

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	101

Interviewee Surname:	Krausz
Forename:	Babette
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	21 February 1937
Interviewee POB:	Leipzig, Germany

Date of Interview:	4 August 2005
Location of Interview:	Salford, Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 53 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 101

NAME: BABETTE KRAUSZ

DATE: 4 AUGUST 2005

LOCATION: SALFORD, MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: I am interviewing Rebbetzin Babette Krausz and today's date is Thursday 4th August 2005. The interview is taking place in Salford and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

This is the interview with Rebbetzin Krausz and it is tape1.

If you tell me first your full name.

BK: Babette Fanny Krausz.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

BK: What was my name at birth? I am always known as Etta, the shortened form, but that is my full name, as I was given it.

RL: And your maiden name?

BK: Sohn, S-O-H-N.

RL: And your Hebrew name?

BK: Geula.

RL: And where were you born?

BK: In Leipzig in Germany.

RL: And when were you born?

BK: '37, 1937.

Tape 1: 1 minutes 11 seconds

RL: First of all, can you tell me something about your family background, about your parents' families and what you know about them and their parents and grandparents.

BK: Interestingly enough in our day and age our parents didn't speak very much about their background, perhaps because it brought back too many sad memories, but my father came from a very poor family, and he had to work extremely hard, that was already before the war, he wasn't so young any more when the war broke out.

But my mother, she grew up in a normal set up, normal undisturbed family, until just before the war and she had a normal upbringing in a very comfortable home, but my father always had it very, very hard.

RL: Do you know where your father was born?

BK: It was either Würzburg or Hamburg, it was one of the two, I can't remember from what I was told many years ago, but one of those two places.

RL: And have you any idea what his father did for a living?

BK: I don't know, I only know that he died young. I don't know, he never spoke about his parents for some reason, not to me anyway, I don't know very much but I think he died very young and his mother was a widow and had to support the family. But my father did lose a sister in the war, in the camps, and otherwise there is nothing much more of his family left, but not due to the war entirely, but one sister was certainly lost in the camps.

RL: How many brothers and sisters did he have?

BK: He had, I don't know ... he had one brother and two sisters, but I don't know very much about them.

RL: Do you know what happened to ... You say that one sister died in the camps ... Do you know what happened to the other brother and sister?

BK: One brother lived in America, he must have gone to America just before the war and the other, I don't know what happened to the other sister, I don't know whether she came out of Germany or not, I don't know. So, on my father's side I know very little.

RL: My mother's family, they ... two sister's went to Israel as pioneers, she was one of five daughters, two sisters went to Israel as pioneers, you know, at the beginning when everybody went, that was long before the war, and one sister went to America, and one sister died young, and my mother came with all of us to England just before the war.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 57 seconds

RL: What was her family name?

BK: Schuller, quite a prominent family in Frankfurt.

RL: Do you know what her father did for a living?

BK: Her father was a, I think he was a textile merchant, he was a very astute businessman, I never knew any of my grandparents, none of them were in this world any more, when I was born, so I only know what I heard, but ...

RL: So, they had died before the war?

BK: Yes, yes ... the last one, my mother's mother died a couple of days before I was born, so ... I couldn't have known her. That was the last one, so I don't know very much about them. As I say my parents didn't speak very much about their family life, whether it was difficult for them or not I don't know.

RL: Do you know what kind of education either of your parents had?

BK: My father was a, he had a university education, he was a very well educated person, he was a highly intelligent person, and he had all the qualifications. He was called a Professor in Germany, what we would call a doctor, he was called a Professor; he was a doctor of various subjects. He didn't have the opportunity of a Yeshiva education; they didn't have that in Germany

My mother grew up in ... You have heard of Reb Raphael Shimshon Hirsch ... and his, his community, and his education, that is what she followed, she was brought up very, very ... in a Jewish school even, in the Frankfurt Jewish School, and then she was trained to be a, I suppose she worked in her father's business, she helped in the business. They didn't have sem, they didn't have anything that we have now, they weren't privileged to have that, but they were very orthodox, they were both very orthodox, so they brought that with them.

RL: Did your father actually work in a university?

BK: He used to lecture in the university for many years, yes, before he was married. He married late, he was already 40 when he got married, so he was lecturing for many years.

RL: Which university was he in?

BK: All I know was that Rabbi Carlebach in South Manchester was one of his pupils, so he may be able to tell you more than I can. He certainly remembers him so you can date that ... so you can see, he would have been well over 100 by now, so, he lectured

Tape 1: 6 minutes 30 seconds

there, in university, all subjects, any subject, he could master any subject, except languages, that wasn't his forte, but then when the Nazi decree came he wasn't allowed to work, so he walked the streets. He didn't want his mother to know he was out of work, so every morning he left the house and said he was going to work and he stayed out all day and came back at night, he didn't want her to know that he wasn't allowed to work any more. That went on for quite a long time.

RL: Where was he living at that point?

BK: I think they had already moved to Leipzig by then. That is where I was born, my sister's were born, I don't know where they were born, they are older than me, but he must have been living in Leipzig already, and as many people will tell you there was no work, they weren't allowed to work anywhere. Then, they realised if they don't get out now, they weren't going to get out.

RL: When did your parents marry?

BK: They were married in 1930.

RL: Do you know where they married?

BK: I suppose in Frankfurt. Where my mother lived, I would imagine.

RL: And what siblings did you have?

BK: I have two sisters who are older than I am and one brother who is younger. That is my family.

RL: So when were they born?

BK: One sister is, was born 1931.

RL: What is her name?

BK: Her name is Hannah, now her name is Hannah Horowitz ...

RL: Aha ...

BK: And my other sister was born in 1933, her name is Elsie Neuwirth, N-E-U-W-I-R-T-H, my brother was born in 1944 in England.

RL: Right, you are not sure if your sisters were born in Leipzig?

BK: They weren't born in Leipzig,

Tape 1: 8 minutes 50 seconds

RL: They weren't born in Leipzig ... no ...

BK: They were born in Frankfurt as far as I remember.

RL: Do you know why the family moved to Leipzig?

BK: Maybe they moved because of work with my father, but he obviously couldn't work there any longer because of what was happening, and I don't know what the standard of living was when they were in Leipzig, because there was no work. I assume that is why they moved, I don't know, I was too young to know. I was two when we left the country so I wouldn't know what happens.

RL: Did they ever tell you any stories about their time in Germany? Were there any family stories? Is there anything that you remember being told?

BK: I remember one or two things. I think the Gestapo used to come round looking for the men, so my mother, she worked it out that my father would be ill, she told him to walk around with, in the cold winter, without anything on, until he caught a cold, so that he would, when the would come he would say he was ill, which was what she did, otherwise they would probably have taken him and that way he was able to stay with us. So they did have some horrific stories, that is not as horrific as some people's stories, but each individual has his own horrifying experience. The very fact that he had to walk the streets, he wasn't the sort of person who could do anything manually, he was more academic than that, so it was very hard for him. I mean when the recession took place and there was no money around, I don't know what they lived on. It is interesting, it may be interesting, I have, I have the things my mother used to have for Pesach, the things she had she obviously gave to her children because she wasn't keeping Pesach any more, so I have got a whole lot of silver cutlery, and she said when the inflation set in, about 1933, her father was a very astute businessman, and he just put all his money into tangible objects, and he bought loads and loads of this silver, so that at least there would be something for them to have, or the notes that they were having, they took them to the bank and by the time they got them to the bank they were of no value any more, that was the rate of deflation, probably, not inflation, I mean that way they still had something in hand. Otherwise they wouldn't, they would never have bought such a thing, it was the only way to secure the money that they still had left, so they were really living from day to day, if even that, I don't know how they managed, but their poverty was, everybody had nothing to put away at the end of the ... when they left. My parents originally had wanted to go to Israel, my father had, I mean, if you think this is a library, he had a vast library of secular books, designs, a vast library, and he had it all sent, everything was sent to Israel, everything, everything that belonged to us was sent to Israel, they wouldn't give

us a VISA to go, so we, England was very kind, and we were allowed to come here with nothing ... nothing to our name at all except the clothes we were wearing. So ...

Tape 1: 12 minutes 31 seconds

RL: Do you know how it was organised to come to England? Who it was through? How they managed to get ...

BK: I think it was through someone in London, by the name of Wechsler, do you know a Thelma Wechsler? Do you remember them? Anyway, they lived here, but their parents, they had an open house, and they guaranteed for people to come across. So we came, probably with very little. I mean we came to England probably about three weeks before Pesach, so we had absolutely nothing for Pesach, no dishes or anything, so for many years I used what we had brought, you know, tin plates, and little, little cups like this, I mean laughable, but then we had coupons, ration coupons, nothing at all. And they put us up, I think it was there, for about six months or so, and we moved around from place to place, until we found a room to live in, in Dorking, everyone was given a room, the whole family had one room to live in. But that was at the beginning of the war, we couldn't stay in London because we were aliens, so we moved around the country.

RL: What was the date that you came over to England?

BK: As far as I know it was February 39, six months before the war broke out.

RL: And then from London you moved. Do you know why they went to Dorking?

BK: Well we went, we were in Epsom, we were in all sorts of places which I don't remember but we came to Dorking because there was a community there, a Jewish community, and they had, it was out in the country, and that was where they allowed the refugees to go, and they found a place where we could live. There was no work, my father used to go to all the neighbouring suburbs to teach at Cheder, you know. He used to go out in the morning to teach in all these outlying places, and do you remember the Joint? The Joint in London, they used to organise the Hebrew lessons for the refugees or even for the few Jewish communities that there were, that was what you did, you went round all the time. He was interned for about six months in the Isle of Man, he was a prisoner of war, but we lived in Dorking, and that was, whether that was where we were told to or if we chose to, I wouldn't know, but ...

RL: Did he ever tell you anything about his time in internment?

BK: I picked up ... he wasn't a very conversant person, he kept to himself a lot, whether it was because he couldn't talk I don't know. We had a very nice community life there, really, because there were a lot of, I mean they had loads of orthodox Jewish men and they had a couple of minyonim and everything, you know, so there was no lack of that. So they didn't seem to have any problem as far as the populous was concerned, and

they lived their own life and that was alright. They didn't have any, as far as I know, unpleasant experiences there, but of course we were on our own for all those months, and my mother, how did she keep body and soul together ... She would do anything, she would do any work that came in, she would do anything, she would clean for people, she

Tape 1: 16 minutes 0 second

would iron, she would do anything, nothing was too menial for her. She worked very, very hard to keep us, to keep us going, because even with all the allowances that one would have got you can't keep the family going on that.

RL: What kind of accommodation did you have in Dorking?

BK: Oh, it was a massive mansion, and each room, very large rooms I would say, twice the size of this; that was our home. We all had to live in one room, eat and sleep, so it was cordoned, partitioned off, with a curtain for the children and we had a little cooker, and a table and chairs, and we even had a little alcove outside where we could put a sukkah, which was very nice bonus. And in every room was another family. One of the things that I do remember which have stuck in my mind, I was only a child, I didn't know it was out of the ordinary, to me it was very nice and a beautiful place, and we always had those bath tubs. There were bathtubs, there were bathrooms on every floor, it was a huge big house, I don't know what it had been used for, we always had to have that full of water in case of the bombs. So there was a bathtub always full of water, and that stuck in my mind very much, I don't know why.

We had a shelter, we had a cellar and a shelter. I don't know if you have ever had those shelters described to you, they were huge iron tables, they just looked like a massive table, a steel table, and everybody had to sit underneath, and we spent many, many nights in these shelters, but only the children and the mums, the men didn't go in, there wasn't room for everybody. My brother was born in 1940, and that was the worst year of the war, and he, there was no such thing as cots in those days, we didn't have a cot, he had a little wash basket and that was his cradle and we used to carry it up and down, those are the things that I remember, I mean I was fairly young.

When the bombs came, we knew exactly when there was a bomb coming, the droning of the bomb, we just took it as every day life, we children are very innocent, we don't put ... no fear was put into our hearts, we just went on and lived a normal life.

Have you heard of Vaughan Williams? He lived in the outskirts of Dorking, and we went to visit him once, and we saw this huge crater, there must have been a bomb had fallen there the day before, and now you wouldn't know, we just walked past and that was it. He was ... what are they called ... doodlebugs, yes, doodlebugs, so we heard them and on the way to school if there was an air raid siren we used to have to go to the nearest house, that was the instruction, just walk along the wall and go into the nearest house until the all clear goes. Many times in school, we were in school and we had to trot off to

the nearest shelter when the sirens went, and when it was finished we came back again and it you could always go back again.

RL: Where there shelters in the school?

Tape 1: 19 minutes 11 seconds

BK: No, I can't remember where we went, but I remember going as a class to the nearest shelter, so if the bomb was droning near the school, I don't know, because you could tell, you can, we were taught how to time it, and you heard the droning, and then if it stopped, like thunder, you counted until you heard the explosion, and then you knew how near it was, if it heard it shorter and then louder, then you knew it was fairly near. We saw quite a few craters from the bombs, but actual damage, there was no damage in Dorking, not like in London, there was no blitz. But it was near enough for the adults to be worried, I mean we, as children we just took everyday as it came.

RL: Did you have gas masks?

BK: We had gas masks, yes ... I can't remember wearing them though, they looked horrible, I can't remember having had to wear them, but I do remember going into the shelters on quite a few occasions, or even being on the way, in the middle of the road, even having to go into somebody's house because of the droning of the bombs.

RL: The shelter in the big mansion, where was that? These steel tables ... where were they?

BK: In the cellar, because the higher, they couldn't be above the house, the lower part may survive. I remember the blackout, not that I went out, because we couldn't go out in the blackout, but we drew everything, black curtains, all over the windows, nothing, nothing to be seen, so there are things I remember quite vividly.

