IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Forename:	Lilly
Interviewee Sex:	Female
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Name of Interviewer:	Deborah Koder
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REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV295
NAME: Lilly Lampert
DATE: 15 April 2024
LOCATION: London
INTERVIEWER: Deborah Koder

[00:00:00]

So today is the 15th of April 2024. My name is Deborah Koder and today I'm interviewing Lilly Lampert in London. Could you please say your name?

Lilly Lampert.

Where were you born?

Vienna.

And when were you born?

10th of July 1929.

Thank you for agreeing to be filmed for the AJR Refugee Voices Archive.

Yes.

Can we start with your family background?

Okay.

Can you tell me something about your family background?

Well, I can only remember since I'm about five years old.

Yes.

I went to kindergarten, and I hated it. I cried every morning for about a few months in Vienna. Came to England in 1939.

And what about your parents? What do you remember about them?

My mother didn't work. She just looked after me and my sister. I had a sister nine years older than me, but she died some years ago in America. And mainly my – until I got married, I lived in hostels. First in Tunbridge Wells in The Beacon and then in London, 243 Wilson Lane.

So, you lived in Vienna as a child. Can you –

I lived in Vienna until I came to England.

Can you remember where you lived in Vienna?

Yes, I got the address, Novaragasse zwanzig.

Thank you.

Can you speak German at all?

Novaragasse.

[00:02:00] Novaragasse *zwanzig, zweiter Stock, Tür elf.* Do you know what that means?

Second floor?

Yes.

Tür elf, door eleven.

Oh, door, Tür. Oh, yeah.

Don't forget it's *elf* –

Elf.

Is eleven.

That's right, yeah. And can you describe the flat to me?

Well, it was really quite a big flat. Don't forget, children's eyes see different to adults' eyes. To me it looked big, the rooms looked big. I think it was bigger than this.

Bigger than this whole house?

No, not the house, the room. Don't forget, in Vienna you didn't have houses like in England. You have apartments, I suppose you would call it. Flats, apartments, whatever, because we had – the dining room and sitting on was all in one. But it was huge and my father's desk was in there. And they had a rocking chair in there, and we had a grand piano in there, all in the one. It must – looking – it must have been huge to get all that furniture in. I mean, in England, you'd have it all in different little rooms. But measurements I can't give you. All I know, I know what was in there, the furniture.

What was the furniture like?

I think it was leather, this sort of three-piece suite.

And bedrooms? Did you share a bedroom with your older sister?

[00:04:02] No, I shared it with my parents until I came, until my sister left and then I got her room, because she came to England six months before me. She got somebody to guarantee get me, because in those days you couldn't just come to England, could you? What do other people tell you about that? Because I know my sister had a hell of a job to get somebody to put fifty pounds forward or something.

A sponsor?

Was that – that's how it was? I mean, I didn't absorb any of that. All I know, I wanted to come to England to be with my sister. I didn't know I'm not going to see my parents again, because they landed up in Theresienstadt. And that's all I can tell you.

What about the other flats in your block? Did anybody you know live near?

Oh, I knew the people. We lived on the second floor; I knew the people on the first floor. They were my cousins, all my cousins lived there. Löwi was the family. You know how they spell it? L-o with two dots on top. When I tell my kids about it, they have never heard. You never heard of that, do you? You don't know about these things. So, in English, you just have to spell it without the two dots.

And then you say Lowi, instead of Löwi [ph].

Yeah, but that's a different name, Lowi. Löwi is Löwi [laughs].

And what about your grandparents? Did they live near you?

I only remember one grandmother, my mother's mother. **[00:06:02]** She lived in the same block as we lived until she died. And I don't remember too much about her. Don't forget, parents were old. My mother, I think, was forty, my father forty-eight when I was born, which is very old for these days, isn't it? That's why I didn't want to be an old mother, because I must have absorbed it. Because I always felt my parents were older than other children's parents.

So, did your sister become like a second mother to you?

Well, she was too busy with her boyfriends and playing the – because she did play the piano and she did go to the opera. Always to the opera. Alfred Piccaver was her favourite. I don't know if you've ever heard of him, he was a famous singer in those days.

And he was your sponsor?

Yeah.

So, you knew him when he was in Vienna?

I didn't actually know him. I never – children never went to the opera. My sister always went. That's all I can tell you.

And what about your aunt? Wasn't she a famous- pianist?

Pianist. Don't know if she was famous. Hilde Flatter was her name, but she was a pianist and that then encouraged my sister to become – to learn the piano. I didn't want to learn. I had the opportunity, my parents asked me. I said, 'No, I don't want to learn.'

[00:08:06] *Can you remember what your mother used to do day-to-day?*

She just looked after me, did the cooking. We didn't have a maid, so she must have done everything.

And your father?

Something in an office and I honestly don't know what type of office it was. I took no interest at all in that.

Did you see much of your parents?

All the time. Well, my father went to work in the morning. The only day I think he didn't work was Sunday. I'm not even sure about Saturday. I can't remember, he must have worked – I think he worked on Saturday even. Sunday used to – we used to go for a walk often if the weather was nice, in Prater. Do you know Vienna at all?

No, I don't.

You've never been there?

Tell me about it.

Well, the Prater was a big park. But part of it was like a fairground, but another part was just gardens and trees and… Anybody from Vienna, from the part of Vienna I come from, must know the Prater. But the reason about it is the giant wheel where – that's the first one, I think, in the world, the giant wheel in Vienna. Now they've got – they're everywhere. But that was in the Prater. See, if you don't know about it, it's very hard to explain this.

[00:10:04] *Did you go there regularly?*

Well, on Sunday if there's nothing else, you go for a walk in the park and you go... It was, as I say, it was local to me. I lived very near there.

And was there a view of Vienna from the Prater? Could you see the whole of Vienna from there?

Well, only if you're high up. If you're high up, you can see things but if you're just low down, you don't. I mean, same as living here. I don't see anything; I just see where I'm living.

Could you describe your father to me?

No. What do you mean describe him?

How did he look? How did he behave?

Well, I think he was a clever man, because I remember some aunties always used to come, they used to come for advice to him. I do remember that. I think he was a clever man and I didn't take – I'm afraid my brains are not good. I never liked school. Never liked it.

Do you mean in Vienna you didn't like it either?

No, I never liked school.

What did your parents feel about that?

Well, you've got to go to school [laughs]. I didn't like it going to school.

Did you want to stay at home?

Yes.

With your mother?

[00:12:00] Well, I had no choice. I had no choice, you've got to go to school, the same as in England. You've got to – kids have got to go to school.

So, could you describe your mother? What did she look like?

Well, I can only describe her from photographs, which I've got. I've got photos if you're interested.

What kind of person was she to you?

Well, a mother's a mother, how can I say that? She was a very warm person as far as I remember. Always got on with my parents. I mean, you take things like that for granted. You don't sort of – if you asked me what sort of person, well, I thought my parents were nice people. But maybe other people didn't, would describe them differently. I mean, I was very happy to be at home.

And school?

I told you, I never liked school.

What was wrong with school?

I don't say anything wrong with it, I – just not fond of going to school. I liked my holidays; I was always doing things. Playing with my dolls, making dolls clothes. The same as kids do now, I suppose. And of course, television stops all that, a lot of things I used to do, because everybody watches television.

What kind of things did you do with your dolls?

Make clothes for my doll. Interested? You want to see my doll?

[00:14:01] *Later. You have a collection?*

No, I've got one doll. You know, you can't just bring things to England. It had to be a certain weight only. Other people must have told you that. Anything over, you couldn't bring.

Jewellery, I had an uncle who was a jeweller. Couldn't bring any jewellery over. No, not like travelling these days.

Did you bring a suitcase?

I brought a suitcase.

Can you remember…?

Two suitcases, yes.

What did you bring in them?

Clothes.

And your doll?

