

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	33

Interviewee Surname:	Edwards
Forename:	Ruth
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	9 July 1926
Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview:	25 September 2003
Location of Interview:	Salford, Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 36 minutes

REFUGEE VOICES

THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL HISTORY COLLECTION

TAPE Number 33

NAME: RUTH EDWARDS

DATE: 25TH SEPTEMBER 2003

LOCATION: MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

RL: I am conducting an interview with Ruth Edwards. It is taking place in Manchester. Today is Thursday 25th September 2003 and I am Rosalyn Livshin

Can you tell me first your name?

RE: My married name or my old name?

RL: Both

RE: I was Ruth Schneier and then, when I married, my name is Ruth Edwards.

RL: Did you have any other names or nicknames?

RE: No. Yes – Maedi. My parents used to call me Maedi

RL: Do you know how that came about?

RE: Yes. I was the youngest of the grandchildren and my other cousin was six months older than me and he was called Bubi. All the other grandchildren had their names, but we were called Bubi and Maedi We were the two youngest..

RL: Was Ruth named after anybody?

RE: Yes. I was named after my father's mother.

RL: Did you have a Hebrew name?

RE: Ruchu.

RL: And where were you born?

RE: In Vienna.

RL: The date?

RE: 9th July 1926.

RL: How old does that make you?

RE: 77.

2 Mins 08 Secs

RL: If you can tell me your parents' names and where they were born?

RE: My mother was Josephine Bick - single name - and Josephine Schneier, married name. She was born in Strusov which was Russia at the time. My father was born Isaac and he was born in Lemberg - Poland at the time.

RL: Starting first with your father, can you tell me something about his family background?

RE: All I know is that he had three sisters, all married and living in Poland. One had two children, one had two or three children and one had none. And his mother got killed during the war by a Russian coming out of the house. His father he took with him to Vienna and he had a toothache. He took him to the dentist to have this particular tooth out and - there was *Blutvergiftung* –septic- set in and he died just from having a tooth out.

RL: When was that?

RE: That was in 1919.

RL: So his mother died during the First World War?

RE: Yes. She went out of the house and a stray bullet killed her.

RL: Do you know what your grandfather did for a living?

RE: No. Not my father's father, no. I know he had two brothers that came to England - Moishe and Sam.

RL: Your grandfather's brothers came to England?

RE: Yes

4 Mins 22 Secs

RL: What part of England?

RE: Wales, Llanelli

RL: Did you ever meet your father's sisters?

RE: No. Last time my father saw them was *Pesach* 1935. He went to Poland to see them and spent *Pesach* there. But I know they were very, very poor. We were poor in Vienna, but they were even poorer because my mother used to send all the old clothes to them. Every few months a parcel of clothes went off to them.

RL: Do you know what happened to them during the war?

RE: No. I never heard another word from them. I used to write to them before the war. I think only one or two times and nothing more after the war.

RL: What were their married names?

RE: I can't remember.

RL: Do you know anything about your father's education? What kind of upbringing he had?

RE: Nothing at all. He was a very good man. He was a very good husband and a very good father and I was very close to him.

RL: What occupation did he do?

RE: It is very difficult. He tried selling materials to tailors. You see everything was made in those days, and they needed linings, buttons and all that. And he didn't do very well with that. So he changed over to buy bits and pieces from the tailors and sorting them out into wool, cotton and used to sell that on.

RL: Where did he work from?

RE: Well at first he used to work in the house. There was a small room downstairs that wasn't used and he used to work from there and then the neighbours complained about it. So he took a hut on in ... where they grow plants. You know, what they call it - in a place where there are gardens. There were some empty huts and he rented one of those and he worked from there. It was a very poor living.

7 Mins 07 secs

RL: Do you know what happened to him during the First World War?

RE: No. I know he was in the army but I don't know what happened to him.

RL: When did he decide to come to Vienna?

RE: After the First World War. There was nothing for him to do in Poland. He had lost his mother and the three sisters seemed to be getting on all right. So he took his father with him to Vienna.

RL: Do you know why he chose Vienna?

RE: They all seemed to go to Vienna. I don't know why. Whether it was the nearest place or the best place, I don't know, but whoever we knew, they all came from around the same place and they all came to Vienna.

RL: Did he have any other relations in Vienna?

RE: N, nobody.

RL: Going on to your mother's family, can you tell me about her family background?

RE: Yes, her father had – I would call a farm these days. I don't mean a farm with cows and that, but what was called a *Gutsbesitz* and they all lived there until after the Russian pogroms. And after the war they all moved to Vienna. My two uncles were already in Vienna. One studied to be a doctor and one to be a lawyer. Well - more than a lawyer in Vienna, but a lawyer by English standards. The other two brothers came over and they became businessmen and then there was only my mother who was at home.

RL: So, she had how many brothers?

RE: Four brothers.

RL: And she was the only girl?

RE: Yes

RL: When you say the two brothers came over, where did they come over to?

RE: Vienna with their parents and they rented a flat in Vienna, but the other two who went to University, didn't live with them. I don't know where they lived but they didn't live at home. Then the two brothers got married and there was only my mother left at home with her parents till she got married. And her parents stayed on in the flat till my grandmother died. There is a grave for her but my grandfather was sent to Auschwitz, at 82.

10 Mins 05 Secs

RL: What was his name?

RE: Berish.

RL: And your grandmother's name?

RE: Czarne, very difficult. I never called her by her name. I always called her grandmother but never by her name.

RL: Do you know what sort of education your mother had?

RE: Very little. She did learn to read and write. One uncle, one of her brothers, came to learn bookbinding in England but he didn't like it. He came back to Vienna. Then he went to Romania. I don't know what he did in Romania, but he came back with a bride. And the other uncle, I don't know how well educated he was.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing did she have?

RE: When she lived with her parents, very strict. When she married and came to live on her own - my father would have been more religious than my mother if she would have helped him to be but she was more outgoing and, you know, my mother was more free than that but the parents were very religious. He still used to *daven* every day. He used to go to *Shul* on Saturday and he didn't used to work.

RL: Which *Shul* did your father *daven* at?

RE: It wasn't really a *Shul* it was a *Stiebl*. I have been to it but I cannot remember the name. My husband might remember the name. It was where the whole family went to except for my two uncles who studied. They didn't come. My two uncles and my father always came.

12 Mins 35 Secs

RL: The two uncles who were studying, were they studying in Vienna?

RE: Yes.

RL: What happened to the uncles?

RE: The lawyer managed to get away through Italy to America with his wife and son. The daughter got married on a boat to her boyfriend to go to Argentina where his parents were already there. My uncle, the doctor - my auntie managed to get him out of Dachau. It was all before the war and they got a certificate to come to England and they came to England. They had no children and we have been in constant touch with them all the time while they lived in London. Then they lived all around the country. He was a doctor then but he could not work on his own because they weren't allowed. But when the National Health Act came in he could start working on his own, but it was not very easy. They lived in Macclesfield at the time and I went to live with them in Macclesfield for three-and-a-half years before I got married.

When my uncle died he was a very young man - he was only 64. This auntie sold the practice at Great Horton and came to live with me for 34 years. She was 91 when she died.

RL: What were their names?

RE: Hanni, Hanni and Solomon Finkel. He was called Finkel because he was the youngest. When they got married in Russia they were all called Bick, by the

father's name. Where he was born was a different part and they didn't recognise the marriage. He was the youngest and they didn't recognise the marriage. So they called him after my grandmother's name. He was called Finkel and the rest were called Bick. And the last one was illegitimate which, of course, he wasn't at all.

15 Mins 12 Secs

RL: Why didn't they recognise the marriage?

RE: Because there wasn't a state marriage - only a shul marriage.

RL: That was the two that had been at University. What happened to the two who were businessmen?

