinction.

She was at the Slade, do you remember ... she didn't do theatre design at the Slade, because, at that time, they weren't doing.

Well, there was a little ... there was a sort of, on a small scale there was theatre design, because we were both taught by a wonderful Russian, called Vladimir Polunin, who had worked for Diagelev, and had painted a set that Picasso designed for, I think it was for The Tricorn, you know, The Three Cornered Hat. And so

Polunin sort of started us both in the theatre world. I remember, we painted a set for the ballet, "Job", which was designed by Epstein, and we did some sets for Nadia Benois, who was a good, you know, quite a famous designer, and was Peter Ustinov's mother. So we had a flavour of theatre work at the Slade. But then, Jocelyn went to the London Theatre Studio, which was run by Michel Saint-Denis and George Devine, which is, presumably, where she met George.

But when would that be? This is post-War or ...

Pre-War.

Pre-War?

Pre-War, I think, yes.

You see, I'm just wondering how this links with, say, the Group Theatre?

Did Jocelyn work for the Group Theatre?

I don't think she did, no.

No, I don't ... I don't know, I don't think she did.

But Michel Saint-Denis, I think, came to London, didn't he, in the late thirties?

Yes. I think he started the school before the War. I may be wrong about this, but I think the London Theatre Studio was, I think it was before the War.

I'm almost certain you're right.

Yes.

Did, did you have any connections, at that time, with Vera, who became Vera Russell?

No. I've never known her.

You've never known her.

No. I've met her once or twice.

Because she had connections with Michel Saint-Denis.

Yes.

That's the only reason I bring that up.

No. I don't know her at all.

But Jocelyn then, was married, when did she married?

She married Anthony very young. In fact, after she left the Slade, she married him when she was 19, I think. And I suppose when she was bringing up her four children, she didn't start on theatre work. And I can't remember, I know she was closely linked with Michel Saint-Denis and his London Theatre Studio, but I, I don't know whether she went there as a student, during her married ...

I think you've got it wrong. I think he actually set up that studio, after the War, in the forties.

Did he? Yes.

And that would fit, wouldn't it, because it was then that she began to work with Devine.

George Devine.

George Devine, in the fifties, when ... because Look Back in Anger is '56.

Yes. Yes. I think you're right. I think Michel, do you think Michel Saint-Denis didn't come to England until after the War?

I think he was here before, but I think he came back and set up that particular studio after the War.

Perhaps so. I'm a bit vague about that, I'm not sure. And then Jocelyn, I think she ... whether she studied there, I don't know, but she taught there.

How would you describe her as a person? I mean, apart from the fact that I know you love her as a person.

Yes. I love her. She's wonderfully beautiful to look at. She's incredibly modest. She never thinks of herself as a great figure in the theatre, which she undoubtedly is. She's very interested in people. She's been a marvellously devoted mother to her four children, and any number of grandchildren. She's a really wonderful friend. But, tremendously hard working. When she takes on a theatre job, a set for an opera, or a play, she shuts herself off, and concentrates madly on getting it right, and, and making the right links with the people concerned, the director, and the actors, and the stage hands. I think a typical story of hers is that ... she didn't tell me this, of course ... but when she was doing a set for an opera at The Met, in New York, at the end of the run, or after the first night, I think, there was a great banquet given for the singers, and for the director, and for her, and so on. And, and she was, of course, invited, and she said, "Well, what about the stage hands? What about the electricians and the stage hands?" And they said, "Well, we couldn't have all of them, there simply isn't room. There are too many, and they're, after all, they're just stage hands." And so she took the restaurant, which was next door to the theatre, and invited all the stage hands, and the electricians, and the scene shifters, and didn't go to the banquet, and gave them a banquet of their own instead, in a restaurant.

How marvellous.

And that's typical of her. And they gave her, as a present, for being so sweet to them, a pair of roller skates. And she must have been 65 by now, and she went roller skating. This is a sad end to the story. She went roller skating in Central Park in New York, and fell down and broke her wrist, and couldn't draw for another six months!

Oh dear!

But they simply adored her. And people always do. She's, she's the sort of mother figure in the theatre.

But, of course, to be as good as she is, it ... at stage design, is to be exercising a critical intellect, isn't it. I mean, it's own way, it's a sort of critique of the play.

Yes.

In the sense that it's an interpretive.

An interpretation of, of what's got to go on on the stage. And also it, it needs a tremendous amount of collaboration and co-operation, because, you know, when you paint a picture, I paint a painting, and if somebody likes it they can have it, and if they don't, it doesn't matter. But she's got to please everybody as well as herself. She's got to fit in with any number of, sometimes very self-important people.

Have you ever worked yourself, in the theatre, apart from scene painting, which I know you've done a lot of.

Yes. Yes.

Have you ever wanted to make sets?

No. I couldn't do that thing that Jocelyn can do, of keeping my integrity and getting everybody else happy at the same time. I'm sure I couldn't do it. And I don't want to do it really, I've never tried, apart from little things like painting sets for Polunin, and one set I did for Rupert Doone, for the Group Theatre.

Did you?