And my doll, I've got my doll upstairs. Unfortunately, she's not in good condition anymore. And that's it. You couldn't bring anything, even food I think you couldn't bring. I remember, my mother, I think she made me a chicken and took it away in the train or something. They didn't allow anything.

Did you bring anything other than the doll that was dear to you?

No, I told you it was in weight, I think. Clothes were the most important thing.

So, if they took away your food, what kind of food did you eat on your journey?

Oh, I don't remember that. I probably didn't eat much, because I was a very bad eater.

[00:16:00] *Why was that?*

Why? [Laughs] I don't know why, I didn't fancy eating and I worried my mother a lot. I know that, because a mother, I know for myself, because my daughter was a bit like that. [Phone rings] What did you ask me?

You didn't eat a lot?

I was a very bad eater. And my mother was worried, because it's a mother's nature, you want your child to eat. But I didn't, I just didn't want to eat a lot.

Do you remember any foods you did eat a lot?

No. Sweet things, always like sweet things. But not meals, vegetables, I hated spinach. They always said how healthy spinach was. I'm afraid – well, now I do eat these sorts of things.

Do you remember any of the festivals and the food that you used to eat for festivals, for the Jewish festivals?

For Jewish festivals, nothing special. I've told you we were not religious.

Did you go to synagogue?

Very rarely. I did have Hebrew, I think I did have a few Hebrew lessons, but I didn't absorb any of that. I didn't – I told you we were not orthodox. So, it wasn't important for my parents to send me even. And only after Hitler came that I went to Jewish school. **[00:18:02]** Before that I went just a normal school. But then, I think all the Jewish children had to leave and go to Jewish schools only.

Did you celebrate festivals as a family?

We had matzahs, but I think we had bread at the same time. I'm afraid –

Hannukah or Christmas?

I think it was always together, wasn't it?

Around the same time.

Yeah.

Both? You celebrated both then?

I think so. As I said, I did the – I don't remember too much about Hanukkah. I think we had both.

Do you remember Passover?

We didn't have a service or anything. I told you, my parents were not religious. So, we bought matzahs but I'm sure we had bread at the same time, because my parents were glad at anything they didn't have to sort of persuade me to eat.

What about your grandmother? Was she religious?

No. No, I told you.

And all your cousins? Nobody, none of the family?

Not as far as I know. Well, we never discussed religion.

Did you ever go on holidays as a family?

Yes, we went to – I don't suppose this place exists. **[00:20:00]** I think was called Zöbern and Eichgraben, two different places. But I don't remember too much of these places either, because once Hitler came, you sort of – my father lost his job. I mean, the Jews didn't work,

they chucked all the Jews out. And if there's no money coming in, you don't go on holidays, do you?

How did you get around? Did you have a car?

No, you didn't have cars in Vienna. Who has cars? Only doctors maybe. No, you don't. I don't think we had a garage in the house. No garages there. I mean, what do other people tell you about this? I mean, Vienna, it's not – it wasn't set up for cars. When I went back a few years ago, the roads looked so narrow. Everything looked smaller somehow. I mean, certain things I do remember. As I'm saying, going to the Prater mainly or go to another park.

Were you friendly with children in the neighbourhood? Did you play out?

Yeah, well, we played. As I say, I had my cousin's living underneath on the first floor and we used to play together in the garden, because we were lucky to have a garden in Vienna. **[00:22:00]** Very few people did, but as this – as the house was a family house, the garden was for us to use, because Vienna is very built up. You didn't have space like in England. I mean, I'm lucky to have a big garden here. Well, I think it's a nice gar – well, I love my garden. It's not very, how can you say what is my garden? It's a bit wild, put it this way.

What games did you play in your garden in Vienna?

What games? I don't re – nothing special. I think we just – just like kids play. I don't really know what games you ask me.

Football?

Girls don't play football in Vienna. Now, yes. Now the kids – now the girls, there's the football team. They played in Wembley, didn't they? No, we didn't play football. I didn't play football. I played with my doll.

In the garden?

Well, if you want to take your dolly for a walk, you take her in the garden in a pram, which I didn't bring to England, doll's pram, doll's bed. I had all these things, but you couldn't bring them to England. You want to see my doll?

Later we'll see it.

Natascha was her name.

We'll see her.

Natascha. **[00:24:00]** That's all I can tell you. No other toys to England.

Your cousins were boys?

A girl and a boy.

Girl and boy?

Hansi and Franzi. Real German names, aren't they? Franzi, Hanzi and Franzi. And Greta and Robin were the other two and both their fathers were doctors. Dr Richard Löwi and Dr Emil Löwi. They lived both on the first floor and we lived on the second floor. That's the house and upstairs above us was another floor, which was only one bed and all the older people up there.

Your relatives?

Yeah, sort of more distant. To me, they were all aunties. I don't know how they exactly were related. Maybe they weren't even related, all of them. You just call everybody auntie, don't you? That's all I can tell you.

So, when did things start to change for you in Vienna?

For me personally, I remember when the Nazis marched through the streets singing *"Wenn's Judenblut vom Messer spritzt"*. Now, that's the one thing I remember, because it must have had such an effect on… I didn't even know what it quite meant. *"Wenn's Judenblut-"*, you know what it means? You understand that don't you? Because it's hard to explain to an English person. **[00:26:00]** When the Jewish blood from the knife will spread, isn't it? That's the actual translation, but it doesn't sound the same in English something. *"Wenn's Judenblut vom Messer spritzt"*, and I don't know the rest of the words.

Where did you hear that?

When they marched through the streets, the Hitler Youth or whatever you call them. *Hitlerjugend,* is it? *Hitlerjugend?* I mean, you've been to other people, they must – maybe they remember more than me.

Was this when Austria was annexed?

Yes.

So, 1938?

In 1938, wasn't it? When Hitler marched in and apparently, they welcomed him with open arms. I don't know. They accepted it, didn't they, the Viennese? That's all I really remember.

Was it dangerous to go outside?

I think it was. I don't – look things were hidden from me, because I was a little girl. And as I've told you, now all the young kids, they know everything. But in those days, anything not nice was sheltered. They sort of – probably after I went to bed my parents used to talk.

What languages did they speak?

Only German. Oh no, my – I don't think my father was – his ancestors were not Viennese. I'm not sure if it was Hungarian in us. **[00:28:00]** I think something – it was all the Hungarian – Austro-Hungarian empire. So, I know my mother was definitely born in Vienna. And I'm not sure if my father was born more near the Hungarian side, because it was all, as I said, the Austro-Hungarian empire. It was the whole – and they split it all up. I mean, I don't know the history. Do know the history? Tell me, what happened there?

Another time.

Another time? Are you coming to see me another time, are you?

Yeah, I'll come again.

Okay.

So, tell me about during the Anschluss, were there water shortages of food or…?

There must have been, but I didn't –

You didn't notice?

I didn't, I was a bas eater, I told you. It wouldn't have affected me even if there was. It's only that my mother obviously, worried. The child has to have the best, I was the youngest.

What was your sister doing at this time?

I think my sister went to, what do you call it? A finishing school or finishing... What do you call it? She just – where you learn sewing and cooking and… But I don't think they have these sorts of schools in England, do they? Do they have…?

I think people went to Switzerland and places like that for finishing school.

Yeah, but my sister did it in Vienna. But her main thing was the opera, she loved going to the opera.

Who did she go with?

[00:30:00] Well, she must have had boyfriends. I told you; things were very – it was – I led a very sheltered life. I didn't know a lot of what was going on and anything bad, I didn't know or my parents tried to hide it. I mean, as a kid I listened in. They used to put me to bed as little girl going to bed and then, the grown-ups used to talk. And I tried to keep myself awake to listen, but…

Did you ever hear anything?

Well, I don't remember what I heard then. But that was sort of, sometimes I may have pretended to be asleep and I listened. I mean, you can't tell if you're kid's asleep properly or not. It's hard to look back, because I didn't lead a very exciting life. It was just a normal kid's life.