RL: What would you do to occupy yourself?

BK: Well, I suppose in that day and age we were happy with little things, I mean paper and pencil ... I suppose we helped as well, around the house, there was no such thing as a help. I remember having to, every morning before I went to school, I had to wash the dishes from the breakfast, we didn't have ... never mind a dishwasher, we didn't have a sink, or anything, we had to wash up in a bowl on the table, you know, very primitive, and that is what I had to do every day before I left, because I really had one particular job, I don't know if we were lacking in what to do ... we had a beautiful garden, beautiful grounds, we played there when we were allowed out, it would depend on what was going on outside, sometimes we were not allowed out. We had a very nice community, we had a lot of friends there, so we had places to daven, in somebody's house and we had everything, a proper communal life. We probably got our food from London, I remember that ...

RL: How many Jewish families were there?

BK: I can't remember offhand, there must have been at least, it doesn't sound much now, but it makes a community when you are refugees. There must have been twelve, fifteen families, I mean big families, I don't mean just couples. We always had davening

Tape 1: 22 minutes 33 seconds

and we always had Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, there was never a problem with a minyan.

RL: Was there a Sefer Torah?

BK: There must have been. I wouldn't know, but there must have been if they had everything. Yes, as children we didn't suffer, because we were with our family, but we, if I look back now I can see how primitive our existence was, but we didn't know. We didn't have new clothes, I didn't have a question of new clothes or anything, I had things handed down or donated or given, but we never knew that. We were just very happy to be all together.

RL: In the big mansion that you were living in, were there other Jewish families in that particular house.

BK: There were, but none of them were orthodox, so when I say families, I mean orthodox families, there were probably a lot more Jewish people but they were, the ones who were orthodox were there ones that I had connection with. There were, there were others as well. Not all from Germany, some from Poland, and I remember, we happened to live in the same house, but it was like living in the same block of flats, you don't have so much to do with the other people, I suppose we played with the children, because being children we do that, but I suppose we have very little to do with them. We lived our own lives, nobody could invite, we didn't have the means to invite anybody else, I mean, whatever it was, we were happy to have ... I remember everything was rationed, if you didn't have ration cards you had nothing, and we used to collect the eggs for Pesach from Chanukah onwards, so we would have enough eggs for Pesach, otherwise we wouldn't manage. And how would we keep the food warm for Shabbos, for the Shabbos meal, we used to put it inside the bed to keep it warm for Shabbos, there were no facilities to keep things warm. So, it was, it was primitive, but as children we didn't realise that, we were comparing it to nothing, so it was a great life, we probably lived a lot healthier than we do nowadays.

RL: What kind of food would you eat?

BK: Well, I remember I once went to London, I had an aunt in London, and I went to visit her, it must have been during the war, because after that I never went. And I saw ice creams, not kosher ice creams, being eaten, and I had never seen these things before, so

there was nothing like that, there was just the general food, the food that is healthy. I remember, just to show the poverty, although we didn't know. What do you give a child for a birthday? Right ... like you just said, you took your daughter out to eat. So, our birthday treat, we always had a birthday treat, we were so excited about it, you could go and look around the shops, just look around them, it is called Schaufensterbummel in German, we would just go round and look in the shops and we could choose the dinner we wanted,

Tape 1: 25 minutes 44 seconds

and that was our birthday treat, and we were so excited. You can see our expectations were a lot less, but we were excited about it, specially if we could have the afternoon together, just with my mother, and none of the others, not that we minded, it was just that we had the extra attention, because we had nothing ... there was no kosher ... there were no kosher sweets at all. I don't know what there was, I don't know what luxuries there were, I mean if you, you probably know that yourself ... if we went down the streets, when we moved to Gateshead we used to walk round the streets and we saw the little stumps from the railings, in every garden we just saw the wall and the stumps from the railings, so what had happened to the railings, they had all been taken to make armaments for the war, so we saw that everywhere, so there were no luxuries, there wasn't any room for luxuries.

RL: So when it came to things like bread, where would the family get bread from?

BK: Well, bread, it so happens, we probably got from the local shop. As long as it had no treife ... it was kosher, there wasn't Jewish bread as we call it now and we were allowed to eat it, but matzah we had sent from London. There was the kashrus board, they would see to all the refugees. Meat we surely got from London and I remember in school we all had to have milk, because the children had nutrition, milk, nowadays we wouldn't be allowed to drink that because it didn't have a hechsher, but as children we were allowed to. I personally didn't drink it, I didn't like it, but I remember the stress that was put on the children to have it in school, because they would at least have some nutrition. But otherwise we just had tomatoes or cucumber or whatever was available, I don't remember going hungry that is for sure.

RL: Did your father, you say, he travelled around teaching Hebrew. Was it over that whole area?

BK: There were quite a few places around there. Croydon, Epsom, Luton, these places, they were all quite near. But he had a problem, he didn't feel to learn English so easily, it didn't come so easily to him, so it was quite a strain for him to communicate but he persevered none the less but he went out and he did whatever he could. I am sure he had a good influence on a lot of people.

RL: So how did you manage with English?

BK: Well I have been in England since I was a little child, so if you live in a country you learn it. I can understand German, I can speak German, that was the language my parents spoke together. We all spoke, I had no problem with the language, I spoke English ... I don't remember learning English, just as you don't remember learning English, you know, you just speak it, and German I just picked up, because they both spoke together.

RL: What language did they speak at home?

Tape 1: 28 minutes 55 seconds

BK: My parents spoke German, I mean in the latter years they moved to English, because they had lived in England for so long, but German was their mother tongue, no doubt about it.

RL: So presumably that was your first language.

BK: I suppose I, I don't remember having to struggle over learning English or speaking English, no child remembers it, but I had no problems with German either, so probably I learnt English in the street and German at home. But, I can't remember speaking German, I never speak it, unless I have to.

RL: And how did you get on at school? How did you find it ... going to the school there ...

BK: How does any child settle in school? You just settle ... you go to a non Jewish school with no problem, I went through all my school years in non Jewish schools and I had no problem with the education, neither did any of the others, I wasn't the only one. We had a very large proportion of Jewish children. I don't remember when we were evacuated, I am sure there were, but certainly when we were in Gateshead, there was an ever growing community. We went to non Jewish schools, always together with other Jewish children. We weren't an odd one out, but the schools were, I mean like schools are, I mean schools are schools.

RL: Did you get on all right with the non-Jewish children?

BK: Yes, there was no problem. I didn't have very much to do with them. I had one or two friends, you sit next to a girl and you become friendly, but I never went to their houses or anything and they never came to my house as far as I remember. We kept ourselves in a certain way but we still integrated into the school system, and we were always very, I mean they gave us off when we needed to be off because we were all doing the same thing, which made it a lot easier, they didn't, in the war years ... we had no problems, when it came to Yomtov and things like that, there were never any problems.

RL: Do you remember which other families were with you in Dorking? Which Jewish families that you remember?

BK: The names?

RL: Yes.

BK: There was a family called Posen, Dayan Posen from London. You may have heard of him, he was there with his family. Dr Rabbiner Korn, he was given his full title, that is where we davened, the minyan was always in his house, and they always had people

Tape 1: 31 minutes 37 seconds

staying with them, it was a full house, perhaps they got it as a community house, I don't know, but everything that was going on in the community was going on in that house. There was a family called Feist, F-E-I-S-T, and Lerner, family Lerner ... probably there were more but I can't remember any more.

RL: Where they all from Germany these families?

BK: Yes, yes ...

RL: All refugees ...

BK: Yes, all refugees

RL: Were all the orthodox families there refugees?

BK: Yes, definitely, because it was a little country village, I don't think they knew what a Jewish person was until we came. They were very friendly, they were nice people. We didn't bother them and they didn't bother us, everybody did their own thing, and ... it was a very, very comfortable life. I don't remember any incidents for instance that we had problems. We put up the Sukkah and I don't think anybody complained. It was very ... we had a lovely life as far as we were concerned. We didn't have to struggle, we were just there. Our parents did the struggling, I am sure it wasn't easy for them.

RL: What did the fathers of those families do for a living or for work?

BK: I really don't know. We are living in a different age now and when we grew up nobody would say what their father was doing as a business, I had never even heard that before, children were asked in school "What does your father do?" And hardly anybody knew, it was kept like a secret. I don't know why. I never even asked what does your father do?... Now, everything is out in the open, in those days it was a, I mean, that is what I have noticed, parents never spoke about how they made a living, so, I don't know what they could do, because they were in the same position as my father. So I don't know what they did, I don't know how they made a living, if they worked or they got there, I

have no idea perhaps they did some business. I really don't know, they all managed, somehow ... I don't know how.

RL: What about during the summer holidays, or holiday times, what would you do?

BK: There was no such thing as summer holidays to go away. We would just stayed put, I mean I don't remember as a family ever, even when I was, as we were growing up, ever going away for a summer holiday. We may have gone out for the day. It wasn't the done thing to go away as a family together, camp or whatever, there was no such thing, as we were growing up. Whenever it was, even it was after the war, we just didn't go away. You took a day off, and you went out, and you were, there was no such thing as packing

Tape 1: 34 minutes 39 seconds

up and going away for two weeks, and going to a hotel, there was no such thing where you went.

RL: You mentioned earlier visiting London ...

BK: Yes ...

RL: Did you use to go into London now and again?

BK: Very rarely, I remember that one time, I assume ... the war ended in 1945, didn't it ... well we left shortly after that. I remember once going to my cousin and staying with her for a weekend and then I went for VE Day and the procession, and that was quite a memorable thing. Although I was very tiny, my cousin took us all and we went over to London for this big procession of VE Day. I don't know if anybody has told you about that. Well, I only see it through a child's eyes, I only know what I saw, and besides the crowds and the crowds, we saw the carriages going through with Winston Churchill with his famous sign, and then the Royal Family going, it was quite an impressive thing, but as a little child I suppose I didn't see as much ... I don't just mean see physically, I mean understand what the importance of it was, but that I remember quite clearly, the crowds, and the excitement, it was an excitement as you can imagine, but children don't understand these things. When we go over this as an adult we appreciate it more but otherwise we were really, who had the money to go to London or to travel more than necessary.

RL: So which relations was it that were in London?

BK: In those days, any relation, whether it was a third cousin twice removed was very precious, because we had no family at all. It must have been a cousin of some kind of my parents or my mother. She lived in London; she also came over as a refugee. Why she could stay in London I don't know. Her husband was working as a tailor or whatever it was, she brought up her family in London, in the east end, for some reason she either didn't want to be evacuated or didn't need to be evacuated, and they spent the whole war

in London. So we went there once to, so obviously one couldn't move around, it wasn't that one was locked into a place, but one couldn't move very often.

RL: What was their family name?

BK: Gonzwa, G-O-N-Z-W-A, they have got, they have got some family living in London still, I don't have much contact with them now, but at that time it was a big thing to have family, you know, one sort of treasured it.

RL: How aware were you of the progress of the war? Did you ever hear anything about the war? What was happening?

Tape 1: 37 minutes 22 seconds

BK: I don't think I made it my business to find out too much, maybe another child would be more inquisitive, I just knew that there was a war going on and as I say people didn't speak much about it. Nowadays things are much more out in the open, we didn't have a radio or anything like that, so we couldn't keep up with what was going on so it was only what we heard on the grapevine or whatever it was. My parents certainly knew much more, but they either didn't want to worry us, or they didn't want to talk about it. So if they knew about the war, how it was progressing, how bad it was in some places and in other places, I don't think we would have been made aware of what was going on in the camps. Now we would of course, but then I don't think we were made aware of what was going on, or those people who couldn't get out.

RL: Did you family get newspapers?

BK: Not that I can remember. There just wasn't that kind of money, maybe they did, I can't remember, you know, but I was just happy to have a family, have the security of a home, and go to school and come home again. There weren't many outlets, but again, if you don't know about it you don't miss it. We were very happy to play with your little ball in the front garden or the back garden. I don't remember being bored, that is for sure, maybe I was, but I don't remember.

RL: Did you have a Hebrew education?

BK: During the war years not, only what we learned at home with my parents. But once we came to Gateshead and had a formal secular education there was cheder, and that was for all the children who went to secular schools. That was before there was any sem or anything. I mean the sem only started in 45, 1945/46, so there was nothing.

RL: So in Dorking it was just what you learnt ...

BK: It was just what we learnt ... and maybe this Dr Korn, he had some lessons for the older children, you know to have something on a Shabbos, to come together and speak, but I was too young for that so I wouldn't know.

I remember, it stuck in my mind, that one day my father never came home, now I realise it was Yom Kippur, the whole day he never came home, as we don't, but that impressed me. A whole day he doesn't come home, so as you can see we had a proper minyan there, we had everything ... so ...

RL: Did you go to the minyan at all?

BK: Yes, I suppose I went a little bit, in the morning, but I was only very young and who could take me? My mother couldn't take me because she had a little baby. And I don't think the tradition was that you only took a child to Shul if they were able to follow or able to do ... not to disturb, so I probably wasn't taken as a little child. These are,

Tape 1: 40 minutes 20 seconds

Some of the things I do remember. I can't remember Simchas Torah, but I am sure they had it, I am sure I went, but I can't remember it.

RL: Do you remember any of the other Yom Tovim? Chanukah or ... ?

BK: It is interesting you should ask, because last year a girl came round, she was making a project about what we used to do on Purim, what did we send, what did we send it in, because there is no such thing as plastic, and I really had to wrack my brains, because I am sure it was sent, as everybody does, but I am also sure we sent a little ... you know, cardboard, we used to collect ... I recall we used to collect the little boxes from mushrooms and we used to have the baskets. And we would fill it, what with, a few home made cakes and a bit of fruit, certainly not what people do now. There was no such thing as bottles of wine and what have you. So we sent them in, and we sent up to two or three people and ... but I can't remember the big excitement of getting dressed up or anything like that, whether one did or didn't ... I don't remember, I don't remember that from later on either, I don't remember, people didn't make ... Now it is the schools that make Purim the excitement that it is, but I am sure we did what we had to do.

