

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Kuttner
Forename:	Henry
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	5 December 1929
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

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Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	4 hours 36 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****NAME: HENRY KUTTNER****INTERVIEW: 135****DATE: 2 NOVEMBER 2006****LOCATION: LONDON****INTERVIEWER: BEA LEWKOWICZ****TAPE 1****Tape 1: 0 minute 8 seconds**

BL: Today is the 2nd of November 2006. We are conducting an interview with Mr Henry Kuttner. We are in London and my name is Bea Lewkowicz

BL: Can you please tell me your name?

HK: Henry Kuttner, I was born Heinz Kuttner.

BL: And where were you born?

HK: In Berlin, Friedenau, it's slightly south of the centre.

BL: And when were you born?

HK: On the 5th of December 1929.

BL: Mr Kuttner, thank you very much for having agreed to do this interview with us. Could you perhaps tell us a bit about your family background?

HK: Certainly. Both my parents were Jewish. My grandparents on both sides were Jewish. In fact I know of no non-Jewish blood anywhere going back. Both my parents were born in Province Posnan – 'Provinz Posen' - the German speaking part of Poland at the end of the 19th Century. My father in Inowroclaw, which the Germans called Hohensalza, in 1893 and my mother in 1897 in what the Germans called Gnesen and the Poles called Gniezno, by which it's still called. Both families – but at different times - moved to Berlin because the Polish authorities at that time, in those 20-30 years, forced German speaking - particularly Jewish families - to move, to get out because they said to them: 'If you want to be Polish then you will have to speak Polish. If you want to speak German, there's no room for you here.' So they moved to Berlin. But my father and his family not till 1901, and I only know that because my father's youngest brother was born in Berlin- the three elder brothers were born in Gniezno – sorry in Inowroclaw. My

parents met at a mutual relative's 50th birthday party. My father was in the German Army at the time so he was in German uniform. Must have cut a fine figure...and so they courted by mail – I suppose by letter - and they didn't get married until four years later, after the war. My father studied to be a dental surgeon and they kept a Jewish household. We kept Passover and we kept Hanukah and we kept... lit the Shabbos candles every Friday.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 34 seconds

I went to synagogue occasionally because I was only...I was not yet nine when we left Berlin and the restrictions from 1933 onwards got tighter and tighter so that I suppose that affected some of the decisions of freedom of movement and... Anyway I recall going to a nearby shtibl for Simchas Torah. I still have what is now a Challah cover – and used to be my flag for carrying around on Simchas Torah. I went to school at the Prinzregentenstrasse Synagogue, but I only once remember going to synagogue there. It was my school, but it wasn't my synagogue. My parents sang in the Fasanenstrasse choir. The Oberkantor there was Magnus Davidsohn, who later became our first cantor in London. And...in fact he was officiating there when my parents got married. When I said he was officiating there he did not officiate at their wedding because he was on holiday. He would have done and he never forgave them for getting married without him being there. And they also sang in a choir of Jewish people called... I've forgotten what the name of the choir was, but the chief conductor of the choir was a Dr Singer. I always thought that was very odd: a choir conducted by a Mr Singer. I never met the gentleman and I never heard them sing in this choir. I just know that they did. When the restrictions for Jewish citizens in Germany became more and more restricted my parents joined, as most Jewish families I think did, the Jüdische Kulturbund. And their membership cards, there too, I've deposited lots of other material at the Imperial War Museum together with most of my parents' documents, those that I didn't deposit at Sachsenhausen concentration camp. But we'll get back to that. My grandparents on my father's side lived in Charlottenburg. I saw them probably once a week or thereabouts.

BL: What were their names?

Tape 1: 6 minutes 36 seconds

HK: Isidor Kuttner and My mind's gone blank...Isidor Kuttner and...I'm ashamed

BL: Don't worry about it. We'll come back to it

HK: I wasn't expecting that question, yes...

BL: Sorry, we'll come back to it later...

HK: My grandmother was born Jacobowitz... Frieda - Friederike Jacobowitz and they both stemmed from parts of Province Posnan. My grandfather was born in Gollub and my grandmother in Lautenburg. I've been trying to look that place up. It doesn't exist any

more. There is a Lauenburg, but it's not the same place. Lautenburg. It may have been nearer to East Prussia, but... So they moved to Berlin with their sons just after the turn of the 20th century and lived in Berlin. My grandfather was a shopkeeper, not a very successful shopkeeper. He was too damn honest, I think. My grandmother was a self-taught pianist and a wonderful cook. I can still taste some of the things she made. As I say, we visited them in Charlottenburg. Occasionally, they came to see us. On my mother's side I never knew my grandfather. He died in 1919, I believe, so ten years before I was born. But my mother's mother – her photograph's on the mantelpiece on the left. She was living in Prinzregentenstrasse. I would walk past her place on my way to school every morning and we'd see her about once a week. She had seven children, my mother being the middle one. She emigrated to Israel, what was still Palestine, in about 1937 with two of her daughters. And I never saw her again, unfortunately. And of course I never saw my father's parents again either after we emigrated.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 24 seconds

BL: What was her name please?

HK: Also Rebecca. Rebecca Löwenthal. Very curious...My grandfather was officially Karl Dzialiner-Löwenthal – that's my mother's father. Some of the daughters carried the name Dzialiner. Some of them carried Löwenthal and some of them kept both. And the shop front, I've got a photograph of his very fine tailor's shop - he was a master tailor - in Gniezno. The shop front says Dzialiner- Löwenthal. But obviously it was a bit too much for passport control and goodness knows what else, so some of the daughters dropped one or the other. And so I know my Oma as Oma Löwenthal. I never thought of her as Dzialiner-Löwenthal, but I realise that must have at sometime been dropped. And she made it to quite a decent age in Israel, died in about 1950.

BL: Where did you live in Berlin?

HK: In Friedenau, which is a district somewhere around Schöneberg, Wilmersdorf near a place called Innsbrucker Platz – that was the nearest U-Bahn tube station. We lived on the second floor in a...you'd call it a block of flats, but I didn't think of it as a block of flats. But it was indeed an unfurnished flat. So we owned all the furniture but we didn't own the flat. It was a rented flat; people didn't own houses. I became the first member of this family to own a house or perhaps my sister. But, anyway, my parent's generation never owned houses. It just wasn't the done thing. And...We lived on the second floor. My father's surgery, until he had to move out of it late in 1938, was in the Hauptstrasse, Friedenau, which was about ten minutes' walk away.

Tape 1: 11 minutes 52 seconds

BL: What was his profession?

HK: He was a dental surgeon. And I would go to the surgery several times a week, either to say hello or take him something, although I don't recall going by myself. I was always

with somebody. And when he was forced to leave that surgery he had what was in fact my room. I had a huge room in Bennigsenstrasse, No. 13. He moved me out into what was called the Herrenzimmer, the gentleman's room, with all the books and library and stuff. And he took over what had been my room and made it into a surgery... until the 10th of November, when he was arrested and taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where he stayed for 4 weeks - a horrendous time. And in the months, the three months or two and a half, that he had been having his surgery in his own flat he treated only Jewish patients because no non-Jewish patients dared come and be treated. And at the time when he was arrested I was not at school because I had seen the synagogue burned down the day before - at Prinzregentenstrasse - and I was playing downstairs in the playground in the courtyard at the back of the flats. When I called up to my mother and said: 'Mummy throw me a sandwich' she didn't hear. So I went up the back stairs and was met coming down by one of my Hungarian uncles, one of my mother's sisters [husbands]. He was Hungarian and he'd been in the chair being treated by my father when they came to arrest my father. They would have arrested my uncle as well, but he had a Hungarian passport so they let him go. He came down the back stairs, hardly said a word to me as we passed. I didn't know what had happened till I got upstairs and my dad had gone. They'd taken him down the front stairs. And I don't now remember what my mother told me, but it was a pretty horrendous time.

Tape 1: 14 minutes 50 seconds

BL: What happened the day before? You said you saw the synagogue burn... What do you remember?

HK: I went to school on my own as I did always. I'd been going to that school for over two years at that time. It was November '38 now. I was not yet nine years old. I went on my own to the school; it was about a 15 minute walk. And, as I got close to the school - we started at eight in the morning, so it was twenty to eight, I suppose, (I left the house at half past seven). And, as I got close to the school, I could see smoke and there were people lining the opposite side of the road where they could get a better view of whatever it was they were looking at and people called out to me insulting expressions because it was obvious since I was carrying a satchel I was on my way to school. And it wasn't until I got closer that I realised the building was ablaze. There were two or three fire engines there. And I now know of course that they were there just to make sure that the surrounding buildings didn't get set alight. They didn't do anything to stop the fire in the synagogue. And I ran all the way home with milk bottles thrown after me and I was never so exhausted as when I got home - very tearful. And my father was shaving and I blurted out what I had just seen. And I don't recall what he said, but obviously he could see that I was upset enough. And little did he know that he was going to be arrested the next day. No doubt telephone calls were made to alert everybody they knew. And, as a result of that, my father's youngest brother, who was a doctor and later became an anaesthetist over here, managed to evade the arresting parties, who came to arrest him. Because he was always spending time somewhere else with well-known patients or with friends and they never caught up with him. He came and emigrated with us when we got our visas to leave the country, visas in fact for Peru.

Tape 1: 17 minutes 32 seconds

It wasn't until much later that we realised those visas wouldn't have got us in to Peru but they did get us out of Germany. I think the Nazis knew all the time that these were false visas, but fortunately, we did not know. Anyway, we were allowed to leave the country. At that time they hadn't yet worked out how the Final Solution should work – so called – and so getting the country rid of its Jews was the number one priority, so, even with visas that were not valid visas, they were quite happy for us to leave the country. We had to leave all our money behind. We left what we could with our grandparents and I remember having a ten pence – a ten pfennig piece in my pocket. That was about all we were allowed but we were happy to be leaving.

BL: Before coming to emigration just to go back a bit...

HK: Yes.

BL: Can you tell me what sort of friends you had, what sort of friends your parents had, what sort of circles you mixed with?

HK: Speaking for my sister and myself we had only Jewish friends. And I assume from that, that that was the case with my parents as well. My father played bridge. He went to a bridge club, though, but I'm sure it was not a Jewish club and he did have non-Jewish patients so he did have contact with non-Jewish people, but I don't remember any non-Jewish visitors to the house. It never occurred to me to question it. But we had friends. I remember twin girls, the daughters of a doctor a few miles up the road, with whom we had a lot of contact. The son of a friend of my father's with whom he'd been at the sports club. My father was very, very active in one of the biggest athletics clubs in Germany called the Sport Club Charlottenburg. I've been to visit them. They still remember him. He was President, the only ever Jewish President of that club. His name is on the board and the names of his brothers.

Tape 1: 20 minutes 2 seconds

BL: What sport did he do?

HK: Athletics. He organised the Potsdam-Berlin relay races in 1922. He wrote the history of the club. I presented the club – the SCC – Sport Club Charlottenburg – I presented them with a copy of the book in case it should no longer be there. So he had Jewish and non-Jewish friends in the sports club. But of course from 1933 onwards it was no longer a good idea to have non-Jewish friends, particularly for the non-Jewish friends, because they were penalised, for want of a better word, if they were seen to have Jewish friends, so they melted away. And you weren't allowed to have non-Jewish patients because non-Jewish patients were not allowed to go to Jewish doctors or dentists. So you were forced into... Hence they also joined the Kulturbund. They couldn't join any cultural societies other than a Jewish one, so the Jüdische Kulturbund – the Jewish Cultural Society - was

formed purely because, like happens in this country with golf clubs, purely because the non-Jewish types don't want Jewish members.

BL: Do you remember...I mean you were very young at the time...Did you have a sense of some sort of anti-Semitism and hostility?

HK: Oh Yes. Born in 1929, my very first memories you'd think would go back to the age of three or four, but actually, I suspect because of the trauma of what happened to me in 1938, I hardly remember anything before that. It's just been wiped off. But I do remember...I can say with certainty that I do not remember the streets of Berlin without brown shirts, Swastikas at every corner, and people shouting Heil Hitler, and I knew that I was not a part of this. That had been explained to me, fine. And if I threw snowballs at the wheels of passing cars, the passers-by would know immediately I was Jewish 'cause I suppose I looked Jewish... And they would say 'verdammter jüdischer Junge' or 'Bursche' or some worse expression. So I knew, but like all young people you stretch how far you can go. So you didn't go out of your way to antagonise people but you pushed the limits. I went to keep fit classes privately because I was a bit of a weedy kid and I did sport where I could. I rode a bicycle. I rode a scooter around the pavements around my area. And, apart from the fact that I kept well away from the swastikas, I didn't feel that my childhood was an unhappy one. I would say that my childhood was happy, but that was probably because I was so protected – Jewish school, Jewish friends, loving family, grandparents. And people who didn't want to be with us we didn't socialise with. So I had a pretty comfortable time.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 2 seconds

BL: What sort of area was Friedenau? Were there many Jews or was it a...?

HK: I don't think it was a particularly Jewish area, but then there were something like 400,000 Jews in and around Germany so I don't suppose there were any streets that were free of Jews. But I don't remember walking by any house and saying: 'Oh yes, this is a Jewish house.' No, that never happened to me. And the school that I went to, fifteen minutes away, I suppose the catchment area was a 3 or 4 mile area. There were other Jewish schools, I just happened to be at a synagogue school. I don't know of the others. But of course reading books like the journals, like the AJR Journal and similar papers you've seen letters in Aktuell the paper that ex-Berliners get sent from Berlin. You see letters coming in from people who went to Jewish schools all over the place. So I now know, but wasn't aware. And I've got the *Wegweiser durch das jüdische Berlin*, and it's absolutely immense what Jewish cultural, educational, religious and official and unofficial organisations there were scattered all over greater Berlin and most large towns. And when you see and hear the propaganda that is brought forth time and again, as in the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion', when people say: 'We must get rid of the Jews because the Jews are running the country'. I can see how easy it was to get away with such a statement because there were Jews prominent everywhere out of proportion... out of their numbers. So it was easy to prove - in inverted commas 'prove' – for Nazis or any anti-Semite to 'prove' that the Jews had too much influence - financial, educational, business,

commerce - and that's why Rathenau was murdered in 1922, and so it goes on. Hitler wasn't the first anti-Semite.

BL: You said that you visited synagogues but can you tell me what you remember of the Fasanenstrasse or...

Tape 1: 26 minutes 49 seconds

HK: I don't remember anything about the Fasanenstrasse. Nothing at all. I did visit the building in 1978, but of course the synagogue doesn't exist. It's a home for the Jewish community and it has a wall marking where the concentration camps were and there's a library and there's an office. And there's a restaurant. But I do not remember the building before the war. My parents went there. I used to go to a little Shtiebl in Stierstrasse, which was close to where my father's surgery was, just near the Hauptstrasse in Friedenau near the Town Hall or Rathaus and literally a room, perhaps only twice the size of this room. And people were just crammed in there on Simchas Torah and I was there on the occasional Saturday morning, but it's too dim a memory now. Funnily enough, being at school at Prinzregentenstrasse, I do not remember going into the synagogue as part of the school curriculum. Very strange...

BL: Did the school teach you some things...I mean you were...Obviously it was a primary school... to do with immigration or was there any sense of pupils leaving?

Tape 1: 28 minutes 36 seconds

HK: No, none at all. Until the day that the synagogue burnt down we had subjects German, written and oral, arithmetic, drawing, keep fit, religious education, Hebrew. I can't remember the rest, but I've got my school report so I can always check. But those subjects were pretty well the basis of education and I do not remember a word of preparation for emigration. Even after the synagogue burnt down and I then went to - just for a few weeks before we left Berlin - I went to a private school where my sister was already studying, called the Zickelschule, only a couple of blocks away from where the synagogue had burnt down. And they had Jewish and non-Jewish teachers. I remember having a very anti-Semitic teacher, and I had to get my sister to come and sort her out, in this Jewish school. And there the subjects carried on pretty well as I had learnt them before. Perhaps a higher standard of German lessons and possibly a little bit less of religious teaching because it wasn't a religious school. But parents wanted their children not to interrupt their education.

BL: Had your sister been there for a long time..?

HK: Yes she'd been there for several years.

BL: Where did she go before she went to that school?

HK: I don't remember. It may have been her first one, but I don't remember. You see she's four years older than I am and, when she was a toddler, I was a baby. She was born in 1925.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 55 seconds

BL: What other memories have you got? You said you have few memories, but is there anything else from Berlin until 1939?

HK: Yes. One of the routes to school was via Innsbrucker Platz, although I didn't normally take that route on my own because there was too much traffic and I went the pretty route through a little park called Maibachplatz at the bottom of our street about ten minutes walk away. But if one went via Innsbrucker Platz, where the underground station was - the U Bahn and S Bahn - you passed some tennis courts. And I knew my parents played tennis and my uncle played tennis and my aunt played tennis and I sometimes watched them play. But those tennis courts were turned into ice rinks in the winter - artificially. And one of my greatest joys was at the age of seven, I think, being given a pair of boots and screw-on ice blades. Not like today where you have a boot and blade all in one. And with my mother on one arm and my aunt on the other they wanted to slowly take me around the ice rink and I said: 'Let Go!', and off I shot. I don't know how I stopped, but I didn't want any help and I'm afraid I've been that independent all my life. Even at the age of seven I didn't want two women... and stupid things... whilst I was skating there. The winter was long and hard, so I remember this may have been two or three winters. It may have even started earlier than seven. They had a little sweet shop there and chewy sweets. I can still taste the sweet of these chewy sweets wrapped in paper, very hygienic. Chewing sweets and skating around this ice rink was the greatest joy, similar to the freedom I felt on my tricycle or my scooter. So when kids today get their first bike I know exactly how they feel. Freedom. Fantastic. Kids need freedom to do what they want within the limitations of safety, and that's the problem for parents of course. The other thing I remember about Berlin is visits to Woolworth's and visits to the cinema, Laurel and Hardy which was called 'Dick und Doof'.