So, tell me about school.

Well, I just didn't like school, full stop.

What didn't you like?

Maybe I didn't like to do what they told me to do. I don't know. I just, I've never liked school. Even when I came to England, I didn't like school.

How would you describe yourself?

How can – I don't… [Laughs] I can't describe myself. I don't know how other people see me.

[00:32:00] *You're very strong minded though if you don't like school, you didn't eat food. You're quite a strong personality.*

Well, I've got my opinions. I probably always have done. But I listen to other people's opinions, but I still do what I want to do. Don't forget, if you leave home so early, I've had to look after myself and had to sometimes fight for the food. I mean, in the hostel in The Beacon, the bread was on the table on plates. I mean, sometimes we had to literally fight to get enough food. It was war time. And I'm still not a quick eater, I had to really gobble my food down to get another slice of bread and butter. And it's hard to visualise now. On our plates for breakfast, we used to get this little, tiny bit of – it was probably margarine and not butter on each plate. You couldn't just help yourself from a big dish, because it was rationed or short of money. I don't know.

So, let's go back a little bit to when you left Vienna. Can you remember?

Yes.

Which station did you leave from?

Oh, that I don't remember.

Was there a lot of preparation before you left or…?

Well, I remember my mother had to mark all my clothes, had to have my name in. And that's about it. I had two big suitcases and little – and I've got upstairs, where my dolly was in and that's it. That's all I remember.

Did you go on the Kindertransport with any of your friends?

No. You couldn't just go; you couldn't just choose when you went. This was all organised, I think. And in England, as I say, I went to The Beacon and there, a couple of days after, I saw

a face that I recognised from school. And she's not alive anymore, she lived in Kenton [ph] here. Years later we met up. I went to school with her, but otherwise –

Which school was this? Was this your first school or the Jewish school that you went to afterwards?

That was the Jewish school.

How long were you at the Jewish school in Vienna?

In Vienna, I think about two years. Only after Hitler came, I told you. Only – it wasn't even two years, I think more just over one year, one-and a-half years. Something like that, I don't remember exactly.

Was it very different to the other school that you'd been to?

School is a school. I told you, I didn't like school.

But Jewish school is different.

No, it's not. It wasn't, don't forget it was already a lot of antisemitism. **[00:36:00]** So they're not going to indoctrinate us a lot. And I didn't like school in there at all, so. Homework, sometimes I think we used to do homework, but nothing much interesting I can tell you about it.

What was it like being in the Jewish school?

School is a school. You've got to obey orders. Break time [laughs] or whatever. Lunchtime, milk, I hated milk, which we used to have to drink at one stage, however. Still don't like milk. I mean, I have it on cornflakes but I would never drink milk

Did you eat at school? Did they make you eat?

No, I think I only went for half – in the morning to school. I don't think I went in the afternoon. Don't forget, school started I think at half-past-eight or nine o'clock or whatever, 'till one or somebody like that. I don't think I ever ate at school. It's not like on England, you have lunch. As far as I'm concerned, I didn't eat at school. Maybe at eleven o'clock or ten o'clock we had something, but I never had food like they do, as I say, in England. **[00:38:00]** Which didn't bother me because I was a bad eater. I didn't enjoy eating those days. Now I eat. I eat okay, don't I?

Was Gertie a good eater?

I don't know, she must have been [laughs]. I don't know. Don't forget, you don't look if other people are good eaters. I'm sure she was. I mean, we all used to eat together as a family. But I didn't enjoy it. But I always liked sweet stuff, but not vegetables.

Do you remember the day that Gertie left?

Yes. The only thing I was pleased about, I could have where she slept, I could sleep then. I got her bit of the house, flat, I should say. But otherwise, I never realised when I came to England that I'd never see my parents, who automatically they were going to follow me. When the war broke out, that was it, because my sister had to find somebody to – for my father to work and my mother had to be a cook somewhere. And my father, a gardener, which he'd never done gardening his life before. But somebody had to say, 'Yes, he can come and do my garden', just to get out of the… **[00:40:08]** As I'm saying, war broke out and that was finished.

So, she was planning on doing that?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, she tried desperately to get my parents over. But war came and that was third of September, wasn't it? 1939. Yeah [sighs].

So, can you remember the journey that you took from Vienna to England?

Vaguely, because it was nighttime the train ride.

Just one night?

No, I think it was over two. We left on the thirteenth. And I always say people – tell people, I suppose thirteen must be lucky for me, otherwise I wouldn't be alive. I wouldn't have left Vienna. I would be dead like the rest of my family. Do I remember? It was just a normal journey. What did you ask me?

Do you remember the journey?

Not really. I was put on the train to sit there and that was it. You sit there.

Did anybody look after you on the journey?

No, no. We were just – I think the Kindertransport had their own bit of train. So, I suppose there was one or two people there. But as far as I was concerned, I didn't need looking after.

[00:42:00] *How old were you?*

Nine. Well, nearly ten. I was still nine. And my sister met me, I think it was – was it Charing Cross? Maybe Charing Cross Station, we arrived. That seems to be in my mind, I may be wrong. Do people arrive in Charing Cross from Vienna?

Possibly or Liverpool Street.

I don't think it was Liverpool Street. I think it was Charing Cross. I don't know why I've heard that in mind, but I think it was that.

And your sister met you?

My sister met me, because she – I told you, she lived in London since January and she is the one who found somebody to sponsor me.

So, what happened after you met your sister? Where did you go?

She took me back to her place, which was one room somewhere. I don't know where. And she went to Bloomsbury House, you've heard of Bloomsbury House? Because I tell people Bloomsbury, 'What are you talking, Bloomsbury House?' Nobody heard of it, because it's so long ago. Took me to Bloomsbury House and they managed to find me a place in The Beacon.

Where was The Beacon?

In Tunbridge Wells. Well, it was Rusthall. The address is The Beacon, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. And a full stop and that's it. Only The Beacon –

How did you get there? By train again?

Train.

With other children or by yourself?

No, I think my sister or somebody put me on this train and somebody met me at the other end.

[00:44:02] *How did you feel about that?*

I think I must have been quite nervous, you know, 'till somebody meets you. You don't know the language. You don't know where you are. Terrible, but I survived. But yeah, looking back now, the gardens down there, we had three lakes. I mean, it was a lovely place we lived in. Now it's, as I say, it's a sort of hotel, boarding house type of place. But they haven't got all the

land that we had. I think they sold a lot of that land separate. So, it's not such – what's happened here, look at this. What's this hanging? Part of – I'm coming to pieces.

You're unravelling. Did you ever meet the person, Alfred Piccaver, that sponsored you?

I must have met him, but I don't really remember much about him. So, I can't tell you much about –

Did he sponsor many people, do you think? Do you know that?

I don't think so. I don't know, I can't say.

But he lived in Vienna and then he came to England?

Well, he was an opera singer. So, I suppose he must have moved about, I don't know. I've told you, in those days children didn't know everything like they do now.

[00:46:00] *I think he also settled here from Vienna, like you did.*

I don't know. I don't know where his – I don't suppose a singer has a permanent home. If you go to all different countries, he's just on the move. But I mean, I can't tell you anything about him.

Did you sleep on the Kindertransport? Or did you just stay awake all the time?

You mean, as we're travelling?

Yeah.

I suppose we must have dozed off. You just sleep where you're sitting.

It must have been a very long journey.

It probably was.

Two days.

Well, we don't forget, we started I think, in the evening. So, you travel all night and probably all day or half a day again. And I do remember sitting, waiting for my sister to pick me up at the station.

She wasn't there when you arrived?

No, no. I remember sitting and waiting.

Alone?

There were probably some other kids waiting for their pickups. And that's how we – everybody scattered. But as I'm saying, one person from Vienna I did meet finally in The Beacon. I was there for five days before she arrived.