Yes, but it was a long time ago, and I think it was, I think it was A Winter's Tale, which we did on the South Bank, on ...

Really?

Yes. Near Southwark Cathedral, you know in that ...

Yes. This would be the post-War Group Theatre?

Yes. Yes. The only thing I've done, it wasn't very good. I've sort of forgotten about it! I wouldn't want, I wouldn't want to do sets for the theatre, it wouldn't suit my temperament. But I think Jocelyn is, altogether, a wonderful person.

And then, among other friends of recent years, well, going back perhaps, for many years, is Anna Ford.

Well, Anna Ford, I've only known her about 15 years I suppose.

How did you first get to know her?

Well, I knew her father, who is a parson, and during the War, he was the curate of the parish where my mother lived in Bristol, and I met him as, as a parson. And then he went up to Cumbria, and was married and had five children, and I didn't see him for all those years. And then his wife died, and he came back to London about 15 years ago, and was vicar of a parish in London, and asked me to go to his induction, if that's

what it's called. And all his children were there, and I met them all, and I met Anna there, in the church. And we immediately became friends, on the spot. And we became really close friends. And she came to London from, she was working at Granada Television in Manchester, and came to London, I suppose, to start reading the news for ITV, and had nowhere to live, and turned up at our house on Christmas Eve, one year, and said, "Could I stay the night? I've nowhere to stay." And she stayed till Easter. And she was lovely company. Julian loved her too. He really loved all these girls. And she was charming, terribly nice, sweet person. Still is. Great company. And then she got a house of her own, and then, the following year, I can't remember why, but she came and lived with us again, for another three or four months, or five or six months, and then she married Mark Boxer. And then, alas, he died, on the day of Julian's funeral, five days after Julian died, Anna's husband died. And since then, we've been very close. We telephone nearly, not every day, but, you know, several times a week. And I've just been staying in France with her. We're really close friends, although she's 28 years younger than me, nevertheless, she is a dear friend. Has a very interesting mind. Loves books, and loves talking about ideas. And she's much more of a person than you might think from just seeing her on the news.

Oh, I think she certainly has a ... is known to be a very intelligent person.

She is, she's very ...

Critically intelligent.

Yes. Yes.

There's one other person I want to ask you about, and that is somebody who, I think, actually came here, and that's John Armstrong, am I right?

Oh yes. Dear John, we knew him very well, for a very long time.

We're talking about John Armstrong the astronaut.

Oh! I thought you were talking about the painter!

No, John Armstrong!

Wasn't he called John Armstrong, the painter?

Yes.

But didn't you know, didn't John Armstrong, the astronaut, come here?

No. One of them did, but it wasn't actually John Armstrong.

Which one was it?

Oh God! I can't remember! What was his name? He was passionately in love with Anna Ford, that's why, that's why he came here.

I thought there had to be some minor connection with Anna.

Oh, I wish I could remember what his name was. He was one of the second moonshot. He walked on the moon. He came here, he was charming. He was rather sort of, a quiet man, and nice.

.....

A quiet American.

Buzz Aldrin?

It wasn't him, no. He had a very ordinary name like Williams, or Wood, or something. And he wasn't one that made a great name, although he was one of the six men who went on the second moonshot.

Having walked on the moon, and then having walked into this studio, I thought at least we ought to mention him!

I ought to remember his name, too! It's so awful!

(LAUGHS)

But he met Anna, and fell passionately in love with her. And so that's why he came to dinner here once or twice, when she was living here, I suppose. And he was married, and there was nothing of an affair, but he thought she was divine, and he was a very sweet man. And before he came, Julian and I said, "Now, we won't ask him about walking on the moon, he must be so sick of talking about it." So we got through most of dinner without talking about it. And then I think he said, "Did you hear, I walked on the moon?" And we said, "Well, of course we heard! We've been trying not to talk about it!" And he said, "Oh, I wish you would. Nobody does in America. Nobody talks to me about it. And I long to tell people." So we said, "Well, tell! We'd love to hear." And off he went. And he told us all about the wonderful colours, and how beautiful it was, and how the rocks and the stones, and the ground and the dust were wonderful shades of cream, and brown, and grey. And how ravishing the world looked from the moon. And how brilliant the blue was in the sky. He was poetical. But he said that even his two teenage children, when he got home, didn't bother to ask him about it. He said, "It's been the biggest disappointment in my life, people's reaction. You are the first people", he said, there was Julian and me and Anna, and Anna's brother, Adam Ford, who is a passionate amateur astronomer, and spaceman. I mean, he's only interested in it, he's never done it. But he's mad about it, so we asked him, because we knew he'd be keen to meet this man. And he could ask all the most technical questions. And he said, "I've never had such a good audience in my life." And he was delighted, and so were we. And he was a really nice man. I wish it had been John Armstrong, it wasn't. I will find out for you what his name is. Anna knows. It's just such an ordinary name, I can't remember. But he was a really sweet man.

Mary, thank you very much.

Well, I hope it's been all right.

Wonderful.

How we run on, Mel and I. Mel is a genius at ...

End of F1888 Side B

End of interview