Tape 1: 34 minutes 7 seconds

My uncle, my father's next youngest brother, who ended up as a slave and ended his days in Auschwitz, he took me - I think it must have been my eighth birthday, perhaps it was my seventh birthday - he took me out, just me, 5th of December, bitterly cold, and he took me to see a Laurel and Hardy film. I do not remember the film. What I remember about that incident was that, on the way there, he, like my father having been an athlete and a very fine athlete and a hockey player, was very keen that I should learn some of the lessons of sportsmanship - well of sporting behaviour and sporting habits. And he could see that I was breathing in through my mouth and out through my mouth in the cold air. Easy to see because of the steam that rises, no doubt. And he said: 'Now I think you should know, Heinz, that your father and all his brothers learnt early on that the healthy way to breathe is in through your nose and out through your mouth.' I tried this and, gosh, it's uncomfortable when the air is so cold. So I remember that instance. I knew that

it was something that I wasn't going to enjoy doing, but if he said so I knew it was true. And I've been practicing it ever since. But I can't keep it up for long because it's very hard to do. And I've spoken to other people who've had similar advice. Yes, it's hard to do: breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Visits to my grandmother and grandfather Kuttner. She would prepare blintzes called Käsepiroggen, cheese blintzes...

[Sound interruption]

Apologies...

BL: Finish the sentence and then we'll stop. Oh I see it's not going to stop.

HK: I just want to wait for it...It goes on for a minute.

BL: We can stop now.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 45 seconds

HK: Visiting my grandma, Oma Kuttner, was always a joy. He just beamed at us from her chair. Opa was much older; eighty-two he was when we left them. He made it to eighty-four. She would entertain us with her piano playing and she would make the most wonderful meals. What stands out for me was the cheese blintzes that she made – very difficult to do. Apparently you make them in the frying pan and then you bake them. So they're sort of twice cooked. Very labour intensive, but for her family this was not too much trouble. Unfortunately, since she made me the last one in about 1938, I've not eaten one, but I don't forget what it tasted like. And she'd sit at the piano and play one particular piece for me because it made me laugh, by Boccherini [hums tune]. And it would get faster and faster at the end which would have me in fits and she'd play on this, start particularly slowly so that she could exaggerate the accelerando. And she'd play other pieces. She was self-taught apparently... piano player. My father would sing songs and she'd accompany him and my mother would sing and they would sing duets. This they carried on into London – Mendelssohn duets and Wolff songs and Schubert songs and Brahms songs, and my grandfather just sat there and beamed at us. And I'd sit on his knee. But, by the time I was eight I was a bit too old for that. And I remember talking to my grandfather but I don't remember what we talked about. But with my grandmother. because she was able to play the piano and because she made these fantastic meals, she is even more memorable to me.

Tape 1: 39 minutes 22 seconds

My other granny also cooked fine meals but she didn't play the piano, so... My sister learnt the piano and I learnt the piano in Berlin, just for about a year, and I have photographs to prove it. But our piano and all the other furniture that we weren't able to take with us went into storage. And whilst we were in furnished accommodation till about 1941 the piano had to stay in storage and so piano lessons and what with evacuation and things, that went by the board. However, when I was thirteen the violin that had come with us that used to belong to my father's eldest brother, who died in the

First World War...My father was the second eldest. His eldest brother Ludwig had been a dental mechanic and served in the Kaiser's army, as did my father. And they both won Iron Crosses from the Kaiser, for all the thanks they got for it later. Ludwig, the eldest brother, fell at the battle of Ypres, which the Germans called by another name. And he apparently was at the hospital tent where he was an orderly - with his medical training he became a medical orderly (corporal I think) - and the tent where he was looking after wounded received a direct hit and he was instantly killed. He was a pianist, self taught, and I have his diary which he wrote in the First World War, in the first couple of years of the First World War, in which he says they found derelict buildings where they'd have a piano and he would entertain his fellow soldiers with his piano playing. My sister learnt the piano and I learnt the piano, but when we got to England my piano playing stopped. But the violin which used to belong to Ludwig - the eldest brother - came into my possession. It was a three-quarter violin, suitable for a boy of 13. And so I started learning the violin at the age of 13. I later got a larger instrument and when I went in the army at the age of twenty I bought another instrument in Germany so I could go on playing there. I played in school orchestras and I played to amuse myself but I never got very good. My teacher said: 'You are the most talented pupil I've ever had but the laziest.' A shame really, But, that musical training and the musical ear which I obviously had, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to play the violin, that - together with my singing in the choir, which I've done since then - has given me a background to music without which I wouldn't be able to do some of the things I am now able to do in music. But we'll get to that.

Tape 1: 42 minutes 57 seconds

BL: Yes, let's talk first about Sachsenhausen, about your father's imprisonment. What happened after he was arrested?

HK: The first thing that happened was that my mother went to the local police station and they said: 'You'll have to write'. So she wrote a letter and I have a copy of that letter in which she says: 'My husband has never broken any law. He has not committed any crime. He has even got the Iron Cross for Germany and even got the Ehrenkreuz!' - a bronze cross that was issued in 1935 with Hitler's agreement at the time with Hindenburg. 'What reason have you for arresting my husband?' Very brave thing to do, she wrote to the chief of police. Later on, she went with her youngest sister Elsa, who only died about five years ago, six years ago, to Sachsenhausen with a food parcel and at the gate the young Nazi said to her: 'Your husband has everything he needs here!' And they were turned away. But incredibly brave thing to do.

Tape 1: 44 minutes 56 seconds

And then came the 7th of December, which was my father's birthday, and his mother whom I don't think they'd told precisely where he was, but she wasn't stupid, she came to visit us on her own without my grandfather. And they were sitting around the small table in the huge room. There was one table that could seat twenty people around it, a long, a huge, huge table. And in the alcove was a round table and my mother and my

grandmother were sitting at this table, not talking much. It was my father's birthday. And I was playing. I can't remember what my sister was doing. And the doorbell rang. And I ran to answer it. And it was my father. He didn't have his keys. He had nothing. I hardly recognised him. He had not a hair on his head. They'd shaved all the prisoners probably for some health reason, but also for intimidation and... So we had our daddy back and his mum was there. Extraordinary moment. I didn't find out till much, much later. He hardly ever talked about his experiences. But I know of two instances...Have you been to Sachsenhausen? I was interviewed by somebody for Sachsenhausen. And I put on tape a few things which I'm about to tell you. I put it on tape in two languages so that visitors to Sachsenhausen whether German- or English-speaking can benefit from this. I gave them photographs and his release papers. Papers too and instruments from his dental surgery, photographs, family, something about my father's surgery, and he is part of an exhibition of Jewish inmates of the camp, which they formulated in 1997 in time to mark the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht. Because, under Russian and East German occupation, that part of Germany which is near Oranienburg, about 35 km north of Berlin - I've been two or three times - that part or that camp was never acknowledged as having had any Jewish prisoners.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 40 seconds

The Russians and East Germans pretended that there were only Russian prisoners there. And indeed the Russians used it as a concentration camp when they took over. And the only prisoners commemorated there in special museum-type buildings were the gays, Christian prisoners like Niemöller were there - in solitary confinement even - and the Russian prisoners. So the West decided that it was the time to commemorate the fact that there were Jewish prisoners and that's when they started collecting evidence. And I felt obliged and very pleased to be able to give them what I had. So in this barracks - there was an attempt of arson on it - they now protect it with wire grids and alarms and all sorts of things. And there are video projectors showing pictures of inmates as they looked at that time, including a picture of my father so when my daughters went to visit they could see my father, about the size of the wall over there. Lump in throat time. And I was there showing my daughters around a few years ago. And, while they were going around a part of this, it's on two levels - Hut 49 or 48 - quite near the solitary confinement block. As I was showing them around...sorry, as they were looking around on their own, for a while I was talking to one of the museum coordinators whom I'd met on previous occasions and she was asking me questions about my father and about things...And we were on the top floor. There's a sort of a balcony and you can look down to what's happening below. And I was unaware that three or four people were standing just to my left, and I didn't really notice them. But, out of the corner of my eye, I was aware that there was somebody and they stood there for a long time.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 17 seconds

Eventually I realised it was a man with his three boys aged about sixteen, fourteen and twelve. And he was standing there with his mouth open and, when he realised we'd stopped talking, he said: 'I have seen films. I've watched television programs. I've been

to museums, I've read books. But to hear this from a witness is something new.' And that's the first time I realised the importance of being an eye-witness and being somebody who remembers. And I visit a school in Friedenau – sorry in Steglitz – which is near Friedenau, the nearest school we could find. And I've been to see them several times. An extraordinary school where the teacher – a Mr Bedürftig – my friend and I keep calling him Mr Needy, but not to his face. Mr Bedürftig has been for the last 10 years, and to my knowledge he's still doing so, working with youngsters from his school on combating anti-Semitism. He's taken them to Auschwitz; he's taken them to Theresienstadt. He's cleaned up with them and other schools, Jewish cemeteries that were vandalised. He's made video projects of their work. There is a Spiegelwand, a mirror wall on which are commemorated the names of all those people in Steglitz who were deported. It's a mirror wall to dissuade graffiti. People don't tend to write graffiti on a wall where they can see their own reflection. It's like a black marble glass effect and inch-high letters. And I was looking at the names on this wall and, suddenly with a gasp, I saw my own uncle's name on that wall, my father's brother who became a slave. And the reason he's on there, even though he did not live in Steglitz, was because they reproduced on that wall, and it's about thirty yards long and ten metres high and eighteen inches thick, on both sides of the wall are names and reproduced pages from the Nazis' records of deported people in trains, people in train transports. If one person from Steglitz was on that page they reprinted the whole page. My uncle lived in Charlottenburg but he was on that page. And the school that I go to visit had been working on the subject of Jewish people and their culture and trying to make good, if that's possible, the loss of the culture, were unaware that my uncle's name was on there even though they'd been in touch with me for a couple of years. But I saw it because I looked at every name in case I recognised a name. And the school now goes to lay a wreath at my uncle's name, every year. Non-Jewish children. Remarkable...

Tape 1: 55 minutes 20 seconds

BL: What were the things you put on record when you were interviewed for Sachsenhausen...? What are the things your father told...?

HK: Yes, I'm sorry I sidetracked myself. I put on there two of the incidents that happened to my father. The first thing was, when he arrived they had to stand for 24 hours. Anybody who moved got beaten. They were fed on nothing but salt herrings and not given anything to drink. It's a torture, an absolute torture. And the other incident he told me about, and that was the only one he told me about, was that he must have got up somebody's nose. I imagine it was not very difficult to do in there. I imagine he was trying to protect a fellow inmate from some mistreatment. They were working, but the guards were vicious and my father must have done something that warranted a special treatment and they attempted to bury him alive. And I'm sure it would have happened but for the fact that the man who was doing it was called away, so he was helped out and he survived. He said the worst...And I remember being asked when I went to speak for the first time at the Steglitz School, Friedrich Bayer Oberschule. Wonderful school. After giving my talk about my experiences – of course I spoke in German. My German isn't as good as my English but I managed - one girl got up and said: 'Mr Kuttner, your German

is so good. Have you ever considered coming back to Berlin to live?’ I said I’m very grateful for the question because it allows me to say a couple of things that I wouldn’t otherwise have thought of to say. The first thing is to say: my family and I were given refuge in England. I am now British. I’ve married a British wife. My daughters are British. I served in the British Army and, although I still speak German, my English is better than my German. My memories of Germany are mostly unhappy although I admit my earliest childhood was mostly happy. But there is another reason why the answer to your question must be ‘no’. I’ve never considered coming back to Germany to live. And that leads me back to something my father told me. He said in the concentration camp the worst criminals – and they were all criminals – he said the worst criminals were the seventeen year olds. So I put it as a question to the school – there were 180 kids there and their parents and their teachers. This was on the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht that I was speaking, the ninth of November 1998, so eight years ago that I was speaking to them. ‘How old are those 17 year olds now?’ And somebody from the back called out: ‘77, Siebenundsiebzig’. I said: ‘Quite right’ and I sighed. ‘And when I walk the streets of Berlin today,’ I said, ‘and I’m confronted with people about 76, 77, 80, I’m afraid to look into their eyes for fear of what I will see. I hope that answers your question.’ I hated doing it, but it was prompted by a question from a youngster and she was entitled to an answer. And that was the true answer to the question.

BL: We have to stop now because we have to change tapes.

HK: Sure.

Tape 1: 60 minutes 26 seconds
End of tape One

TAPE 2
Tape 2: 0 minute 4 seconds

BL: This is tape two and we are conducting an interview with Mr Henry Kuttner.

You were talking about your father’s stay in Sachsenhausen and you were telling us what you tell the schools. I was just wondering, at the time he probably didn’t tell you that much.

HK: No he didn’t.

BL: Probably until much later?

HK: Much, much later. He wouldn’t want to burden his children with that sort of thing. I don’t know how much he told my mother.

BL: When did he tell you these two incidents?

HK: Oh after I was married. I think I must have asked him, although I didn't enjoy asking him such questions. But the right moment came for me to ask. And I'm glad he told me because otherwise I wouldn't be able to record the evidence myself for the tapes.

BL: So when he got back, what steps did your parents take?

HK: My mother had already got in touch with anybody who could help us including my cousin abroad, who was in England working for Thomas Cook's. And she got in touch with her brother in America who had emigrated a few years earlier. And simultaneously there were attempts made to get us visas to America. That didn't work out, although we signed...my uncle had papers signed in America by people who guaranteed us. But before any of that could come to fruition the war broke out anyway cause there were delays and delays for that, so the first option that was available...I was unaware of what was happening of course as a nine year old. And my uncle Martin, the youngest brother of my father - he was a nerve specialist working at the sanatorium I recall at Lichterfelde. He was married to a non-Jewish wife, Lella - Lella Busching. And they lived in accommodation in the sanatorium. I remember visiting them quite often. It became memorable on those visits when my mother would take up just me perhaps to see Auntie Lella. At the sanatorium at Lichterfelde the avenue leading to the sanatorium had chestnut trees by the dozens.

Tape 2: 2 minutes 54 seconds

Dozens and dozens. I would fill my bags with chestnuts - conkers - I don't know what I did with them. And tea or coffee at auntie Lella's was extraordinary because she had on a little coffee table a stand on which were hanging eight or nine different coloured cups. Each cup was about that size and saucers standing underneath, a very modern looking thing. You can see things in Selfridges today no doubt, but this was 1938 or 37. And there was a blue cup and a red cup and a green cup and a yellow cup and I was fascinated by this set of cups. She wouldn't let me play with them of course, but I was allowed to drink out of it. So Auntie Lella's visits meant for me these coloured cups - visiting her - and the conkers. I never saw my uncle when we went there because he was working. Anyway, my Uncle Martin, who managed to escape arrest during that week by flitting from place to place, and a different place each night, he helped my mother in acquiring what turned out to be these false visas to Peru that allowed us exit visas. And my father's release from concentration camp was on the basis of those visas. And his release paper states, and these are now deposited with Sachsenhausen... And I think I've left copies in the Imperial War Museum - '...leave the country within two months otherwise this release is rescinded and that would be grounds for re-arrest.'

Tape 2: 5 minutes 6 seconds

And on the 8th of February we left, so just two months. And my uncle came with us. We went by train through Hamburg to Ludwigshaven and from there by night train - boat. And when I woke up it was Southampton. I had already started to learn Spanish. And when we got to Southampton our papers were inspected. I think we would have stopped

only for a day or so. I think my father's distant cousin, whom I called Auntie Lucy, came to meet us and it was whilst we were, we thought, just en route, we were informed that our visas to Peru were not valid. So we asked for asylum and were given a three month permit of stay...through my Auntie Lucy and people we knew who were already over here. And that three months was extended by a further three months by which time the war had broken out. And even our attempts – and we weren't the only ones - to get on to America which would have been the next ... to try to proceed, whether because my mother wanted to be near her brother or whether because we didn't think England was safe in the long run, I don't know, from invasion. But, in common with many of the people who had hopes of visas for America any thoughts of fruition for that was nipped in the bud when the war broke out.

BL: Who found out that the visas were false visas?

Tape 2: 7 minutes 31 seconds

HK: The British Authorities or possibly some Spanish Consul or Peruvian Consul. I doubt it. I would have thought it was the British authorities. And it wasn't till 50 years later that I decided on my own that it is impossible to consider the possibility that the Germans were unaware that the visas were false. I think at the time they just wanted to get rid of the Jews any old how so that they could say Berlin or Germany was 'Judenrein', free of all Jews, *cleansed* of all Jews. As I mentioned earlier, the Final Solution hadn't been worked out yet. The Wannsee Conference wasn't to be for another 3 years. And they would catch up with us later anyway. World domination was the idea. And various levels of hierarchy of the Nazi party would no doubt have thought of themselves as having achieved success by just getting rid of us out of the country, at the same time as having absorbed all our wealth, having taken from us most of our possessions.

BL: What could you take? Do you remember what you took?

Tape 2: 9 minutes 6 seconds

HK: We took all my father's dental surgery in the lift or container. It was called a lift, sort of enormous crates that you now see on docks everywhere, stacked on top of each other. And ours' were stored in Glasgow and not opened for several years. Very exciting when that was opened, although I didn't see it being opened. And out came the piano and my father's surgery and then he had to find somewhere else to store that in his first years in England, although he had come over in 1937 while we were all on holiday in Denmark. He'd come over secretly in a fishing boat from Denmark to put his name on the dental register without which you could never hope to practice as a dental surgeon. And even with a signature on a dental register you had to be resident for 5 years before it came into force – that permission. But he didn't have patients. The patients of humans...no I haven't said...the patients with a 'ts'. It wasn't till the National Health Service came along in 1948 that he realised he would be able to get enough patients to run a dental surgery again and that's when his surgery equipment came good. And he

installed a surgery where we were then living, at number 31 Compayne Gardens, not far from John Barnes. Finchley Road Station was a five minute walk from there. And that's where I played my violin. And that's where he had his dental surgery. And that's where we lived for several years.