This was Mela?

Mela and she was thrilled to see me. And we became good friends, we were good friends until she died. How long has Mela been…? Anthony or Jacqueline, how long has Mela been dead? Five years?

[00:48:08] *Not long then?*

No, she used to come twice a week. Whatever the weather, she came, Tuesday and Friday.

Oh, wow. That's amazing that friendship, isn't it?

Yeah, yeah.

So how often did you see Gertie once you were in Tunbridge Wells?

Not all that often, because the distance. And I think she had to go to the police station to get permits, because it was what they called a restricted area. So, she couldn't come all that often. And then she joined the ATS. And then she had to wait to get her leave and permission to travel again. And it wasn't easy, I didn't see her very often.

What kind of work was she doing?

In nursing, some sort of nursing, whatever.

In London?

It varied, not always in London. As I say, she also travelled about. I've got all different – I looked – funnily enough, I looked at my address book the other day, an old book, all different addresses she had. She worked in hospitals and various places. But it's hard to visualise what happened in those days.

What were your first impressions of England?

[00:50:00] My first impression? I don't think I had many. Don't forget, I was a young kid. To me, everything looked different, there were – I told you, in Vienna you didn't have houses like this with gardens. They were all flats as far. As I was concerned, a house, a whole house? That was something unheard of. Other people must have told you the same, it was a different world somehow.

Was the weather different? The food? The people?

Well, the food, I told you the food didn't interest me. And the people, well, I had my cousins and I had a few friends.

Your cousins came on Kindertransport?

No, no, no, no, no. Oh, no, they all died.

So which cousins did you have here?

It didn't. I told you. I only had my sister, I had no other relatives. Only after the war I found out that nobody survived. I told you, my parents. It's hard to visualise now, people were just killed, taken to concentration camps or wherever. I don't know what they did with the people, starved them. **[00:52:00]** I can't – nothing interesting to tell you.

So, you had a birthday when you arrived in England presumably?

Yes.

Because you arrived in June and your birthday is July. Do you remember your first birthday spent here?

Yeah, nothing special. They may have – maybe they sang happy birthday in German.

Did you speak German when you came to England then?

Well, of course. In Vienna, we speak –

Did everyone speak German in the…?

In Vienna.

In Tunbridge Wells, in the hostel?

No. Well, most people either were German or Austrian. But after that, I think from Czechoslovakia we got one or two. But it was – we were not allowed to speak German at the – they discouraged us to speak German.

Where? At Tunbridge Wells?

At the table, in Tunbridge Wells. They wanted us to speak English.

How did you learn English?

Just picked it up. I mean, they sent us one time to school. We didn't – I didn't speak a word of English. And then finally, they got a teacher who lived in and we sort of learned English. But my English is still not perfect. Well, my English is but my accent is still there and I'll never lose it.

No, you never lose your accent.

No. Some people did. If you go to an English family immediately, which some of my friends did, then you would think they're English born.

Really?

[00:54:00] But now everybody in London has got accents [laughs]. You get it from all over the world. But in those days, it was, especially Tunbridge Wells, very conservative down there.

So, did your accent give you problems?

No, I don't think it caused me prob – I mean, I've told you, my first job when I was fourteen, there were – it was an expensive school with this nursery attachment. And the kids must have picked my accent up. And two-and-a-half to four, that's when they learn to speak, don't they? That's the sort of learning age still. And I'm sure they picked my accent up. But the parents

were nice to me. I mean, they used to give me Christmas presents. I mean, I was their teacher. But I was quite happy to do that. I thought it was a lovely job.

At Tunbridge Wells were the girls and boys living there?

No, it was the girls' hostel. But at one stage, we got one or two little boys there. I don't know why they were there actually, because it was a girls' hostel.

So, did most of the girls go on to becoming kindergarten teachers?

No.

What did they do?

The majority, funnily enough, went to Pitmans College. Shorthand they did. I mean, I went there just to learn English, or to perfect my English. **[00:56:01]** But I'm afraid I never wanted to learn a lot. Told you, I hated school.

Did you like the college you went to when you were learning English?

Well, she was very nice, the teacher. It was like a private house converted, what they called a college. I mean, how you can call it a college, I don't know. It was like a private house converted. But the tea – like it was her house and she was very nice, I must say. You got somebody there who went?

I think this lady –

Miss God – Mrs Godfrey.

This was your house college, wasn't it?

Yes.

Mrs Godfrey and what…?

Have you got somebody else there, from there?

Just some notes here, that's all.

Ah.

So, can you tell me about Mrs Godfrey?

Well, she was very nice to me. That's all I can tell you. She used to make me tea at teatime, because I went there at three o'clock. Got there say, half-past-three. So, by the time – I suppose it was five-ish or four-ish we had tea. So, she used –

What was tea?

Well, I think it was only bread and butter and jam things. But I appreciated it, because being in a hostel you don't get a lot of food. You only get – I've told you what we get.

Bread and butter.

Well, we didn't get good food. But of course, then war time came soon after I got there and there wasn't much food. And the staff like the matron, assistants, they got our food, I think.

They ate your food?

Well, not my food. But don't forget, they could only – say they were thirty children, I suppose they only got the ration for thirty children.

[00:58:08] *Do you remember Kristallnacht when you were living in Vienna?*

I've told you, things were very – I lived a very sheltered life. I can't really exactly say I remember it.

That night with all the breaking of the synagogues and all the glass shattering and the burning?

I personally didn't feel it. We lived in our flat, you just didn't go out. I told you, I lived a very sheltered life. I was always the youngest in the family, because my cousins were a little bit older than me. And it's hard to explain this. It's – but you want to know.

[Daughter] You've told me it.

So, in Kristallnacht, a lot of the men were taken away. You don't remember anything about your father leaving home and coming back again?

Not really, I don't remember quite what happened. I've told you, things – it was all very sheltered. Not, it's hard to remember these things. Maybe subconsciously, you don't – they're not happy memories, so they sort of get pushed aside a bit. And it's a long time ago, a hell of a long time ago.

[01:00:03] *On your journey with the Kindertransport, do you remember going over the seas? Do you remember the crossing from Hook of Holland?*

It was nighttime. I remember it was nighttime and I didn't quite know how to get into bed, because I'd never had sheets and blankets. It was all duvets in Vienna. You didn't have a blanket and a sheet and all that. You got under the – in the – under the duvet.

So, what did you do?

Well, eventually, sort of I suppose they must have told you how to get in, I don't know. You know, I know this sounds funny now, because you take it for granted how you get into bed.

But as a kid, you go under the duvet, not tucked in blankets and sheets all tucked in [laughs]. No, it's – now you take it all for granted, but…

So, did you enjoy anything about living in The Beacon?

Well, we were quite happy there, yes. Looking back now, it was a lovely place. Huge gardens, because I've been back there since, it is lovely down there. Big lakes, there used – we had snakes in the garden. Mainly grass snakes, apparently. **[01:02:00]** But a snake is a snake, isn't it? Have you ever seen a snake? Yes? But they always told us they were only grass snakes, but I wasn't so sure.

Did you play in the gardens?

Oh, yes.

What did you play there?

Some ballgames we used to play a lot. Kids play, I can't – I think we had a swing at one time, we had a swing. We used to take it in turns.

So, when war broke out on the third of December [sic] 1939, what changes did you sense or feel?

How it affected me? My parents, I couldn't write letters to them anymore under normal postage, it had to go through the Red Cross. And I think it was only twenty words or twenty-five words, only a certain amount of words. And if I write it, you write it – I had to go to, I suppose it would be like a sort of office in Tunbridge Wells. And tell them the words, they had to write them down and all I was allowed to do is sign my name. I wasn't allowed to even write it myself. Send it to Vienna and my parents answered on that same bit of paper on the other side and sent it back to me. **[01:04:06]** Also, only a certain amount of words.