RE: One got lost completely. The other one was with another son. He lost one son. They went to Belgium and, of course, Belgium was overrun. He and the youngest son, whose photographs I have shown you, did not go to a concentration camp. They went to an internment camp and I heard from them every now and again through the Red Cross and I could write to them through the Red Cross to them.

They finished up in Paris after the war and I went to see them and stayed with them for three weeks. I went back the following year because he (the son?) was getting married and had his father living with him all the time.

When his father died, he decided he was going to live in Israel because in France he had two daughters with whom we are still in close contact and his wife - I have just spoken to her as well. He was worried they would not marry Jewish because there was a lot of intermarriage going on in France. So, he decided to move to Israel. He came to our Edmond's Barmitzvah and about two years after that he moved to Israel and he even took his father's body to Israel.

RL: What was his name?

RE: Willi. He had two daughters and one is married to Ariel Ridlon - one of the Ridlons - you may have heard of them. And the other is married to an ultra, ultra orthodox Monty Reisen and she is completely orthodox. She doesn't send her children to Higher Education or anything, only to the *Yeshiva*. She doesn't believe in anything else, that's all she believes in.

RL: Where did they live in Israel?

RE: In Jerusalem. Both of them live in Jerusalem. I go there when we go to Israel and I go to my cousin's wife. I go, we go, I've stayed there, Michelle and everybody stays there. They came to the wedding of my granddaughter.

RL: Which internment camp were they in?

RE: I can't tell you.

RL: Coming on to you, what are your earliest memories as a child?

18 Mins 12 Secs

RE: My mother was having another baby and unfortunately they told her not to have any more children after I was born. My uncle was a doctor by then. He got her a specialist and the trouble was she couldn't start labour. She had a terrible time when I was born and she was told by everybody not to have any more children but she insisted on having another one.

Unfortunately, the specialist who brought me into the world had died in the meantime and she went to somebody else, perhaps who didn't know her history. I can't tell you. They let her go over until nearly ten months and she had a stillborn boy. It was March time when that happened because I know every March there was something wrong. My mother was crying all the time and she asked my father always to go somewhere. Nothing was said, but I knew and I was only three and I knew something was wrong. She was a long time in the hospital after this, and I remember her standing at the top of the steps. I was staying with auntie - the one I had living with me. I stayed with them quite often in Vienna because they had no children and used to take me during the holidays and take me around. I was stayed with them, and I remember as clear as if it was yesterday and I can still see her standing in the dress. I said, "That is not my mother. My mother is ill in hospital". I didn't recognise her she had changed so much and that is what I can remember. But, after that, I can remember going to school.

RL: Did you have any siblings?

RE: No, nobody.

RL: You were an only child?

RE: An only child, yes. She didn't dare try again after what happened.

20 Mins 28 Secs

RL: Do you remember the home where you lived?

RE: Yes, definitely. It was three rooms – a kitchen, a living room with a divan - say a couch, but I could sleep on it. And a cabinet which was a small room which held beds going this way, not that way. That's where my parents slept.

We lived in the kitchen. It was a big kitchen. It had a table, but it wasn't a table with legs. It had drawers in it and two cupboards underneath and that's where we ate. It had a very big kitchen cabinet. It had no fridge, but there was an *Eiskasten*, an ice-box, where you could put ice in and keep things cool. Near the window there was a small table, as long as this, but twice the size of this, and a chair. I had one of those wooden chairs, and that was my place where I used to do my homework.

The other room had a table and four chairs, two wardrobes like this, and there was the piano. It still had one of those very big ovens in the corner which was never used. We had two windows. The dressing table was going this way and the divan was down that way and that is where I slept. In the other little room there were two beds and two bedside tables and that is all we had.

RL: Was it in an apartment block?

RE: Yes, the apartment block was very nice and big, but we were in the offspring of the apartment. We had only two neighbours - us and a neighbour. We had to go through the whole yard to get water and get to the toilet. All fresh water and dirty water had to go through that yard.

23 Mins 00 Secs

RL: Did you not having running water in the flat?

RE: No, nothing at all. It was a very cheap flat. That was all they could afford.

RL: What part of Vienna was it in?

RE: In the 20th district.

RL: And were there other Jewish families there?

RE: Yes, there were. It was about three I think and one non-Jewish family who was exceptionally good to us.

RL: What floor was the apartment on?

RE: Well, it wasn't a whole floor. It was half a floor. I would say it was about ten steps up. We went to see it once. We went as far as the door and I just couldn't knock on the door. So I thought, right, we'll go again when we went with the others. We went with two children once and with one child another time. But the house had changed. It had come down and they had rebuilt it. It was a corner house and they had given it a different address, and the door we used to use was a driveway. So, there was no point in going any more.

RL: What was the address?

RE: It was Brigittengasse 9, then stroke 20 because it was in the 20th district. And the house number, the flat number was 16. Sixteen has played a great part in my life, the number 16.

RL: How was that?

RE: First I arrived in England on the 16th, my son was born on the 16th and somehow the number 16 has always played something in my life - coincidence?

RL: How did you get on with the neighbours?

RE: Oh fine - before Hitler came.

25 Mins 21 secs

RL: Did you have much contact with the non-Jewish neighbours?

RE: "Hello". They used to ask me how I was getting on at school - how you speak to a child. "Are you enjoying your holidays?" Things like that.

RL: What school did you go to?

RE: I went to an ordinary primary school since I was six to ten. My mother didn't want me to go to a grammar school. She thought it would be too hard work for me. So she didn't want me to study. She said I should go to an ordinary - what you call here secondary school - for four years, and after that I should take some course in business. What sort of business she had in mind for me I don't know. I know she wouldn't let me go to a grammar school and I was quite happy not to go to a grammar school. All my friends were studying for the entrance exams and I had no problems. I just moved over, but I was only there for 18 months. Not quite 18 months because Hitler came then and we had to go to a Jewish school a long way away. I had to take a tram to go to the Jewish school.

RL: First of all, in the first two schools, how did you get on with the other non-Jewish pupils?

RE: Very well.

RL: Did you ever experience any problems?

RE: No, none at all. I also went to a Hebrew school because my father insisted that I learn Hebrew. We only had two lessons of Hebrew in the school, but he said that was not enough. I had to go to Hebrew school three afternoons a week. In the Junior School we had no afternoons so I was free and my mother used to take me to the Hebrew school, three afternoons a week.

RL: Where was the Hebrew school?

RE: Well, it's hard to describe, but it was about ten minutes away.

RL: Did it have a name?

RE: I only know the teacher's name - Herzog - but I don't know the name of the school. But it was a proper Hebrew school. There were lessons there all afternoon.

RL: How big were the classes?

RE: I think about twenty girls and boys.

RL: What kind of things did you learn?

28 Mins 01 Secs

RE: Well, we learned to write - not like it is in the ... (inaudible). We learned to write in the Hebrew way like they do in Israel, and we learned to read and all about the festivals, right through. When you have only two hours in the school you really don't get enough time and he went into it much deeper.

RL: Were they mixed classes?

RE: Yes, but not sitting together, half and half.

RL: Who were your closest friends at that point?

RE: All those that I have in the album, all gone.

RL: Were they Jewish children?

RE: All, yes.

RL: Did you have any close non-Jewish friends?

RE: Not really.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs?

RE: No.

RL: Did you have any hobbies?

RE: Not really.

RL: What did you do in your spare time?

RE: I learned to embroider. My grandfather taught me to embroider when I was five. He also taught me to play chess. So when he came and he came nearly every day to see us, because my grandmother was one of those people who used to cook and cook, he used to come with the ready-made food. They used to know already and would say "Opa" - they used to call him Opa - "Opa's here with the dinner". He had a leather shopping bag and every day he and came with food. Sometimes he would call for me at the school and we *just made it out* and came home together and that was absolutely wonderful. He was a wonderful man. I didn't get very close to my grandmother, but I was very close to my grandfather.

30 Mins 18 Secs

RL: Why did he used to bring food every day?