BL: So for 9 years he didn't work as a dentist, from 1939 to 194...?

Tape 2: 11 minutes 14 seconds

HK: Yes he did, but not for himself.

BL: Right...

HK: He worked for the National- sorry, he worked for the London Cooperative Society Dental Department first in Penge and then in Peckham. Peckham Rye. The building no longer exists I am told by somebody whom I knew from the BBC – we haven't got to that. I worked for the BBC for a long time and one of my ex-colleagues lives in Peckham Rye and she knows that building that used to be over a chemist's shop where my father had his dental surgery. He worked as a dentist for the Cooperative Dental Association. There were lots of continental dentists who were registered in the Anglo-German Dental Register. And there is a diary – I've got a copy of it somewhere in the loft, which I gave access to, to a gentleman from one of the universities who is making a life study of the doctors and dentists of continental origin. There are several people doing this research. And so he was able to work with other people's equipment rather than his own equipment. He was an employee of the Cooperative Dental Association and it served the purpose of giving him patients. What he told me about Penge and Peckham was that most patients would arrive and say, 'Good morning Doctor. I'd like you to take all my teeth out.' And he'd say: 'My training as a dentist was to save teeth, not to pull them out. Can I persuade you not to have them out?' And they'd say: 'No Doctor, I want them all out.' He would ring the head office and they would say: 'No you've got to extract them.' But he soon started to train people and, by the time he left, people weren't asking that any more. He was training people... 'Why do you want all your teeth out?' 'My father wanted all his out.' would be the answer, the reason why people wanted all their teeth out. Unbelievable!

Tape 2: 13 minutes 40 seconds

BL: You said he registered in 1937? So he must have had an inclination of emigration ?

HK: Yes. He must have had...Yes, indeed, he must have done. But two things, three things militated against it. I mean making the decision any earlier. One was that his parents were still living in Berlin and when the time came my grandfather felt he was too old to emigrate. So that was the point: he didn't want to leave his parents if he didn't have to. Two, in common with all Jews in Germany, but in Berlin in particular, the general thought was: 'Oh, this will all blow over,' particularly after the 1936 Olympic Games when they had to backtrack for a while, without which backtracking the Nazis

would have never have persuaded the Americans to come over. But for a subterfuge Goebbels pretended - and I know some of the people involved - to put Jewish athletes on the team, on the German team for the Olympic Games. But for that the Americans would never have set sail. They didn't fly in those days; they went on a boat. So, once the Americans were on the boat, they issued these letters to all the Jewish athletes: 'You won't be required after all.' But lots of the swastika signs were taken down. All the 'Jews are not wanted here' signs were taken down and the place was cleaned up, so to speak. And that gave one hope, I suppose. I was unaware of it. I was only six in 1936. That gave one the hope that things might get better after all. And anti-Semitism is to be found everywhere so where do you run to? And, thirdly, my father was, you might say unfortunately, doing rather well.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 48 seconds

Financially, economically he was doing extremely well in the mid-30s, so it must have been a very hard decision. But most hard of all of course was leaving his parents, never to see them again. And his brother, who had been widowed shortly after his daughter was born, Eva, who is now a grandmother in her own right in Scotland. And Richard, having sent his daughter Eva on the Kindertransport, Richard, my uncle, the one who told me how to breathe through my nose, felt it was his duty to stay with his parents, and this he did. First to see them deported, whilst he and his cousin, who had come to live with them from Königsberg and whose two sisters were now in London, here, Auntie Recha and Auntie Herta. One of whom died in my arms here. The two cousins saw Richard's parents, my grandparents, deported after they'd signed over every last spoon and chair and cupboard and knife and fork. And I have those papers from the Berlin Archives. I have a photocopy of every one of those sheets where they'd signed away every last piece of what they owned. It became the property of the state. And Richard too, I don't know where he lived after that. But he and Leonhard, after his parents were deported first to Theresienstadt, where my grandfather died on arrival I'm glad to say, but I don't know whether of natural causes - he was eighty-five - but he was not gassed. He died on arrival. My grandmother outlived him by just three months and died in Theresienstadt. But her son, Richard, and his cousin, Leonhard, became slave labourers. His athletic prowess made him too fit to be sent to Theresienstadt so he became a slave labourer cleaning the streets and later in a munitions factory or perhaps the other way around. I don't remember. I only found this out much, much later. And then they were both sent to Auschwitz, where they were gassed. And his name is on one of the transports commemorated on the Spiegelwand at Steglitz. And I have the date and the name of the transport, and the number of the transport. And I've got photographs of all that. So when I go to Steglitz, that's the first place I go.

Tape 2: 19 minutes 14 seconds

BL: What were your first impressions of England?

HK: Breath of fresh air. Freedom. No swastikas. No brown shirts. Friendly policemen. I mean Barry Turner was quite right: 'And the Policeman Smiled', he called his book,

although it was somebody else's idea I now know. People were friendly, certainly to a child. I didn't meet any anti-Semitism, not at that time. And this is what I meant by a breath of fresh air. You didn't have to worry about what you said, except that I was very embarrassed when I heard my parents speaking German aloud in the streets. I would say, 'Shhh!' even though I could hardly speak English myself. Within a few months because my father, although he worked for the...not as a dentist...he was working for the Bloomsbury House Refugee Committee because he had English and German and French to a very high standard. He was useful to the Refugee Committee for administering all the refugees who came to Bloomsbury House, for which reason he was not interned. He got as far as the police station when they found out that he was working, and when they found out that he was working for the Refugee Committee they said: 'No you carry on working for the refugee committee. We need people to do this work.' So he was not interned to the Isle of Man where most people were interned. My mother was, therefore, not interned either and my sister and I weren't interned. But my father, although he was working for the Bloomsbury House Refugee Committee, was earning three pounds a week and hardly enough to keep a family. So my sister and I were sent... My sister was sent to be evacuated; in my sister's case to a riding school in Wales.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 50 seconds

Actually, I think she went first to a convent in Wales where they tried to convert her. So she got moved to a riding school. And she had a traumatic experience while she was there. She got friendly – she was four years older than me so by this time she was 14 - 13, 14 and she had a boyfriend. And one night, when she was about 14, 15, a British plane in a dogfight over Bristol or thereabouts crashed on the building where her boyfriend was living and he got killed. A tremendous experience for a young girl. I don't know that she ever got over that. Well, of course she got over it but...I don't know. These are the things that happen in war.

BL: Sorry, where did you actually live when you came to England? What was your first address?

HK: That's a very good question. I'm sorry that I forgot to mention it. Because we were with our Auntie Lucy and my father had his cousin who had helped us with the visas to Peru who worked for Thomas Cook's Agency, Lucy lived in Fellows Road – at several addresses in Fellows Road. One of the numbers was 72. I think she had another at 48. She had a flat on the second floor and she had room for my mother and my sister. My mother got herself a charring job doing char work, polishing and cleaning for families. Illegally, no doubt, because she didn't have a work permit, but she earned a few shillings. And I think in some cases she took my sister with her, until they found a school for my sister and before she got evacuated.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 6 seconds

And my father and I lived in Kentish Town with this cousin called Jacobowitz. You remember me telling you my father's mother was a 'geborene Jacobowitz', née

Jacobowitz. And he was the son of one of her brothers called Jacobowitz, who changed his name to Felix Jay – ‘Jay’ for Jacobowitz. And whenever I hear the name Jay now I wonder if his name is Jacobowitz? And there’s this horrendous story about somebody who hasn’t seen his friend for a long time and says: ‘Remind me of your name?’ And he says: ‘My name is Jacobowitz.’ ‘Didn’t you change your name to Jay?’ ‘Yes,’ he said, but people keep asking me ‘Wie hiessen Sie früher? What was your name before? And now I can say ‘Jay’!’ Stupid story really. So we lived with Major Jay. He was a major in the British Army by this time. And he’d been here for years and he had an English wife - Mrs Silver. She had been called Mrs Silver, so he obviously married a...or perhaps she was still called Silver. I’ve just realised that maybe he didn’t marry her at all, but anyway he was living with Mrs Silver. But perhaps, like yourself, she kept her maiden name, who knows. But my father and I slept in one bed. Not a very big bed either, but force majeure. And, during the day, my father, when he wasn’t working or even before he was working at Bloomsbury House, he and I would go shopping at Camden Town market. And I can still remember some of the prices. A challah would be four old pence. There were 240 old pence in the pound in those days, before the metric system. And a pound of stewing steak would be eight old pence. And on my mother’s birthday, which was eight days after we arrived here, on the 16th of February, 1939, which was her 42nd – 41st birthday – 42nd birthday...This is Molly my wife [interruption].

BL: Yes please?

HK: My father and I would do the shopping in Camden Town market and go to Lucy’s flat, which was then empty, in Fellows Road, whilst my mother was out doing her charing work with or without my sister. And on an oil stove he would prepare the lunch. One oil stove. My dad would do the cooking, whether it be stewing steak or whatever it was, scrambled egg. My dad was quite a cook and you have to learn things when needs must, but I think he had that talent anyway.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 54 seconds

BL: Did you meet many other refugees at that time?

HK: I remember meeting people at Woburn House. I went with him to Woburn House. I still recall going with him – it must have been in the first weeks - and being presented with a sandwich and an orange. And of course there were other people there queuing up, but nobody that I knew at that time. My mother would come home in the afternoon from the...or perhaps she came home for lunch and went back to work. I don’t know how I spent the rest of the day. But if Dad was going to find a job, whether it be as a dentist or the refugee committee, not only was there not enough money to keep a daughter and a son, but there was the prospect of war, and it was best that the children were somewhere safer. So we were both evacuated. So we were both refugees and evacuees. A curious combination...

BL: When did you start going to school?

Tape 2: 29 minutes 15 seconds

HK: I started my first school whilst evacuated on the farm in Berkshire. The arrangement for evacuation in my case was through Seymour Place, 33 Seymour Place, West London Synagogue, who under the auspices of Rabbi Reinhart and his number two, Rabbi Cashdan... they had contacts with the Church of England no doubt and through the local vicars in communities everywhere places were found for children who needed to be evacuated, refugee children. And I was one of those lucky ones, and they found me a farm in Berkshire where I arrived speaking 3 or 4 words of English. But I learned very quickly. I went to the village school and in three months I won first prize in English composition. Remarkable really, because there couldn't have been a word spelt correctly. But the teacher recognised the importance of expression and I think I had more interesting things to say in my essays than other children locally. So she gave me first prize! I have a letter still, though I don't have the prize – it was a book – but I have the letter still in which she said: 'Your son well deserves his prize.' The teacher there, the headmistress...there were two teachers only, a headmistress and a junior teacher because there were only two class groups in the village school: those for under nine years old and those over nine years old. I started in the bottom class, but after a term I got moved up to the top class. And she would sit with me and make a drawing of something and tell me what it was called and I would repeat it. That's how I learnt English. I know because I looked her up when she was ninety-four and she was now living...Not many years ago she was ninety-four and it was fifty-eight years after she taught me.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 37 seconds

She said: 'It's not often that pupils look me up after fifty-eight years.' There had been an incident while I was living on the farm and while I was under her tutelage at the school, where because the school was two miles walk from the farm I had to take sandwiches. And the farmer's wife didn't make me sandwiches that I enjoyed eating. It was white bread, home baked, unsalted butter, which I hated, and on this unsalted butter she put lettuce and sugar neither of which I liked, so I used to throw them away. And, one day, the headmistress was looking out of her window when at lunchtime she saw these flying sandwiches coming over her hedge and she invited me in for lunch. And fifty-eight years later when I looked her up, having been to a funeral at the farm and said: 'Does Mrs Cornley still live?' 'Oh yes, she's living in sheltered accommodation in Banbury.' 'How do you know?' Because her son is the bank manager at the local bank in Farringdon. So I wrote to him. He passed the letter on to her. We made contact. Molly and I drove up to Banbury two years running and took her out on her birthday. And the first time I said to her: 'Do you know why I'm taking you to lunch Mrs Cornley?' And she said: 'No, do tell me.' And then I told her the story of the flying sandwiches and then she remembered. It was a happy time.

BL: What was the family like who took you in, the host family?

HK: Very kind people. It was a matriarchal society...Mrs Wilkins, a very well-built lady of some refinement. I mean she spoke very well. The husband was less educated and

spoke rather gruffly and I had the feeling when I got the first slice of cake that he would resent it or that sort of thing. But in later life when I used to visit them, in the army I was there and used to go and see them. I was accepted and I never felt uneasy, I must say. Listen, when you've lived in Germany under the Nazis you can put up with anything. It was no hardship. There was a son and a daughter. I say it was a matriarchal society. The daughter who married while I was there and had her first baby while I was there - that baby is now sixty years old and I'm writing to him every few weeks. She in her turn became the matriarch and this son, now sixty-five, his wife has become the matriarch. It is a matriarchal society. Farmer's wives are like that. They organise everything and without them the whole thing would go to rack and ruin. The men don't know how to look after themselves and they need organising. Certainly in that family.

Tape 2: 34 minutes 57 seconds

BL: So it must have been quite a shock to come from Berlin to a farm...?

HK: Yes I didn't know what a cat was, let alone a cow or a bull. And amongst my first vocabulary must have been quite a few swear words. I know that because on a visit to an aunt...in those days you had...farmers had petrol allowance during the war, albeit all headlamps had to be blackened so that aircraft couldn't see the lights. But one day we went on a winter's day to a posh aunt in Wantage, which was about eight miles away, the nearest railway station after Farringdon, which was the nearest town. And we went for an eight mile drive to see this aunt for afternoon tea. And I was included in my best - Sunday best. And, as we drove home in the dark, we stopped at the local pub where I wasn't allowed in, but they brought me an orange squash and a packet of crisps. In those days crisps still had salt in a little packet that was screwed up so the salt didn't fall out; they hadn't thought of salted crisps yet. And, on the way home from this posh aunt Mrs Wilkins was driving and she suddenly stopped the car and she turned around to me in the back seat and she said: 'Henry! You never swore!' And what she meant was, at the farm I was always swearing because this was the vocabulary I was learning from the son and from the daughter and from the other workers on the farm. But, when I went for tea in this posh tea room, this lady's lounge, I knew that this wasn't the place for swearing. Nobody had bothered telling me that. And she was gratified that somehow - she didn't understand how - I had felt it necessary to abstain from swearing. And she suddenly realised this had come as a shock to her, driving home, that I had not sworn. So it's that incident that leads me to realise that swearing must have been a large part of my vocabulary. It still is but not as large.

Tape 2: 37 minutes 24 seconds

BL: When did you change your name from Heinz to Henry?

HK: My passport, when I was allowed one...Let me go back a step. I didn't receive my first passport till I was...Well, I was entitled to one when I was 18, but I didn't get one till after I came out of the army. My father's naturalisation paper, which was 1947, November, and when I went in the army in 1949, first went into the RASC and then got

transferred to REME, I did my national service of 2 years. On the paperwork there I'm still known as Heinz. So it was after I came out of the army and I got my first passport. I didn't actually make use of my first passport for quite a while, but I was still Heinz on my first passport. But, when changing my passport 10 years later the man at the office at Petty France where I went to change the passport just said: 'I see you're called Heinz, brackets 'known as Henry'. Would you like to drop the Heinz?' I said: 'Yes, by all means.' And from that day, the Heinz was dropped.

BL: But you were called Henry at the farm?

HK: I was called Henry. Yes, I was called Henry. And I don't know where they took the name from but it seemed apposite, it was the right thing to do. I thought it sounded good. I never objected, so there it came. At school, at the Hall School, I remember every boy except me had at least two forenames. So: 'What's your name?' 'William Charles, Sir.' 'What's your name?' 'Frank Leon.' 'What's your name?' 'Henry' and he was non-plussed, the headmaster, because I was the only boy who had less than two names and being a very tactful man he said: 'Sensible boy!' which was very kind of him. I've never felt the need for any other names. People who have two names can choose by which name they wish to be known. I never had that choice really.

Tape 2: 40 minutes 8 seconds

BL: So how long did you stay at the farm?

HK: I stayed just over a year. I would have stayed longer but for the fact that when I came home on one of my school holidays with a huge boil on the back of my neck from which my mother assumed that I'd been neglected in some way. Well in the sense that...I don't recall being sent to a doctor with it. I suppose it looked quite dangerous. And she felt in that case that either I'm picking up germs there or there isn't the motherly care that a child needs and, although there was still bombing to come, later on the flying bombs as well of course, I did live through at least two blitzes. But that year was very important to me because I learnt English there and I realised that it eased my parents' time not to have to look after the children while they were finding their feet. So it served a very useful purpose. And I don't regret it for a moment.

BL: And you probably had a certain degree of freedom?

HK: Absolutely. And the local vicar, who was instrumental in finding the farm for me to be evacuated on, he came to the station to meet my father and me and took us to the farm and later took my father back to the station and made the mistake of letting me come back with him. Because of course I didn't want to be left on the farm. It was just not the sort of place I was used to as you've already pointed out. But my father really had very little choice. And the vicar, a very kind gentleman, the Reverend Girling, made a very silly mistake. He said..., to try to persuade me to stay, and he achieved this by saying: 'I shall make sure you get a bicycle.' I'm afraid I never got that bicycle and I resent that promise being made. And I think what that's done to me is taught me that one must never

make promises one cannot keep. Children are very sensitive to promises. So, as a mother, I pass it on to you. Do not make promises you cannot keep. It's stupid. In his case he wasn't a parent, but he was a person in authority; he shouldn't have done it. I don't think it would have been very practical on the farm. It was a hilly place, bumpy, and there wouldn't have been... but at least he should have come and explained it to me.

BL: Did they know that you were Jewish?

HK: Oh yes.

BL: Did it mean anything to them, or...?