So, when the war started –

And that's the only way we could correspond. Couldn't have had normal post.

How often could you send these?

I think only once a month, I think, and that seemed expensive at the time.

Have you kept them?

Yeah. Why, you want to see some?

Later.

I'll find some later.

So, did you stay at The Beacon for long?

Yes, yes. I stayed in The Beacon 'till, well, until I came to London in 1947.

What about Harrogate? Didn't you go to Harrogate?

Yeah, but only for a little while.

Short time?

Short time.

What was it like in Harrogate? Where did you stay there?

We lived in sort of, I think you would call them Nissen huts now. That's all I can remember.

Just a hut, not a real house?

No. And I think to go to the toilet we had to go out somewhere to another hut. You know, these things have sort of gone out of my mind. I think they were too horrible.

You were only nine or ten still. Ten maybe when you had to go to Harrogate?

Yes, but it's – I don't think I liked it up there.

Why did you move to Harrogate, can you remember?

Yeah, because of the bombs coming over Tunbridge Wells, southeast England. All the bombers went over us. I mean, they didn't want to bomb Tunbridge Wells, there was nothing there. They wanted London. **[01:06:01]** But to get to London, they had to go over the South. And then they sent us to Scotland at one stage. And then for some reason, and I don't know quite what happened, the Germans were coming in the other way. So, they sent us all back to Tunbridge Wells again. But they didn't tell us a lot.

What did you think what's happening?

Well, they said, 'For your own safety we're moving you.' And we all had to move again, pack our bags and move again.

How did you feel?

Well, I think I was quite pleased to get back. In fact, I told you I started work at fourteen and I'd already been to work in Tunbridge Wells. I'd been to work already. When I went to Scotland, I had to go back to school.

Different rules?

Yeah.

And how was that? You hated it again?

[Laughs] Well, I must have done, but it's so long ago you don't actually… Well, I can't actually remember exactly what I felt like.

Was there any love or caring from the people that ran these institutions?

Yes, there was one matron we quite liked, but she wasn't the top matron. She was Mrs Fisher and she was nice because she had her own daughter there. **[01:08:02]** So she knew more how we felt without anybody. But we had some matrons who were horrible. I think they hated us; I think they hated the Jewish people. And there were some – some staff were horrible. And this Mrs Fisher was the only one I could say was quite nice. In fact, she was very nice actually.

What did she do for you?

Well, nothing special for me, but she just was a human being around us. I mean, I can't say what she did for me. As far as I was concerned, I was looking after myself.

Did you ever get cuddles or hugs?

No, of course no. You don't know things like that. We were about thirty of us living there, all different ages. The little ones, the middle ones and the seniors. So, by the time I left was a senior, wasn't I? I was seventeen, that was senior, I had to come to London.

So, amongst yourselves you became like a big family where –

Yeah, well, we –

You were caring with each other?

Well, we were friends. You've got your special friends and you've got other people who you're not such friends with. I mean, when you go to school, you got friends. It's the same thing. I suppose it's like a boarding school, only a bit rougher. Well, we had no luxuries there. **[01:10:00]** It was quite impersonal, because the staff really, I think they did it just for money. They didn't care for us.

Were they all English?

Mostly. I've told you it became a restricted area, so nobody over eighteen could just live there or something, because it was near the coast. I mean, look, in those days we didn't know much what was going on. We just saw different things. Different matron coming or different cooks coming. But they don't tell you, they don't say a new person's starting.

How do you think this affected you?

How did it affect me? I liked my home; I don't like moving. I mean, when my husband died everybody says, 'Aren't you going to – why don't you move?' Well, why should I move? You can understand that?

Definitely.

Oh, good [laughs], because no, you see, some people would be just the opposite. They would say, 'If you lived there with your husband, move away. Do something completely diff...' You know what I'm saying? Start – but why should I move? Now I'm stuck here for life.

Did you go home on holidays? Did you enjoy travelling? Or did you really just like being at home after you got married?

[00:12:03] Well, we didn't do a lot of travelling after I got married, no.

Was that because you didn't want to? You were happy at home?

My husband was always working. Don't forget, we're two refugees and I still don't feel English.

What is it English?

Well, I don't know what is English but I feel, I don't know, it's hard to explain.

Do you feel Viennese?

I don't know what I feel like. I don't know where I belong. But I don't think I feel like an English person.

You don't belong?

Well, I'm quite settled here, I wouldn't move. I had an opportunity to go to America and I upset my uncle very much. That when it finally came, my papers were finally in order, I said I didn't want to come anymore, because I'd already met my husband.

And your sister went?

My sister was in America. She was – she went over there. I didn't want to go. I mean, I visited once or twice I went, I think.

Were you ever offered to live with an English family?

Yes, but I didn't want to go.

Did you try?

[01:14:00] No. I think I may have tried one. But it's –

The Rose family?

Yeah, but it's gone so out of my mind, I can't tell you about it.

But you didn't like it?

I didn't feel at home there.

You preferred Tunbridge Wells hostel?

Yes, because I had friends already. I've told you, we were – looking back now, although we complained a lot, I think we were quite happy down there.

So, you wanted to get back to your friends?

Yes.

You missed them?

Yes.

And did you stay in touch with them all?

Yeah, I told you, she – my last friend, she just died. She lived here in Selhurst [ph] Close, just off the main Kenton Road. Now, I think I'm about one of the last ones from The Beacon.

Did you all stay in touch together?

No, not at all, only a few. Just your immediate – you can't stay in touch with thirty people once you've moved out. But no, they all – I think my friends are dead. I know it sounds horrible.

Did you share a room at the hostel with other children?

Oh, yeah, of course, you don't get your own bedroom. That's luxury. Of course not, I was lucky to get finally in a room, I think three or four were in that room before that, at the beginning. Some people had – literally they squashed us in so much, about eight in the room sometimes. It's not very – looking back now, it's not nice sleeping with so many people.

[01:16:07] *Were you in your own beds?*

Oh, you got your own bed. Oh, yes.

Were they bunk beds?

No, I didn't know any bunk beds. No, we didn't have bunk beds. Not in Tunbridge Wells, I never had a bunk bed, no. No, we were just squashed in very close to each other. Like the beds, just enough for a little cabinet or a table or whatever you call it next to it.

Bedside table?

Oh, that's what you call it? Yeah.

So, what do you remember about the end of the war?

What do I remember about the end? I think we all celebrated, we all went to Tunbridge Wells, loads of us celebrating in the street. They used to sing and they were – everybody was happy.

Were you happy?

Well, of course, I hoped to see my parents again.

How old were you then?

Well, I must have been about thirteen, fourteen when the war finished.

Fifteen?

Fifteen maybe.

1945.

'45, yeah, I was just fifteen. No, that's so vague already in my mind. But it –

But it must have been an amazing time when the war stopped.

Well, everybody was happy.

Yes.

But no, it's hard. It's hard to remember these things because I've wiped them out. **[01:18:03]** I don't think about them anymore. It's a different world.

So how did your life change after the war finished, after VE Day?

Personally, for me, well, it didn't really make too much difference, because I was already living in London. Came to London.

When did you come to London?

1947, I think it was. Yeah, '47, I think. And the war was over in '45. The war was over in 1945. Two years later, I came to London and I lived –

So, you stayed in Tunbridge Wells for two more years and then you came to London?

Yeah.

Were you teaching the children? You were looking after children?

In London, I only had –

In Tunbridge?

Tunbridge Wells, yeah, I've told you. It was the nursery attachment in the kindergarten, in the school.

But you stayed in The Beacon hostel? You lived there?

Well. I stayed in – I lived in the hostel all the time, until I came to London. I didn't have a room anywhere else. No, no, I lived in the hostel.

So, in 1946 you received a letter from your mother after the war?