RE: Well, my mother was very busy cleaning so she didn't have enough time to cook. My grandmother used to cook, cook, cook, so she used to send it.

RL: Where was your mother cleaning?

RE: The house, the flat, the three rooms. I know it sounds ridiculous but that's how it was.

RL: Did your mother do any other work?

RE: Yes, she used to wash and iron. No - she washed and ironed and baked. No, she never did any work.

RL: What kind food did your grandmother use to send? What did you use to eat?

RE: Chopped and boiled fish. We used to call it *gefilte* fish - not like here chopped and boiled, but they used to stuff the fish back, mostly chicken soup and chicken, *lokshen* and all that sort of thing. Don't forget everything had to be done in Vienna. You could not go out and buy *lokshen* you had to make them. You had to bake your own *chollah*. And if you didn't have an oven you had to take it to the baker's to have it baked for you. Later in years, we got an oven. Before that you had to go to the baker to have it baked.

RL: What was your favourite food?

RE: I don't know. I wasn't a good eater as all mothers would say. I didn't really have a favourite food. I used to like *Knoedel* - dumplings. We used to have dumplings with plums in them - that was a meal - and dumplings with - the German words come to me so easily at the moment - yellow things. Anyway there were two or three kinds of dumplings. Mushroom sauce I used to like very much when she made it - with bread *Knoedel* and that sort of thing. Meat there wasn't very much, only for the weekends.

RL: Did you used to eat together with your grandparents at all?

RE: No. Well I wouldn't say no. Not very often. We used to go there and I used to have the tea a glass of tea and I used to like to put the *matzo* in. I used to break it up and I liked that. I always used to have that when I used to go there - not actual meals.

RL: What about *Seder* night?

RE: We always had it at our own house. It was too much to go there and two *Seder* nights my mother took ill. One *Seder* she took very ill with - appendix, and was rushed into hospital, another *Seder*, years before, with her gall-bladder. Those were both two *Seder* nights I will never forget.

33 Mins 39 Secs

RL: What about childhood illnesses?

RE: I had the whooping cough very badly. I was about five. Because they said that if you walked against the water it would help, and I remember my father carrying me on his shoulder and walking against the Danube hoping that it would help. I have had measles. I have had chickenpox and that is all I can remember.

RL: Did your parents or your father belong to any clubs or societies?

RE: No, neither of them. They didn't go anywhere.

RL: Was he involved in anything?

RE: No. My mother started going to the cinema only perhaps a year or two before Hitler came in. She used to go once a week to the cinema but it was by herself. My father used to stay with me. He wasn't really interested in the cinema. I used to go, well he used to take me to see Shirley Temple and that sort of thing. We never went out as three. He used to take me on Sunday afternoons down to what we could call the fun fair - the Prater. We used to walk. We had an agreement because we could not afford very much, so if we walked, I could go on a ride. If we went on the tram I couldn't have a ride. So we used to change over you know.

RL: What about reading? Did you read as a family?

RE: Read?

RL: Books or newspapers.

RE: We had no newspapers, only school books. I didn't get any other books.

RL: Did you have a radio?

RE: No. That was a luxury.

RL: Was your father interested in the news?

RE: Well I don't really know because it was never really talked about and if they talked between them I wouldn't know.

RL: What about holiday times?

RE: We had very little holiday. We had - my mother needed the sour water because, at the second childbirth her kidneys were affected and sour water is supposed to help. So we went to two places. One was called Bad Sauerbrunn, which we have been to - me and Michelle and my husband. We used to rent a room with a little cooker and my mother used to take things with. We went in a taxi - four or five people whatever it was and she used to make her own meals. On Friday

night she used to pay beforehand - there was a *kosher* restaurant - and we used to go for Saturday lunch.

37 Mins 04 Secs

There was another place we went to which was cheaper, called Kobersdorf. We tried to get there but we could not often because they only have a bus running there once a week, so you can imagine how big the place is. She rented a room in the same farmyard and she used to cook for us. She used to go and drink that water. It was in a pump. You used to get big containers - brown containers if you can imagine. She used to bring them home and whenever she wanted a drink, she used to take that water. She used to manage one or two containers a day and it helped her.

RL: So were those the only two holidays?

RE: Those were the only two we ever had. We might have gone two or three times, but I can't remember - but nowhere else. I have not seen anything else. It was my auntie in Vienna who took me to see things like museums and parks. She used to take me round Vienna to show me things.

RL: Were you interested in music?

RE: My mother made me learn the piano. I wasn't really interested but she thought a girl had to play the piano. They managed to get a second hand piano. At one time the music teacher used to come to the house for an hour a week. But I could have done without it. I was not musical. I haven't got an ear for music but I did learn for about 18 months.

RL: Were either of your parents musical?

RE: No, neither of them.

RL: What about sport?

RE: Oh no. I never did anything at all.

RL: Did you learn to swim?

RE: No, I wasn't allowed in the water. And I have never learned to swim. I cannot swim to this day, although I made sure my children learned to swim.

RL: Why weren't you allowed in the water?

RE: Well, I don't know. She just had a fear of water so I wasn't allowed in the water. I have never been to a swimming pool in Vienna.

RL: Did you ever go to any musical concerts.

RE: Yes, my father took me to one at the Volksopera - Rumpelstiltskin. I can still remember that. If I went to any more I can't tell you. That is in my mind, but I think that will have been the only one.

RL: What about the theatre?

RE: No, couldn't afford it.

40 ins 14 Secs

RL: Going on to the Jewish school that you went to.

RE: The Hebrew school?

RL: Well, the secondary school that you had to go to.

RE: The Hebrew school finished as soon as Hitler came in. Then we went to the secondary school. There was no Hebrew there.

RL: Tell me about the secondary school you went to.

RE: Before Hitler? Where I stayed for 18 months?

RL: And then, after that?

RE: We had to go to a Jewish school. All the Jewish children had to go to a different school, a long way away.

RL: How did you get on there?

RE: I was alright. I had to take a tram and get there. I was alright.

RL: When did you become aware of what was going on with Hitler?

RE: When my father got taken away on the 10th November. Crystal Night.

RL: Can you describe to me what happened at that time?

RE: I wasn't in. I was across the road at a friend's house and there I didn't know anything. We were sitting round the table and I don't know a lot of the things. There was an old lady. This friend of mine had lost her mother and she lived with her grandmother. The grandmother was a very, very clever woman. She tried to keep us occupied so she gave us beads and we had to thread them and when they were threaded we had to crochet them into purses. It was just to give us something to do.

That was one of the evenings I was there and there were just the two of us. My mother said - it wasn't far but my mother said she would call for me. She came and I could see she had been crying and she said "Come on home. They have taken your father away". So straight away it came with her and when I got to

the flat I could see his coat was still hanging there. We had three hooks on the corner where his coat and hat used to hang. I could not believe it - his coat was still hanging there. She said, "Yes, they would not let him take his coat." It was a very cold night I remember in November. And that was when I burst into tears and that was my worst experience that I had. I think it was even worse than leaving them.

RL: Had they disturbed the flat at all?

RE: No, they did not. They came in and my mother said they were too polite. It was the brown ones, it wasn't the SS. It was the brown-shirts it was. They came in and they said, "Herr Schneier, you must come with us" and, of course, he went without saying anything and the next thing we heard, he was in Dachau. They were still allowed to write then. There was no war or anything.

43 Mins 43 Secs

RL What happened?

RE: Well, he was working in Dachau and my mother was trying to get him out. The only way she could get him out was by getting - we had nobody to go to and we had no family anywhere abroad - but if you bought a Shanghai card for 100 schillings you did not need a visa to go to Shanghai. So she started working for that.