RL: Do you remember hearing the Megilla?

BK: Not in Dorking. I can't remember. Probably we did, but I can't remember.

RL: Do you remember anything about Chanukah?

BK: I suppose everything was played down, you know we lit the menorah like everyone. My father used to play the mouth organ while we were singing, that was Chanukah for us, I remember he always did that, he enjoyed doing that. And we were sat down together and we had a few nuts, I don't remember if we had nuts or ... there were no sweets, perhaps we had little biscuits or something. We sat down as a family, and he would play his mouth organ and it was very homely. It was very nice, yes, very comfortable.

RL: And Pesach, how did you manage for Pesach?

BK: Well again, my mother I suppose was the one who worried whether we would have enough to eat. We had the potatoes, we had the matzah and we had the eggs. How much meat we were allowed to have during those days was probably minimal. We had what we needed, I think we had raisin wine, there was nothing else, we boiled the wine, with raisins, to make the wine and we had the Seder like everybody did. But the dishes were not the Seder dishes that we have nowadays, we were happy to have any dishes, and the basic, the bare things. If you go to the shops now you don't know what to take, it is ... it is so ... there is plenty of everything. There we were happy to have the matzah and the potatoes, doubt there was anything like potato flour. We did have something called egg powder, I don't know if you have ever heard that, that was not necessarily kosher.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 33 seconds

They did give out egg powder because there was a shortage of eggs, which was absolutely revolting but it was food, so we used to mix it with water and we had ... I don't know what we had, but it was something nutritious, so probably that couldn't be used on Pesach, but we had that during the year so that we had something. The country had to look after its people to make sure they had the food that they needed. But otherwise there was certainly nothing special.

RL: Did you ever grow your own vegetables or ... ?

BK: My mother was a very keen gardener and she had an allotment, which was, I don't know where it was. She used to go early in the morning. She was a very hard working person. She used to go about half past six in the morning with her little trowel, and sometimes she heard the doodlebugs, and she went and she used to tend her garden and I suppose that when we were eating potatoes and things it was from her hard work. But she enjoyed it; that was her relaxation and she worked very hard on it. She used to go quite a lot, regularly there. I don't know if you know what an allotment is? It is a little patch, you know, where you could do what you liked. I myself never went with her. She went at that time in the morning I certainly wouldn't have gone. And she probably did bring back food from there that we were able to sample, whether it would feed us, funnily enough I don't know, but I don't remember ever going hungry, at any time. Whether there were cakes or not, but if there were they were home baked. But, when you are not so involved or something you don't remember it so well.

RL: Before we move on to after the war, is there any other wartime memory that you have not spoken about?

BK: I mean the only thing that I can remember is that my brother was born in 1940 which was the severest year in the war; it was the most difficult. Although the hospital was just down the street, it was very difficult to be able to go in, because they just locked it up and you have to lock it up, certainly at night time, so we couldn't get in; so with

going to visit, it was very difficult. You know, there was the security and everything. One day was more or less like the other for the younger ones, so I can't remember anything which is very outstanding. The only thing I can remember ... you learned to live with the doodlebugs and everything. It was just, it was how you live with thunder, you are frightened the first time and then you sort of ignore it. But otherwise I can't remember anything which is difficult, we were protected from that.

RL: Do you remember any more families coming from London during the time of the doodlebugs?

BK: Uhu ...

RL: You know, maybe to get out of London during that period ...

Tape 1: 46 minutes 40 seconds

BK: Not where we were, I can't remember any newcomers, I can't remember, I think everybody just stayed as long as they could, nobody came in and nobody left before the end, I can't remember newcomers, but then again that might not be quite so, I can't remember people coming to visit either. It was a very, very quiet life, nowadays you might call it boring, you know there was no, nothing to take ... nothing to do, we had beautiful places to walk and we were happy with it, but I can't remember that we were ever bored or ... There was no "What shall we do now?" As far as I remember we always had something to do. It probably wasn't very exciting compared to today, but there was plenty.

RL: What about reading? Did you use to read?

BK: Well reading material, there was very little, very little reading material, for any children of that age, even English secular, I don't know what there was. I suppose there was the normal Enid Blyton books and things, there was nothing in the Jewish world in English, so ... those who could read a bit more advanced ... probably some could read German. We had nothing because nothing came with us, we couldn't afford anything.

RL: Did you belong to a library?

BK: Never, no, nothing like that. I don't know if there was a library there, I wouldn't know, it was just a little village, maybe there was. We read our books in school and things like that, but nothing ... and things like that, but maybe it was from school, I don't know. There wasn't the wealth of literature like there is now ... What kept us busy I really don't know, we did things with our hands, we made pompoms, and things like that, we used scraps of this and scraps of that and we kept busy.

We were always busy, we didn't have a car, so everywhere we had to go we had to walk, wherever that was, so we were out, we would go out. There wasn't a short cut of just hopping into the car and going, wherever you had to go you had to go and shlep and do

your own thing. So in that way, perhaps that is how the time went, I don't know, it is hard to imagine nowadays.

RL: When did you move from Dorking?

BK: We left Dorking in 1945, almost as soon as the war was over, we had to decide, we couldn't stay, we had to decide where to go. We could have gone anywhere, the whole of England was at our feet, and the important thing for my parents was to go where there was a Jewish future, and there weren't many places. There was London, and the only thing that we knew at that time was Gateshead. We had never heard of Manchester, and in Gateshead they had opened a boarding school. Rabbi Bamberger, he had opened, he had .. my parents knew of him from Germany, and he had opened a boarding school for refugee boys, boys who had no homes anymore, and he was looking for a matron and a housemaster, so my mother went up for an interview, and she was interviewed by Rabbi

Tape 1: 50 minutes 16 seconds

Dessler. Have you heard of Rabbi Dessler? My mother was more outgoing than my father. She had to make the main decisions, because he was a very frustrated person, with the intelligence he had, but not knowing the language, and he was not a youngster any more. For him to adapt to this way of life was very difficult for him, so she sort of engineered things, and she went to Gateshead and had an interview, and they accepted her. So we went as a family to Gateshead, which is not as it is now, and she was the house mother and he was, she was the matron, and my father was the house master. And they actually lived, they were given three rooms to live in, in the school building, and because my sisters were a bit older they couldn't live there, with it being all boys, so they had to live in somebody else's house. I mean sleep in ... the girls couldn't sleep at home, but we lived there for, it must have been there for about ... perhaps five years.

RL: Where was the boarding school?

BK: In Gateshead, where it is now, Gladstone Terrace. Now it's called, it's just a school now, it is just a Gateshead school now, but it was called a boarding school. It was the first boarding school for religious boys. Do you remember Rebbetzin Bamberger? That little lady who lived at Edith Kaufman's house, well her husband started the boarding school, and my parents were the first matron and housemaster.

RL: How many boys were in the school at that point?

BK: There must have been about 25/30 from all over, from anywhere in the world, we saved them, first of all physically, because they had nowhere else to be, and then religiously as well. They had, they were looked after, they had everything.

RL: Were they all refugees?

BK: They were mostly refugees, mostly refugees.

RL: What ages did they range from?

BK: From what I can remember they ranged mostly from probably the age of about eleven to perhaps sixteen, perhaps it was after bar mitzvah, I don't remember that. And, it was a full time job, the boys were a full time job, and eventually we could afford to buy our own house, which was a big event, and we moved our belongings by horse and cart/ We moved with a horse and cart, not that there weren't removal vans, but it as something couldn't have afforded to, to own our own house after all those was like having a palace, the excitement of being on one's own ... nobody can dream, can think of that nowadays, but that is what refugees are, aren't they. And we lived in a house too. And that was it.

RL: Where was the house?

BK: It was on Bewick Road.

Tape 1: 53 minutes 46 seconds

RL: Were your parents still house masters of the school?

BK: No, then they just ... my father still taught there, and my mother when she ... she had no more connections with the school. She was the first person to take in children, when the mother's had babies or whatever, she ... you know to help, that was her income, the children stayed with us for a few weeks at a time, and off they went away, and then she had a kindergarten. Well she took over a kindergarten in our house, and she was always known as Auntie Sohn, for years and years that was her name. Quite a few people around here still remember going, coming to our house as young children, and we looked after them, and that was how we scraped together pennies, and she worked in the mikveh. So that was also, she worked on the chevra in Gateshead.

RL: And your father continued teaching?

BK: He continued ... and he also taught in Newcastle, Newcastle is not quite like Gateshead, so the children there went to secular schools, but they had cheder, and he used to go to outlying places there to teach in the cheder. But he was an elderly man by then, by the time the war was over he was already almost sixty, so he wasn't so agile, but his, his mind was very agile but he himself was not, and he used to study at that time. He was very interested in learning, but never had the opportunity. But he ... he taught in the school for a long time, he was known as Dr Sohn and he taught in the school, and if anything needed working out, calculating for times for Shabbos, he was the one who did it. He had a fantastic mathematical brain and he was very artistic, beautiful, beautiful things he had drawn, I don't think I have got anything. I had something, whether I have still got it I don't know. He was very, very artistic, and he was, he didn't have anybody to discuss his knowledge with. Which was very hard after all, I mean people learnt, not everybody was as educated as he was and he withdrew into himself a lot, but he was

always, he was always very friendly to everybody, but he wasn't the person he could have been if he had been allowed to live his life to the full, but at least he survived and he came over with his family, so the things that really mattered he appreciated and he had.

RL: What were your first impressions of Gateshead having lived in Dorking and then going to ... ?

BK: I think what I noticed was that it was so big, and so town-like. There was no green here, I missed that a lot, and that is the first thing I noticed when I came here, was how green it was. It was very town-like. But you know we led such a sheltered life, we just continued with a sheltered life. We didn't really take much notice of what was going on around us, it didn't change very much except we had no doodlebugs and nothing to be scared of in that sense. We had no freedom, we didn't know anybody, we didn't have any family there, so we just continued the way we were.

RL: So this is about to end so we will just stop here.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 44 seconds

BK: Right.

TAPE 2

RL: This is the interview with Rebbetzin Krausz and it is tape 2.

I was asking you of your impressions of Gateshead, but also how was school there, how did you find it there?

BK: Mostly it was just like a transition from one school to another school, because it was a non Jewish school as before. I found the, although I was only a child so I am not sure, I found the standard quite low, not so much of the subjects, as the teaching process. The teachers were, I hope they won't see this, but I don't think they are in this world any more, the teachers were not professional, but maybe that was due to the war as well, they had also been through it, and all the Jewish girls, in whichever school they were, had no problem getting into the school. They all excelled, so it can't be just because of the Jewish, you know a Jewish head is quite a good head, but I think it was, mainly because of that, but the teaching itself was very basic. Although at the time we just went through it, we had no problem, we had no problem with the children or anything. It was an easy life, on the whole, and they just went through the system.

RL: Which grammar school did you go to?

BK: There was only one grammar school in Gateshead, and it was a very high standard grammar school, and we all went there. It was co-educational, much to everybody's horror nowadays, it was co-educational, but we never mixed, the boys sat on one side and the girls on the other. You knew nothing else, and even in the playground we never

mixed. It was a different kind of society in those days as well, as we all know, so there were no problems that way. They were very understanding, the non Jewish schools, they were very sympathetic to whatever we needed. We had our own assembly and if we didn't, we didn't have to go into the general assembly, we never had any problems, like in previous schools. Because I think I would say that 90%, 95% of the Jewish families in Gateshead were religious, were orthodox, very few were on the border, which made it a lot easier. There were a lot of refugees in Gateshead, I mean it was built up from refugees, like England is built up from refugees basically. A lot of refugee families and grew from that.

RL: Did you know any of the other families in Gateshead?

BK: Not ... besides the Bambergers, who my parents knew, I didn't really know, everybody just got to know each other, it was the community. But it was a very, it is now a very close community and everybody helped everybody but everybody lived their own lives. They did whatever they had to ... I don't know what the older families did who lived there during the war, they were probably business people, they started off in

Tape 2: 3 minutes 14 seconds

Newcastle and came across to Gateshead. Gateshead is a ... it came into being later than Newcastle Jewry, but it became a Gateshead community rather than a Newcastle community, which was quite interesting. I remember the men in Shul in their top hats, and Mr Baddiel, you know Chava Fulda? She is a Baddiel. Her father also had a top hat, you know like the beadle in the Shul, top hats, very formal, he changed, he changed a lot, but that is how he was at first. We were very much part of a community there, it was growing all the time. So we just grew with it. I remember the sem starting off.

RL: When did that start?

BK: It must have started ... perhaps in 1946 maybe. I remember the house that it started with. With four girls, I remember the names of the girls.

RL: Who were they?

BK: There was Miriam Eiseman, she was an American, I think her name is Elias; I think she writes books. There was her sister, and if I am not mistaken Mrs Rosenthal was the secretary of the sem. She has been secretary for the last fifty years by now. She was one of the first girls as well, her name was also Eiseman. Four girls it started with, and then it grew and grew and grew ...

RL: Who started the sem?

BK: Mr Kohn. He was from Germany as well, and he started the sem in his own house, he started the sem at the request of Rabbi Dessler. The yeshiva was already in existence for many years, and the Kollel had already started, and Rabbi Dessler was very concerned

that the boys would leave Yeshiva and they would have nobody that would appreciate their learning, and nobody to continue, they won't be able to keep their standard, so they had to have educated girls. So the girls were brought into the sem, in order to learn, in order to be a helpmate, that was one of the reasons for the sem, besides the fact that we need the Jewish female teachers as well, but that was one of the reasons. What would happen to these boys? So he, at the behest of Rabbi Dessler he started the seminary.