Tape 2: 43 minutes 3 seconds

HK: In as much as the Jewish synagogue at West London had inaugurated this system of evacuation of refugees of course they knew it was the Jewish community. What's more, the local vicar, Reverend Girling, had the job of passing on to me, twice a month or perhaps it was every week, the books and homework tests that were sent me for religious studies. I was sent books and I still remember the name of the books, the Bible books called 'Out of the House of Bondage'. There were two volumes of it. I now run the synagogue library, as you are aware, and I have those two books there, not the two books that I had but other pupils have had the same books and I've acquired those for the library.

BL: And this was run by West London Synagogue?

HK: This was run by West London Synagogue and I had a correspondence with Rabbi Cashdan who was the number 2 or 3 to Rabbi...

Tape 2: 44 minutes and 1 second

BL: Reinhart...

HK: Reinhart, thank you. Senior moment. Rabbi Reinhart and Rabbi Cashdan. And Rabbi Reinhardt would countersign Rabbi Cashdan's reports. So I have reports of my progress in the postal course that I took on Jewish studies whilst I was living on the farm. And the vicar, the Reverend Girling, supervised this. He would supervise the sending and the receiving of this and the reports I still have. So this went on for a year and I would traipse happily across the fields to where the vicarage was and he would let me pick almonds from his almond trees. It was very thrilling. Very posh afternoon tea there. But, most of the time... and I would do this work so of course he knew I was Jewish. And it was important that my Jewishness be remembered, not just for me but for other people because the danger was in a non-Jewish society, without constant reminders that one was Jewish, one could just lapse into non-Jewishness. So I was very pleased. I was always proud of being Jewish and this was part of it.

BL: So when your mother decided you should get back to London, were you pleased about that or did you want to stay?

HK: I don't remember. I have to recall that after three months away and earning my first prize in English composition I had had no opportunity of speaking German. My first visit back to London, I used to hate coming back to London because it was on a coach and I used to feel nauseous on a coach so I hated it, through Reading it took forever, to Victoria Station. I was always glad to arrive. On my first visit back I could not understand my mother and my mother could not understand me. Either it was because my English was too strong in accent that she did not recognise or because my German had disappeared although I had some German books with me I soon stopped reading them because I was reading English. But once I re-learned German, and I am still re-learning it in a way, later on working for the BBC I had occasion to use my German, so now I can converse in German pretty fluently. But there was a time when I had forgotten it. So yes, I was pleased to be back home but I had also learned to love my life at the farm. The freedom of which you speak, the self-reliance, probably I had it anyway but you have more outlets for your self-reliance on a farm. The only child, there were no other children about, except in school. I used to share the walk to school with a young lady called Ruth, Ruth Argent, whose parents kept the lodge at the local Lord Farringdon's estate, the gates of which were just opposite where the farm entrance from the main road was, so we would often meet. She liked my sandwiches with unsalted butter, lettuce and sugar and I liked her tomato sandwiches. So we would often swap. It was only on occasions when we had not met and she was not there, that my sandwiches went flying over the headmistress's hedge. Yes, it was a happy time. I recall enjoying listening to the radio broadcast of how many aircrafts had been shot down by the RAF and things like that. Everything was radio, radio, radio and I became a great radio fan. It is probably no coincidence that I finished up working for radio.

Tape 2: 48 minutes 45 seconds

BL: So when you came back to London, which school did you go to ?

HK: When I first came back home to London at the age of eleven, I went to the Hall school, which was just around the corner from where we lived by this time in Lambolle Road. Once we left auntie Lucy's flat, once my father and mother between them were earning enough, we moved to a one-room flat in Lambolle Road, number five, which is now a block of flats, the building no longer stands, just around the corner from Belsize Square synagogue. So it was just a five minutes' walk to The Hall school. Because most parents' children were evacuated, Jewish or non-Jewish, any child that was available and could pay even a small fee, was welcomed. So a lot of Jewish children went to The Hall school.

I remember being there with Italians...and I still remember some of the names. And although it was a private school and the fees were fees that my father could not afford, I have the correspondence that shows that the headmaster allowed me to be there for three pounds a term, some ridiculous fee and after a year or so he wrote to me father to

increase the fee and my father replied 'on my salary, how do I do this?'. So I stayed in The Hall School for a couple of years. It was a fantastic school. I learnt geography there, I learnt Latin there - I learnt to love Latin there and French. I led the morning assembly in choir because I had the best voice, apparently. Mr. Baron, the Latin teacher, would come round and say 'you are the best voice; you will lead the school choir at prayer'. 'But I am Jewish Sir'. 'I don't care a damn'. [Laughs] So I knew as many non-Jewish hymns as Jewish hymns. So I stayed there until I was 13. From there, I did not really know what I wanted to do, my father wanted me to be a dentist. I had no intention of becoming a dentist, I always had the crazy idea of becoming an Electrical Engineer. So general schooling in Holloway, Camden Town, Chalk Farm. If I count the schools I went to in Germany I went to nine different educational establishments. And they all did me some good, each in a different way. For instance, in The Hall school the maths teacher was abysmal. I was evacuated at the age of 14, 15 some years later during the flying bombs falling I got evacuated to my uncle Martin, now an anaesthetist at the sanatorium Western-Super-Mare. He came with us, the nerve specialist from Lichterfelde. He and his new wife, whom he had met in the synagogue choir here in London, Betty Marcus. I went to live with them for a year in Western-Super-Mare. There I went to another private school called 'the College'.

Tape 2: 53 minutes 3 seconds

The headmaster there, a Mister Sharp, was the teacher of maths and in three months I went from bottom in maths to top in maths. It showed that I had mathematical skills but that the teaching at the Hall school had been abysmal. Suddenly all my trap doors opened and I never looked back. I wanted to study for maths degree but by the time when a maths degree was the option for me, a little later in life, there were only two colleges in the whole of the country I believe, King's College in London and another somewhere else, that offered a pure maths course, this was 1947. I went to King's College for an interview and it was a very gruelling interview and test. At the end of it they said 'Mr. Kuttner, your maths is excellent but to enter this special maths course you really have to fill a gap between the end of A-level and the beginning of our course'. 'How do I do that?' I said. 'Oh, that is up to you'. In other words there is no academic course that fits you, fits one, to be ready for this special maths course. Today I can walk into any university with my A-levels in maths and physics but at that time they were very choosy. He said 'If you when you get to your A-levels and you get 95 per cent in pure, applied and physics, then I will take you'. But I was so disenchanted after this interview that I played table tennis for six months and did not learn anymore. So I did not go to university but my two daughters did maths degrees later. So the love of maths was passed on. So nothing is wasted, nothing.

Tape 2: 55 minutes and 11 seconds

BL: You said your uncle married again. Did he get divorced from his German wife?

HK: Yes, he divorced her. He was forced to divorce her, I suppose. When he left her, it was a good thing that he did. She did not survive the war. She had a long and tragic end.

But he would not wish me to discuss it. But after the war he still wrote to her parents. Yes, he met my aunt Betty sitting in the choir in St. Johns Wood synagogue, what became Belsize Square synagogue. It started off as the New Liberal Congregation. It had its Friday evening services [in St. Wood] , both my parents were involved in the choir there. My uncle Martin, my father's only remaining brother, sang there...I think it is in the High Holiday service that they then met. The High Holiday services at that time took place in the Wigmore Hall. I don't know who paid for the renting of the Wigmore Hall, but it was done. I was an usher, stopping people from getting to and from their seats during the sermon [laughs]. All the youngsters used to congregate outside the doors in the foyer. So they met and it was a very happy marriage until he died in 1991, at the age of 90. She lived on to the age of 95 at Greenhill in Hampstead. He was lucky to have found such a nice wife. They adopted a son who is now in Australia, who has recently been to see us, Peter. I have been at parties with Peter and people say 'you do look alike'. Of course we are not at all...he is adopted [laughs].

BL: We have to change tapes please.

Tape 2: 57 minutes and 36 seconds

End of tape

TAPE 3

Tape 3: 0 minute 6 seconds

BL: Today is the 2nd of May 2007. We are conducting an interview with Mr Henry Kuttner. This is Tape Three. We are redoing tapes 3 and 4 of Henry Kuttner's interview.

BL: Perhaps I can start by asking you about New Liberal Jewish congregation and your family's involvement with the synagogue?

HK: We arrived in England on the 9th of February 1939 and I was not aware of it at the time – 9 years and 2 months old. We were living in various addresses in Fellows Road or Kentish Town depending on where we were at any one time. But, behind the scenes, there were other refugees trying to get together to try to form some form of congregation. And they found premises in Belsize Park, first at number 20 and a few months later at number 30, where we then stayed for many years. And word soon got round that there was a group of like-minded Jewish people from the old 'liberale' communities of Berlin, Frankfurt and Breslau. And to begin with, they called themselves an 'association'. They were not a congregation yet. The name 'congregation' was not to come about for several months. I think there were at least three or four months at least when we were an association but I cannot remember the exact dates. And, in any case, round about that time I found myself evacuated to a farm in Berkshire. But, meanwhile, the association and later the congregation found themselves ministers who happened to be refugees who happened to be in London. And, on the 24th of April 1939, the first service took place of the New Liberal Association through the good offices of the Honourable Lily Montagu.

Tape 3: 2 minutes 50 seconds

And the St John's Wood Liberal synagogue – the English community. And here I must explain that the word 'liberal' in English means not at all what the German word *liberal* implied. Liberal Jewish congregation in this country means something to the left of Reform whereas the *liberale* community that our parents and that generation that came from Germany belonged to, was a much more traditional, conservative type of Judaism, in other words much further to the right than the other so-called Liberal in this country. And so it is to this day. Lily Montagu, without whom we could not have formed the community, became our first Chairman. And, in that capacity, she put forward the name New Liberal Jewish Congregation because her community was called the Liberal Community of Great Britain. We were the New Liberal Congregation. We knew fairly soon, I mean not me but our leading members knew fairly soon, that the word 'Liberal' in our name was not apt but, in deference to Lily Montagu, they had to put up with it. And we continued to put up with it until several years after she died in the 50s or was it 60s? – Gosh... So it was much, much later that we were called Belsize Square Synagogue in order to drop the word Liberal from our name. This was fairly important in that whilst we were called Liberal we were attracting the wrong sort of members, or if you like people coming to us, thinking we were Liberal in the English sense, finding out that we weren't and leaving again. Once we were called Belsize Square Synagogue, as we are today and an independent synagogue at that, when people hear of us they don't expect us to be Liberal and therefore they come and are far easier satisfied with what they find because it isn't different from what they've come to expect. So there we were in 1939 with ministers who happened to be in London officiating at our services.

Tape 3: 5 minutes 50 seconds

BL: Who were these ministers? Do you remember some names?

HK: I think there was a man called Swarsenski. If you'd asked me this question some years ago my memory would have been better. But Rabbi Dr Van der Zyl, Cäsar Seligman...All the rabbis who came through London at one time or another, came and did their stuff for us. But it wasn't until we appointed a permanent rabbi and a permanent cantor that a form of stability, I suppose you could call it, set in. The first service, because of Lily Montagu's kindness, took place at the Montefiore Hall in St John's Wood. The Liberal Synagogue of St John's Wood held morning services on a Saturday in their huge synagogue auditorium. That doesn't exist any more. That synagogue's been rebuilt. But they did not hold Friday evening services. So our first Friday evening services and that first one that took place on the 24th of April 1939 took place in the Montefiore Hall, which is a hall, quite large, it holds 200 people with an organ. And our first service took place there. And the morning services, when we held them, took place in our congregational 'home' so to speak, first at 20 and then at 30 Buckland Crescent, around the corner from Swiss Cottage. I don't think either of those two buildings exists today. Certainly one of them doesn't because little blocks of flats have grown up there, but it's quite close to College Crescent in NW3.

Tape 3: 8 minutes 10 seconds

And services took place there in the morning and entertainment took place on a Sunday afternoon. And this was the social fabric which held the community together. At the time there was no television. People didn't understand enough English to listen to radio much even if they could afford a radio. And the congregation's feeling of togetherness was cemented, first of all, by the services and, in the second place, by the soup kitchen if you like and the rooms where people could meet. But, particularly on a Sunday afternoon, when our Oberkantor Magnus Davidsohn, who became our cantor and was also my teacher, and our first rabbi, Dr Salzberger, Rabbi Dr. Salzberger – they were our first permanent ministers. But Oberkantor Magnus Davidsohn, who had been an opera singer in his younger days, was already about sixty years old at this time. He led the entertainment if you like; he became the impresario of afternoon entertainments on a Sunday. And the talent which was available from amongst our members and from amongst other refugees, who were not members but whom he knew through his various contacts in the entertainment world – opera, light music. He was at the funeral of the parents of Richard Tauber, Magnus Davidsohn, so he knew Richard Tauber. He knew Norbert Brainin, who became the founder of the Amadeus Quartet, and so we had the most wonderful artists come on a Sunday afternoon to entertain us. Melitta Heim, a lady who had been an opera singer in her time but had lost her voice overnight in Vienna Opera through the chicanery of a rival singer, she became our pianist and organist. And she accompanied anyone and anybody. Wonderful musician. So we had sopranos and altos and duets and violins, cellos and humour. And the whole thing was orchestrated, if you like, by Magnus Davidsohn, who became the impresario and introduced the items. And the humour was supplied by Eric Goodman, who was called Erich Guttmann in those days, who became a very good friend of my father in those days, and my father. And between them they wrote poems and set them to music, the most fantastic poetry that made people laugh and took them out of themselves.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 10 seconds

BL: In German?

HK: In German and occasionally in English, but to begin with in German. But they – Eric Goodman would combine English and German. He would say: 'I am now going to recite poetry called Finchley Road', that being the place where everybody met in the restaurants called Cosmo and Dorice on opposite sides of Finchley Road. Neither of those restaurants exists today. He would say: 'I am going to perform, I am going to tell you poems now on the subject of Finchley Road, first in the style of Goethe, and then in the style of Schiller, and then in the style of Shakespeare and one or two other luminaries'...And there would be a few words in English, 'Finchley, Finchley, Finchley Road, ...' and then the next phrase would be in German. And the people just fell about! And I have those poems upstairs in a filing cabinet so it hasn't died, this talent, even though the writers of the poetry have died. They would set these things to music, so they'd take a well known popular tune of the 30s that people would know and love and put new words to them, taking our refugee status and analysing it and laughing at ourselves. And that laughter

was necessary to take us out of our depression of having been separated from our dear ones whose fate we did not yet know, of living in a one room flat, four of us, or five of us when an aunt came from the Isle of Man where she'd been interned. One room to sleep, cook, everything.

BL: And where was that room?

Tape 3: 13 minutes 37 seconds

HK: That was in Lambolle Road. And the laughter helped people to stay sane. And everybody got used. I wasn't old enough to perform. A little later I was. My talent was to draw the posters to advertise these things with a paint box. And what artistic talents I had were used to that effect, so I felt involved, although for a year I was taken out of it when I was evacuated from the end of 1939 to end of 1940. So in that year I know very little of what happened in London except what I was told afterwards. But the sense of community life was very strong: the services, the music, because both my parents were involved in the choir - that was something that has stayed with me till this day. And the community life later on with lessons for the youngsters arranged by the mother of a friend of ours, Sidonie Goodman, a very powerful lady who had been a lawyer's secretary in her younger days in Germany, and she came with her son, Karl-Heinz Goodman, now Charles Henry, and she went to the Rabbi and she said: 'I want you to start lessons for our youngsters, well for my son for a start.' And that was a demand hard to counter. And so lessons started on a bench without a back and the lessons took place in German because the Rabbi's English wasn't good enough. And so there we were taking lessons, four of us on a bench: Karl Heinz Guttmann, Herbert Levy, Ruth Schmeidler, and myself. And we used to giggle and laugh through these lessons because the English of the Rabbi was not good enough so if he attempted to speak English we just roared.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 3 seconds

BL: Those four youngsters – were those the youngsters from the synagogue?

HK: Those were the youngsters from the synagogue, who were old enough to be considered ready for Bar Mitzvah, say at age ten, eleven years, coming up to the important years. In my case in Berlin I'd been at the Synagogue school, I'd learnt Hebrew and I'd learnt scriptures, but to interrupt that for very long was obviously not a good thing so here was a chance to continue our learning. So the Rabbi - Rabbiner Doctor Georg Salzberger, gave the scripture lessons on a Thursday afternoon I think, and from Magnus Davidsohn, the Oberkantor, we learnt Hebrew and liturgy. And, in the case of Bar Mitzvah training, I would go to the Cantor's home in Fitzjohn's Avenue at number 53. I can't pass that house in my car today without thinking of him. And I would have a one-to-one lesson in liturgy and learning my portion for the Bar Mitzvah, which then took place in 1942 in the room at 30 Buckland Crescent. But, the previous evening, a sort of pre-Bar Mitzvah service on the Friday evening at St John's Wood Montefiore Hall. And it was all very exciting. The war was on but I had my Bar Mitzvah, unlike some boys who missed it because the date for their Bar Mitzvah coincided roughly with

emigration and the Hitler pogroms in Germany. So there were boys who missed their Bar Mitzvah. But my Bar Mitzvah age was reached in freedom albeit in war time. And my mother, although it was rationing at the time, still managed to bake a cherry tart and an apple tart. Don't ask me how she got the ingredients for this. And we had thirty or forty people come, by this time we were in Compayne Gardens. And half the community must have come. And I still have one or two of the items I was given for my Bar Mitzvah. These four pupils who sat on that bench are still friends today, with one proviso that one has died. Ruth Schmeidler in America has died since then, but we are as friendly today as we were in those days. And then there was Norbert Cohn who was older than we were and who had already had his Bar Mitzvah. And he became one of the group, although he wasn't on the bench with us because he had lessons probably post-Bar Mitzvah but not together with us.