Going back to my auntie, she had her mother living with her in Vienna. They still had a grocery shop, and she said to my mother "Let the child go somewhere. Don't keep her here with you." And my mother was very upset about this. I was with her all the time, and she said "How can I send a child of twelve away?" I wasn't even twelve then - about eleven or eleven-and-a-half. "I don't know the people. I don't know anything." My father had these two uncles in England you see, and they kept in contact but not very often. We had an invitation to come to the daughter's wedding and that. But to cut a long story short, she wrote to one of them, Sam, and she asked if they could do anything - if not for them could they do anything for me. The answer came back that they couldn't do anything for them. They hadn't got any money. They were very poor people, but they could take me to one of the daughters - the one for whom we had the invitation, who got married in 1936 and this was in 1939.

And so that started the work and there was an awful lot of work to be done to get me over. Because, as I came on my own, I needed so many papers that I hardly went to school. I had to go with my mother because they wanted to see me and we were queuing everywhere for the Gestapo to give us the papers and it took a long time. I think it took over six months to get everything for me to go. My father was released with a Shanghai card from Dachau on the 26th January. I left Vienna on the 14th February and arrived here on the 16th February.

46 Mins 24 Secs

RL: How did your mother get the money together for the Shanghai card?

RE: We had the last 100 schillings. That was the last. As a matter of fact, we used during that time to go every day to the soup kitchen to get the food for us and for my grandfather who still lived on his own.

RL: What did your father do once he had come out of Dachau?

RE: Nothing. He couldn't do anything. He wasn't allowed to work and he had until the end of February to leave the country. But he didn't want to go to Shanghai because there was no way my mother could go. So they started looking where they could go illegally and the only place that was open to them illegally was Yugoslavia. My father went first and my mother followed him.

RL: How did they get there?

RE: Over the mountains, they walked it. How she did it I don't know.

RL: Did somebody take them?

RE: Well, there were some guards that could be bribed. You could bribe some of the guards to take them over the mountains.

RL: When did they go?

RE: They went - I can't really tell you the dates. I would have to look at their letters. They went before the war because I still have letters from them. But I can't tell you the dates.

RL: Had your father been working up to the point that he was taken to Dachau?

RE: Not really, because there was nothing he could do. He could not go to all the people because he was Jewish and I don't think they would have entertained him. They were just going round and round to see where they can go. That was the most important thing for all the Jewish people in Austria - where they can go. People went illegally to Switzerland and to Belgium. Some got turned back. You got stories "Don't go there for that. Don't go there for that." You really didn't know where to go. If you got to Czechoslovakia Hitler follows you round so you were no better off. You had to go on again.

49 Mins 37 Secs

RL: Did you continue to go to school?

RE: Here? Yes. I arrived here by Mrs. Press, Auntie Lena, on the 16th February as I said on the Thursday, and I was at school on the Monday.

RL: When did you stop going to school in Vienna?

RE: I think it was the week before I went away.

RL: What about the *Anschluss*? What happened then?

RE: Well, we didn't feel it very much at that time where we lived. I can't speak for other people, but we didn't feel it very much when the *Anschluss* actually happened. As a matter of fact our neighbour turned round and said to us "You will be better off now that the *Anschluss* has happened."

RL: Why did he think that?

RE: Why did they think that? I can't tell you. Very stupid really, but that was what she said to my mother.

RL: You didn't experience anything different as a result?

RE: We were the lucky ones.

RL: Did hear about - was their talk about what was going on? What kind of things were you hearing?

RE: We were hearing how the people were scrubbing the pavements. There was a *Shul* I liked very much. I used to go sometimes, the ... (inaudible). Now it is coming back to me. That was where the family used to ... (inaudible again). But this was a different *Shul* and there were flats above it and they had thrown everything out on the street from inside the *Shul*. That upset me very much because I was going to school and I used to catch a tram from there and I just couldn't and I went home.

I didn't have much schooling during Hitler's time, to be honest. There was no regular schooling. If I went I went, but if I had somewhere to go I didn't. All I had to say was that I had to prepare for going away and nobody bothered. Everybody was in the same position. Everybody was trying to prepare something.

52 Mins 03 Secs

RL: During that time, did you personally experience any anti-Semitism?

RE: No. Yes, one girl called Emma Langer. We were very friendly. We met somewhere and she said, "I'm sorry, Ruth, I can't talk to you any more." I never met any others but that one girl, Emma Langer.

RL: Did your father ever say how he had been treated in Dachau?

RE: Only that he had to wear a striped uniform. He had to work but I don't know what.

RL: How did he seem when he came out of Dachau?

RE: His hair was cut and he had lost weight. But otherwise he seemed fine to me. I didn't look for anything if you know what I mean. I didn't know how he really felt. I was so glad to see him.

RL: When you packed to leave, what did you take? What were you allowed to take?

RE: Well, can I tell you, there is a little story attached to this. My mother, when it was decided that I was coming to England and I was going to Heywood Street in some town, she asked them if she could send things for me. She sent seventeen paper parcels, very big ones made up of linens, towels. I can't tell you because I am still using some of them. There were seventeen parcels waiting for me in Heywood Street, enormous ones. It nearly filled one wall in the attic. So I, personally, had very little to take with me. Everything was here. I am a completely different case to other people. I took a few bits and pieces of my childhood, which I still have in the little bag, and just what I needed for the thing.

I stayed the night in London. Again, my auntie's cousin was in London who called for me at the station. She took me to her home and let me sleep the night there. Took me the next day to what I presume was Euston and put me on the train for Piccadilly. All I had was Auntie Lena's address on a piece of paper. I got on the train and I got to Piccadilly. I knew there would be nobody waiting for me. I took a taxi. I showed the taxi driver this address and I got there.

55 Mins 28 Secs

RL: Could you speak any English?

RE: Not a word. So I said in Yiddish - or German I can't remember which it was. My Yiddish is not very good that he is waiting for the money and he charged her half-a-crown. So, she went out to pay him and there I was.

RL: Going back to Vienna just for the moment. You said you brought some little things from your childhood. What kind of things?

RE: Can you find the little *Koffer*, Michelle? It is there. No, I don't know where. I think it might be in the bedroom on the top. No, don't bother. What did I bring? A yo-yo, a little thing like a bird where you could put pins in, I had a pencil sharpener, a frog pencil sharpener I have got, a lot of my dolls, little bits and pieces which are not of any use to anybody. Oh yes, what we did send over was my father's *tallith* and his prayer-book that he used every day and his *tallith* bag. I have just given Edmond his *tallith* bag.

RL: When was that sent over?

RE: All in the parcels, before the war.

RL: Did anybody have to supervise you packing your little bits and pieces?

RE: No. My mother was there but that was all.

RL: Could you remember the day of departure?

RE: Yes. The 14th February.

RL: Can you describe that day?

RE: Yes. I don't know. I can't be normal I think, because I went to the station and I was quite happy to go. To me it was an adventure. I remember both of them crying on the train. They could go on the train to us because we were all children coming from different families and coming different ways. They weren't all being taken over like I did. Some of them came by the Kindertransport. I was on the train and I saw my father crying. Of course that made me cry and my mother said "Perhaps she doesn't want to go." And I said, "Yes, I do want to go." I remember saying that but not in English of course and the next thing we were gone. It was a very quick goodbye. Nobody thought that we would never see them again. I thought it would be a matter of six or seven months and we would be together again.

58 Mins 37 Secs

RL: How many children were travelling?

RE: Oh, the train was full, up to eighteen. I was twelve-and-a-half but they called them children until eighteen.

RL: Was anybody in charge of the children?

RE: No

RL: Was the train stopped on its journey?

RE: Yes, in Aachen. But they only came in. They didn't ask for anything. They walked right through the train and walked out again - at least in our compartment. I cannot speak for other compartments.

RL: And from there?

RE: From there it was straight through. We arrived in Harwich. I can't tell you where we took the boat from but I do remember arriving at Harwich.

RL: How was the boat trip?