RL: Right. Where was Mr Kohn from?

BK: He was from, he must have been from somewhere ... he ... my father taught him. So he must be from that part of Germany because he was one of my father's pupils. So that gives you an idea of what kind of people he was involved with in Germany. And, exactly where he was from, whether he was from Würzburg, or Hamburg I don't know, but he came over and he ... it was tremendous, that was really mesiras nefesh, because he never had a private home of his own, he always lived in a seminary. It was incredible how it grew and it grew. Eventually it outgrew its premises and they had to move.

RL: Where was that first house?

Tape 2: 6 minutes 41 seconds

BK: That first house was Avondale Terrace, the sem started in Avondale Terrace, number five I think, then it moved to 6 Gladstone Terrace, I think they had two houses there, I can't remember, they had a house on, I think the girls ate in a house on Oxford Terrace. You don't know Gateshead at all? Do you?

RL: A little bit.

BK: Aha ... well, do you know where Rabbi Lehman has his bookshop?

RL: Yes.

BK: Well, opposite there was a house where the girls used to eat, and Miss Agulnik, she was the cook, and then it grew and they moved into 50 Bewick Road, which is a massive house, and then gradually they bought up the whole street. You know Nussbaum, do you know her? Well where she lives, that is at the end of the sem, and all the other houses, about 15 houses now, belong to the sem. So it grew and grew and grew, it is a whole city on its own now, that came from small beginnings, four girls. And Rabbi Miller taught there, and all these big names, and lehavdil Reb Sternbuch, who is still teaching there. So this is what we grew up with.

RL: Was Rabbi Miller there from the beginning?

BK: No, because, I think he only came when he was, as far as I remember only married men were allowed to teach in the sem, either he came just before he was married or after he was married, he joined the staff very soon, but he wasn't there at the very beginning.

RL: Do you know who taught there at the beginning, when it first started?

BK: Besides Mr Kohn? I don't know, I don't know ... I am sure he had some of the men from Gateshead, but they don't have a proper start, it is mainly men teaching there now anyway. But, he joined us very shortly afterwards ... he was one of Rabbi Dessler's main talmidim when they were there. And he helped to bring out his sefer, Michtav Eliyahu, that was one of his, this was Rabbi Dessler's brainchild that began in Gateshead and all other sems have evolved from that of course. I don't think there is one home in the world, one Jewish home in the world, that hasn't benefited from the sem in some way or other, it is incredible ... I mean it kept Judaism going, with all the problems especially.

RL: So did your sisters go to the sem?

BK: One ... my younger sister, the younger of the two older ones went to the sem, my older sister didn't, she went to university in London, but she lived in Dayan Posen's house while she was there. So she couldn't have a better sem than that.

Tape 2: 9 minutes 42 seconds

RL: What did she study?

BK: She studied languages. German, she did a bit of Greek, she got a BA in German, so she studied, but she had more than sem when she was staying in London, and anyway times were different.

RL: Yes.

BK: She got a state scholarship from the school where we went. She was very brilliant. My other sister, she showed her colours in other ways, she went to sem. She went through the three years as well.

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about the boarding school? You were actually living in the boarding school ...

BK: Yes ...

RL: You were actually sleeping there as well, because you were younger ...

BK: Yes ...

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about that and any incidents or memories that you have as times there.

BK: There again we weren't encouraged to have anything to do with the school as such. It was not an easy job because some of the boys were problem boys and you know to find the staff and to make sure they were happy and had what they needed was a very difficult job for my mother, Again, we were not involved in it, we knew it had its ups and downs, but it was working, and it was my mother's main stress that we should live in a Jewish community and we should learn, and we should not forget what our Judaism was, because once you are in a place, the environment is very hard, so ... from that point of view we gained a lot I remember. We heard Krias Hatorah on certain occasions, when I went to hear it in the Shul, and I wasn't involved in the school ... there were certain things we went to, like every child does. My parents did not involve us in the things that they were doing, maybe they should, things are different now, in the school; I know it wasn't easy, it was difficult to control 30 boys or so. But, it was, it worked very well, but it wasn't easy, so, as boys were, some of the names were mentioned more often than others, but I had nothing to do with it. And, we just had a roof over our head, which was important, and we had a livelihood, which was important. We had the right environment.

RL: Did more boys join the school as the years went on?

BK: Yes, like any school. There were those who graduated and went to Yeshiva and went to other Yeshivas, and every year there was a new intake.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 28 seconds

RL: Where did the new intake come from?

BK: It probably came from the boys who were coming over from Europe who had been either, I don't know if they had actually gone through the camps, but people who didn't have families or if their families couldn't look after them. There were very often boys without a family to support them which is obviously a recipe for problems, and some of them where their parents wanted them to have a Jewish environment, because there was no such thing in London. I think it was the first Jewish school, boarding school, and then there were schools opened here, but not as a boarding school, the only Jewish orthodox boarding school in the country, so a lot of boys probably were saved from assimilation by being able to come there. And they were looked after by Rabbi Bamberger and Rabbi Gruner and they had very devoted staff.

RL: Rabbi Who was the second Rabbi?

BK: Rabbi Gruner. He was also very active in the school. There were a few names which won't mean very much to you but there were a lot of people from Gateshead who were involved in the running of the school and the lessons ... I mean I don't remember a lot of the names, all of them, some of them came and they went. But it was, it was a school which gave the boys a Jewish education, and I suppose a bit of a secular education as well, as much as one could.

RL: Did your father teach any secular subjects?

BK: He only taught secular subjects.

RL: He taught secular subjects.

BK: Yes ... yes ... he had never been to Yeshiva, he could have taught it, but that was more his forte, to teach the maths and science, because that was his subject, that was where he excelled.

RL: Did he get other secular teachers?

BK: Probably, if there were they were probably not Jewish. I can't remember that. There was somebody there who was also secular, Mr Moshe Steinberg. He was also brilliant, and he taught there as well. Probably secular as well, he could have taught anything, but I think it was secular as far as I remember. I mean, they had a staff. But it was ...

RL: And the Hebrew teachers?

Tape 2: 14 minutes 44 seconds

BK: They were Rabbi Bamberger Rabbi Gruner, Mr Selig, I really can't remember who was teaching there at the time.

RL: And did your mother cook for them?

BK: She cooked there, she cooked for them with a bit of help, and she was there when they needed something, and sort of tried to keep them in control, like a matron, a 24 hour job and she had help, but it was quite a tough job to keep them all under control without a ... those were boys ... and some had problems. But she had her, she had her staff ...
[Telephone rings – interruption]

RL: So I mean, did you actually eat in the boarding school?

BK: No, we were able to live our own life and we had our own, we had three rooms, one for ... two bedrooms ... two bedrooms and a living room.

Just to show you how tight things were, I am talking a lot about how difficult it was to manage, but it is a big strain on a family when there isn't an income.

I remember as a little girl I once dropped a cup, and it broke, and I wasn't terribly upset, and my mother was more upset that I wasn't upset than that I had broken the cup. I mean I had broken a cup, you know, we couldn't afford to drop a cup, and I still remember that because it is a ... for them it was a, I don't know how much it was of their income, but for them it was scraping together pennies and trying to be independent, so it is not so

much that, it is the strain of not being able to control of what you are doing because you are so dependent on others.

And another thing which I remember which is perhaps quite funny, I mean in those days I don't know if you have been told, but some fruits were very hard to get, and a banana was a very big novelty. In fact somebody told me that they had been sitting on a park bench, and they had this fruit and they didn't know what to do with it, and this lady was sitting next to them, who they didn't know, and she saw their dilemma and so she started to help and she started peeling it, and they got the message. So bananas were very, very scarce. I remember I once got one and I thought I would take it to bed and I would keep it until the morning, and I woke up in the morning and my bed was full of banana because I had fallen asleep with it, but I had wanted to treasure it because it was something which was so rare, but you can see, times have changed thank G-d. But that is how we grew up. You treasured everything that was given to you because it meant so much. Not that you felt deprived, we never, ever felt deprived of anything, you don't know, we never turned a hair, but when we look back and we see how we treasured those things, you know things that are easy to get, easy to lose. So that was how we grew up.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 12 seconds

RL: Was there any youth groups or anything like that in Gateshead for you to gather and do things together?

BK: Well as the community grew and as we grew older there was a group, we used to call it group on a Shabbos afternoon, which some of the ladies organised and then as we grew older we took it over. We tried to, occasionally it had to be revived ... we had to find premises, we used somebody's attic or something like this, we couldn't have a house, so we did, we had to walk ... we had quite a few people who used to take afternoon group on a Shabbos and we got together, and we sang, and we talked, and we ... There weren't the kind of books that we have now, you can pick up a book and you can look for a story. There were no English Jewish books, nothing at all. There were a few, what was there? There was Haderech, I don't know if you have seen or heard of that ever. It was a little paper booklet which came out once every, every Yomtov or something, there was nothing, nothing for children. And, I remember, we always had a good time on a Shabbos. We would get together with our friends, and ... but there wasn't anything formal that you did, except for cheder in the afternoon, and that was run by Mr Kohn, he opened the cheder for the girls, and the sem girls would teach.

RL: Where was that held?

BK: That was always in the sem. And then some of us, as we got older, we went over to Newcastle to teach in the chedarim there, but that was already later on.

RL: How old were you when you left school?

BK: The usual age, 16, I was 16 ...

RL: And from there?

BK: I went to sem.

RL: You went to sem ...

BK: I went to sem for three years.

RL: How many girls were in the sem when you joined?

BK: When I joined there was about 60 girls in the whole sem. I mean, each class, for three years, they got smaller as you went along, it started with about 30 girls and then some left. In my particular class there were about 15 girls in the final year. It was certainly a lot smaller, but you knew everybody, and then it just grew in leaps and bounds, but it started, as I say it started with four, there were about 60 girls in the sem at the time that we were there.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 44 seconds

RL: And the sem, how many years were there?

BK: Of the course? There were three years.

RL: Three years.

BK: Yes, three years of the course.

RL: So there were 15 in your year, then ...

BK: It probably started with about 25 and some girls left, so the whole sem was 15 girls, but that is how it was, they had that one house and it worked very well.

RL: Was that still Avondale Terrace?

BK: No, that was already in Bewick Road.

RL: When you joined it was Bewick Road?

BK: Yes, yes.

If you want to know where weddings were held in those days, that is very interesting. When my sister got married in Gateshead, she got married three years before I did, and we lived on Bewick Road, and the Kolliel, have you heard of the Kolliel? It was just directly opposite where we lived, and the Chuppah was going to be there, and it was thick snow. So they had to shovel a path through the snow from our house to the Kolliel so she

could get across to the chuppah. So the Chuppah was there and the dinner was in the Gladstone Terrace sem house. That was the dinner ... everything had to be self ... there was no such thing as a caterer, everything had to be self catered, and she went into the dinner in a, as a Kallah, on her wedding, in the back of somebody's van. That was how weddings were, not everybody, but there was no organised fuss or anything. We had no caterers, I remember when we got married my mother had to cater the whole wedding, there was no ... now they have got the women who do the catering, but there was no caterer, and people still made simchas, you can see the pictures of the wedding, but everyone had to ... it was a do it yourself job always. In a small community everybody helped, it was very village like, so that is how she had her wedding.

RL: What year did she get married?

BK: She got married ... eh ... it must be about 48 years ago, so you can work that out. It must be '55 ... eh ... '57, 1957.

RL: Who did she marry?

Tape 2: 23 minutes 15 seconds

BK: She married Yehoshua Neuwirth. Have you heard of the Sefer Shmira Shabbos? No? Well the author is her husband. That is who she married, from Yerushalayim, she got married here and they went straight over, they got married just before ... just after Purim, and they were already there for Pesach. There was no staying at home for six months in those days, you just got on with it.

RL: How did she meet him?

BK: She was in Israel for, she did a course, she worked in an orphanage in ... near Bnei Brak, she was there for about a year after she left sem, maybe two years, I don't know. He is actually a nephew of this Rabbi Bamberger, so that is probably where the connection was, and she must have been introduced to him there. So she went to live there and she has lived there ever since, in Yerushalayim. And she has her own story to tell.

RL: Coming back to the sem. There were only 15 girls in your class. Where were the girls from?

BK: The girls were ... well actually there is a girl who I am still very friendly with, well she isn't a girl anymore, she is a great-grandmother, from Denmark. Other girls from South Africa, South America, France, anywhere ... London ... I was the only Gateshead girl, various places in England, anywhere, a lot of French girls came, the Baal Teshuva movement started basically in France, because we were living in Gateshead, and a lot of French couples came over as Baalei Teshuva ... and they, well if we lived with nothing, they lived with even less. And they mainly went to Yeshiva to learn, and they really had no means of keeping themselves, although they must have done it somehow,

and they were the original Baalei Teshuva who came over, and they were the top of the top. I could mention some names to you, but I don't know if it would mean anything.

RL: It is good to record ... for the families ...

BK: Well there was Pultrach and Kahen, you know top names now that everybody knows is the top of the cream, the cream of the cream, but they came over and they really gave everything to study in Gateshead.

RL: Were they single men or were they married?

BK: They were newly married, they came as newly married couples, and they lived on floorboards, it meant nothing to them as long as they could gain their Jewish knowledge. It was tremendous, that was really giving up a lot, a lot of those, and a lot of the girls who came also, not mainly from France but from anywhere in the world they could have been.

RL: How did they hear about Gateshead? With it being just a new idea ... the sem ...