Tape 3: 19 minutes 25 seconds

And, meanwhile, I took my place next to the choir because my parents were both involved with the choir as was my elder sister when she was in London. And gradually I came to know and love the music and what I'm involved with today is a result of that involvement from the age of eight or nine with interruptions only for evacuation. The congregation, having started life as a group of stragglers who called themselves an association...I'm not sure about the legal, technical reason why it had to start as such. Perhaps there was no membership fee paid or in any case where were they going to get the money from for that? At the services we had a collection box, which at the age of nine was my job to collect and on the basis that no matter how poor you are there's always somebody poorer than you. And on the basis that we shouldn't feel too sorry for ourselves, I imagine. So whatever little you could spare for charity and I don't know which charity this went to, presumably the congregation. Presumably that was the first charity that the congregation got involved in. It was my job to stand at the door and collect the money and it was my job to count it and occasionally people were so embarrassed that they had no coin to put in that they put a button in. And amongst the coins that I counted were several buttons from time to time. And it's a sad tale that people should have been too embarrassed to put nothing in so they put a button in. These are all vivid memories in the sense that the effect of it is felt to this day. There are people who go to religious services because they are devout. There are people who go to religious services because they have an anniversary of a dear one's death, or on a festival, but as a community as a whole that is normal probably in all religions and in all grades of orthodoxy or otherwise.

Tape 3: 22 minutes 26 seconds

But in those days, when the community was new and people realised first of all what a miracle it was to be saved from a fate worse than death and to have a chance to regroup and rebuild your community, that sense of wonderment...Even for a child I was conscious of the wonder that this was possible and to have the music and to feel that life could start again. I didn't realise how important this might be to my future but that's not the point. You knew that something important was happening and that it was important to

the adults to have this feeling of belonging and togetherness and to each bring their talents towards the whole of the community. And I doubt whether that sort of sense of importance that we felt during the war years could be duplicated today. You couldn't expect it. Then, we were a community of a few dozen people, perhaps a hundred or two, I don't know the membership total. Today, we are 1,500 or thereabouts, 1,400 if you count the children, and people tend to take the congregation for granted, I imagine. And it was all within 10 minutes' walking distance of Belsize Square, which is where the community now is housed in what used to be a vicarage because we bought that from the church when the church needed money at Belsize Square in about 19...59, I think.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 7 seconds

Although we are in a fine building at Belsize Square and we've expanded enormously, the large membership uses us as a convenience in many cases. It's not meant to sound critical but the fact is we used to live within ten minutes and now they live forty-five minutes by car away and so it's not so convenient any more to come regularly. But because the community is so large people come often enough for us to keep going to our services and our various activities. We have an infant school, a toddlers' group, a junior school, a Cheder, that's Sunday school, educational facilities are wonderful. We have an office with three or four staff. We have a Rabbi and a cantor. Not many communities in this country can afford two ministers. So, in that sense, we are wealthy. Not compared to most wealthy congregations in England, but by refugee standards we are wealthy. No doubt as a result of restitution money, when you consider that the collected wealth – if that's the right word - of all those thousands of people who escaped without a penny because they had to leave it all behind, which left them destitute almost...It is only that they should have been recompensed. And that money, all too little for what they lost, has filtered through people's ownership and some of it is left to the congregation in legacies, and without that money the community couldn't function in the way that it does today.

BL: I'm very interested in the sense that you said that you, even as a child, felt that importance of the community. Can you tell us a bit more about this, how important it was for your parents to have this sort of belonging?

Tape 3: 27 minutes 41 seconds

HK: The sense of responsibility - I think you're born with that. I think I was born with it. If you have parents who think that education is important, that giving to the beggar outside the synagogue is important every time you pass him. That you have a duty as a citizen in whatever country you live in to be a good citizen. That feeling I think I was born with, so it's a small step from there to feel upon your shoulders the responsibility – that it's a shame for a child to have to carry. But I didn't feel it as a burden. I felt it as a privilege. Because the alternative...Listen, I saw the synagogue burning and that does something to your system. The trauma of that makes you realise, when you've escaped it, how lucky you are. And so you constantly, whether consciously or not doesn't really matter, are aware of your responsibility to do something with your life, otherwise what were you saved for? And, today, when I go and speak to schools, and I still do, about my

life or about life generally in Germany under the Nazis, my closing words are usually based on trying to pass on to the youngsters that I'm talking to...I often say to myself, I say to the children: 'Why was I saved? Millions died and what was so special about me that I should be saved? And the most logical answer I come up with is...talking to you today is one of the reasons. And if one of you leaves here today' ...actually I don't say that to them but that's what I think. 'If one of you leaves here today slightly the wiser, and more likely to treat others with respect rather than contempt, which you might have done before, then my coming here to talk to you today,' I say to the children 'is worthwhile. Just one of you.' So that sense of responsibility, I think you soak it up with your mother's milk. But, when you've experienced the trauma, I think it's almost by definition you have to be very insensitive not to absorb that. I suppose if you feel it as a burden and you try to shed it because you're afraid ever to... It can turn you both ways.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 52 seconds

You can either say 'dafke', which is the Jewish term meaning 'in spite of everything I'm going to succeed no matter what you say,' or it can crush you and leave you afraid of ever getting any persecution again, and so you try and hide your identity, like the Marranos did in fear of the death in the Spanish inquisition or something like that, but secretly you carry on being Jewish. Famous men have done this in different ways: Disraeli throughout his political career, Mendelssohn in his musical career in the case of the father, on behalf of the son, had them baptised thinking this was the only way to success. That was not an option that ever occurred to me or my parents. But then we were never put in the position of having to choose. So I'm not making a judgment, I'm just saying we were Jewish; we were proud of being Jewish and it was up to us to do something useful with that Jewishness and with the fact that we were healthy and alive and wanted to use our talents as best we could. In my parents' case their talents lay in the musical side of life and the organising thereof. My father's brother was choirmaster, my father was choirmaster. I later became choir master. Erich Guttmann, whom I mentioned, became choirmaster after my father. My mother sang in the choir, two of my aunts, a cousin of my mother's, my sister, my two daughters, ten members of my family have been involved in that choir, and when you're involved in the choir the music becomes your responsibility. And in a letter that Magnus Davidsohn, the Oberkantor, wrote to my father in 1958 - I have it upstairs, this letter - he says, writing to my father from Dortmund where he ended his days... In 1958 he wrote this letter, three weeks before he died, 'Und ist Ihr Sohn immer noch im Chor tätig?', and is your son still active in the choir? These things interest me enormously,' he said in his letter. So to him it was important that the choir had some form of continuity, and I was the younger generation of all his pupils that was involved in the music so he knew that it was important, if at all possible, that I should carry on the mantle. Whether he felt it as a given or whether he felt it as a hope I cannot tell. He knew I was talented musically, but I like to think that if he knew today what I was doing with the music he would jump a few somersaults. But I'm doing no more with my talents, than he did with his. You can only do with what you're given.

Tape 3: 34 minutes 45 seconds

BL: Tell us a bit what you are doing with the music. What is this project?

HK: Excuse me. Yes, time moves on now in chronology... I've been involved with the choir since I was nine with gaps for evacuation, etc. And I've sung soprano, and I've sung tenor and I've sung bass and, occasionally, I've sung alto, without much musical training I might say. I learnt the violin and that was my musical training for four years from when I was thirteen till I was seventeen. I got my father's late brother's violin as a Bar Mitzvah present and I played that till I was seventeen. That was my musical training. I never had a singing lesson in my life but that, together with being involved with the choir from such a young age, meant that I knew the music better than most. And I loved the music. And when you love it enough you get to learn things about it that you can pass on to others and to get the feeling and make sure that it is retained and passed on to the next generation. So I was involved in singing every voice there is and conducting it. Still, during my father's lifetime, I started conducting the choir. He died in 1974, and I realised I wasn't fully qualified to be a conductor.

Tape 3: 36 minutes 52 seconds

Today we have a professional musician as a conductor. And that suits me fine because, apart from the fact that I'm getting too old for it, I'm not really qualified. However, I'm told by professional musicians that when I conduct the choir there is something very special about the music and that can only be explained by the admiration that goes into the work. Anyway, there I was, worrying for many years about the state of the music. The music that had been saved by Oberkantor Davidsohn from the burning synagogue in Berlin and that he'd saved again from a bombed St John's Wood Montefiore Hall in 1942 approximately. That music was getting tattered and torn and the congregation had spent quite a lot of money over the years having it republished or, in many cases written by hand. You can imagine what that costs to do. And then successive choir masters had chosen to photocopy pages and, depending on where you would photocopy it from, you would have page numbers and item numbers that didn't correspond to the order in which items were sung in the service. Or things would get borrowed from A and put into B and then it was missing from A. And then we had a change of Cantor and they would introduce new pieces of music, and this would have to be incorporated in our scores. And gradually the combination of new prayer books, new order of service, new Cantor, new music, illegible music, torn music, gradually it got impossible, or very hard anyway, to run a service or let alone sing from it.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 8 seconds

For new singers it was almost illegible. And then came the time in 1970-something, during the Rabbi-ship of Rabbi Jacob Kokotek, who was our second Rabbi after Rabbi Doctor Salzberger, when the synagogue decided for the sake of the children in the Sunday school to change our pronunciation of Hebrew from the original Ashkenazi pronunciation which was what they used in Germany, to the Sephardi pronunciation. I

say for the youngsters because they learned Sephardi pronunciation in their Sunday school and it seemed fatuous, it seemed ridiculous that they should learn Sunday school Hebrew with a Sephardi pronunciation but that when they came to our services everything was in Ashkenazi. It was a very difficult problem. The synagogue decided that all services should henceforth be in Sephardi pronunciation. Now this is no different to the prayer book printing because Hebrew is Hebrew, is Hebrew whether you pronounce it in one way or another, but the music, where not a word of Hebrew is written in Hebrew alphabet in our case but in transliterated Hebrew, the fact that it now had to be changed from one pronunciation to another meant that every other word of Hebrew under the music had to be rewritten, whether by using some form of 'snopake' or sticking some white tape over the top, and there are thousands of sheets of music! And so a good friend in the choir, Peter Heimann, and I spent countless hours and days and weeks and months and years re-writing the music. And it was a soul-destroying job because you knew when you finished it in some cases it was almost as illegible as it had been from its tattered form. So I'm now getting around to answering your question. This was the background, the accumulation of new prayer book, change of pronunciation, wrong page numbers, change of order of musical items - this combination of events made the music almost illogical when you looked at it. Nothing was in at the right place; it was hard to explain to newcomers what should happen now. Then one night I had a brainwave, a stroke of lightning hit me.

Tape 3: 42 minutes 25 seconds

It was at a time when an aunt of mine had just died and left me with a legacy, a small legacy. And then another aunt died and I had two small legacies. And I decided, to answer the question that I was referring to earlier: 'What is so special about me, to be saved?' And in that flash of lightning I knew. Here I am with some money to spare, the willpower and the knowledge to do something about the music that is dying on its feet because of the tattered form in which it is finding itself over the years of its use and abuse. The existence of computer technology, which I had started to absorb in about 1983 when I bought a BBC microcomputer for the first time, and the existence of some music editing software called Sibelius, so-called because the founders were two brothers called Finn, F I double N, so for want of a better word they called their software Sibelius, the most famous of Finnish composers...And I knew at once what to do. I found myself a member of our choir who was a young man, much younger than me, Tom Rouncefield, who unfortunately is now very ill and cannot continue with the work so I'm having to find other people to do the work. And I employed him, which is where the legacy came in, to use Sibelius, the software which I bought - two copies, one for him and one for me, although the one in my name is actually registered in the synagogue's name because I bought it for the synagogue. And I employed him, using my money, systematically to re-write and re-edit the whole of that liturgical music. Thousands and thousands of pages. But, like any long path, it's one step at a time and gradually the distance is covered. And we're now about two thirds or three quarters of the way through so we're winning. Even though I sometimes wonder if I shall still be here to see the end. But as Hillel said, the famous Jewish prophet: 'It is not your job to finish the job necessarily.' - I'm paraphrasing - 'Neither are you free to desist from starting it, or continuing it.'

Tape 3: 45 minutes 23 seconds

So I shall continue it for as long as I have the strength and good sense to do so and until the money runs out if you like. But other people will carry it on. It was the flash of idea that I'm pleased about. That I had the idea and other people think the idea is so wonderful that I'm not the only one carrying the flag and I can relax a little because I don't feel it's quite such a burden now because there are several people now helping me with it. I am still overseeing the project and I am the brains behind the project. And nothing happens without me, but that doesn't mean to say that if I walk under a bus tomorrow it can't continue because it can. It's on DVD and it's on computer and several people have copies. It's not yet on the web, but gradually it is being transformed into something legible, easily followable, and it's a joy to sing from. We have new singers come to us and they say: 'My Gosh, what a joy to sing from this music!'

BL: And are these some of the original Lewandowski and ...?

HK: In most cases, yes. In most cases. But, as we get other composers and a new Cantor introduces new music, we have other composers. So I say to the new singer: 'Well, you sing in other churches. You sing in other synagogues, don't they have music like this?' 'No,' they say, 'you're the first one we've met that does this.' I think there are one or two places that try to do this obviously because software being available it's only natural. But I'm very pleased that we are doing it and if it helps the music to survive for another generation or beyond, well then I've done my job. I have to cut off...

Tape 3: 47 minutes 34 seconds**Tape 3: 47 minutes 41 seconds**

BL: Let's go back to your own life in the early 40s. You talked about your Bar Mitzvah. Can you just tell us about the end of your schooling and what happened to you?

HK: The number of schools that I attended if you include adult education – sorry, fairly adult education up to college standard - I went to nine different schools. Two in Germany if I include the one that I had to go to for a month or two after the synagogue burnt down. And seven in this country. The seven in this country included a county school at Chalk Farm and its sister school at Princes Road, Chalk Farm down the road, a much nicer building. Then the Hall School, a school in Holloway, a school in Weston-super-Mare, the college at Weston-super-Mare, Pitman's College, Acton Technical College, and evening classes at London Polytechnic, so there was a lot of schooling of various kinds. And I benefited from each of them in some way or another. But the most outstanding ones were the Hall School, where I learnt Latin and French to a level that was quite good, but where I didn't learn Maths because the maths teacher wasn't very good, so I won't mention his name therefore. But when I went to Weston-super-Mare, the headmaster taught maths and in three months he changed my maths from being bottom of the class to top of the class. And that's what good teaching does, three months, incredible! And I had ambitions to become a mathematician because I loved mathematics so much and I still

do. But I never made it to degree level. That had to be done by my two daughters to whom I passed on my love of maths. Today there are dozens and dozens of universities and colleges in the country where with my A levels I could go and take a maths degree course if I so wished.

Tape 3: 50 minutes 28 seconds

But, in 1952, before I had my first job, there were only two colleges in this country that did a special Maths course, King's College London, and one of the universities, I think it was Cambridge. And because there were only two such colleges they naturally were very, very selective in the choice of their pupils that they took in. And so, although my maths was very good - I thought so anyway - it wasn't quite up to the standard that King's College in London were looking for. And a Professor Edwards there said to me: 'We will take you if in your forthcoming A-levels, which I hadn't yet sat, you get 95% in physics, maths and applied maths.' And I knew instinctively I couldn't do that. I wasn't prepared to work that hard, if it was going to be that hard. I said: 'Why is this?' or some such question. And he said, 'Because', and I still don't understand this to this day, 'because between the end of the A level syllabus and the beginning of the special maths syllabus there is a gap.' How is this possible?' I said. 'Yes, it is hard to explain and I can't explain it to you but there is. And unless you can fill that gap...' 'Where am I going to fill that gap from?' He asked me questions about ellipses. I didn't know anything about ellipses so naturally I couldn't answer it. I could have soon learnt it but there wasn't a course for this. So I knew that I was in trouble, if you like, and I knew that if it was going to be that hard, and a lot of people, I'm told, dropped out of that Special Maths course because it was that hard, I didn't want that. If I wasn't going to find it within my reasonable capacity to take and pass such a course I thought it better not to start. So what did I do? I went on and took my A levels but without any effort in the intervening 5 months. And I just played table tennis, which improved my table tennis no end. But it didn't do much for my maths. So I passed my A level pure maths and I passed my A level physics but I did not get the A level standard in my applied maths. What would have happened if I'd continued working, I don't know. So that was my schooling and instead of a maths degree I went on to take...No, I beg your pardon. This was 1952. I'd done my engineering diploma at Acton Technical College which took me three years, although it was only a two year course, because I failed in chemistry and physics in the first year and had to repeat the first year because of it. My maths was excellent or good enough so they asked or they allowed me to re-take the course. I hadn't taken physics or chemistry before. So that's going to that. The A level physics came later. So, in 1952, I decided perhaps I should go in the army. No...I got that wrong, forgive me. I'd been in the army from 1949 to 1951. I'm jumping around too much. I'm very sorry. So to just go back. I finished school and went to technical college in 1947. It took me three years to complete that till 1949. Having been deferred from the army for a little while, I then went into the army, into the REME, 1949 November till 1951. And then I did three years of reserve duty but that was just a fortnight a year.

Tape 3: 54 minutes 55 seconds

BL: Did you volunteer or was it compulsory?

HK: I volunteered. No, I volunteered. And whilst in the army I nearly did volunteer for a further twelve years but I failed my interpreters' exam to become an officer on the strength of one word that I didn't know. I didn't know 'Feldstecher'. I didn't know the German for field glasses and on that one word I failed my interpreters' exam. No, I went in on National Service and I considered volunteering because at that point I didn't know what I should do with my life. Having deferred, and not being able to do the maths that I had wanted to do, when I came out of the army I didn't know what I wanted to do. So I was toying with the idea of becoming an interpreter and carrying on in the army. But when I failed the exam, perhaps the best thing that ever happened to me, the interpreters' exam, I left the army only doing three years of reserve duty, a fortnight's camp each year, and decided to look for a job. And in those days there was no such thing as unemployment. We were lucky in that generation. And I applied for three jobs and was offered three jobs. One with Mullard's Miniature Valves in Croydon or thereabouts, one with EMI in Hayes, Middlesex. I would have been a technical assistant, doing what, I'm not sure, and the BBC. And I waited for the answer to come from the BBC before answering the other two, kept them sweating for a couple of weeks. I thought: 'Look I've got two jobs in my pocket, but I'd like to see if the BBC want me.'