RE: Very good. No problem. I don't remember. It was all in a haze. I can't really remember, but I remember getting off the boat in Harwich and getting on the train for London and arriving in London. My auntie's cousin met me in London. Who met the other children and how they were met or anything I can't tell you. Once she got hold of my hand that was it. She took me to her place. We arrived I think in the middle of the night because she let me sleep the next day. She said she wasn't going to take me on an early train to Manchester. So I

arrived in Manchester got about four or five o'clock, so I must have left London on this day about twelve.

60 Mins 28 Secs

TAPE 2 WITH RUTH EDWARDS

00 Mins 00 Secs

RL: So you arrived in Manchester. If you can take me from that point on, what happened?

RE: I started school on the Monday. I had a uniform and a blue raincoat. It was a central school and Auntie Lena had arranged for two girls to come for me to take me. It was only two bus stops down, the number 7, and you could walk it comfortably. It was a half-penny ride.

I went to the school and they made me very, very welcome. I met two or three girls from Vienna, which was lovely and I started school right away. They had been here a week or two longer than me. They used to give us - I could not understand any English personally - so the teacher used to give us words to learn. She would write them down and we had to re-write them and translate them and that's how I started to learn English and it wasn't very long before we mastered it. My best subject was Geography at the time. I was better than the English girls at Geography. They hadn't done as much as we had done in Vienna. We were far above in that subject. French I could not do at all and Maths I wasn't very good at, because they did different divisions and multiplications than we were learnt. I got into it. I enjoyed school very much. I came home for lunch and went back again and I did that for eighteen months.

2 Mins 54 Secs

But during that time we were evacuated to Accrington at the beginning of the war. I lived with non-Jewish people in Accrington who were extremely nice. I was in a play. Of course that was lovely with all the makeup and everything. I was out every night. Then they used to call for me to bring me home. I had a lovely write-up in the paper if I could find it.

At Christmas time everybody came home. They bought me a beautiful pair of fur gloves and £1 in an envelope which was a lot of money. *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* were nice. A family, Mr. and Mrs. Grosskopf, came over and we had meals and we fasted. It was my first fast and gave us dinner after that as well. They were lovely people. I don't remember which Grosskopf. I know there were so many Grosskopfs, but I don't know which ones came to us.

Christmas time we came home and went to school in Grecian Street where I was but we didn't have as many lessons because they were worried about having so many children together so they cut the lessons. I left school the following July.

RL: First of all, taking you back, you spent the weekend before you went to school, when you'd just arrived, with your relations?

RE: Yes.

RL: What was your impression of England and of Manchester?

RE: Well, I thought they all lived in villas. I could not believe they were poor people. They had a bathroom which I had never seen before. They all had their own bedroom. They had a living room and they had a kitchen. I remember writing home that they all lived in villas with gardens. I mean you didn't see that in Vienna - not where I lived anyway. I couldn't believe they were poor people but they were. They were living from week to week.

5 Mins 31 Secs

RL: What did they do for a living?

RE: The family Press. She had a wallpaper shop which was not hers. She was living rent-free, coal-free, electricity-free and she was getting a very small wage for it. Her husband was a machinist who was getting £2:10s. a week, which was a lot of money.

RL: Did they have children at home?

RE: No, they had no children. They had been married three years. Then here was the sister, who was getting married in August, older than her, called Esther. There was a brother, a *shochet* called Isaac. Isaac Pastor. I don't know if you ever ... He lived in Tewkesbury Drive. The brother and the mother and father lived in Heywood Street, next door, but one to each other. So I had three homes to go to. Then there was the family from Isaac Pastor, which made me very welcome as well. I was surrounded by people. I think they must have thought I had come with horns! I was surrounded by people the whole weekend. They all wanted to see me.

I came in a fur coat my auntie gave me not to be cold and I remember on the Friday Auntie Lena taking me to Timpson's to buy me two pairs of shoes. I said, "No more boots?" She said, "No." so the boots were slung and I got a brown pair for going out with laces and a black pair for school. She got me a gymslip, a blouse or two, a tie, black stockings, which I hated but which I had to wear and the navy raincoat ready for Monday. She bought me that right away and a school bag but I can't remember what that looked like.

RL: How did you feel your first weekend away from your parents, away from your mother?

RE: I was so surrounded by everything new. I was in a different world and all I did was write, write, write to tell them everything. I used to write sixteen or seventeen letters in a week. All my family I used to write to, friends and family. That is all I did in the evenings - just write letters.

8 Mins 40 Secs

RL: What language could you speak in to your relations?

RE: German and they spoke back in Yiddish to me.

RL: Could you understand each other?

RE: Yes, because I understood Yiddish although I didn't speak it.

RL: And then you went to school?

RE: Yes.

RL: In August or September war broke out. What was happening? Where you aware of what was going on with your parents during this time?

RE: Yes. I knew they had gone to Yugoslavia so, hopefully - who thought he would invade Yugoslavia? I felt they were being quite safe. Only my grandfather was left in Vienna with one uncle and aunt and cousin. The rest had all disappeared. They had gone to Belgium. One uncle had gone to Belgium with wife and two sons, and the other one was in London - the doctor already and the lawyer was in America. So my parents were in Yugoslavia. So I had nobody actually in Vienna very much - just my grandfather and they were putting him into an old home because they didn't move even from Vienna - the other uncle. I don't know why they didn't move but they stayed put.

RL: The school you went to, how did you get on with the non-Jewish children there?

RE: Oh, we were a novelty. We really were. And the Jewish children made us so welcome. There was a girl who specially stands out in my mind - Betty Levy. She lived in Great Cheetham Street, and every Saturday night we used to walk down to her house. Her parents used to be out. He was a worker for the refugees, her father, Mr. Levy. He was Dannimac. There was loads of lemonade and crisps and nuts and we used to have some lovely Saturday evenings in her house.

11 Mins 16 Secs

There were sisters, Rita and Friedl Starke and there was a girl a few doors away from me called Marie Flasch and there was me and Thea - I can't remember her second name. She had one or two English girls there as well. But the house was open for us on a Saturday night and it was within walking distance, so it was lovely to go there.

RL: Were the Flasch girls and the Starke girls - were they refugees?

RE: Yes, all those girls were refugees from Vienna.

RL: From Vienna?

RE: Yes, from Vienna. Thea was the only one from Germany. She was a lovely girl

RL: Were they the girls who had just started at your school before you?

RE: Yes, they had all been here before me. Rita was very clever, Rita Starke. She spoke better than anybody, she wrote better than anybody. Her sister was not so clever, but she was very clever. She stayed with the Levy's. She was the one the Levy's took in. She was very clever. I would say she was grammar school material.

RL: What did you do during the summer holidays, that first summer holiday?

RE: That first summer was lovely. This Auntie Esther, Lena's sister, got married on the 8th August and the family from the other brother who lived in Wales who had died, Moishe. He had three - no he had five children. They all came up to Manchester for the wedding with their children and some of them were my age and they asked me to come down to Wales with them for three weeks holiday and I did. I had a wonderful time between all of them, between Llanelli, Swansea and Cardiff, where they lived. They lived all round South Wales and they gave me the most wonderful holiday you can imagine. All had children my age, so it was wonderful. I came back to Manchester just in time to go back to school when war was declared.

13 Mins 51 Secs

RL: What language did you speak in to the cousins in Wales?

RE: Again, a mixture of everything. My English was not good enough and yet we managed to get by. We all managed to get by. It was a lovely three weeks. They bought me clothes. They bought me all sorts of things. Unfortunately, there is only one left now. We have been down to Wales for many a trip, Sydney and myself, when there has been a *Bar Mitzvah* or a wedding. Not to every, but some of them we went. Some of them came here as well.

RL: Which synagogue did you attend, or did the family attend?

RE: Sabrina Street, which is not there any more, where I got married as well.

RL: Was that very different from what you were used to?

RE: Yes. Yes, it was an old church made into a synagogue which we didn't have.