Tape 2: 26 minutes 29 seconds

BK: Well, I suppose the sem canvassed, and spread the name so the people should know. When anybody had been, it spread its own name. I mean our year was not the first year, our year was perhaps ... perhaps it was about ten years in existence already by the time we went, so it was a long time for the fame to spread. I went after school, I finished school in '53, so I went to '56, and in those years to '53 I am sure a lot of people heard, from America from everywhere. Even though communication was not like it is now, there was communication and people still hear.

RL: Were there any girls from England?

BK: Yes, yes. I mean I had another girl from London, and a girl from Leeds. Perhaps even more than one. I would still know them if I met them, I just don't keep up with them. Yes, there were from London. There weren't so many from Gateshead, Gateshead wasn't such a big community and not all the Gateshead girls went to sem. Not every girl went to sem in those days, a lot of them didn't, now it is much more accepted to go, more necessary as well in a way. Because it helps you to face the outside world.

RL: Can you take me through a typical day in sem. How the day sort of panned out.

BK: Well I can and I can't, I never lived in, I was never a boarder there, so I am not a "real" sem girl, which perhaps explains a lot. It was very strict in the sense that there was a discipline, you know you can't just walk in when you want it, you couldn't do your own thing. There was always lectures in the morning, you were expected to be there on time. And you were expected to daven before you came as well. They expected something of the girls, and then, then I, it so happened, because I wasn't there for mealtimes, I never ate in the sem, so I wouldn't know how that would have... and I didn't join in the, in

between social activities because I was at home. They didn't have so much extra curricular as they do now, it was more learning and learning, with a bit of teaching. They taught in the chedarim, those who wanted to teach. The primary school started when I was in sem, Rabbi Shaul Wagschal, he opened the first Jewish primary school. Until then the children had to go to non Jewish schools, because besides the boarding school there was nothing, so he opened the first Jewish primary school, that must have been ... I was one of the first teachers there ... it must have started in about fifty ... I was in sem so it must have been in 55 or 57, 56 ... something around there. It was also mixed, boys and girls, and that was the first Jewish education from primary school onwards. So I was teaching already when I was in sem and just part days, so as far as the programme was concerned, as far as the sem is concerned, I mean you know the lectures in the morning, the shiurim in the evening, and on Shabbos there was shiurim, but I was never there as part of the sem, I wasn't a typical sem girl.

RL: Was there nothing in the afternoons?

BK: There was probably study like there is now. Study or, I used to, at the sem, some of the Newcastle boys, when they stopped going over to Newcastle to teach they brought

Tape 2: 30 minutes 29 seconds

some of the Newcastle boys over to learn in Gateshead. And they used to come and learn in the Yeshiva. I don't know if you know the Yeshiva building as it is now in Gateshead, but it used to be a whole series of old houses, very old houses, and one of the houses was a kindergarten, very decrepit place, but it was a kindergarten and I used to go there every evening to serve tea to these boys, so they would have some tea before they went to cheder, so that was nothing to do with the sem, but that was the set up then, you know, in order to encourage them to come and learn. They couldn't come from school to go to extra lessons, so it was also part of the communal work, you know, for the good of the wider community.

RL: Where was the first primary school? Where was that?

BK: On Richmond Terrace, number five and six was the primary school.

RL: When did you find time to teach there?

BK: I suppose I didn't go to the afternoon sessions in sem, it was only in the last year of the sem, and instead of teaching elsewhere I taught there. Being a Gateshead girl it was the obvious thing for me to do once I finished sem, which I did. I mean I taught there for a couple of years before I got married, so I started as part time and then I went onto full time.

RL: And how many children did that school start with?

BK: As a guess I would say that there were about 50 children, which was a good start, because they had, I suppose they started from the youngest age, from the kindergarten. It

wasn't, not everybody sent their children to kindergarten, I don't know what they learnt, it wasn't as it is now, it wasn't as organised as it is now. So I assume, I can't remember which ages I taught, I remember which children, but I don't know which ages, I can't remember which ages ... I suppose I taught them until they went to boarding school. Well the boys went to boarding school ... but what did the girls do, there was no Jewish high school at that time. They must have started the Jewish high school at that time, there is no way the girls would have gone on to a secular school, but I wasn't in the teaching profession any more, I don't remember a Jewish high school in my time, I don't know when that started, I just don't know where they went.

RL: So who was the head of the primary school?

BK: Rabbi Shaul Wagschal, and Mrs Karo, do you know Mrs Karo, her father, he started the primary school.

RL: Where was he from?

Tape 2: 33 minutes 20 seconds

BK: He was a refugee as well, he was also teaching in sem. He taught halacha; he was a, a very active person, he was still doing things, I mean he lives in America now, and he started this primary school for the children of the community. Now, who is it, I don't know who is the headmaster now, of the primary school, who is it, I am not sure. I can't at the moment think who the headmaster is.

RL: Would you say that it is mainly the refugees that got all of these things going rather than the families that had been there ... ?

BK: That happens in every community ... I mean England, I mean the main Jewish towns, they have all been established by the Jews who came from German, Eastern Europe, the Jews who were born in England and grew up in England had very little chance of a Jewish education. There was no formal Jewish education, I mean Reb Balkind, the Balkind boys, was the only thing there was, because there was nobody to bring in that now blood, it is not a reflection, it is just a fact. So all the communities have been built up by the refugees who came over from Eastern Europe. The Yeshiva in Gateshead was built up by Rabbi Dryan. I don't know if you remember the name Dryan. Well he built up that Yeshiva, and although he had no children of his own, he got a picture of his, the whole Yeshiva, they were his children, he put his life and soul and he made that Yeshiva, and that was the feed into the Kollel then. So the Yeshiva started with a few boys, I remember they borrowed some boys from the Manchester Yeshiva to start. Have you ever seen the book on Gateshead? You must have read it. So we lived it, it was tremendous to see how it grew, but it is very much more in the last 30 years than before that. I haven't been there for the last 40 years, so that is why I can't remember how things have gone since then.

RL: So who were the teachers in sem when you were there.

BK: Well there was Rabbi Miller, Mr Kohn, Rabbi Sternbuch, Rabbi Wagschal ... they had somebody, I think Rebbetzin Kauffman taught in the sem already, they probably didn't have as many subjects as they have now. They taught a few subjects, Rabbi Miller would teach two or three subjects.

RL: What kind of subjects were you learning?

BK: Well we learnt, besides the regular Chumash and Nach and things like that and halacha, we had hashkofa and psychology and biblical Hebrew I suppose you would call it now, and we had lessons on teaching procedures, tefilla, the usual Jewish subjects, plus the more, definite things. I mean hashkofa was very important, that was Rabbi Miller, he worked his way through Rabbi Dessler's sefer and for that alone it was worthwhile being in sem. It gives you more confidence in what we are meant to say and do more than anything else, the knowledge, having the right approach. I can't remember who the other teachers were. As I say one teacher taught more than one particular subject ...

Tape 2: 37 minutes 42 seconds

RL: Did you ever put on any plays as they do these days? Or put on any concerts?

BK: Yes, we had a siyum, and I think we had a Purim do. And the girls, we had to speak on occasions, we had assembly and what we would have called it ... we had our test lessons. It wasn't as blown up as it is now, because there were less girls to blow it up, but everything was done on a quieter scale than now. It was much quieter; everything was done in the confines of the sem, We always had farewell parties, and wherever there was an occasion we did the same. I remember when Rabbi Dessler was nifta, we all had to sit low for a few minutes. It was a sign of respect, because he was the father of all the institutions, all the institutions in Gateshead were the outcome of his work. I remember when he lived there, I remember him from when he lived there. So, you know, the personalities who passed through Gateshead was quite remarkable. There was a big privilege to know all these people and to see them and to speak to them. Well I didn't speak to them, but to know of them, to see them in real life, it was a tremendous thing, that was real history in the making as far as we are concerned, and the other things we had to go through the turmoil and the uncertainty, everything. My mother once said she was at a family wedding in Israel, you know at a wedding only the family is there. So she saw all these dozens and dozens of grandchildren, and she said who would have thought 60 years ago that we would have a family like that, not just the numbers but the quality as well, so we have defied all logic haven't we, and Gateshead was really a melting pot, but it re-unified people, to be able to face the outside world. We wouldn't be what we are without Gateshead, no way, not my husband nor myself. He also went through Gateshead, and it is something that can't be replaced. We have to be grateful for it. We have to be grateful for our parents, if they hadn't had the foresight, they could have landed anywhere. They were quite raw, how much education had we had in those days. We kept the traditions but we needed more than that, that saved us, whatever we are now is because they gave us the right start.

RL: What kind of facilities were there in Gateshead in terms of you know, shops and butchers and Jewish communal ...

BK: Now that hasn't changed, I mean it has changed a bit now. There was one butcher and there was one Jewish shop, kosher shop, Stenhouse, Stenhouse, that was where ... I remember we had to go every morning to get the milk. The milkman only went to get the milk, he didn't deliver it, and he was called Mr Silver. Do you know Brenda Corn, on Northumberland Street? Well if you go to Beenstock house, there is a gentleman there by the name of Mr Corn, who is going to be 100 in a couple of months all being well, and his mechutan, Mr Silver, was the milkman in Gateshead, and he had a little shop in his house, and every morning he went to get the milk, and we had to go with our little cans to get the milk every morning before we went to school, because there was no delivery service. Everyone came with their little can, I remember the little cans, to get our milk, kosher milk, so things weren't so organised.

Tape 2: 41 minutes 42 seconds

Caplans, there was a kosher shop called Caplan, have you heard of Pinky Caplan? He lives in Gateshead, he ... anyway ... so his mother had a corner shop, a typical corner shop, just opposite each other, we did all our shopping, there was the Caplans, the Silvers and Stenhouse. Stenhouse was basically a bakery that is where, he was the Jewish bakery, the kosher Jewish bakery, I don't think he sold anything else then. Now it has evolved, there is a bit more, but there is still only one bakery, but there are more shops, there are more outlets, but very little, considering how Gateshead has grown.

RL: Was there a bookshop?

BK: Do you remember Lehman? He started his bookshop, he was a Yeshiva bochur, he had an interest in books and he started getting books sent and selling them to Yeshiva bochurim, and from there he grew and grew until he is the biggest bookseller in Europe now, I mean it is a household name, Lehman. He lived next door to us, or we lived next door to him I should say, and he developed into a Seforim shop, when, at a time when Seforim were not as obtainable as they are now, now you can, there are loads and loads, but it basically grew and grew, but it started by providing Yeshiva bochurim with their seforim and it grew and grew ...

RL: Was there a Rabbi in charge of the community?

BK: Yes. There was a Rabbi Shakovitzky, he was the Rav of the community, I mean Gateshead is unique, it still is, unfortunately it doesn't have a Rabbi now, it hasn't got a Rav, because his son in law, Rabbi Rakov was nifta two years ago. But there was only ever one Rav and one community in Gateshead, everything was under the jurisdiction of the Rav, even now, and he was in sole charge of everything. Anything that had to, was started, we had to inform him at least, no-one could start a school or anything without his jurisdiction and approval, which is a unique set up, to have on community under one Rav.

You won't find it anywhere else in the world I don't think, that's how it used to be in the Haim that was Rabbi Shakovitzky.

RL: Where was he from?

BK: He was from ... from ... Eastern Europe, certainly not from Germany, probably from places like Kelm or ... it will be in the book. His son in law was Rabbi Rakov, and he was the one who took over from him. There was a lady in Eretz Yisroel a Rebbetzin Greenberg, there was a book about her, that was his daughter, Rabbi Rakov,[I mean] Rabbi Shakovitzky's daughter, he was a very fine person, he was a proper Rabbi, a proper Rav, and when he was nifta his son in law Rabbi Rakov took over. He was nifta two years ago and they haven't got anybody to take over yet, even though he has got eight sons, but none of them have chosen or been chosen to take over, so it is a big ... but now they have a lot of Rabbonim there who can help out. It was always unique way it was run, there was one butcher, nothing else, one school ...

Tape 2: 45 minutes 20 seconds

RL: Did you ever have any dealings with the Rabbi?

BK: Well, we had sha'alas, I met him, but not on a personal level. I am sure every family had dealings with him, every family had there sha'alas and would go to him, and when we were first married we also had our sha'alas and would go to him, that was the connection. But it was like a hierarchy, like a royalty, we looked up to him. A Rav was a person you looked up to, he wasn't a person you would socialise with. I am sure he had his friends and his people he could talk to, but that is from a previous generation. You know, that he was, he was very special.

RL: And were there charitable organisations in Gateshead?

BK: Not as one knows it now, probably on the quiet, there have always been, the women used to get together to sew tachrichim. You know, like they do here in some communities. And it was always a chessed, you know people were there to help each other. You know they probably had gemachs there as well, but you know at that time it wasn't so well known about, or perhaps on the quiet. I am sure there were a lot of people who did a lot of chessed. I will just give you an example of a family in London, where both parents had died, the brother was in Yeshiva in Gateshead and his two sisters and brother were in Norwood, Norwood was not over orthodox. I am not criticising them but they were what they were, they gave what they gave. And he was very worried and he asked different families in Gateshead to take the children in, and three families just semi adopted these children, they grew up in their homes. And ... they grew on from there to become whatever they became, so of course there was always chessed, but as organised as it is now, where you have gemachs and you have all sorts, I don't think it was, that is only the recent past, where it was started in Israel, and it spread across ... people didn't have the wherewithal, and then the communities weren't so big either.

RL: You mentioned that your mother was on the chevra.