Ah, oh, the last letter? Well, no, that letter was written – she wrote that letter and gave it to an aunt of mine who was in the concentration camp with my mother. **[01:20:10]** And this aunt survived, went to America and she sent me the letter that my mother wrote.

When did she write it?

Well, she wrote it when she was still in the camp, I told you.

In 1943?

I must look at the date.

According to the date, it says 1943.

Yes. I've got it down there, the letter.

Where was she when she wrote that letter to you?

Theresienstadt.

And was your father there too?

Well, he was already dead by the time she wrote that letter.

But she couldn't get the letter out? Your aunt kept it?

My mother gave it to my aunt. And my auntie, probably my mother must have written several letters. I don't know. But she wrote this letter and she gave it to the auntie. And this auntie sent it from America to me. She survived the war.

Have you met that aunt?

No.

No? Have you spoken with her?

No.

Was she your mother's sister?

No.

How was she related?

I don't know, maybe I only called her Auntie. I don't know. Probably she wouldn't be alive anymore, so it's no good looking for her because all my old relatives are dead.

[01:22:01] *What was in the letter?*

Only a few words. Just – I can show it to you, but if you don't understand it… Well, you've seen it the book. It's in the book.

I've seen it in the book. Can you read it to me in German? Can you still…?

Yeah, my German's not bad, but what's the good of reading it? You wouldn't understand it.

I think it's – in German, it sounds very, very powerful. And people can understand some of it.

Well, I mean, it's written in German. But if you don't speak German…

I do speak German a little bit.

Oh, you do?

Could you read it to me?

Well, I'll try and read you some.

Okay.

Okay.

[FS2] Don't worry yet, wait 'till they've finished.

So, you got a letter?

Ich habe hier einen Brief- In German? Shall I say it in German?

[MS1] As you like.

I'll say it in English. I have here a letter from my mother, which was written in Theresienstadt. This is the last letter I received after the war, because she gave this letter to my auntie, who went to America and took the letter with her. And from America sent it to me and this is the letter. *Fast fünf Jahre sind allein in die Welt gefahren. Noch sehe ich Euch dort in Wien, wie ihr beim Abteil, ihr Kopf – ich kann, mein Deutsch ist nicht mehr gut, mein Köpfchen wird hin und mir dass Du Euch sagen – bleibt ich bei Euch* by heart. **[01:24:14]** No, I think I'd better read this in English. I think my German is too bad.

[Daughter] Here's English, it starts here.

Let my daughter read it instead.

Okay, maybe later.

Yeah. You read it, it's a very sad letter actually.

Would you like to read it?

[Son] Not just yet, no.

It's a very sad letter.

[Son] Can you give us a sense of what it says?

What was the letter? What was in the letter?

Well, just saying that she's now all alone and she could bear anything if she could only see me just for a second. And that my – she would even be at home there if my father was still alive. And that's the basic part of the letter. She must have been very, very, very low. Feeling very, very low to write that, because it hurts when you read a thing like that. No, you should

never know anything like that again happening, antisemitism. But it still goes on. That's all I can tell you.

[01:26:06] *But then you met Martin. So, let's talk about Martin, your husband.*

Oh, yes. Well, in those days before television, which obviously, there was no television in those days, we went – I met my husband. We used to go dancing, with friends we used to go to the Lyceum.

Theatre?

No, it wasn't a theatre in those days. No, we didn't have no money for theatres. We went to the Lyceum dancing. It was a dance hall.

[Son] The Lyceum Ballroom?

That's it. Oh, you've heard about it? So, I'm not the only one who talks about this? And I met him there. We went out for two years and we got married, because he lived in a room in West Hampstead. I think it was West Hampstead, or called it Hampstead, whatever. And I lived in the hostel. So, after two years, we decided we may as well get married.

Were you both working at that time when you met?

Oh, yes, I always worked.

What were you doing then when you came to London?

I was a nanny to a little boy.

What was his name?

Anthony.

And your son's called Anthony too.

That's why I called Anthony, Anthony.

Why?

Because he was such a lovely little boy, I looked after. Which was – I lived at 243 Wilson Lane and it was two doors – it was a nice block of flats. And that's where these people lived with the little boy.

[01:28:04] How old was he?

I think it was about four. I'm not even sure, I can't quite remember how old he was. I think about four when I went there. Maybe three-and-a-half. I was there about two years. Then of course, he started going to school, I came to London.

Didn't he live in London, Anthony? Anthony lived in London?

No.

Where did he live?

No, that was Tun – that was Brunswick Court [ph]. That was London but a different part. That was Willesden Lane, which is… No, that's what I can tell you. I don't really know much about it anymore because I don't think about it. So, it's so far gone.

Did you have any other work after Anthony went to school?

No.

Did you work in a factory?

Oh, that. That was – yes, that was in Harlesden, made swimsuits. Martin White, yes swimsuits. In fact, looking back, he made me model them sometimes even, because somebody's got to try them on. Yeah, I made swimsuits.

Have you got photos of that time?

No, in those days you didn't have photographs like you do now. I might have a photo with the swimsuit on, but nothing when I was trying them on.

[01:30:02] *That was a very different job to looking after children.*

Oh, yes.

Did you enjoy it?

Well, it was quite good money I could earn, because it was piece work and I was quite quick. It was all electric sewing machines and all that. I must have quite liked it because I stayed there for a while, quite a while.

So where did Martin come from? You said he was a refugee also.

Ah, he came over after the war.

From where?

Mukachevo, which is – I've told you, it's – have we finally, Jacqueline, found out if it's Hungary or Czechoslovakia?

[Daughter] Depends when you're thinking. He came from the Carpathian Mountains, which apparently is where Robert Maxwell also came from, which I think has changed over the years as to which country. It might even be Ukraine now, I'm not sure.

[Son] Or Romania.

[Daughter] Or yeah –

That's what I'm saying, it's all changed names.

[Daughter] Yes, they change around.

So, he lived in Mukachevo?

Mukachevo.

Mukachevo.

Mukachevo.

And what kind of lifestyle did he have there?

Well, I think they were wealthy, wealthy type of farmland owners. What would you say he was, Jacqueline?

[Daughter] They were very wealthy farmers. They owned the bakery there. They were the centre of the – that little village. They – people used to go to their premises to bake. They used to have the Shabbat services there. Their farm was the basis of that village life, from what we understand. They used to grow plums and make slivovitz.

[01:32:02] *So let's get your mum saying all that now.*

[Daughter] She won't remember that.

Can you tell us about your husband's lifestyle?

Well, he came from a very orthodox family. And when things got bad, he went to Budapest to learn jewellery trade. And that's how he became a jeweller.

Before he came to England, he was a jeweller?

And then he came to England. And he lived in, I think in the East End in the shelter. It was a place called a shelter or something. And then he went to work in Hatton Garden and I met him in the Lyceum. As I'm saying, in those days before television, we used to go either to the cinema or dancing.

What kind of dancing was it?

Dancing. You're – you go up, he came up to me, 'May I have this dance', I suppose. He must have asked in English, because that's how we got – that's how you got together in those days. [Laughs] And I don't think they do that anymore, do they? Do you go dancing? Yes? But with a partner?

With my husband.

Oh, you're married? Oh, well. Well, how did you meet your husband then?

Oh, that's a story in itself.

Oh, well, we've all got our stories.

Maybe I'll have a story one day. Anyway, so Martin, how many brothers and sisters did he have?

He had one sister, but she was not a well person and she got TB, because she was in the camps. **[01:34:04]** And well, there's still one niece, I suppose. Caroline is still alive, isn't she, Jacqueline?

[Daughter] And Paulette.

Paulette, not Caroline?

[Daughter] Yes, Caroline and Paulette.

And Paulette.

So, your husband came over as one of the boys?

One of the boys, yes.

And did his sister come with him?

Yes.

[Son] One of the Windermere boys?

[Daughter] No.

Where did they live?

[Daughter] Excuse me, he didn't come with his sister. They met by chance though there.