RL: Any other differences?

RE: No. You used to go down there on Friday night as well. They had a choir in those days. But we had a choir in Vienna too. It depended on the grade of the thing whether you had an organ playing or not. Some synagogues would have

an organ playing and some would not. But it was not a reform synagogue. I don't know whether there was a reform synagogue in Vienna. I can't say.

RL: The synagogue you went to in Vienna, did that have an organ?

RE: Yes. I will tell you. We had to go to the synagogue on a Saturday afternoon, which was compulsory from the school we went to, from the religious, not the Hebrew school, but the ordinary school, where we had two hours Hebrew a week. The teachers would stand in rows. Every teacher had two rows of children and we had to go every Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock. It was a children's' service for one hour. I have got a book from there. There was an organ playing there. It was called the Kluckigasse (?). It was a beautiful, beautiful synagogue.

16 Mins 22 Secs

RL: So you didn't go to the synagogue on Saturday morning? *Shabbas* morning?

RE: I went with my father but not to that one. He would go to the Marsickergasse, and I would go with him, but then it was playing outside in those days. Or we would go to the ... (inaudible) - the one where the flats were above it. I used to stand. There was a *Rebbitzer* called Ocks, Rabbi Ocks. He managed to get away to London, but I have never been in touch with him. I used to stand next to *Rebbitzer* Ocks and I used to talk to him. He was a lovely, lovely person. I was always busy with something.

RL: So you would go with your father in the morning and to the Hebrew in the afternoon?

RE: He would come to the Hebrew as well because it was crossing main roads. So he would take me and sit in the back for an hour and then take me home.

RL: So we were actually in Sabrina Street when we were talking about Vienna there.

RE: Yes. I used to go down with my friends because the choir was there. So we went - Tanya's mum and me. I got friendly with Tanya's mum the first day I went to school. We have been close friends ever since - like sisters. She was an only one and I was an only one, and it was a wonderful friendship.

RL: She was English born?

RE: It didn't matter. It didn't matter. We managed to get across to each other.

RL: Language?

RE: Wasn't a problem. We managed to get on from the first day.

RL: Did you join any clubs or anything?

RE: No.

RL: Any youth movement?

RE: Nothing.

RL: So you left school after eighteen months.

RE: Yes.

RL: What did you do?

18 Mins 54 Secs

RE: Now that is the hardest bit to tell you, but Michelle said I have to tell you. I was cleaning - cleaning in Auntie Lena's shop. I helped to prepare meals, wash up, do the washing, the ironing and the cleaning. Later on, when my Uncle Nat was called up into the army, she didn't want to stay in the house. She was having a baby. That's what it was, she was having a baby then, Vivienne, and she had to go to Blackpool for a fortnight because they would not allow them to have the children in Manchester. So she went to Blackpool during her time of having the baby. I went to live with her mother and father in Heywood Street and her sister and me would come and open the shop every day. It was a wallpaper shop and paint shop. Gradually I started cleaning the other house as well and washing and ironing. I did that besides having to look after Vivienne when she was old enough for me to be able to handle her. Don't forget, I had never handled a baby. I did nothing else. I cleaned, washed, I ironed, I cooked and that was it. I did that for seven years.

RL: Would you have wanted to do other things?

RE: Well, I would have liked to do something. It was not my ideal way of living. There was nothing in the future. I had nothing else to look forward to. I had a friend. Unfortunately she is not here now. She died very young. She was called Peppy. She lived in Heywood Street and she said to me, "If you want we can give you the front room and you can get a job." Leo Karesh, I don't know if you have heard of him? He was a very good man. He took all the refugees on for sewing. Anybody who came to his door he would give a job, whether it was packing or sewing or anything he would give a job. He never refused a refugee. So she said, "Go to Leo Karesh and see if you can get a job there and come and live with us."

22 Mins 09 Secs

My auntie and uncle - my auntie who lived with me - were living in Macclesfield by then. I told them what I intend to do. I am going back to after the war. We are living back after the war. This was right through the war and I didn't do anything - I stayed in the shelter and everything. After the war I was getting very unrestful. When I told my auntie what I intend to do she didn't approve of it and neither did my uncle. They said they were going to see if they can take me over to Macclesfield. He worked as a locum for the doctor who

was away in the army. They only had rooms in that house but it was an enormous house. The doctor never lived there. He lived in a house right out of Macclesfield. There were empty rooms. She said if they would let me have. ... There was a housekeeper and her husband there. She said "If they would let me have the attic room for you, you can come and live with us and we will get you a job in an office." With people they knew. There were London people evacuated and they opened a factory in Macclesfield, making clothing. I said "How can I get an office job, I haven't even" She said "They will take you if you are willing." I said "OK"

I think it was about six or eight months after the war, something triggered it off and I said "I am leaving." What triggered it off is hard to believe. There was a fellow called Sam Rosenfeld who, unfortunately, lost both of his legs in the war. We had known him since we were twelve or thirteen. He lived round the corner in Pearl Street. They made a dance for him to collect money to buy him a business and after that we were so friendly that they asked me to come to the party to the house, which was 2 minutes away, in Great Cheetham Street. So I came home after the dance, which was at the Higher Broughton Assembly Rooms. And I went and asked because I couldn't have a key to the shop, having lost one lot, so I couldn't have a key again. He waited up for me and I came home and said I would like to go to the party. Vivienne was not asleep yet. She was about five. Auntie Lena was in bed already and she said, "No. She is not going to the party. Vivienne is not asleep yet. She has been to the dance and today is Thursday and tomorrow is Friday and there is a lot of work to do and it is enough." He said "Vivienne has got nothing to do with Ruthie." He was a much fairer person. "No, let her go to bed." So I went to bed but that night I knew I would not stay. That was just about the end.

25 Mins 47 Secs

So I kept on phoning Macclesfield and said "I am leaving. I am leaving." My auntie said "Don't do anything. We will sort things out" which they did. A few weeks later when I told him I am leaving to live with my auntie and uncle in Macclesfield, they were not very happy and Esther turned round and said "Who is going to do the work here and in Heywood Street?" I overheard that and I thought to myself, "Well, that is it." As good as they had been to me, that was all they thought about me - the work. Finally I got my auntie and uncle to come and take me to Macclesfield to live with them. That was absolutely wonderful. I was a free person. I could go out when I wanted. You cannot imagine it. I started going into Manchester, going to dances, to Austria House and going to the Ritz in the afternoon on Sunday. It was a wonderful life for me. I met Sydney soon after and that was it.

I went to the office and I learned, which everybody said was very hard do - Pay As You Earn - and I managed to do it. I learned to type. I went to night school. Sydney used to come to Macclesfield to take my auntie to the pictures while I went to night school. I went for English, book-keeping, typing and shorthand. But shorthand I could not take in. I didn't get further than 50. But I passed fully in English, book-keeping and typing. I have still got the typewriter I bought in

Stockport to learn quicker. My aunt said "get your own typewriter and you will learn quicker." and I did.

I had a lovely three and a half years there. I was a free person. If I wanted to go for a walk, I went for a walk. If I wanted to go into Manchester on Saturday, I went to Manchester. I didn't have to ask, I just went. Shortly after that we got married and that was that. But it was a wonderful three years.

28 Mins 15 Secs

RL: When you were working and doing the cleaning, were you paid anything for that?

RE: No. I got spending money. The highest when I left was 10/- a week. No.

RL: When you worked in the office, how much were you paid?

RE: £2:10s. I gave my auntie £1:10 and the rest was mine. But I had wonderful bosses. They were costume and *Mantel* manufacturers. I was frightened to open my mouth to say "This is nice", because if I said "This is nice" they would give it to me. I had two or three beautiful suits from them. I had coats from them. I didn't dare to open my mouth to say "This is nice" because they would take it off the hanger and give it to me. They were wonderful people, wonderful.

RL: Going back to the war years, did you experience any bombing raid?