BK: Yes ... well, it was a few ladies, I don't know whether they had an organised chevra like they have here, because it was a small town, and hopefully they were not very busy, but if there was a need they would sometimes go across to Newcastle. And my mother would tell me she once was out and did shemira all night, she came walking home in thick snow. You know people were, people gave what they could. They didn't have a tahara house, they don't have one now either in Gateshead, Gateshead doesn't have a tahara house even now. I think if G-d forbid there is a tahara they have to do it in the house. When my mother was nifta they did it in the house, so they really hadn't got everything yet, surprisingly enough. I don't suppose G-d willing it won't be necessary to have a tahara house, but it is certainly not easy the way they do it. But that is how it is set up there.

RL: So how did you meet your husband?

Tape 2: 48 minutes 49 seconds

BK: How did I meet him? [Laughs] Well, my husband was studying in Kollel, and in those days people were, people usually started Kollel as a bochur, and when they were in Kollel for two years or so, or for a time then they would look to get married. One of the reasons being, was first they didn't know if they would settle there, and then they weren't paid for the first two years. So just logic dictated to get settled there first, so my husband was in Kollel, and the story goes, as I was told later on, we lived just opposite and he came to get some change from our house, he needed some change for the phone or something, and he met my mother and he met the family and things went from there. I didn't know of his existence until we met even though he was studying across the road, so it was suggested and that is how we met. But he was actually learning across the road.

RL: Where was he from?

BK: From Basle in Switzerland. His parents lived there. He was one of the first Swiss boys to stay in learning. Most of them went to Yeshiva for a few years and then took up some profession or went into industry. He was one of the first and probably set the tone for others to do the same, there are quite a few now, of course. So he first was learning in a place called Kapellen, which was in Antwerp, and his Rosh Yeshiva there was a gentleman by the name of Rabbi Kopperman, and he still is a Maggid Shiur now in his Lucerne Yeshiva, and he must be either 100 or something and he still gives shiurim every day. He was an old man when my husband was in Yeshiva. So that is ... these people, they have a special bracho, and they should have for many years. He still carries great awe and respect from the bochurim there. We have some great people amongst us. Then he moved to Gateshead and he was in Gateshead until we moved here.

RL: And when did you get married?

BK: We got married in 59 I think. Does that make sense? Somewhere around there ... yes. We got married in Gateshead and we lived in Gateshead for the first five years.

RL: Where did you live?

BK: We lived on Cambridge Terrace and we were studying in Kollel there and I was teaching until our first child was born and then I retired.

RL: When did you have your first baby?

BK: He was born in 1960.

RL: And what was it?

BK: A boy.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 40 seconds

RL: Working in kollel, you say that the boys weren't paid for the first two years when learning in Kollel, and after that?

BK: They most probably got a stipend, I don't suppose they got a very big wage, but in those days one managed on a lot less than now. Houses were not quite the price they are now. If you think back, I don't know if you can think back that far. I know how much we sold our house for in Gateshead, and we wouldn't have brought this house, but this house, I mean the numbers are just not comparative at all, so the expenses they were more in line with what one had.

RL: You bought your first house in Gateshead?

BK: Yes, we bought it, we bought it and then we sold it. On a mortgage, we didn't buy it right out. And then we bought this one in a mortgage because ... first of all there was no need to rent, and then, it made more sense, one just bought if one could. But if you want to know relative prices, I know when I got married I was determined to have a very nice cooker, so I saved up and saved up, and I bought a beautiful cooker ... for £36, brand new, which probably now would cost £400, if not more, so it was a lot of money, but it sounds like nothing, it sounds like a game. I don't suppose the standards of living were as high as they are now, but money still had to go a long way and somehow we never were short of anything, somehow we managed.

RL: And what made you move from Gateshead to Manchester.

BK: Well, the aspiration of every person in Kollel is to do something for the community, and to look for a position comes up, one tries to follow it, so my husband was offered in the Beis Din as a Kashrus organiser, as a Kashrus supervisor, so he basically came here to work in the Beis Din. At the same time he was given an opportunity to take over a Shul

that had no Rav, so he became the Rav of Adass Yeshurun, but it was the Beis Din that brought him here. So we came here because he wanted to take up the position, he felt he was ready. He had been in Kollel for seven years and he felt he was ready. He took semicha here.

RL: Who did he take it under?

BK: Well, it is very interesting ... well it is not all that interesting, but still ... if you are asking me everything, you can ask me this as well. When our third son was born it was already on the cards that he maybe, not so much maybe, but it would be useful to have semicha, because without semicha one can't become a Rav. So he was up all night as husbands are when wives are having babies, and when he was born, I said "You have got to go, go now, you are up anyway." So the morning after he had been up all night, he came here to have his semicha test and he passed. It is just a little snippet by the side. I don't think Dayan Weiss ever forgot that. So he took his test after that, so he must have been on a high, although it was the third son.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 27 seconds

RL: Was he already the Rav at Adass Yeshurun before he got the semicha?

BK: No.

RL: No.

BK: No, that doesn't work, I don't know ... normally a person only becomes a Rav once they have semicha. It is like a degree, lehavdil, it is like a degree, you can't become a doctor without the degree, he went for ... just to show you how times were then. We lived in Gateshead, we had no phone, we had no fridge, we had no central heating, we lived very much how our parents had lived, and he had to go for a few weeks to London to learn the practical sides of semicha, all the things that they had to learn. And he didn't come home once in all those five weeks, which isn't terribly a long time, but now it would be unheard of from London to here. And we had no phone. So if we wanted to speak we had to go to somebody else's phone to speak, so times were a bit different to how they are now, we weren't as spoilt, so ...

RL: So when he got his semicha, were you already in Manchester or were you still in Gateshead?

BK: No, we were still in Gateshead, we were still in Gateshead for another two years after that. Yes.

RL: But he came to Manchester ...

BK: He came to Manchester to have the semicha, because there were only certain Rabbonim who do semicha, not everybody does it, and not everybody, and people want

to choose who they have semicha from, because that also means something, so he came here to have it from Dayan Weisz. So, I don't know what they do now, or where they go for semicha.

RL: So when you moved down to Manchester ... How many children did you have at that point?

BK: Three children.

RL: Was it three boys?

BK: Three boys, yes.

RL: And how did you find your home?

Tape 2: 57 minutes 20 seconds

BK: I didn't. My husband came to look at this house, I was pregnant so I didn't travel so much, so he came to look at this house, and he liked it, and the people were moving out shortly, so he bought it, I didn't even see it before we moved in. So again, it isn't quite the way things are done, but if he is happy then we will all be happy, and we are.

RL: This tape is about to end, so we will just stop here.

TAPE 3

This is the interview with Rebbetzin Krausz and it is tape 3.

So you were just mentioning to me how weddings were conducted in Gateshead, so if you can tell me a bit more about that.

BK: Well perhaps the one I remember best is my own, and as I say we didn't have the facilities as we have now ... we had wedding cars I suppose, anybody can make their car a wedding car but with, with a caterer and organisation and everything laid on, so, I remember ours was on an Easter weekend, which meant that ... it was on a Thursday and it meant the shops were closed straight afterwards. And the wedding reception was in a hall, just a non Jewish hall, and the wedding, the seudah was in a different hall, and everything had to be set up by the people themselves. There was no facilities to have any help, the girls used to help, the local girls, the teenage girls used to help to set up and to serve and to clear up afterwards and we enjoyed it thoroughly, and perhaps it is very interesting to mention, that much to the horror of a lot of people nowadays, there was no such thing as a mechitza, in Gateshead nobody knew of a mechitza, the men of course were quite separate to the women, there was no mixing, but there was no mechitza. If you look at any of our wedding photos, because probably wasn't as necessary as it is now. That doesn't mean that times have improved as far as that is concerned, there is more socialising so one has to have it more. Now of course there is always a mechitza and we

wouldn't be without. I remember one wedding, have you heard of Rabbi Schwadron he was the speaker at the wedding, and it was absolutely fascinating to hear him, but I don't think I have ever forgotten what he spoke about, and we also used to cater the Pirchim Siyum for girls, together with a group of women and we had people like Reb Eliya Lopian speak, and these giants came to speak and we just thought it was part of our normal programme and now when we realise what they were, what we were privy to, to hear these people speak and we were allowed to listen, and we were very involved in these kind of things, because we were the only ones to help, as we were old enough to help and then we grew too old to help but we had that ... that was very, very interesting to us, always, perhaps it was an advantage not having a caterer, and having everything done, organised, we managed to have things as it should be done, it was do it yourself, all the way through.

RL: How did people manage to cater themselves for these sort of, a wedding ... you mentioned you didn't have a fridge ... How was that possible?

Tape 3: 3 minutes 3 seconds

BK: All I know is when I got married my mother had to find somebody from London who came down to do the cooking and the baking and that was after Purim, so she came down and did the cooking and the baking. I suppose the butcher helped like you do ... he probably would have had an ice room or something. And people did have fridges, we may not have had, people did have these things, but not everybody. And surprisingly enough, I don't know how people managed, but we ourselves had 13 sheva brachos, people were, everybody made that effort, I don't know why, but it was amazing. Now I see how difficult it is when you do it yourself, but at the time I just walked from one to the other, but people ... everything was just done beautifully, and people did it, I don't know how, and we had a very nice custom in Gateshead, that the youngest couple in the Kollel made sheva brachos for the next couple who got married. So we actually hosted sheva brachos for the next couple who was Rabbi Pinchas Roberts from Hendon. Do you know him? Well he was the next one who got married after we did. So we made. It was very nice. Everything was there, We never missed out on anything. We just, it was just a family way of doing things ... nowadays we have become so commercialised. And then we had photographers, I think a cousin of my husband came with a film of our wedding, which was very unusual, but what do you do with a film nowadays, one of these big reel films, so we had it put onto a video ... not that we ever see it but at least it is seeable, but that was very unusual. And it is not very nice to look at it really because a lot of the people on it are no longer here, but that was, that was unusual, but there were photographers, we had everything, but it was on a quieter scale.

RL: And music ... ?

BK: No band, there was no such thing as a band, Boruch Hashem, but we had people who sang, people would sing something, whether to accompanied music I can't remember. I know exactly who sang at our wedding and I remember what he sang, it was

very nice. But there was no band or anything like that, nothing at all, what you could provide you provided and what you couldn't you couldn't.

RL: Was there any dancing?

BK: Yes, oh yes. Just like now. Singing and dancing with the men and the women ... there is one photo that you saw just now – one of them saying a grammen on somebody's shoulders. Everything as it is now but not so ... I don't know what you would call ... it was just on a smaller scale, life was like that. The communities were not so large yet ... I don't think our children's weddings were like that.

RL: How many attended your wedding?

BK: The actual wedding, or the dinner?

RL: The dinner.

Tape 3: 6 minutes 10 seconds

BK: I assume about 150 ... as far as I can picture it now. The community and some family, there wasn't such a lot of family.

RL: And where was the dinner held?

BK: It was called The Civic Hall which was more like a prefab in those days, not like it is now, not like the Civic Centre that it is now. Quite a primitive place, but all the functions were held there, the siyums were held there, it was the place where people went other than going into Newcastle of course, which was much larger, that was the main place, that is what people did. There were no other centres, there was no centre for the town; there was no Shul hall at that time either. The Shul hall was built much, much later.

Have you heard about the Shul fire? The fire in the Gateshead Shul?

RL: No.

BK: When my sister got married, two days before she got married; she got married two days after Purim, I think two days, a week before that there was a fire in the Shul. I have got a photo of it. They think it was arson. The Sifrei Torah, and everything was burnt and we all had to fast just after that. I don't think we ever found out who did it, but it was an absolute calamity for the whole community and it was taken very, very seriously, but after that when it was rebuilt, they may have made a Shul hall, but before that there was nothing. It was the only community centre that there was, but that was in the year 57 I think, 56 ...

RL: And was the building completely burned down?

BK: No, just the front where the Aron Kodesh was it was burnt. I have got one picture there. It wasn't the building that was burnt, just the interior and of course the sifrei Torah which was devastating, as far as I can remember. It could have happened ... these sorts of things happen unfortunately, especially if it's arson. I don't know any more details than that.

RL: Did you ever come across any anti-Semitism in Gateshead?

BK: Not ... not as blatant as it has been nowadays, probably there is no ... no, I don't think so, I mean I was in hospital once there, I didn't notice anything, I didn't see any outward signs, we were accepted everywhere. Maybe because we were so new from after the war, maybe people were more tolerant, maybe it was a better society maybe, that hadn't been incited so much. I personally can't remember anything that would have made us sit up. We kept a low profile also, so maybe that also made a difference, we minded our own business. We all had our helps or whatever it was and we worked together, but people knowing now or anything.

Tape 3: 9 minutes 28 seconds

RL: Now coming onto Manchester, how did you find it in Manchester when you came? How did you find the community? How did you find it here?

BK: It was an eye opener. Not so much from the orthodox community because that was no different, but from the wider community, because I had never seen Jewish people who were not totally observant, so maybe it is a ... I think it is one of my experiences that has left a mark on me, to the extent that I was really shocked. I will just give you a very small example, our first child born here was born erev Rosh Hashona, so I was housebound on Yom Kippur, I remember looking out of the window and I saw someone going past carrying a machzor, I have never forgotten that. It is only due to ignorance, it is not because the ... the people don't know, Shabbos they know. Yom Kippur they didn't realise, but it was ... it gave me a shock to my system. I realised that it is different here, also it is not a little village, and you are going to meet all sorts, and I have met all sorts, everybody had met all sorts, and it is very good to meet all sorts and to integrate in the right way and to help them, but that was a shock to my system because I have never, ever seen that. That was one of the advantage or disadvantage, I don't know how you want to put it, of living in a very small community, where everybody just toes the line and does what they have to do. I will never forget that, it was a big lesson to me of how to approach people here, not because I don't hold it against them, I mean it is ignorance, it was an eye opener for me. Otherwise the communities are healthy, they are more or less the same, you see different backgrounds, and different, but mostly people are all the same where we circulated, it was a very friendly community.