In the shelter, I've told you. In the East End, there was this place called the Shelter. I don't know, I never –

So, his sister came later on to England?

I think the two of them came together. Nothing to do with me, that was before I met him.

That was in 1946?

Possibly ’46, yes. It was after the war.

So, you met him in ‘47? Was his English very good?

I don’t think it could have been very good, but then my English is – I've still got an accent now.

Yes, but in 1949 your English must have been quite good already by then, because you'd been here a few years. Martin had only just arrived.

Yes, but don't forget in The Beacon, we still spoke a lot of German to each other. It's only in London when I went to work. And I worked in Tunbridge Wells as well, but I don't know when I learned English. You just pick it up.

So, what language did you speak with Martin?

[01:36:02] English. Although he could speak Yiddish, it’s similar to German. But you know about that, don't you? So, he understood German as well because of the Yiddish. But I didn't speak Yiddish, because my father always says, ‘You’ve got to speak good German. Very important. *Gutes Deutsch*.’ You understand that, what I'm saying, don’t you? *‘Musst gutes Deutsch sprechen.’* But it got you nowhere.

So, was Martin from a religious family?

Very, ultra, as Jacqueline was saying. Ultra. But he turned – after seeing what's going on, religion and no religion, all you wanted to do is keep alive. He used to smuggle out and bring bread in apparently. In Hungary that was, it was long before I came on the scene. He used to tell – but he didn't talk about it a lot. A lot of things he didn't speak about.

Did he have contact with any of his family apart from his sister?

Nobody. I mean, families were just wiped out. I mean, it's – you can't visualise things like that, can you? I'm afraid I'm not a very interesting person to talk to because –

You are.

[01:38:02] No, I'm not because, well… But I'm still alive. I'm getting very ancient and I can't believe how old I am.

How old are you?

Well, I'm – work it out. I'm born in 1929. You –

So, you must be ninety-six, seven?

Not quite as old. You're making me older.

[Laughs] *Tell me then. You do know how old you are.*

I know how old, but you can work it out.

[Son] Ninety-five.

Four.

You'll be ninety-five this year?

Yeah.

Well, you're doing well for that,

I don’t know about doing well. I'm alive, that's all I know.

So, what happened after you met Martin?

What happened? Well, we used to, as I'm saying, Saturday, we used to go mainly to the pictures, because we didn't call it cinema. Going to the pictures. And Sunday we used to go dancing, either to the Astoria or to the Lyceum. And they were both in those days ballrooms. Maybe now the Lyceum is a theatre again, isn't it? And in those days, it was huge, because people had nothing to do. It was just the done thing, you went dancing.

It was a good night out.

Yeah. We used to play – the Giraldo [ph], was it Giraldo or…? I can't even remember the name of the bands who played there. **[01:40:00]** We just took this for granted, this was our life. Put your nice clothes on. Everything was rationed, you couldn't just buy, go shopping. That's why I made a lot of things myself, because it was – you were better off buying just the material than buying a dress, you understand? Because you only got – you got a ration book with so-and-so much in. And once they've cut these ration bits out, that's it, you've got nothing for another year or however. I can't even remember how often we got these books, once a year I expect. Maybe other people remember more about the ration books. Other people must have told you that.

So, you made your own clothes?

A lot, yeah, I did.

Have you kept them?

No, not anymore. That's a long time ago, you know [laughs].

Did you make your doll more clothes?

Well, I made my doll's, of course. My doll's clothes, I made years before.

You didn't make her any new ones in England?

No, my doll was falling to pieces, because nothing lasts forever. I mean, you've seen, my dolls falling to pieces. Was it her hand come off, Jacqueline?

[Son] Just falling apart. That plastic's disintegrating.

No, you mustn't touch it.

[Daughter] I will go to the repair shop, I've just Googled it.

Tell me about your wedding.

My wedding? Well, there should be a wedding photo. Where's the wedding photo, Jacqueline?

[Daughter] Yes.

[01:42:02] *Yes, but what about it? What kind of wedding was it?*

It's up there.

Lovely.

Well, it was a white wedding in Willesden Green, in – I forget. What's that synagogue called? If only I remember what the syn –

The synagogue in Willesden? I don't know what it's called.

There were two, actually.

[Daughter] Brondesbury Park?

Was it Brondesbury Park?

Brondesbury Park.

-*Synagogue. And who attended the wedding?*

Well, my sister came over from Holland with her two little girls, they were at the time. And of course, all – anybody I knew who wanted to come. It wasn't like now that you have it all beautifully prepared with the tables and… It wasn't that type of wedding. It was just anybody came. And then we went back to the hostel, which was only about three or four doors along, if you approach it from the Wills… You see, it's hard to explain. You could approach it from Brondesbury or from Willesden. Do you understand what I'm saying? The roads running – it's hard to explain. In any case, yeah, quite a lot of people attended because in the hostel, just the hostel people were a lot of people.

The hostel in London or the hostel in Tunbridge?

No, the hostel in London, because from Tunbridge Wells you didn't stay friends with – you can't stay friends with thirty people. You can't keep up with them all. No, only one of a few people from there came to my wedding. It was the London people mainly.

[01:44:10] Did Mela come?

Of course. Oh, yes, I had a few people who came who I knew. But you split up and as I'm saying, now I don't think there's anybody else around anymore. The last one died, when did Erika die? A month ago?

[Daughter] A couple of years.

Hm?

[Daughter] A couple of years.

No, she only just recently died.

[Daughter] I went to her funeral in the Isle of Wight.

Is it already a couple of years? [Pause] I don't know, I don't think there's anybody else around.

Have you been back to Austria many times?

No, not many times.

You went back to your old apartment?

Couldn't get in. You go, you went to the house, we went to the house. But the actual apartment we had, there was nobody in. But I showed my husband the garden, because everybody said, 'Nobody had gardens in Vienna.' Well, we did have a garden, because it was a family house. But it's hard to explain it to people.

What advice would you give young people nowadays?

[01:46:04] In what respect?

From everything that you've been through and…

Fight for what you want.

Fight?

Be determined what you want to get. That's all I can say. Would you like a cup of tea or something? No? No?

Was it important to you that Martin was also a refugee that had similar experiences to you?

Was it important? No, no, I think you just take – we just went out together and we hit it off. No, he came from a very different family to me. Completely different. I've told you, we were not religious and he came from a very Orthodox family. Extr – I mean, what I call over-the-top Orthodox family, but he lost it completely after Hitler came and the war. And he lost it completely, because he saw such terrible things. But he could read Hebrew and all that sort of thing. Can you read – did you learn any?

Yeah.

[MS1] So did he spend the war in Budapest?

Yes, in hiding. He said he used to hide under the bed and people… You can't visualise what happened.

[01:48:02] *Did he keep in contact with the boys?*

A few. But then again, they all split up. A lot of them went to Israel to live, Israel or America. So, he didn't – my husband was always working. He – well, my daughter will tell you, he was always working. He was a very hard worker, that's all I can say. But then I was working as well.

What were you doing?

Well, I mean after I had children, I worked for – I helped my husband. But it's hard to explain what I did. You know lockets?

Yeah.

You wear around your neck. You know what the inserts that go inside, with a transparent thing so you can put the photo underneath it? Well, somebody has to put all this in and that was me. Right? I had to put all this in, wrap it up in tissue paper, ready for the shops in other words. That's what I did after I left work in the office. They sent me all this work home. And before that, I worked in the office where my husband was working, preparing parcels to send it off and orders, and things like that. **[01:50:02]** Not a very interesting job, actually.

Did you want to work with children again?

Well, I preferred that. Looking back now, you know, it's sort of nice working with kids. But that's it.

How many grandchildren have you got now?

Is it about eight, Jacqueline? How many? No, three, three –

[Daughter] Three children.

Three children. How many grandchil…? Is it…?

[Daughter] Yes, you're right, eight.