Tape 3: 56 minutes 50 seconds

And I asked the BBC - I applied - in my application form, that I wanted to become a recording engineer. I felt with my musical tendencies perhaps a recording engineer is what I should be. Well, the BBC offered me a job and I accepted, but I found myself not in recordings for radio but in television transmitters. They had a vacancy there and with my technical diploma and my maths they thought I would fit into their operations and maintenance staff at Alexandra Palace, which is where the television transmitter was in 1953. I started in February, on my mother's birthday, February the 16th. And I continued with the BBC for 34 years before I retired early on health grounds in 1987. I retired from the BBC a little early on health grounds. But it took me two and a half years of working as an operations and maintenance engineer, which I wasn't terribly good at in television Alexandra Palace, until I got a transfer to radio which is where I felt I should be. Two years to get transferred to radio. And I became a studio manager although at the time I didn't know what a studio manager was. I became one of the most senior studio managers that radio has had because the job fitted me like a glove.

BL: Mr Kuttner we have to stop here. We have to change tapes.

Tape 3: 58 minutes 40 seconds

End of Tape Three

TAPE 4

Tape 4: 0 minute 18 seconds

BL: This is tape Four. We are conducting an interview with Henry Kuttner.

You were talking about becoming a studio manager at the BBC?

HK: That happened in 1955 after two and a half years rotting away in Alexandra Palace. No, I enjoyed my time there but I didn't feel very useful. I felt my talents were wasted because very few of my talents were being actually used at Alexandra Palace. But I look back on it with pleasure because the things I learnt there are not lost to me. And things go in circles; our younger daughter is now working in television. So things go in circles. Anyhow there I was finally transferred in 1955 - June - to radio, Broadcasting House. And I went on a studio manager's course. They explained to me what a studio manager was. A studio manager is the right hand, the ears and eyes of the producer in radio, be it for music, drama, news, sport, current affairs, religion, any subject really. And the departments of studio management are split into various groups or at least they were in those days. There's a drama department, there's a music department, there's a light music department, there's a news and current affairs department, there's radio newsreel, there's sport, there's outside broadcast, and all these facets have different needs and different producers. Different artists come to them, but the studio manager has to be flexible in that he is called upon from day-to-day and hour-to-hour to use different skills. So if you happen to be interested in languages, or music or drama, or you're just quick on the uptake and you're good with your fingers and you can edit tape and to begin with we didn't have tape. The Germans had tape in Germany and the Italians were using tape, but in this country we were still using acetate disc recording for many years before we changed over to tape. But, eventually, we learnt to tape edit, so you were recording, you were playing sound effects, you were making sound effects from scratch, what is called 'spot effects', but recording them and then using them in programs for dramas, for children's broadcasting, educational broadcasting, further educational broadcasting. So that I worked for a department that covered news and current affairs and sport and documentaries and religion and radio newsreels and further education and in the educational schools broadcasting there was music and drama. So I had the widest possible range of programs to work for and if I enjoyed the variety, I was given as much variety as I wanted. And, talking of variety, there was also a variety department which in those days was humour and quiz shows and stuff and I occasionally worked for them. But I stuck for the most part to the general department which did almost everything else.

Tape 4: 4 minutes 16 seconds

BL: Did you meet any other refugees at the BBC? Were there any other...

HK: One or two, including a lady who to this day is one of the highest paid producers or heads of departments and she became a studio manager whilst I was there, long after I joined there, and became a producer and then a producer of The World at One. And then she became Head of News and then she became...She is a very high flying lady indeed. And there were several such people.

BL: Who was that?

HK: That is Jenny Abramsky. And she's still with them and she's one of the highest paid ladies in radio to this day. I'm not sure of her age but she's been in a high position for a long time. I never had such ambitions, nor talents I might say. But I was happy to be using what talents I had and there can be no greater joy in life than to spend 34 years and, having finished it, say: 'There wasn't a dull day there. I enjoyed every single minute' to the point where I was spending sleepless nights because of the flow of adrenalin from the excitement of the programs that I had been working on. There were down sides when I might have been working on Woman's Hour. I remember one day I was working on Woman's Hour and I'm a fairly squeamish person. And there was a talk. This is radio I'm talking about and we rehearsed the talk. We rehearsed the whole program and then in the afternoon at two o'clock you went on the air to do it live. Well, in the rehearsal a lady came, was interviewed, and gave a talk on abortion with some fairly gruesome details of abortion and I felt so ill. I had to listen to this and control it and you can't switch off. And then I knew I had to go through with it a second time. I felt terribly ill. So these are the downsides. You're forced to listen to stuff that you'd rather not listen to. Then you walk into a studio that's doing pop music and you're nearly deafened. And I'm glad I didn't work on pop music because I would now be deaf. And I've said to many a colleague: 'Do you realise what you're doing to your ears?' The problem is that pop artists themselves come in to listen to what you've just recorded and if you don't play it to the point where it's going in one ear and coming out of the other because of the loudness, they're not satisfied.

Tape 4: 7 minutes 10 seconds

So you're being forced against your will to listen at a high level. I don't understand why but that is a fact. And on the few occasions when I had to work in such a studio I said: 'No way. You'll listen to it at my level or you won't listen to it at all.' And I was fairly strict with the way I handled people and eventually I enforced a no smoking rule in my studios. I mean the studio in which I happened to be working. And I even threw out of the studio or asked to leave Directors of Broadcasting. Director of Radio was asked politely to leave from a studio underground, as most of them were anyway, in which the ventilation system only regenerated about 20% fresh air. So any smoke - you were breathing that for the rest of the day. I said: 'You are only here for 20 minutes. I'm here for 8 hours. Please leave.' And he did. And the silly man said - I won't name him - said: 'I'd rather smoke than stay'. I started that no smoking law and within two years from that day or three years the whole building became a no-smoking area because my colleagues took my cudgel and handed it on. And today Broadcasting House and all the BBC buildings are no-smoking buildings. And from July 1st this year - we're in 2007 - there won't be a restaurant that I can walk into and won't be bothered by smoke and glory be.

BL: What did your parents think of your professional choice?

Tape 4: 8 minutes 55 seconds

HK: They never interfered with it although I know my father always had ambitions that I should become a dentist to follow in his footsteps but I never felt - I suppose my

squeamishness – I never felt inclined to take on a medical career. I hardly know how the body functions so I showed neither interest in medicine nor much talent, I would say. So once he realised I wasn't cut out to be anything in the medical profession, he knew where my talents lay and if I was good at languages, I was good at maths and I was good at science and geography. One of my colleagues in broadcasting once put it at his retirement party. He said: 'My 30 years' – or whatever it was in his case – 'My 30 years' he said 'have been an education at the BBC. I've had 30 years at the BBC and every day has been an education.' and he was right. Education doesn't stop when you leave school. And to be working on music and drama and news and current affairs and meet the most wonderful and interesting people: Desert Island Discs. I must have recorded 150 of those episodes with the original presenter. And I met the most fantastic people. Kiri Te Kanawa was the most amazing person I've ever met in my life. The most genuine person I've ever met in my life – under those circumstances, you know. You interview people – and I hope I'm not coming out as one of those I'm now about to describe - you interview them on the news or Desert Island Discs or for some other program, and I was through the window controlling all this. And you soon learned to see whether people were genuine or not. And there were various levels of genuineness and I got very sensitive to being able to judge whether a person was genuine or not and she was the most genuine of all. And you can get every level of genuineness or lack of it, and I won't mention the people who weren't but...Without being necessarily fully conscious of it at the time I instinctively labelled people in my mind according to how genuine a person they were. And when they were that genuine it became a breathtaking event to listen to them. They spoke from the heart and their choice of music meant so much more as well, so you become sensitive to people and to their needs.

Tape 4: 12 minutes 14 seconds

And one of the greatest joys as a studio manager is not just the job satisfaction that you go home with, but the realisation that you can have an amazing effect that you wouldn't have thought possible. There was a certain person who for 25 years presented a certain program – I won't mention the program – and worked on that program for many, many, many years. It was a record program. And this man presented this program and he was a very, very, very good broadcaster. And then he became very ill and he was away for about a year while somebody else presented his program. And when he came back from illness, he was very nervous, so nervous that he became almost... inhibited – well yes, very inhibited and unsure of himself and he stuttered. This is a recording so, as with the filming of what is happening to me today, if something goes wrong you can cut that out and re-do it. But, eventually, if someone is so nervous that they are petrified, which is what happened in his case, he shut up like a clam. He didn't know what to do. He'd done it all his life but suddenly he was like a newborn baby and lacked confidence. There were three or four people – there's the producer, secretary, studio manager and him. And he was wearing headphones and instinctively as a studio manager you have to do something about this. You're in control of the equipment and if you're the first to react well then you're the one who does it. So I put my finger on the talk-back key and he could hear me in his headphones, and I said – and I don't know where I got this from but this is instinct. I'd never been in this position before but somehow you find this. I put the talk-back key

down and I said very quietly: 'Now John, don't worry. There's no rush, take your time. Take some deep breaths and do nothing for about two minutes. Just breathe in and out slowly and when you feel relaxed enough, we'll have another go.' And he did. And all was well. And a few weeks later he wrote me a letter, most touching, and he said: 'But for your quickness of thought, I would have been destroyed.' He felt so shamed, ashamed. There was no need for him to feel ashamed, but that's what he felt, inadequate, insecure. Feeling insecure he would have left if we couldn't have solved it for him. And then I realised that the human contact that you have in this position, the responsibility that you have is not just the technical responsibility. You deal with human beings every day. And in my retirement book, when I read through the things people have said – there's about fifty pages to it - and one secretary wrote: 'I shall never forget your kindness in welcoming me into the studio on my first day. I was nervous and insecure, and you were busy but not too busy to put me at my ease and to explain what everything was and what to do and what not to do.'

Tape 4: 16 minutes 44 seconds

And somebody else said, 'You will be remembered not only for how good you were with programs but that you cared for people.' So to have had the privilege of working in an industry for thirty-four years that gave you an outlet for every single one of your talents, however little the talent, there was an outlet for it. Whether it was languages, or translating, or putting people at their ease; whether it was music or drama or humour - there was an outlet for it. My mother always said: 'Nothing you learn is ever wasted'. And she was right. And as a studio manager, unlike most professions in life, here was the ideal vehicle for somebody who was Jack of all trades, which is I suppose how you would describe me. I was a Jack of all trades. I never had a degree. I was good at maths and in languages and I liked people; I was gregarious; I could talk the hind legs off a donkey; my English was quite good and I could speak German without an accent. And this was the ideal place for me. I knew television wasn't.

BL: When you started working at the BBC were you still living with your parents?

Tape 4: 18 minutes 20 seconds

HK: Yes, I lived with my parents until I married, which was 1956, February 11th. And we were living in Compayne Gardens when I joined the BBC and so for the first three years of my life at the BBC which included two and a half years at Alexandra Palace, when I would cycle all the way up Fitzjohn's Avenue with a motorised bicycle with a two-stroke engine on the back wheel, all the way up to Alexandra Palace and back again to Compayne Gardens. And then my first six months in Radio House at Broadcasting House from Compayne Gardens until I married, and when I married the BBC gave me a £5 voucher, a £5 increase in my salary as a wedding gift.

BL: How were your parents doing after the war? Had they settled?

HK: My mother started without much English. My father spoke English, but my mother hardly spoke any when we arrived and, probably illegally, she took on jobs as a domestic, scrubbing floors and cleaning kitchens and things and later on looking after other people's children. And I remember one holiday when she was looking after two children. and the parents were there – the parents of these children were there – a wonderful place on the River Thames near Maidenhead and I remember dangling my fingers in the water and catching tiddlers with a little net. That was while she was looking after other people's children.

Tape 4: 20 minutes 12 seconds

But my father, who had come over from Denmark as I think I explained earlier, whilst we were on a holiday in Denmark in 1937, had come over secretly – secretly as far as the Germans were concerned - to put his name on the Dental Register over here without which he wouldn't have, even after five years of residence in Great Britain, been able to work as a dentist. With that registration he was able when he wished and could practically do so to open his own surgery. But his surgical chair and his dental surgeon's chair and his drill and his instruments and his glass cupboards were all put into storage in Glasgow in a container which used to be called a 'lift'. And it wasn't until 1948 that that was opened and the contents taken out because, as a new dentist in this country, although he had the permission to work, where was he going to get the patients from? And it was a very tricky situation until 1948. So until that time he found work as a dentist working for the Dental Cooperative Association, a branch of the London Co-op. And he worked first in Penge and later in Peckham. And he travelled from West Hampstead by underground and then by trolleybus or tram from Elephant and Castle every day, probably a two hour journey, to work, first in Penge and later in Peckham, as a dentist working for the Co-op. And, as such, he treated mainly English patients. The inhabitants of Peckham and Penge benefited from the ministrations of a continental dentist. And he managed to re-educate his patients because they used to come in their droves and say: 'Good morning Doctor. I'd like you to take all my teeth out.' And he'd say: 'Why?' And they'd say: 'Because my father had all his out.' 'Well that's not a very good reason', he said 'My job is to treat teeth and to save teeth, not to pull them out.' But to begin with he didn't quite know how to handle this so he would ring the head office and they'd say to him: 'Well if they ask for that you better take them all out.' But he hated doing it and gradually he re-educated all the patients to save their teeth. And he had a very good mechanic, a Mr Shepherd, who made the dentures in a little back room. And so...partial dentures to save teeth, keep as many of your teeth as you could. One of my father's last words on this earth were to me: 'Keep your teeth as long as you can.' And to this day I have no dentures, although I've lost plenty of my teeth. So thank you Dad – very good advice...

Tape 4: 23 minutes 54 seconds

BL: In 1948 you said...?

HK: In 1948 the National Health Service started and overnight here were the readymade patients which he couldn't have guaranteed beforehand. So, overnight, this surgery as

stored in Glasgow in this lift came into its own and in what had been my sister's room – she was about to go off and get married so this was ideal. I don't think he pushed her out to get married so that he would have her room, but this room became the surgery and for the next twenty....1948, 50...next thirty years approximately he had a surgery there until he became too unfit to carry it on. And the patients would queue up in the hall from which all the rooms led. If I was sleeping in my room I had to wait till there were no patients in the dining room before I could get to the bathroom. And he made a good living but he was never wealthy from it. What chance he had of wealth was killed off by emigration and having to leave. The affluence he had in Berlin – I don't think he ever got that back.

Tape 4: 25 minutes 24 seconds

BL: Did your parents go back to Berlin after the war? Did they...?

HK: No, my father said he would never set foot on German soil again. I never heard my mother express that view, but I'm sure she agreed with him and neither of them ever did. They never set foot on German soil again.

BL: What about you? Did you go back?

HK: I went back because there was no reason why I shouldn't. I went back with the British Army. I had my two years National Service – at least when I started it was only eighteen months and whilst I was half way through my training period they added six months so suddenly it became two years. And it was, therefore, worthwhile for the Army to send me abroad as a National Serviceman and I chose between Cyprus, Egypt and Westphalia – Minden in Westphalia. And I chose Westphalia. I thought well here's a chance to improve my German or to eavesdrop on German conversations and this I did. So I set foot on German soil again as a British soldier in British uniform and my father didn't object. But he would never set foot on German soil. And I don't blame him.

BL: And what was it like for you?

HK: Funny feeling really. No Jews. Nor did I wish to open wounds by trying to engage people in conversations on the subject, but I overheard enough conversations to know that the subject was fairly taboo. They wouldn't have talked to me about it but they talked amongst themselves. I was in the REME workshop, which employed German civilians, so I had plenty of opportunity of overhearing. But, gradually of course, they found out that I did speak some German. But when I spoke German I took care to speak with an English accent. But they never knew quite what I could overhear.

BL: So you didn't tell anyone you were from Berlin?

Tape 4: 27 minutes 53 seconds

HK: No. No, there was no reason for me to. And I saw it as a little advantage that I had and there were a few embarrassing moments. No, embarrassing is the wrong word. We had a military exercise called Operation Counterthrust which took place near Detmold in the woods. And we dug trenches and we mended radio communications equipment because that's what the workshop I worked for did – the REME workshop for telecommunications equipment – for tanks and Army telephone equipment and things. I learnt some of the things that you needed to do for this, but I didn't really show much talent for it. But there I was and one night I was on guard duty guarding the tents and equipment. And I was stationed in the woods by a bridge. And it was about 11 o'clock at night, fixed bayonet, full uniform, all on my own in the pitch black. And I could see in the distance the lights in the village or nearby village; I didn't really know where I was. And the local *Kneipen*, the local pubs, had closed and out came all the people. And some of them came in my direction including a few who had had too much to drink. And two of these came over the bridge and saw me and stopped and started to speak in fairly guttural English not realising that I could have understood the German, and I'm very pleased that he did speak in English because I wouldn't have wanted to speak to him in German. And he patted me on the back, a very dangerous thing to do since I had a fixed bayonet. And he said, and I'm not joking, he said something like this. This is 1951. July or August 1951 and he said, 'In ze next war you and I, we will fight shoulder to shoulder, nicht wahr?' I said not a word. But that's the sort of situation that was bound to happen sooner or later if, as a Jewish refugee you put on a British uniform and chose to go to Germany. That was just bound to happen. And that was just one example of it. The Germans were so petrified of the Russian menace at that time and before and after for a long time that they would rather assume that the British and the Americans would fight with them.

Tape 4: 31 minutes 22 seconds

BL: Did you go to Berlin as well?