RL: How easy did you find it to integrate into the Manchester community?

BK: I didn't notice any problem; that was without any family around me, I didn't have any family, I had cousins, but I didn't have any close family. I didn't find moving here any ... not traumatic in any way. I found my feet very quickly. We didn't have any problem with schools in those days. We didn't have much choice, so you got into a school and that was ... the children went to school and that was no problem.

RL: Where did your children go?

BK: To Mr Roburg's school, Broughton Jewish, and they spent many happy years there. It was the obvious choice, it was the nearest school, and now you don't know what to do for the best thing. But there was no problem then, and I didn't find it very difficult to integrate. I didn't know very many people, but it didn't seem to bother me particularly, so we carried on as we had been doing all those years. I still feel a newcomer sometimes.

RL: Really ... in what way?

BK: Because there are some families, I don't know how long you have lived here, but some families have lived here for generations, you know, if you have seen ... I have seen

Tape 3: 12 minutes 54 seconds

the town evolve in the last 20 years tremendously, but what it was before I came I have no idea. You hear story of how the first school started, but I wouldn't know, it started long before I was here so I wasn't in the evolvment years, we came to a more or less finished product, and at that point ... so I feel I have missed out, to see how Judaism started growing here. We came to already made schools and a Yeshiva and a Kollel, which weren't always there. When I was in Gateshead we were very much more part of it. But otherwise I had no problem in settling down.

RL: How accepted did you feel here?

BK: I think one feels as accepted as one wants to, depends who one is mixing with. You get to know people as you are going along. The community certainly, it is a very friendly community. I don't just mean our particular Shul anyway, people are very friendly, very welcoming, and I think it goes on all the way along until 120, how one is accepted, is how one accepts others as well. It works both ways, but people on the whole are very friendly, we never felt that we are being looked down on or looked at, we just became part of the community, we just slid into the community like ... without any teething problems, it was very good. I don't think we ever looked back on it, and said should we have come here, we were always very happy here.

RL: And the Shul that your husband became the Rabbi of? What kind of Shul was that or is that?

BK: It is the Shul which Rebbe Feldman, I don't know if you have ever heard of him, he was in Machzikei Hadass, they were affiliated to Machzike Hadass, I mean they were

advised, they came from Yeckishe stock to make a Shul which would keep the Yeckishe minhogim, and that is what they did. I think they started in rooms in Northumberland Street and eventually they built the Shul which they are now replacing, and when they started they had no Rav, and then Mr Emmanuel, the optician here, his father, he was the elder of the Shul, and he kept it ... he helped it to evolve and to grow and he sort of kept it going. And then when they heard that my husband was coming here, and his .. he was as Yeckish as they could find, although he has never stepped foot in Germany, so he was not a Yecke from that point of view, they offered him the position of becoming the Rav. And interestingly enough just a few days before we moved here this Mr Emmanuel had a massive stroke and was completely incapacitated, so they were never left without a leader, they sort of stuck it out until my husband came, which was very important, nobody could have planned that, so he came and he took over the Shul and probably kept it in existence for all those years, because a Shul without a Rav is not easy to keep going.

RL: So was he the first Rav of the Shul?

BK: He was the first Rav of the Shul. Yes, and he led it for 33 years, then he retired from the Shul but that is another story.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 40 seconds

RL: And what kind of membership did the Shul have? Were they English born? Or were they ... ?

BK: Well to start off certainly not. They were all refugees. I would say 80% of them are refugees, but then the new generation came who had been born in England or ... probably England, they came because their parents belonged, and now a lot of the members are not Yeckes at all. They just happen to belong to a Shul that has these customs, but that I show it is, it is ... it is not a growing thing, to have a Yeckish custom, but to some people it is very important to keep these customs going.

RL: What kind of customs are you referring to?

BK: Well mainly the order that, the tefillas are the same, but Yom Tov and the things that they do on Yom Tov and things that they, certain minhogim that they have brought over from Germany which they are very keen to keep up, and mitzvahs and things like that, and some of the ways they sing, I mean it is attractive in its own way. It may not be the most popular way nowadays because things have changed, but that is the way it was set up in the first place, it isn't very much different but just little insignificant, but to some significant, which makes it what it is, but now the Yeckishe clientele is probably in the minority.

RL: When was the Shul established?

BK: The Shul must have been established, it must have been in the early 50s, because when we came it was already well established, and we came in, we came in sixty, maybe

the middle of the fifties, we came here 1965 did we, we have been here 40 years, yes we came here in 65, it must have been 65 that we came here to Manchester.

RL: And Mr Emmanuel, where was he from?

BK: I think they are from Fuert F-U-E-R-T [Fürth], I am not sure, his wife was a great granddaughter of Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, or granddaughter.

RL: And how big a community was it in those days.

BK: It was never very big, but I should say it had about fifty to sixty families. On the books, I am not sure but I should say something like that, but I would say is quite a good proportion if it is only the Yeckishe crowd, but I don't know exactly.

RL: Were there any English-born families in those days? Or was it completely ... ?

BK: When we came, I wouldn't remember, if it was it was a very small percentage, now it is more or less, obviously, like every community ... but they all had some connection, although people who came to the community, just wanted to join such a Shul,

Tape 3: 20 minutes 7 seconds

which has also happened over the years, have no blood connection if you want to put it that way.

RL: Did you belong to any organisations in Manchester?

BK: When I came here, no. I was a very naïve housewife and I stayed that way until I was approached to teach in Jewish High, which was when my youngest was about one year old. And then, that is when I started stepping into the public world a bit.

RL: And when was that?

BK: That must have been about 28 years ago, 27 years ago.

RL: And have you taught there every since?

BK: Yes, I have been there ever since, so that was my stepping stone into the teaching world. And then I got involved in the Chevra Kadisha when Dayan Ehrentreu set it up, about, it must be about 20/25 years ago he must have set that up. So I got involved in that. So, I am one of the senior ones there, if somebody wants to join the chevra they have to speak to me, but the chevra runs without me as well.

RL: What happened before Dayan Ehrentreu set that up?

BK: Well there has always been a Chevra Kadisha in Manchester, it was run by the burial board, but the people, the women who were on the women's team, first of all there were not many of them and then they were never aware of all the halachic needs. They knew they had to do what they have to do, and they did it as best they could, but there are a lot of minhogim and a lot of halochas, the Beis Din gave out a booklet on all the minhogim and halochas that they have to have on taharas and we go according to that. It is mainly minhogim but it has to be organised, it has to be learned, so there were about four or five ladies, so now we have about 60 or 70 ladies and we have rotas, and we have got fantastic ladies. And anyone who wants to join is encouraged to do so, provided they pass our criteria ... so you can keep that under your hat with you, if you ever have time for that. I mean that seriously ... I am not here to ...and I don't want it to go onto the thing, but it is an amazing opportunity, it is wonderful, wonderful work. So he ... so Dayan Ehrentreu set it up, and now my husband is in charge together with the administrators of the burial board, if there are sha'alas they come to him, and that is a wonderful work.

RL: So when you first started, was that the first time that you had had involvement with the chevra?

BK: Yes, well I knew of it, because I had seen my mother and of course I knew, but I had never been involved.

Tape 3: 23 minutes 28 seconds

RL: Who taught you what to do?

BK: Well, we had sort of sessions, or were told, or just went and was told, but then it came to a stage where we wanted it streamlined and we wanted it organised properly so the Beis Din decided to bring out a booklet. I have got one there, you can have a look at it, it gives us, it is the entire Shulchan Aruch actually, we have got a fantastic chevra. We have a very, very special chevra, really, we are very proud of almost every person who is on it, and it is very dedicated work, so that is something I became involved with as well.

And I get involved in various other things as well, shiurim and things like that. I have been involved with the seed project now since it first started, when ladies seed first started in The Shrubberies, it must also be about 25 years ago, and I have been involved all the time, and I am one of the oldest there I suppose, and that is also very rewarding. That is a tremendous satisfaction, working together with people who haven't had the opportunities that we have had, and obviously they have made the open declaration of wanting to, no one is forced to come to seed, that is the tremendous thing. I really admire these people who come because they really want to come, and that is the biggest sign of going the right way, because one wants to do it. Nobody is telling them to do it, there are some lovely ladies and I get a lot of pleasure from it. I get a lot of ... it gives me a lot, to work together with people like that, that is something that a lot of our ladies are involved with, as you know ... you have also been to Seed, haven't you? You had a very special partner, I know I am not here to ask questions but do you still have any contact with her?

RL: Yes ... yes ...

BK: She was a very special person.

RL: Yes ...

BK: So you know yourself what seed is. You see Manchester has the scope for doing so many things in a community which they don't have in a place like Gateshead. But that whether it is just how it is built it, they have seed in Newcastle, but Gateshead doesn't lend itself to so many things, as in Manchester, you can grow, there is so much you can do communally. I am sure people in Gateshead are very busy with different things, but it is a different way of life, so this is a very wonderful ...

RL: Have you taught anywhere else apart from Jewish High?

BK: I taught for a very short time in the cheder in Whitefield but very, very short and I found that quite challenging for various reasons. The reason that I gave up there, was very interesting, was because I was asked to teach a group of boys I think they were, aged ten or eleven or maybe Bar Mitzvah boys, and it must have been a biblical Hebrew session and one of the questions was "What is your opinion about something that happened in Chumash?" And I couldn't understand how someone could make such a

Tape 3: 26 minutes 28 seconds

question, I mean how have you got a right to make an opinion about anything, so how can they say we have an opinion about something that happens in the Torah. I can't, it isn't a way to phrase a question, so I said I can't be doing with that kind of thing. That is a fault nowadays when we ask children to give opinions, when they have no opinions, or they shouldn't have an opinion and they think they have and I think it is a road to disaster, but when I saw it I thought that is not the place for me.

RL: Have you had any connection with the sems in Manchester?

BK: Slightly, I have given once or twice lectures, not in the new sem, only in the sem here, my husband has been teaching in the sem here since its inception. He is probably the longest standing teacher in the sem here. He was very involved in the birth of the sem, together with Mrs Royde, Oleha Vashalom. He was very much for it, and he became one of the first teachers and he is teaching the third generation probably by now.

RL: When did the sem start?

BK: The sem started ... about thirty ... it just had the thirty sixth siyum, we had a siyum, thirty six, thirty seven years now. It was started by Mrs Royde, but I am sure you know that, and he was there at the beginning and he is still there now, without any break, so occasionally I have given lectures there, but not very often.

RL: You mentioned how your husband came, initially as a kashrus supervisor to the Beis Din, and what was his career in the Beis Din from then on.

BK: Well he started by going to all the caterers and delicatessens that were there at that time, and the butcher shops, bakers ... to make sure that everything was going according to halacha, to the best of the ability that there was at that time, and then he worked his way up until he became a Dayan in the Beis Din, and he was still involved with Kashrus until about six years ago, and then he retired from kashrus and he still is very involved with gittin and gehrus, although they don't do any gehrus here in Manchester, they only do it in London. And he is involved with any kind of sha'ala you can think of can come to the Beis Din, it is a very versatile office, and he worked his way up to become a Dayan. He has been a Dayan now for about, I would say about 25/30 years already. But he worked his way up, he wasn't ... he started at the bottom of the ladder, well not bottom, but from where he started from he worked his way up ...

RL: And when he first came as a kashrus supervisor, did he find things very different then to how they are now?

BK: Oh yes, I hope they are different now, there was a lot to put right, mainly due to ignorance, because a lot of the caterers and the meat shops, the butchers and the bakers just didn't know, they didn't know a lot of the important halochas, so they had to be taught, it is like everything else. You know you can become a butcher and know what

Tape 3: 30 minutes 36 seconds

one joint of meat is from another, but do you know the halochas that go with it. So it was an education.

He was also a communal Rabbi and he went from Shul to Shul and he spoke in many places. You know, he went to many public places, I don't know which Shul in the north that he hasn't spoken in, almost every yom tov he spoke in a different Shul, and he was a communal Rabbi as well. And ...

RL: How long was he a communal Rabbi for?

BK: Oh, many years, when Dayan Golditch wasn't able to do it any more, you know he took over. I think he was more or less doing it to a slower or lesser degree until about ten years ago. Even then he has to go to many public functions as a Dayan of the Beis Din, so he is still in the community, but he doesn't have to go to all of the Shuls because they have other communal Rabbis now, but he did it for many years. Yes almost every Shul he has spoken in, more than once probably.

RL: And you say that he has retired as Rabbi of the Adass Yeshurun?

BK: Yes.

RL: What made him retire?

BK: Well, first of all his age. I know Rabbis don't usually retire, but there is a very interesting historical fact in the family, the ... my husband is family of the Chassam Sopher, and he was Rabbi for 33 years in his community, and then he passed his way. And his grandfather was a Rabbi in Baden, that is in Switzerland, and he was Rav in Zurich as well for 33 years, so my husband felt that 33 years has a very deep meaning and he didn't want to overstep the mark, he wanted to leave healthily and be able to do other things, so he made it a pointer to him. There were other reasons as well but this was the most poignant reason, and they thought they wanted a younger person, and interestingly enough, his grandfather, Rabbi Krausz, took over the Rabbonus in Switzerland in Zurich, from the grandfather, Rabbi Wreschner, he was called Rabbi Weingarten. And when my husband retired they suggested they take Rabbi Wreschner, so he followed my husband, which was also quite symbolic. Now he is going as well, did you know that?

RL: For how many years was your husband Rabbi at the Shul?

BK: 33 years.

RL: He stayed for 33 years ...

Tape 3: 33 minutes 30 seconds

BK: 33 years ... And then he chose retirement, and he said he wanted to retire and do something ... you know he still has connections with the Shul but he wanted to revoke his Rabbonus. You know it is the only job that is a seven day a week job, Rabbonus, but he did that ... there was quite a few reasons, but that was the most pressing one, so he left, Boruch Hashem in good health.