RE: Oh yes, yes. We were in the shelters a lot, especially during the blitz. We used to put Vivienne into a washing basket - there were no carry-cots or anything - line it out with bedding and cover it and we used to carry her into the shelter every night. We were in the shelter every night. As soon as the siren went, we went to the shelter?

RL: Where was the shelter?

RE: Right in the back alley.

RL: And what was this?

RE: A horrible brick building with benches in with a bit of light in two corners.

RL: Why was this safer than the house?

RE: That is what they said. We had no actual bomb in our street. Across the road where the Notre Dame School was - it was a Catholic school - they did have incendiary bombs. But we in our block had nothing. We were always able to get into bed. Of course, it was cold and we had to make a drink and maybe she was crying. She had to have a bottle, the usual thing. But we never had a full night's sleep for a long time.

31 Mins 08 Secs

RL: Was the shelter for a number of homes.

RE: Yes. There were quite a number of shelters down that alleyway. It was the backyard, right down in the middle. We were allocated this shelter right next to the back door and we used go in there and sit.

RL: Were you still in touch with your parents?

RE: Yes. I was in touch with my parents till I think it was 1940, before he invaded Yugoslavia. But once he invaded Yugoslavia that was it. I know my mother had to have an operation in Yugoslavia. On her last operation, they left something in and she had to have it taken out.

RL: When did you discover what had happened to them?

RE: I got a Red Cross letter in 1941. I didn't get it until 1945. There was a very good man, a Mr. Bloom, who lived just around the corner from us in ... (inaudible) Avenue and after the war he used to come in with all the names of people who had survived. I went through everything and never found their names on it or any of my family names. There were lots of these lists going round - repeats, repeats - but I still went through them every time. In 1945, I got an official letter from the Red Cross that they were shot in Zagreb.

RL: How were you when the war ended? Do you remember the end of the war?

RE: I do. I was in Albert Square. It was wonderful.

RL: How did you celebrate?

RE: Doing nothing, nothing at all, just being there watching people. It was not my scene to drink. I wouldn't have known how to. So I just stood and watched the others getting drunk and dancing and all that.

33 Mins 44 Secs

RL: Did you have to register with the Police?

RE: Yes, when I was eighteen.

RL: How did you do it.

RE: We took our papers down and registered, no questions asked. I didn't go anywhere you see. I would not have been allowed to go within five miles of the sea places or something like that but there was nothing. I wasn't going so it didn't matter.

RL: You mentioned when you were living in Macclesfield you started to go to things? You mentioned Young Austria?

RE: Austria House.

RL: Austria House. What was that?

RE: That was a house. I don't know even who opened it. But you could go there and spend an evening amongst your friends. For instance, all the people I know now and who are still my friends, we all met at the Austria House, all my friends.

RL: Are they all Jewish refugees from Austria?

RE: Yes, from Austria and there were older people there as well. Because there was an Austrian kitchen there and they used to like the Austrian food. I could not afford to eat there or even drink there, but it was free to go there and to sit and talk. They used to have billiards. They used to have table-tennis and you were among sort of people of your own age, of your own nationality. A lot of them from there went back to Austria after the war and eventually they closed it down and we went to a German club after that - also in Oxford Road - and that was very nice. They took great care of us. They took us out. We had rambles and we had outings with them. There was a Mr. Robert Werner and he used to hire coaches, pay for it and take us on days out on a Sunday which was very nice.

RL: Were there outings from the Austria club?

RE: No, that was already in the German club and he paid for it. He was German and when the Austria House and that all sort of disappeared, he said, "Well, come over to the German club." So we did and a lot of marriages came out of that as well.

36 Mins 36 Secs

RL: Who do you remember used to attend the Austria House?

RE: Walter, Freddie who lives in Israel with whom I am still in contact and Myra, who lives in Israel who I have just phoned.

RL: What were their surnames?

RE: Their surnames? It was Myra Goodman, Frieda Black - no, I don't know her single name. I only know her married name. There was Lettie Oldsburg and Joe, Freddie Black, Peppi Gard. They were all my friends. We were all friends. Heinz - I can't remember his second name - Albert Edwards, Sammy Stern, Henry Rapaport. Unfortunately, a lot of them are not here any more. All these boys - there weren't so many girls, there were more boys. I think I was the only one amongst all these boys. But we weren't boy and girl, we were all friends and it didn't matter whether I was a girl or a boy. We were friends. They would never let me go home on my own. They always made sure I got home or got to the train whatever I was doing.

RL: Did they live nearby in Manchester or were they coming from ...?

RE: No, they all lived in Manchester. They all lived in Manchester.

RL: Did you know any of them from Austria?

RE: I didn't but my husband did. When I met him and told him who I was friends with, with one he had played ball, with one he had played on the street, you know how you did. He knew nearly all of them much better than me, but he had not been in touch with them because he had been in the army for four-and-a-half years. So he lost contact with all the friends until I brought him into it.

RL: How did you meet your husband?

RE: In the Ritz. We had a table on the left-hand side which they must have called the refugee table because we met there every Sunday afternoon. That table was just for us. There was Nancy and Henry there. There was Albert there. There was Wolf and Barbara there. It was after the war I am talking about. Barbara came out of Theresienstadt and Henry came out of Auschwitz. Albert, Walter, Herbert Elliot - we were all around that one table. We used to dance with different boys. It was a lovely atmosphere on a Sunday afternoon to go to the Ritz. It wasn't the Ritz we all know today. It was the afternoon Ritz from 4 until 9. It was a club. You had to have someone to sign you in.

39 Mins 36 Secs

RL: So that's where you met ...?

RL: Where was he from?

RE: Vienna.

RL: He was from Vienna as well?

RE: Yes.

RL: What district?

RE: Second district, very *fromm* district, the *fromm* district.

RL: When did he come across?

RE: He came across in December '38. He came with the *Kindertransport*.

RL: Was he interned?

RE: No. He went into the army. He volunteered for the army.

RL: Where did he serve?

RE: First in Germany. That was when he changed the name from Einhold to Edwards, in case he got caught as a prisoner. Well, as Einhold they would have shot him immediately. As Edwards he would have a bit of respect. I know in Germany he was not in the D-day landing. He was about four days after the D-day landing. Then he went out to the Far East and then he came back. I actually met him for the time where he lodged, but I was not aware of him. It was just "Hello, how are you" and that was it. Then he volunteered for India for six months and after that I really met him.

RL: How long did you go out?

RE: Where to?

RL: Courting. Before you married?

RE: Oh, I think we went out for twelve months, got engaged for twelve months and then married. We had to save up. We had to make our own wedding.

RL: What was he working at?

RE: On the market. He was a machinist and he went to the market.

RL: And where was he living?

RE: In lodgings. Well, it wasn't lodgings really. It was a room. There was no landlady. It was in Wellington Street and the whole house was made into rooms - bed-sitting rooms - and he had one of those.

RL: You have told me about the Austria club and the German club. Was there anywhere else other than those that you used to go to?

RE: No. We had meetings in Macclesfield. There were a lot of Jewish people there who came to Macclesfield from London as evacuees. But gradually that disappeared. I have still got one friend in Macclesfield who I go to see. But they all went back to London. My auntie and uncle got a permanent job in Great Horton so they left Macclesfield.

42 Mins 52 Secs

RL: Was that before you married?

RE: In Great Horton? No, after that, at least twelve to eighteen months after, if not longer, yes, I had Karin already and we used to go over see them. It was a long way to go with three children.

RL: So where did you get married.

RE: In the Sabrina Street *Shul*.

RL: What was the date?

RE: The 19th June.

RL: And the year?

RE: '49

RL: Who gave you away so to speak?

RE: My auntie and uncle gave me away and Sydney had my Auntie Lena's mother and father. It would be my father's uncle and his wife.

RL: What kind of wedding did you have?