HK: Not at that time. I didn't go back to Berlin. I went to Hanover and Hamburg and I saw the bombed U-boat bunkers at Altona and I went on holiday to Nordeney and I've travelled to Dortmund and Düsseldorf. But I didn't go to Berlin. I didn't go to Berlin until 1978 when, as a guest of the Bürgermeister with Molly, I returned for my first visit 39 years after I'd left it and stayed in a posh hotel at the city's expense. But I paid my own fares. Those people who could afford it paid their own fares. You could travel but they would put you up and give you tickets for the opera and tickets for the theatre and it was very well organised. This was part of the city's plan to conduct some form of communication with their ex-citizens who had been fortunate enough to escape the Holocaust. They knew it was futile to pretend that this had never happened and it was a step in the right direction because if you don't talk about it and if you don't allow your own people to be made aware of what's been happening, if you don't acknowledge it in some way, this seemed a very good...apart from the reparations money that was being sent and paid to Jewish organisations and to individuals if they survived. Although there are still to this day plenty of slave labourers who never received a penny.

Tape 4: 33 minutes 38 seconds

But this invitation... and they're still going on to the next generations of survivors. They started with the elderly and, by 1978, they'd got through to the younger generation. I was then forty-eight and today I'm seventy-eight. So this was a good opportunity to find out what Berlin was like after the war and I was intrigued. It was still in a fairly dire state in that the East...The Wall was still up, we could look over the Wall. And when I went to speak at German schools, as I do from time to time, the Wall in the meantime had come down and for years thereafter you could see the building project because the West was spending its money to build up the East to the same level as the West had already had for years, and the last time or the last time but one that I went the skyline of Berlin was nothing but cranes, hundreds of cranes for as far as the eye could see from horizon to horizon around the Potsdamer Platz and all around, rebuilding the whole of Berlin to an unbelievable extent. You wouldn't believe there were enough workmen living to cover all these projects so I don't know if they were all German workers. I know nothing about this. But the rebuilding of Berlin once the Wall came down has cost them so much money that I hear from my teacher friend at the school where I go to talk to from time to time in Berlin, in Steglitz, that the city is bankrupt and no wonder the city is bankrupt.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 2 seconds

BL: What's it like for you to talk to these German children?

HK: Traumatic. I mean it has its traumatic moments. My idea is as it was for when I go to speak to English schools and I'm about to do again. And I've gone recently at Holocaust Day and at the Anne Frank exhibition which I've helped to guide, although not recently. The idea is, it's a history lesson in a way for them. It's a form of catharsis for me to be able to talk about it. It's important for each generation to have passed on to it eye-witnesses as they saw it and how it affected them and unless you hear the emotion in a person's voice, which is going to come out from time to time in my interview today, you don't get a feeling of the importance of the event as it happened. And you feel that a whole generation later. And if you can pass on the importance of it then some lesson may be learnt. The children in Berlin to whom I speak in their own language, although in a vocabulary not quite up to my English vocabulary, because my German is the German of a nine year old and has had the good fortune of working at the BBC and working on German language programs, so my German vocabulary has increased to the extent that a German child would learn if he'd lived in Germany. And so at every point, at every occasion that I speak to them, I would start off by saying: 'Look you'll have to understand that, although I'm fairly fluent in German, my vocabulary is not sufficient and occasionally I'm going to have to use an English word and you're going to be able to help me out I hope.' And that's fine. But the questions that come after I've spoken about Kristallnacht say, and I spoke to them on the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the questions are amazing. So at the end of the talk, one girl gets up, fourteen years old and says – I'm speaking in English but this was all in German - 'Mr Kuttner, your German is so excellent have you ever thought of coming back to Germany to live?' Now I had no warning of such a question. It never occurred to me! But, instinctively, I knew this was

such a wonderful opportunity of saying something which I could not have found a way of saying without the prompting of the question, so I was ever so grateful for the question. Because now I was able to say: 'Thank you for your question. It's a fantastic question and I have to admit to you that the question has never occurred to me. And the reason it's never occurred to me – really two reasons. Firstly, and these are the answers to your question. Firstly, I came to England as a refugee speaking no English. I've spent the last fifty, sixty, seventy years improving my English, becoming English. I'm now a British citizen, married an English girl having two English daughters, working for the BBC, serving in the British Army – I'm British. There is nothing about me that is German any more.

Tape 4: 40 minutes 19 seconds

This is not a criticism - it's a fact. So it has never occurred to me. I welcome the chance of being able to speak German because this is something that has nothing to do with Nazism but you have to remember that, if I were to live in Germany today, I would be constantly reminded of things that I would rather forget, things that don't happen to me in the same way in England. And my second reason is based around that, I said to the young lady, because when my father came out of concentration camp on his 43rd birthday on the 7th of December 1938, many years later when he was able to talk to me about that time he said to me: 'All the German guards were swine, but the worst swine were the seventeen year olds who had no humanity at all or no feeling of guilt or about being cruel to people. They'd been brought up by the Hitler Youth, in the Hitler Youth and stepping on a Jew meant nothing to them. They didn't have children of their own. They were the worst, the 17 year olds.' So I called out to the assembly of parents and children and teachers, including the young thirteen year old who'd asked the question: 'How old are those seventeen year olds today?' And this was the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht, and somebody shouted out 'Siebenundsiebzig!' 77. 'Yes', I said, 'and if I walked through the streets of Berlin or anywhere in Germany today and I meet someone of approximately the age, 77, 78, 80, I do not wish to look into their eyes for fear of what I might see. And I hope that answers your question.' And there was a deathly hush in the class. But I hadn't gone out of my way to look for an opportunity to say all that. But I hope it said the things that needed saying and the question is what prompted it. I hope I wasn't too unkind.

Tape 4: 43 minutes 8 seconds

BL: Now you mentioned your identity so let's just follow up on that. How do you define yourself today in terms of your identity?

HK: I've never been asked the question before. And the reason I've never thought about it before and presumably the reason I've never considered the question is because in most cases in life you are what people assume you are. And this was brought out most forcibly in Germany by the people who never thought of themselves as Jews but if they had one Jewish grandparent they were clamped in concentration camp. So, unfortunately, whatever you consider yourself as in life, since you have to interact with others, is probably not as important, unfortunately, as what other people treat you as or, as Eliza

Doolittle said in *My Fair Lady* - I don't know whether the original Shaw version has it in *Pygmalion* because I've never read it - 'A lady is not defined by how she acts but how she is treated.' But that is slightly sidestepping your question. How do I see myself? Very lucky. Very lucky to have survived. Very lucky to have been given the opportunity to become British, as British as I'm able to absorb. But proud of my heritage, my Jewish heritage and my German Jewish heritage because there's nothing about German Jewry that has any...that is altered one iota by what happened to us in Germany. German Jewry means the Jews that grew up in Germany and the tradition of that heritage is so enormous as to be for me, whose education didn't take place in that niveau but over here unfortunately...

Tape 4: 45 minutes 57 seconds

So I was not able to benefit from the unbelievable high standard of education that my parents and their generation achieved. From the ghetto of the 18th century through to the pre-Nazi German Jewry, the German Jewry before Nazism destroyed it. The explosion of education and culture and everything that goes with it, without which you couldn't have had a Freud or an Einstein or a Mendelssohn and I could go on naming a few others. That explosion of talent and achievement and education which was destroyed will never be achieved again. And I am conscious no matter how much I put into what I do – the musical project or my talking to youngsters or my educating my own children - I can never bring to it more than I am blessed with, much as that is. But I am conscious of being unable to equal the status in education and culture that my parents enjoyed through that growth, unbelievably energetic growth of imagination and talent that they were the climax of. So, on the one hand, I'm extremely fortunate as a German-Jewish refugee to call myself British and have a Jewish wife [means British ?] and Jewish children and live happily as much as health will allow in comfort and contentment in London today. With enough to eat and enjoying music and new technology and seeing my grandchildren grow up and having a loving wife who is healthier than I am - that's a great blessing and that makes one humble no matter how little....A little bit of humility. I don't show it much but I am conscious of it, the need for it, because I know that through no fault of our own my generation has, with all the educational opportunities that there are in this country, never achieved the culture that was available on the continent. British culture is not the same as the culture that was available on the continent.

Tape 4: 49 minutes 7 seconds

BL: What is this most important aspect to you of this legacy of this German-Jewish heritage?

HK: Well, for one thing I never inherited German literature, the ability to read French literature. The appreciation of Heine and Goethe and Schiller, which I know was terribly important to my parents, passed me by because I never read it. I never read one word. I could because I can still read the ancient German script, but because I didn't have the schooling in it I need a teacher to instil the love of it for me. At a time when reading of books was for me a burden because I had to learn a new language the reading of German

books became an irrelevance and so I started reading English books, but all too few of those because I was a musical and mathematical child. My talents didn't lie in the spoken word, although I've acquired a few talents in that respect now. I'm not as well-read as I ought to be - perhaps that's why I run the library. A feeling of inadequacy in that respect in the education is lacking. We learnt Shakespeare in this country but to explain what I meant about the lack of culture, and it's not a criticism so much as a fact, I said this to the Chairman of the Goethe Institute a few years ago when I had the opportunity to speak to him, or the Assistant Director of the Goethe Institute. I said: 'Why do you call yourselves the Goethe Institute in London? Why don't you call yourselves the German Cultural Institute or some such name?' And he didn't understand the question. I said, 'Let me explain... If you walk through the streets of Berlin, or Frankfurt, or Breslau, or Munich or Vienna and you ask the first person you meet in the street: 'Do you know who Shakespeare was?' Eight out of ten will tell you correctly: 'He was a great poet and playwright who lived in the 16th century.' You do a survey in London, or Birmingham or Manchester or Glasgow and say to people: 'Do you know who Goethe was?' 'You what?!' 'Schiller?' 'Pardon?' 'Heine?' 'Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about.' I hope that explains the question.

BL: What impact do you think did it have on your life, being a refugee and having to leave Germany?

Tape 4: 52 minutes 26 seconds

HK: If this were my death bed and I were asked the question 'What quality has sustained you most of all the qualities you were born with?' I would say: 'Adaptability'. Whether that is a Jewish trait 'Fiddler on the Roof' style, or whether it is something that my parents happened to pass on to me or something that I learned I can't tell. It's probably a Jewish phenomenon and 'Fiddler on the Roof' explains it quite well. If you're being chased from pillar to post you have to adapt to the new environment be it language, surroundings, treatment, inquisition or otherwise. And wherever you are, you make your home. You use the talents you have to the best of your ability and if you find yourself somewhere where those talents aren't any good you have to find new talents. So the answer to your questions is: I am pleased that I have been adaptable enough to swim and not drown with whatever difficulties I have faced. I've not made a spectacular success of my life, but I haven't been a spectacular failure either. I suppose I'm average. But as a survivor I know I have a responsibility and that, together with the adaptability, is what keeps you going. You know you're adaptable enough to adjust to moving circumstances, so you're never afraid that you won't be able to cope. Because you know you can cope. You've coped with everything so far. If ever you meet something that you can't cope with it will be a surprise. That's the way I go through life. It'll be a surprise if I meet something I can't cope with. Of course there are situations...The ideal situation scenario is you are in the water and your mother is drowning over there and your wife is drowning over here. Whom do you save first? That is a no win situation. Happily, I've never been in that situation. But everybody needs a *raison d'être* and for me that *raison d'être* for want of anything better is that sense of responsibility that keeps me going, saying: I'd like to do this and I'd like to do that and that... But now, with failing health in one or two

respects, I'm happy to concentrate rather hard on the things that mean the most, which would I be most sorry not to finish of all the jobs I've started.

Tape 4: 55 minutes 40 seconds

And that's what I concentrate on. So you get your priorities right. And that is true of life - that's why people have confession in the Catholic faith - you have to get your priorities right before you meet your maker. In my case, I'd like to get as near finishing my musical project as I can. And I know that when the money runs out, if that happens, although I can't see that happening - it doesn't cost that much - it's a big amount but it's not that much. I know the synagogue will carry it on because they have learnt to appreciate how important the project is. And they've said to me on several occasions, 'Do you want us to help with the paying of this?' I say 'Not while I have the resources.' My father was ill with Parkinson's disease and was bedridden. And one day I had a phone call from the Chairman of the B'nai B'rith Lodge of which he was Chairman - he had once been Vice Chairman. And I was asked on the telephone by the Chairman of the Leo Baeck Lodge whether I would accept on behalf of my father the payment to pay for my father's day and night nursing which he needed after my mother died and he was housebound with Parkinson's Disease. And I said, 'Well I'm sorry Mr X, but my father has still got all his marbles and although I'm running my father's affairs, I do nothing without consulting with him.' 'Oh, no you mustn't tell him about it!' And I said 'Well, I'm sorry - I cannot accept on my father's behalf without my going and telling him about it.' And I knew what my father would say. And I told him. He said, 'Whilst I have a penny in the bank, I will not accept a penny.' And my attitude to the paying and financing of the musical project is the same: while I've got a tuppence in the bank I'm going to pay for it.

BL: We have to stop here; the tape is coming to an end.

Tape 4:

57 minutes 55 seconds.

End of Tape Four

TAPE 5

Tape 5: 0 minute 8 seconds

BL: This is Tape Five. We are conducting an interview with My Henry Kuttner.

BL: How different do you think your life would have been if you hadn't been forced to emigrate?

HK: Almost impossible to answer of course. I would have felt the pressure of my father's wish for me to become a dentist more probably. I would have had less excuse not to become one except that I'm sure I would have not wished to have been one. But what I would have gone on to do... there would have been no BBC for me to work for. I really can't imagine. One thing I'm fairly certain of is that my education would have been better than the education I was able to have here because there would have been a continuity of

education from not being thrown about from country to country or school to school. I would have gone from a junior school to a senior school to university I hope. I like to think and probably a mathematics degree. I think I would have probably become a teacher. My father always wanted to become a Head Teacher. But his Headmaster said to him and this was 1914 or thereabouts, 1913, 1912. 'As a Jew,' said the Headmaster to him in a non-Jewish school, 'As a Jew, I would think my advice to you is: don't try to become a headmaster. You would find it too hard.' So I too would not have reached that height. And that has nothing to do with Hitler... but anti-Semitism would have been there anyway. I can't think of any country where it doesn't exist, more's the pity. But I think it's too difficult a question for me to answer. I wouldn't have married an English girl. I wouldn't have had English daughters. I wouldn't have learned to speak English as well as I do now. I wouldn't have been in the British Army, so I have a lot to thank Hitler for.

BL: Tell us a bit about your wife and daughters because we haven't really discussed them.

Tape 5: 2 minutes 52 seconds

HK: I haven't had the opportunity - thank you. In 1953 I went with my tennis playing friend who is now in Australia, himself now a grandfather, to Kensington Town Hall for a dance. We had both been to dancing lessons in the previous year and we thought we'd try this out. And there, I met Molly. She's not Jewish born and was raised and bred in the country in Norfolk - Church of England but not strictly so. But she used to go to church. And when we got married in 1956 we decided that because the Jewish religion would have more to lose than the Christian religion were we to bring our children up in the other, she agreed that our children should be brought up as Jewish. And this we did. We live 35 minutes' drive away from Belsize Square but every morning once they were at cheder age we drove them every Sunday morning to Sunday school. And they went on to have their Bat Mitzvah - the equivalent for girls of confirmation which for boys is at 13 and for girls is at fourteen. And they went on to graduate, and they know as much if not more about Judaism as I do. Molly all this time only learnt about Judaism from me and from them and it's extraordinary that we've had Friday evenings here since the first week and we light the candles and we have Passover Seder and she comes to synagogue with me though not on a regular basis. And I sometimes go to church with her. She belongs to a family society called the Philby Association, which is her mother's maiden name. And there is a family association and she's helped to organise that Philby Association. And they meet in the village of Philby and the centre point of that is the church there so every three years there's a reunion and I usually go with her to these reunions. And having learned to sing hymns at the Hall School I led the choir there even though I was Jewish.

Tape 5: 5 minutes 48 seconds

I can join in all the hymns and usually quite enjoy it, although I don't sing the words 'Jesus Christ'. And so Molly has run the Jewish home for us. Now the children are grown up. Susan was born in 1958 and Helen in 1961. Susan is very successful as a senior staff trainer, producer of training programs for Waitrose, the John Lewis Partnership food

store. And Helen is a very senior producer with the BBC sports department. And we see them on a very regular basis. Susan has two children, which you will see on the photographs in a little while. And Helen has no children. She's not been married but she loves children and she's godmother to a host of children. And our grandchildren love their Auntie Helen. And they live a little way from us: Helen in Hammersmith and Susan in Sunningdale, which is about an hour and a quarter from here. So if I had the chance to emigrate I wouldn't do so because I'd like to stay being near my children and grandchildren. Molly has been a wonderful housewife and she still is. And she's the healthy one in the family. That's a great blessing. When the children were growing up she went to work on a secretarial basis in various places as a temp and then as permanent staff and managed to combine working with running a house. And our children were born in this house, or one of them was born in this house, the other one in a hospital, but we were living in this house when both the children were born. And here we are still. The house is not too big for us. The rooms are not enormous and Edgware...I imagine I shall be carried out of here eventually; I don't think we'll move. And family celebrations happen here and the children give us wonderful surprises from time to time and they invite us to their place. And they, like their father, love sport. So Helen is working in sport and Susan plays a lot of sport. And they're both good at maths, which is very nice for me because that was my first love. And all in all we are blessed as grandparents and as parents. We have a lot to be grateful for.

Tape 5: 9 minutes 18 seconds

BL: Do you talk to your daughters about your past? About Germany? About...?

HK: Oh yes. I never made a point of sitting them down and talking to them about it, but it just came out in natural conversation at various times and there was never a time, once they were old enough to grasp, although even before we ever explained anything to them they would have known from knowing my parents' German, and why was it German was spoken? And there were recipes from Germany and there were Jewish recipes; there were Hungarian recipes – I had a Hungarian uncle - and gradually you absorb the cultures that your family is blessed or cursed with. And our family was not different. I don't remember a point where we said...I remember with sex education sitting down and saying 'we've got something interesting to tell you'. But with the problem of being the product of a mixed marriage that just evolved over time with story telling and bedtime stories and all sorts of things. I was fairly inventive with bedtime stories because the kids were intelligent enough to know stories off by heart. And so you realised you had to do something different. So I would start stories like: 'Once upon a time there was a little girl called Little Rude Reading Hide.' And they would be beside themselves and never fall asleep because they would just be giggling all the time.