RL: And coming onto your children ... can you tell me a little bit about your children? What they have done? Did all of them go to Broughton Jewish? How many did you have?

BK: Nine children, kneine hora.

RL: Did they all go to Broughton Jewish?

BK: No, no ...

RL: Can you take me through their development.

BK: The first five, the first six went to Broughton Jewish, the next one went to, he may have overlapped and then he went to Jewish Day, I don't know how many I have given you there ... but it doesn't matter ...

RL: That is seven ...

BK: So the last two went to the Mechina, now where did they go before Mechina, they went to ... Mechina is only from the age ... they must have gone to Jewish Day Primary School. Wait a minute, they went to primary Broughton Jewish, and the primary of Jewish Day, the first boys went to Jewish Grammar, and the last two went to Mechina, so ... the two girls went Jewish High. So Jewish Grammar, Jewish High and Mechina basically.

RL: So how did it go between boys and girls? How many boys and how many girls?

BK: Seven boys and two girls.

RL: And they went to Jewish High. And after school ... well first of all, did they belong to any youth groups at all?

BK: Well, Bnos and Pirchim, the girls were Bnos, Bnos Agudas, not Bnos School but Bnos Aguda, where they went to a weekly ... and they had concerts and all year they had events with Bnos and they went to that.

Tape 3: 36 minutes 0 second

RL: And then, after they left school, what did they go on to do?

BK: The girls went to sem in Gateshead and the boys went to Yeshiva in Gateshead, except for one who went to Sharei Torah here.

RL: And then after that?

BK: They all went to ... the boys all went to Ponovicz ... all of them, and the girls got married. When they finished sem they got married straight after they finished sem.

RL: Who did the girls marry?

BK: Our oldest daughter married a Rabbi, Elozer Lieberman, who teaches. They were all in Kollel in Gateshead to start with, all the ones who are in England now, so he teaches in the new sem in Gateshead and he is head of the kashrus board in Gateshead. And our other daughter married Boruch Shimon Barnett, who teaches now in Be'er Hatorah in Gateshead, so they all went to Kollel first. Our older son is Rosh Hakollel of Zichron Shaul in Gateshead, so they all have positions in Gateshead.

RL: Are there any other children in Gateshead?

BK: Two sons and two daughters in Gateshead, the two daughters I have told you about, the sons, one is the head of a Kollel and the other one has got two Kollelim, one is a zeroim kollel, where they learn the dinim of shmittah and all that, and he has got a Choshen Mishpot Kollel, he runs that as well, that was where Dov Openheimer was involved when he lived in Gateshead.

RL: Sorry, what was that?

BK: Rabbi Openheimer, do you know he moved here? He made a Choshen Mishpot Kollel that is on business ethics, well one of our sons is head of that Kollel, and another Kollel where they learn all the dinim of shmittah and things like that, and he is the one who makes this terumas and ma'asros where you all belong, that is him, so they all do their bit ... yes ...

RL: So that is four of the children, and what have the other children gone on to.

BK: They are all in Eretz Yisroel learning there, one is, he gives shiurim in a Ba'al Teshuva Yeshivah in B'nei Brak called Mabatorah, and his wife is a teacher. And the others are all in learning either in Kiryat Sepher or Bnei Brak. One son has just moved here now, our youngest son has just moved to Manchester and he is in Kollel here.

RL: Are they all married?

Tape 3: 39 minutes 7 seconds

BK: Yes.

RL: Do you know how many grandchildren you have?

BK: I do. But that is not interesting, well it is interesting ... but I do know, yes, Boruch Hashem ...

RL: Approximately?

BK: No ...

RL: No ...

BK: Boruch Hashem we are blessed with a lot, we don't number them ...

RL: Do you have any grandchildren married?

BK: Two grandchildren are married?

RL: And any great grandchildren?

BK: One, so far. So, we have a lot to be grateful. In the previous ... as I say I didn't even see a grandparent, and the Gateshead Rav once said, how is it that so many people have the privilege of being great grandparents, I mean it is nothing unusual any more, even great great is becoming a normal, because we have to continue handing over the tradition from father to son and we need all the generations, so it is a responsibility, it is not just the progress, it is a responsibility as well. It is a fantastic thing. You don't feel it, it just happens, and all being well you will get there as well.

RL: When did you become a British citizen?

BK: We became British as a family already quite early on, it must have been about, I must have been early teens, my father, he was very involved in restitution work and he helped a lot of people and he worked on it and he got British citizenship quite early on, so I remember when we had to sign these declarations, we became British quite early on, I think I was about aged 12 or something like that.

RL: Have you ever been to Germany? Have you ever been back?

BK: Well, unless you call Frankfurt airport going back to Germany, you know, besides going to the places which are important, like the Beis Olam and things like that I have no feeling, no feeling at all to go back to Germany. I would like to go to the other places like Prague and these places which have so much to show, but not Germany.

Tape 3: 41 minutes 53 seconds

RL: How do you feel towards the Germans?

BK: Well, you can see what is happening now. They haven't really changed their colours. You know, they are no different to any other country now, it is worldwide. It is a very dangerous world now, but you know, I don't think the sympathy towards us now is any less than it is in Germany. We are not exactly ... there is plenty anti-Semitism wherever we go, we don't have to go far. We can just hear what is happening around the world, France and all these places, for all that they say they are very upset, the fact that it can happen, we are living in very dangerous times, I don't know if any place is any better. How do I feel towards Germany? They will never be able to repay what they have done, never, never ... with all their confessions, they will never be able to ... their earth is soaked with Jewish blood and they will never be able to put that right. They will never be able to justify it. So what can I feel?

RL: How do you feel towards Israel?

BK: When I am there I feel very much affiliated to Israel, but it is very sad the situation there, because it is not being run the way it should be run, and until the government comes to its senses and realises ... I don't know how much one should say, but things are very serious there, with the country being run the way it is being run, to make it almost impossible for the committed to survive, is very unfair. I have never seen a country that

looks so little after its youth. If you hear the welfare state here, what they do for families with children, and there they are depriving them right, left and centre, they are not giving them their rights at all. Every child is entitled to a certain amount of help, I have never seen that anywhere else, I don't know how they can answer for it. How are people meant to survive? But, I don't know what other people think, but I think it is very obvious that it is a very sad state there. And yet my children wouldn't leave, the ones who come back now, come back with a heavy heart, they still want to be there more than here, they love it there. The life there you can't compare to anywhere else, it is very, very special to live in Israel. Very special, especially in the communities they are setting up, beautiful communities, it is just a hard life. And they wouldn't change it.

RL: Why has your younger son come back?

BK: He came back because he wasn't happy in the Kollel where he was learning, and that is because so many had to close down. His Kollel had to close down because of lack of funds, and he couldn't find something. He didn't come back for financial reasons, he was prepared to struggle, he is struggling here. But he wanted to have somewhere where he would be learning well. He even gave up a flat there, he already had his own flat, so he gave that up to come and learn here. So ... it wasn't easy, a very hard decision, they miss it terribly.

RL: In terms of identity, how would you describe yourself?

Tape 3: 45 minutes 49 seconds

BK: I don't quite understand how I am meant to answer that. I mean I am who I am. I don't know ...

RL: I was thinking in terms of English, Jewish, German, Continental, a mixture ...

BK: I suppose English, very English, very English, with an English reticence, you know a little bit laid back at times, which is the English mentality, you know not to worry too much about what will happen the next day, and hopefully Jewish, trying ... but, certainly not German, but like most of us living in a country for so long which has enabled us to follow our religion unhindered, which is a great, great chessed, so, I just feel very Jewish here in a community like this, perhaps more so if you are involved with others and can give to others.

RL: Do you feel that you have any continental identity?

BK: I don't know how any continental identity would show? I mean maybe I have got a Yekish streak in me, I don't think that is anything to do with where I come from, it is just that I like to do things properly, so, the definition of Yekke is not always understood. A Yekke is somebody who is really very reliable, or who tries to be reliable, but is not to be inflexible, you have to have a certain amount of flexibility about you, to have the best of everything. I don't know where the continental comes into it all.

RL: Do you feel different to the British?

BK: I suppose in a way, because one can see a little bit the disadvantages of being too phlegmatic and too easy going when you see what happens in Israel and places like that then one tries not to be too British in that aspect, but otherwise how can one help it, and one becomes like that society one becomes like that society and we try to use ones best not to use it to ones disadvantage.

RL: Can I just catch up with your brother and sisters and what they went off to do when ... ?

BK: Well, my sister, my older sister, she was an academic person and she was teaching for many years in London, and when she went to Israel, unmarried, and she went to see what life had for her there, and she got married there. She is very high in the educational world, she worked her way up in education, she has done a lot of translation, from German to English, from Ivrit to English, and she is head of the school department – well she was – she interviewed teachers for the education department and she was in Be'er Sheva. My other sister, well she is the wife of a husband who is very much involved in a lot of things in Yerushalayim, because he is one of the main Rabbonim there.

RL: In?

Tape 3: 49 minutes 18 seconds

BK: In Yerushalayim, in Jerusalem. She is very involved in Shaarei Tzedek, in a voluntary basis, she has got her own commitments in the community, and she has got a very busy life in the community all on a voluntary basis.

RL: Who did they marry?

BK: My older sister married a teacher, well he was a teacher, he is retired now, by the name of Meir Horowitz in Beer Sheva.

And my second sister, she married Yehoshua Neuwirth, who is, he teaches in Kol Torah Yeshiva and he teaches in the sem in Jerusalem, the big sem, and he is one of the poskim, one of the Rabbis who decide, he is the Rabbi for Shaarei Tzedek, and he has brought out a lot of books on halacha.

My brother lives in Gateshead and he is the Sopher, the scribe, there is only one Sopher in Gateshead and he is the one. He took over from my father with the artistic touch, and he has made good use of it, and he is the Sopher and he is doing very well there, he is very busy. He wrote a Sepher Torah for the family Hubert a few years ago, quite a few years ago, and he has ... he is doing very nicely, he is a very special person.

RL: When did your parents pass away?

BK: My father passed away about ... it must be about 30 years ago, and my mother about 12 years ago.

RL: Were they still living in Gateshead?

BK: Yes, well my mother was here for part of the time, but her home was still in Gateshead. She lived with my brother and she passed away there.

RL: Have you ever had any contact with any refugee organisation or holocaust societies or anything like that in this country?

BK: No, because I couldn't really identify with it, because I didn't really go through the trauma, just having been uprooted from our home to another home wasn't enough reason, I also haven't been involved with them.

RL: Is there anything else that you might want to add that you have not touched upon?

BK: Under what heading, I don't know ... I think that we have to inculcate in ourselves and in the generations growing up now, not to take advantage of the freedom that we have, and if we have the freedom to question why we have got that freedom, we have got a very big responsibility. The previous generations were deprived of their freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of anything, and were so savagely punished for

Tape 3: 52 minutes 29 seconds

doing whatever they were meant to do, we have to have the responsibility to put that back onto a fair scale, we have to do everything that we can to make up for those who aren't able to do it, and we shouldn't just think that it is automatic, that we can do what we like. Because what have we done to deserve to have a life like we have here, compared to what they did. What did they do to deserve what they went through? We are not here to judge anybody, we mustn't, but it gives us a very big responsibility to continue what they couldn't continue. So we are not here just to do what we want, how we want, we have got to ... that is how I feel. We should be asking ourselves "Why am I here? Why have I been given the privilege to be here in such a country with all the facilities? What am I doing with it?" That is a very important message that we should be giving over to everybody. To ourselves and to the next generation, because they take far too much for granted, youngsters don't think, but as they grow up to realise what responsibility we shoulder to justify what we have, not to think that we are just entitled to it.

I think that is one of the biggest lessons we can learn from what happened in the last sixty, no before the last sixty years. And that should be the message of all these reminiscing, not just for the sake of reminiscing, but to learn something from it. I feel very strongly about it, that is one of the reasons why I agreed to this interview. Not just for the sake of the interview but because it is time consuming, your time and my time. But if it can give such a message across, to see what people made of their lives, having

come through with nothing and they did everything to make sure the next generation has the ability to grow, then we have to grow, and we have to use it and we have to hand it down. So, I don't know if that message will hit home, but I think that is very important. Every privilege has its responsibilities and I think that is one of the main things we have in mind. We can only try.

RL: Thank you very much, thank you.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Tape 3: 54 minutes 55 seconds

BK: These are pictures of my parents. My father's photo was taken in approximately 1965 in Gateshead, and my mother was approximately in 1990, also in Gateshead.

RL: And their names?

BK: Their names, my father is Mr Jacob Sohn and my mother is Mrs Selina Sohn.

This is one of our rare family photos. My mother in the centre, on the left hand is my older sister Hannah Horowitz, on the left hand side is my other sister Elsie Neuwirth. In front of her my brother Henry Sohn, and myself on the right hand side, and this was taken approximately 1946 in Gateshead.

Tape 3: 55 minutes 57 seconds

This was at our wedding in 1959. You can see black and white photos only, and my father in law on the right of my chosen, my husband.

RL: Where was it taken?

BK: It was taken in Gateshead.

This is a family photo taken in Manchester in 1976. In the back row is our oldest daughter Rochel, then Chaim and Moshe, Yisroel and Esther. Front row from the left is Shimon, Menachem, Tzvi Yehuda and the little baby on my knee is Nosson.

This is a picture of our grandchildren taken in 1991 in Gateshead, some of them anyway, some of the grandchildren.

This is a picture taken in Gateshead in 2002 at the wedding of our oldest granddaughter and I am standing behind the bride together with my husband.