Eight grandchildren. Isn't it?

[Daughter] Yeah.

Lovely.

Eight grandchildren. Is it eight? Yes, must be eight.

[] And thirteen great-grandchildren.

Thirteen what?

[FS2] Great-grandchildren.

Thirteen great-grandchildren. Now, you heard it from his master's voice, Jacqueline knows it more than… [laughs].

Well, thank you for sharing your story with us.

Well, it's not a very exciting story, because I did nothing special in this world, did I?

You survived.

I survived. I'm a survivor, you're right. And I'm still here to tell the tale and I'm not going – not just going yet. But who knows? I always hope I'm going to die in my sleep but I'm a bad sleeper. I don't sleep all that well these days. And that's it. **[01:52:00]** So I'm going to be ninety-five, is it? Or ninety-four?

Ninety-five.

Ninety-five I'm going to be, good God. That's ancient, isn't it? No, my son asked me once, 'Am I – are we – and I from a long living family?' I said, 'I don't know. My parents didn't die under normal circumstances, so I don't know how long they would have lived.' [Laughs] So that's it, yes, my story. Nothing very exciting going on there. But you must have heard interesting, real interesting stories.

Yours.

Mine? No. Mine is just…

It's the story of a life.

Yes, but it's not – how can you put it? It's – but I take a normal mother's life. I had children, grandchildren. I didn't do anything special. Maybe some people do things, I don't know. Travel the world maybe? Well, I mean, I've been to Israel, I've been to America and I've been to Holland. And that's it. And of course, I lived in Vienna. Yeah, you're not taping…? **[01:54:05]**

Well, when you look at this photo, you'll see my mother. She was born in Vienna and otherwise, I don't know much about her. I don't remember very much.

[Cameraman] Do you know when the picture was taken?

'08.

[Cameraman] 1908?

I think it was 1908. So, she was quite a young lady. Okay, now?

[Cameraman] Yes, please.

In this picture, you see my sister, Gertie, who was nine years older, as you know, with my cousin, Walter. My first cousin.

[Cameraman] And the lady in the picture is…?

Gertie.

[Cameraman] Your grandmother?

My grandmother.

[Cameraman] And do you know where – when it was taken? It says ‘21 or ‘22 on the back of the picture.

Well, that's what it is, ‘21 or ’22. That's all I know.

[Cameraman] Thank you.

Oh, what can I say? On this photograph, you'll see as I'm growing up, about a year old, so it was taken in 1930 or so in Prater, which was a very big park in Vienna, very near where I lived. And I used to go there every Sunday, nearly every Sunday with my father, on a Sunday morning.

[01:56:06] This photograph of my parents with me in the Prater, where I used to often go. That's good enough, isn't it?

These are from my parents, I think that were taken for their passports, because they intended – were hoping to manage to get to England. But war broke out and I never saw them again.

[Cameraman] This photograph?

Oh, now on here you'll see my parents, who were rather old parents compared to now. But I think it had something to do with the First World War. My parents couldn't get married too early and then my sister's nine years older than me.

[Cameraman] And where was this picture taken?

It was taken in Vienna.

[Cameraman] In your garden?

In the garden in Vienna, in Novaragasse, in our garden.

[Cameraman] And this was taken in 1939?

Just before I left Vienna, before I came to England. A day, I think it's taken a day or so before I came to England in June ’39.

On this photo you’ll see me at the end. We're having a party for Purim and I think I was dressed up as – I think I had a clown’s sort of dress, uniform on. I think it was a clown.

[01:58:05] [MS1] Where was this taken?

In The Beacon. This was taken in The Beacon, outside the house, at the back of the house.

[Cameraman] Do you remember which year?

In 1940.

Here you'll see me with all my friends at the back of the house in The Beacon. There’s nothing to say about it.

[Cameraman] Where are you in the picture?

I’m right at the end on the, do you call the left or the right?

[Cameraman] You’re on the right.

On the right side.

On this picture you'll see Martin and me before we got married in 1950.

On this photo you will see us cutting the wedding cake, which was – I think it was provided by a Gruzinsky [ph]. I think I was a Gruzinsky cake we ordered and that's all I can say.

[Cameraman] Where was your wedding?

In Willesden Green.

[Cameraman] And what year?

1951.

Well, this photo was taken just after the – just after we got married in – outside the synagogue.

In this photo you will see us outside the back of the first house we bought. **[02:00:00]** Up 'till now we rented, but this is the first property we owned. We had to work very hard and save very hard to be able to put the deposit down.

[Cameraman] And where was the house?

In Neasden, Kenwyn Drive.

This photo, you'll see my children growing up a little bit. What can I tell you about it?

What are their names?

Oh, my children's names? That's Jacqueline, my daughter. Then comes Anthony. And four-and-a-half years later, Barry, he's the baby in my family.

Jacqueline's not on there though, is she?

No, it's just your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren.

Oh, this photo you see my children, my grandchildren and their children, including the triplets. They're to Lydia, my first grandchild was Lydia. Is that enough?

These two letters were written just before my birthday, my 10th birthday, which was soon after I came to England, a few days after I came to England. I can't even remember receiving those letters.

[Cameraman] Who were the letters from?

My mother and father. My parents were still in Vienna then before war broke out.

[02:02:02] [Cameraman] Yes, please.

Ah, now these letters are from my parents, as you can see on the signature and I get very sad when I read them, actually.

Now, this letter is written in 1942, which is during the war already. One of the last letters I received, because after this, my parents were taken to concentration camp in Theresienstadt. That's enough, isn't it?

How many words were you allowed?

We were allowed twenty-five. We were allowed only twenty-five words, and you can't say much in twenty-five words. And we were only allowed, I think it was only one a month, one letter a month. And now, this is – I've wrote my twenty-five words on my side, which I sent to my parents. And then they answered on the other side of the paper, again, twenty-five words.

[Cameraman] Then if you could –

And this is the last letter my mother wrote. She gave it to an aunt of mine who managed to survive the concentration camp. **[02:04:05]** She went to America and she sent me this letter from America, which was written by my mother in Theresienstadt. I know this sounds a long way around, but that's how it was. She wrote it in German and the translation loses a lot,

because she wrote it in verse and the translation is just word-by-word. It's hard to explain this. How can you explain that?

I've found a translation which has been made into verse.

Ah, somebody translated it for me, but it's not very good translation. It loses its…This one was written by my mother in the concentration camp in Theresienstadt, who gave it to an aunt of mine who was with them in Theresienstadt. Who went – who managed to survive the camps, went to America and sent me this letter, which my mother wrote. And that's all I can say. There's nothing else I can tell you about it. And my father was already dead, so she must have been in a very, very bad state. And I never saw her again.

[Cameraman] Thank you.

After – just before I left, this is an autograph and a photograph of my cousin, Franzi and her brother, Hansi. **[02:05:09]** And you can turn the page over then, can't you?

[Cameraman] What happened to Franzi?

Franzi must have been taken to concentration camp like the rest of the family. I never saw any of them again. In fact, I lost all of my family. [Pause]

And now we're on the last page, which my cousin Hanzi wrote, the one who lived downstairs in the same block of flats as I did. And he wrote that he loves me very much. Of course, in a very innocent way. We were cousins and we always played together. Unfortunately, he never survived the war. He was taken with the other family to the camps.

Now on this page you'll see what my father wrote the day I left Vienna. Well, the translation is, 'You've always got to be honest in life and never do anything wrong.' **[02:08:05]** What did you say you call it? A finger, a foot and never do any – never put your foot wrong. Is that how you say it? In German, it's a finger [laughs].

My mother wrote, ‘All the pleasures…’ That translation from the German, ‘All the pleasures are going with you, with – only a picture of your face stays with me. All the pleasures go with you. Only a picture of your face stays with me.’ That's it. That's all she says, very few words only.

[02:09:26]

[End of transcript]