Tape 5: 11 minutes 3 seconds

And then one day I had a brainwave. In order that the children...bedtime story or perhaps when they were ill... but it might do them no harm at all to hear about when their daddy was a naughty boy. 'Would you like to hear about when Daddy was a naughty boy?'

‘What? Daddy was a naughty boy?!’ Imagine a five or six or seven year old. They couldn’t get enough of these stories. And so these stories, all true, a dozen of them at least, these stories have been passed on to the grandchildren to the point where, about four years ago, our grandson, who is now sixteen, did me a birthday card and the central motif, and I can’t remember what that was, was surrounded by little postage stamp drawings circled round and each one of them represented one of my misdemeanours. So they’ve learned to laugh at...and the important thing for me was that they should learn not to put me on a pedestal. I’m as human as they are. But the big plus, I hoped, was that they should not be afraid to make mistakes. They should never feel a burden of guilt from having told a lie or having stolen something or having spilt something or having offended somebody. This is human nature. One must try not to do it and I explained why – morality and all that - but you should not be crushed by your own human traits. And telling them about when Daddy was a naughty boy was a good step in that direction.

Tape 5: 13 minutes 6 seconds

BL: You said before that you are now giving lectures to school classes on a regular basis. Can you tell us what made you do this or what triggered this?

HK: Yes. It started off in the late 90s. I had talked to the Anne Frank exhibition over a period of years. Our synagogue at Belsize Square was home to the Anne Frank exhibition over a period of about four weeks fifteen years ago or so. And then it moved the following year, or the year after that, to St Alban’s Cathedral and I toured it there as a guide. But then came the time after the fall – I can’t remember now exactly when – but sometime after the fall of the Berlin Wall it came to light that concentration camps, like the one where my father had been at Sachsenhausen, thirty-five kilometres north of Berlin, that the East Germans or the Russians before the fall of the Berlin Wall when, apart from the fact that Berlin was a sector within the Eastern Block... All around Berlin was East German under Russian jurisdiction and East German. And the East Germans had kept Sachsenhausen... first of all the Russians had used it as a concentration camp. And then the East Germans had used it as a museum, but they only commemorated gay prisoners and Christian prisoners and Russian prisoners. The word ‘Jew’ did not appear in any of their museum exhibits. And so it was decided that it was high time that justice prevailed and that the records of Jewish suffering in the camp, who were after all the main purpose of it having been built- mostly with slave labour I believe - that they should be commemorated with a museum within Sachsenhausen. As a result of that, feelers were stretched out all over Europe for people who had something to exhibit. So, either through the synagogue or through the Wiener Library - I cannot now remember - I was contacted, and I had papers and stuff and I gave the Sachsenhausen authorities material from my father’s surgery to show what profession he’d been in: photographs, his release certificate and other things of interest about his family, his parents and a feeling of what life had been destroyed.

Tape 5: 16 minutes 34 seconds

And, as a result of that museum the opening ceremony of which I attended in 1998 [he meant 1957] to mark the 59th anniversary of Kristallnacht, as a result of that local schools in and around Berlin started to visit Sachsenhausen and one such school was a school in Steglitz which I knew nothing about before then, a school called the Friedrich Bayer Oberschule. And the teacher who took his class there, not as part of the main history curriculum of the school but as a part of the extracurricular activities, he formed a sort of Aktionsgruppe – AG – an action group. And children from various classes of the school came voluntarily to be part of this generation of Germans for the first time – not their parents, not their grandparents – but these youngsters for the first time were thirsting for knowledge of things which had been taboo subjects beforehand in their homes and in the homes of their grandparents. And this teacher spoke to the organisers at the museum at Sachsenhausen and said: ‘Is there anybody exhibited here who has relatives that we might contact?’ And they said ‘Well there’s one here.’ Oh, they wanted somebody who lived in Steglitz, somebody in their area. Well Steglitz is quite close to where we lived in Bennisenstrasse, about 15 minutes by tram. And so he said: ‘Well, there is this Doctor Kuttner here. He is no longer alive but his son is. He lives in London.’

Tape 5: 18 minutes 41 seconds

And they asked permission to contact me. Well, they didn’t give him my address. They contacted me from Sachsenhausen and said: ‘May we give your address to this teacher?’ And a few weeks later I got a letter from this teacher, in German. I answered and a correspondence ensued. And I helped them with research. They wanted to do a project on this and a project on that and I started to help them with photographs, papers, with documents, photocopies. And we spoke on the phone and then they said they wanted to put on a special thing to mark the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht at their school – not only the AG, but they wanted to involve the whole school. I said: ‘Yes I will help you; what’s more I will come and talk to you.’ And they, unbeknownst to me, tried to get the Council, their local Council, to pay for my fares. I didn’t ask for this. But, in any case, they refused because the city is bankrupt as I mentioned before. But I was unaware of any of this and I was happy to pay my own fare and go and speak to them. And I was in Berlin for two or three days. I think on that occasion Molly came with me. On another occasion both girls came with me. I’ve been a few times. And that school - those classes and that teacher are still working with successive age groups as they grow older and others leave and they’ve cleaned up Jewish cemeteries that were broken down. They’ve gone to Auschwitz and they’ve gone to Theresienstadt, Terezin in Czechoslovakia, and filmed and videoed and recorded interviews and projects, taken photographs and done a huge amount of work on matters Jewish. They also entered a competition with my permission. They wanted to enter a competition that was open to all schools in the whole Berlin area – that’s a few hundred schools – on the subject of...and it was sponsored by the non-Jewish City Council as well as by a Jewish organisation in Germany called ‘Mifgash’, *Begegnung*, - meeting. And they chose to do a project on the subject of either a Jewish person or a Jewish family or a Jewish business. And they chose Mr Kuttner, meaning my father.

Tape 5: 21 minutes 43 seconds

And I provided them with all the material and a lot of help and they won first prize. And the first prize and I've got a certificate upstairs - they gave me a copy of it - which was about 8 years ago, the first prize was for two of the school, two of the class that did this work, to go on a ten day trip to Israel and live on a Kibbutz. And I met the two girls who went there. And I'm still in touch with them. So you get involved gradually by making yourself available and if I don't do it, after me there isn't much left in the way of generations who can speak with any feeling of 'I was there.' I shall soon be seventy-eight and who knows for how many years people like me will be available. So I feel it important and the children themselves have expressed in their letters, of which I've got a hundred-odd, have expressed the view that: 'We are aware - I'm translating now - We are aware that we are the last generation of Germans with the opportunity of meeting eye-witnesses and we therefore welcome the opportunity.' So I can't but feel some sense of responsibility. If they welcome me, I will go and talk.

BL: In that sort of vein, have you got a message for anyone who is going to watch this video, based on your experiences?

Tape 5: 23 minutes 40 seconds

HK: I'm sure I could think of quite a lot to say on the subject but the basic thing has to be that if you are bitter then don't go, because that bitterness will only show through immediately and cause resentment. But if you have an open mind and realise, as I came to realise, that the present generation of Germans is completely guiltless, how can they be anything other than guiltless? What's more they are keen and eager to learn the truth because they didn't hear it from their previous generations and the only way they were going to hear it was through the type of teacher of whom I spoke, Mr Bedürftig by name, an amazing man. Or from people who lived through it and are able to talk about it, but without rancour, because they must not be made to feel guilty because it would be counter-productive. What's the point? They are not guilty so what's the point of trying to make them feel guilty? Anyone who wishes to go has to be going with the thought of building bridges not of making people feel guilty.

BL: What I meant also was a message in general about your refugee experiences.

HK: Well everybody's experience will be different. I happened to have been evacuated to a farm for a year and I had an English teacher who took great pains to teach me English. I was very lucky. Others never lose their accent, although I have a little accent, but it's mixed with so many other accents it's hard to pinpoint. Nevertheless, I have friends who came exactly the same time as me who still speak with a foreign accent. So I'm extraordinarily lucky, probably my musical ear.

Tape 5: 25 minutes 58 seconds

Unless you were a refugee there's really no point imagining what it was like to be one. All I can say is refugees need understanding. And there are plenty of refugees in the world today who need understanding, help. And it's no good looking the other way and pretending it's not happening. Somebody needs to help. We all need to put our hands in our pockets and certainly my generation would be well-advised not to pretend that we weren't the lucky ones, and why should we pull out the plug just because we're here and the devil take the hindmost. So my message is: for God's sake help other people.

BL: Now is there anything else which we haven't mentioned and which you'd like to add to this interview?

HK: In the excitement of talking at various points in the interview I'm conscious of having made too many slips. The first one is that I had a mental blockage when trying to remember the name of my father's mother and her name was Friederike Rebecca. My mother's mother was called Rebecca and that's one of the reasons my youngest daughter Helen is called Helen Rebecca. Friederike Kuttner, my father's mother who died in Theresienstadt, was called Frieda, but her full name was Friederike Rebecca. And the second thing that I slipped up slightly on was that I mentioned – I think I mentioned it twice – that's the thing about several hours of interview: you forget what you said before. I mentioned that the time when I was in the choir, in 1958, at the time when Oberkantor Magnus Davidsohn wrote the letter to my father asking whether I'm still involved in the choir. I said in error that I was nineteen at the time. I was actually twenty-eight, twenty-nine. This was 1958 and that was why he asked the question. It was now twenty years after or nearly twenty years after I'd been a pupil of his – seventeen years – and he was interested whether I was still involved in the choir. I was married by now so he had every reason to suspect that I might have other things to do than be in the choir, but I still was and I still am.

BL: Mr Kuttner, thank you very much for this interview.

HK: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity.

Tape 5: 29 minutes 16 seconds

End of spoken interview Tape Five

Photographs

Tape 5:29 minutes 37 seconds

HK: This is a photo on the wedding day of my father's parents in 1890. They got married in Inowroclaw. The local photographer whose postcard size photograph this is in sepia obviously went by the Polish name of the town of Inowroclaw. My father always spoke of it as Hohensalza because they were actually a German-speaking family in that part of Poznan, Poland. And it was for that reason of language difficulty that they were forced to leave and move further west and they ended up in Berlin. So Hohensalza and Inowroclaw

are one and the same place and this is where they got married in 1890. They had four sons, my father being the second.

HK: This is a photograph on the occasion of my parents' engagement, I believe. 1917. My father's in the uniform of the Kaiser. He'd come home on temporary leave from the front and he visited my mother in Gniezno-Gnesen near Posen in Poland. And this photograph was taken, but I don't know who by, on the occasion of their engagement. They were married four years later. There followed twin boys who died at birth. Then my sister Lilo, Lieselotte, as she was known, in 1925 and then I followed in 1929.

HK: This photograph in sepia was taken in 1926 and, although I wasn't alive, it was another three years before I came along. My mother, who's second from the right on that photograph, has obviously invited together not only my father's parents, who are on either side of her, but her own mother who is far left on the photo – Oma Löwenthal and the grandparents Kuttner. My mother's father had long since...had been dead seven years at that time.

BL: And where was this photo taken?

Tape 5: 32 minutes 21 seconds

HK: It was taken...I'm not absolutely certain whether it was on our own balcony. At that time they lived in a place called Stierstrasse which I never knew. I knew of Stierstrasse, but I was never in that building. But what I do know is that the occasion must be very early in 1926 because my sister had been born in November 1925. And this was obviously an occasion for both sets of grandparents - those that were still alive - to come and view their new grandchild, their first grandchild. Because the eldest son, in the case of my father's parents, had died in the First World War without marrying, and neither of the other two had yet had children. In the case of my mother's mother, there were seven children, but at that time none of them had had any children. So this was the first grandchild for all concerned. So a happy occasion celebrating the birth of my sister – Lilo.

HK: This photograph was taken on the couch in my father's surgery as far as I'm aware – his dental surgery, in between patients no doubt. My sister, who's four years older than I – that looks as if it must have been taken at the end of 1930 or beginning of 1931 because I look about a year old. Proud sister with new brother, fairly new brother. I had hair then. I even had more hair than I have now. And very wide-eyed. And I think my father was the photographer. He was quite keen on photography in those days, but why it had to be taken at the surgery I don't know. But we had quite a lot of photographs taken there.

Tape 5: 34 minutes 25 seconds

This photograph was taken on the second floor balcony of our apartment block. We didn't own the apartment block; we didn't even own the apartment. It, number thirteen Bennigsenstrasse, and here is my sister and me sitting very happily obviously giggling

away at having our photographs taken on the balcony in the middle of summer. Usually, photographs were taken if family came to visit and that may have been the occasion for various photographs taken of various members of the family. But this album seems to have separated occasions and just taken haphazard photographs from here and there and stuck them all together next to each other. But that must have been about 1935, possibly '36.

This photograph was taken in something like 1935 or '36. And my sister and I are sitting on the wall outside the local *Kneipe*, or pub, on the corner of Bennigsenstrasse and Hauptstrasse. This is obviously as it says in the picture 67 Hauptstrasse that must be because the building that we lived in Bennigsenstrasse was number thirteen, so this must be the number of the high street. Why we're sitting on top of this wall I cannot imagine – I certainly don't remember it - and I'm scowling maybe because the sun's bright in my eyes. But somebody took pleasure in hoisting us up there for the photograph. And these were the days when Jewish children could still be photographed on the walls of German pubs and probably about the time of the Olympic Games – 1936 or thereabouts.

This was in Berlin, also, and I'm grinning from ear to ear. And had it been in colour you would see that I have very ginger hair, dark ginger hair. It was the occasion when every child in Prinzregentenstrasse School was lined up against the wall to be shot, but not by rifle or firing squad but by photographer. The school photographer came along to the school and this is my... the only thing that is missing is the number of the convict that goes with it. I obviously thought the occasion was hilarious because I'm really enjoying it. I don't remember the occasion now, but looking back on it now I'm amused that I should have found it so enjoyable. 'Cause it must have been dead boring standing up with your back to the wall and looking self-conscious. But I don't. So I'm very pleased about that. So I was about seven.

Tape 5: 37 minutes 38 seconds

This photograph was taken on the balcony of our rented apartment at number 31 Compayne Gardens. The only thing that stopped me falling over into the front garden was that one heavy rail. It was a very small balcony and how my aunt and uncle climbed out over the high windowsill I don't know – well over knee height. Anyway, my uncle Martin and his second wife, Betty, came to visit us. And I can see from the photograph that I must have been at the Hall School, which means I must have been already eleven years old. I don't look eleven, but that's how old I was when I joined the Hall School. I was there for nearly two years or something like two years. So this must be 1941, the war was on. Obviously there wasn't taken during an air raid because otherwise we wouldn't have been out on the balcony.

Tape 5: 38 minutes 55 seconds

Proud parents, my parents, with their son in uniform. This was 1949, possibly early 1950 – oh yes, 1950. I joined the... I became a National Serviceman in 1949, November, having been deferred for two years before that, so I was nearly twenty when I entered the

Army. And I started off in the RASC and quickly got transferred to the REME because I wanted to be an electrical engineer at that time. And you can see from my cap badge it's already the REME badge. I had my initial army training at Arborfield where I was several months...anyway come home for a weekend. But because I only came home for a weekend there wasn't time to get into civilian clothes. You weren't allowed civilian clothes at the camp so there I am in uniform and I'm not sure exactly where it was taken, whether we went...Molly thinks it was at the seaside, but I'm not sure where it was taken – it's too long ago for me to remember. But it was 1949 or 1950 and it must be nice to have a son in uniform not during a war.

The date is the 10th of August 1960 – 1959 – my wife knows better. 1959, she's quite right. It's the first birthday of our eldest child and the family had come to celebrate. My parents were there and who else came? There were other aunts and uncles and cousins twice removed and presents galore. I don't know if Susan knew what was happening, but it was August so late summer 1959. I was in the BBC, still plenty of red hair on my head, and Molly looked quite pleased with herself on one of our garden chairs. We were not very well-to-do in those days, but it was in this house and if you sit in the same place in our garden now you can reproduce the same sight really. We've been here for nearly 50 years.

Tape 5: 41 minutes 46 seconds

Yes. This photograph is one of those family occasions which prove how important family occasions are. It was either 1963 or 1964 and we went to my parents' home on the second floor of number 31 Compayne Gardens to celebrate Hanukah. We always went there at least once during Chanukah each year. The reason I think it's so important is that within three years granny was dead of a brain tumour. And it's so important for grandchildren to know their grandparents and vice versa of course. And if you don't take the opportunity to meet, to give the grandchildren and grandparents the opportunity to meet, the opportunities soon dither away. So we're very seriously singing Ma'oz Tzur [a song for the festival of Chanukah] and I think my dad did the honours that day, whereas in this house I did the honours. Both kids enjoying the musical part – they were both showing musical talent from a very early age and, since all the Kuttners like singing and Molly does too, singing was an enjoyable part of being together on such occasions.

Tape 5: 43 minutes 19 seconds

This photograph was taken in front of the bull ring in Seville. Last year, 2005, our younger daughter, Helen, spent several months, three months, learning Spanish and generally having a break from the BBC. And, while she was there, Molly and I and later Helen's sister, elder sister Sue, and her two children, Hannah on the left, age thirteen at the time and Ben, on the right, age fifteen at the time, went to spend a week with Helen. And this photograph is taken on a lovely sunny day in Seville, taken in front of the famous bull ring there.

This is a photograph taken of my wife, Molly, and me. Taken about two years ago. At the time we were married about forty-eight years, forty-nine years. And we were at an outdoor function, a very happy occasion it was, and we're looking on, watching the proceedings. And we were unaware that this picture was being taken by somebody else in the family. And it's in black and white.

BL: Mr Kuttner, thank you again very much for this interview.

HK: It's been a pleasure.

Tape 5:44 minutes 47 seconds

End of photographs

End of Tape Five.