RE: We had a small reception and a salmon tea by Mrs. Peat, who came and catered. I have still got the bills somewhere I think or Michelle has got them. I don't know.

RL: Where did you have it, the tea?

RE: In the hall upstairs to save on taxis.

RL: And where did you go to live?

RE: We had two rooms in Whalley Range, in Clarendon Road, number 40 but we didn't like I, at least I hated it. I didn't like that part of Manchester. I was used to the north part round here up from Heywood Street. We just could not find anything. We could not afford to buy, of course, but we could not find anything to live. So we stayed there till nearly Edmond was born.

RL: How long was that?

RE: We stayed there until January 1951.

RL: And then where did you go?

RE: Northumberland Street. We had a self-contained flat there, two rooms and a kitchen with a bath. The toilet we had to share but that was not so bad. And the hot water we had which we didn't have in Clarendon Road, and that was very good.

45 Mins 48 Secs

RL: How long where you there?

RE: I was there until I started having Michelle which was nearly three-and-a-half years. There is three years and 9 months difference between them. We had a car but we had to sell the car for a deposit for a house. We sold the car and bought a house in Blackley New Road which was a very nice house, beautiful windows. I always liked big windows and it had carpets down. Carpets were

very important those days. A roll of material we bought and put curtains up in every room the same and we had a little bit of furniture. You know you collected a little bit of furniture over the years. So we moved into Blackley New Road and we stayed there. I was not very happy there because I didn't like it, but there was no choice and we stayed there four years.

RL: Why weren't you happy there?

RE: Didn't like the area. I wanted to come to Bury Old Road. I always liked it and then Karin came and it was very crowded. My auntie came as well. My uncle had died during the time we lived in Blackley New Road. She was living downstairs in the dining room. Edmond was sleeping in our room. The two girls were sleeping together and I already had a maid in the house because I was working full time. So it was getting very very cramped. So we got a house in Ravens Close and that was absolutely wonderful. I loved it very much. We stayed there 34 years. I didn't want to move but my husband insisted upon going into a flat for which I am very grateful now, but not at the time. We have been here eleven years in November, and no, I didn't want to leave that house. I loved it that much.

RL: When were the children born?

RE: February '51, November '54 and February '56. No, wrong - '57 and not '56.

48 Mins 42 Secs

RL: So you were working full time?

RE: Yes.

RL: When did you start doing that or did you always work?

RE: I always worked.

RL: What happened when you had the children?

RE: I stayed at home for a short while and then I had Karin who wasn't a well child. I had to take a nanny in as well. The maid was only seventeen, and we decided she was not old enough to have the responsibility of a baby. We had a little problem when Karin was born. We took a nanny in for six months until she was old enough to be looked after. But I didn't work full time like I do now. I only worked three days a week.

RL: What were you doing?

RE: Selling leather goods on the market.

RL: When did you start doing that?

RE: Before I had Edmond. I hated the market. I loathed it. I would never go on the market. That was me. I was working in an office in St. Paul's in Blackfriars Street till I started having Edmond and then I left. I know it is hard to believe, but I had a dream that somebody was giving us the key for me to work on the market. In the morning, a bag of keys came. The lady who was working for my husband had decided to leave. I said, "Sydney, this is too coincidental. I am going to take it on." It was only two days a week in those days and I took it on and I have not left it since. You can't get me away from it.

RL: What were you selling at that point?

RE: They were selling shopping bags. You could not get a handbag because they had no frames to make after the war. It was different kinds and sizes of lunch bags, medium ones, small ones, shopping bags, some travel bags -everything with a zip. No handbags, you couldn't get any frames, and two kinds of purses with press-studs only. Well, gradually you started getting back frames and you went out every week to buy. You saw different things and you bought different things.

51 Mins 26 Secs

RL: Where did you buy from?

RE: We bought from a number of places. We bought off Walter, our friend, we bought off ... (inaudible), and we bought from reps that came to the stall.

RL: Which market?

RE: In Yorkshire.

RL: Was it just one particular market or were there several markets?

RE: Only one particular one. My husband went to a different one. He went to an outdoor one on Wednesday and Saturday.

RL: And which days did you work?

RE: I worked on Friday and Saturday.

RL: What did you do the other days?

RE: He was in manufacturing in those days - clothing. I did the office work. Of course I was free. I could take the children to school and I could pick them up. It wasn't that I had to sit there. So, while they were in school, I did the office work.

RL: And where was the place?

RE: In Yorkshire.

RL: No. When you said he was in manufacturing.

RE: We had a place in Charles Street which, unfortunately, went up in fire and he took a place in Church Street in Radcliffe, but it didn't succeed.

RL: How long did he have the manufacturing?

RE: Until '66.

RL: And then, after that?

RE: He went into the market business completely.

RL: How many days a week do you work now?

RE: Five.

RL: And your husband?

RE: He doesn't work. It is not our business any more. My youngest daughter and her husband have taken it over completely, about five years ago. He has retired, but she needs him so when she needs him he goes which is, at the most, two days a week. But he does a lot of buying for her in Manchester. She will phone him, she needs this or that and he knows the people and he goes and buys it for her.

53 Mins 43 Secs

RL: Has what you sell changed over the ...?

RE: Oh yes. You can't imagine. There is no comparison. The choice now is too big for words.

RL: What are you, are they, selling?

RE: We are all selling the same thing. I am on the cheaper end of the thing and they have gone in for better things.

RL: What have they gone in for?

RE: Better bags, named bags. I don't do named bags.

RL: So it is still bags?

RE: Oh yes. We are still in the same line - and purses and umbrellas. We haven't changed anything, only the make. I am in the cheap make and she is in the named make.

RL: Is it a covered market?

RE: Yes. It is in a market hall. You close your stall and go away. I don't think I would have lasted in an outdoor market. It would have been too much work. I have got two helpers so it is easy for me. All I have to do is sell. I am not interested in the rest of it. I go buying with her because I want to, not because I have to. I enjoy it very much. Sunday morning is buying morning and I like to meet everybody and I like to speak to people. My husband goes and picks it up and takes it up to the house when it is needed. Not every week, but when he's needed, he does it. We phone him and he does it. We all pull together. So does Michelle. If he is working and Karin needs something, she phones Michelle. She knows all the places and all the people. She goes and picks things up for her.

55 Mins 50 Secs

RL: Tell me about the children. What kind of schooling they had?

RE: Now Edmond went to Thomas Street when he was five. He was very good. He was quite clever. I wouldn't say he was very clever, but he was quite clever. When he was about eight, I met a lady called Mrs. Mallinson. Her husband was a doctor and she had a daughter there and she said to me, "Do you know, Mrs. Edwards, I have seen so many tears shed at eleven years when they don't pass into a grammar school? I am going to put Tania down for Bury Prep." I didn't know anything about it. She said that at Bury Prep they have a better chance of doing the 11+ exam into grammar school because they are being trained for three years.

So I came home and told my husband that and he said, "Make enquiries, how much it costs and we will see." We talked it over with Edmond and he thought it wonderful. So we went to the teacher and she said "Yes, he should be alright for prep school." We put him down at eight-and-a-half to go to Bury prep school but he failed the exam. So we said, "Right. We will do it again at nine-and-a-half and if you fail again when you are nine-and-a-half we will leave it until you are eleven." But he didn't. He passed and he went to Bury Grammar Preparatory School and then he passed, of course, the exams for Bury Grammar School. He was there until GCE's, or 'O' Levels as they were called in those days. He didn't want to stay on. He wanted to go to work and he went to work for Stanley Feldman and Morris Gayler. He took a correspondence course for five years. He was a qualified accountant six months after. At twenty-two he was one of the youngest qualified accountants. He's got his own place now with several partners and he is alright. One of his daughters is a lawyer, last week fully qualified, and the other daughter has a BA Hons degree in Theology and Religion.

58 Mins 46 Secs

RL: Whom did he marry?

RE: A girl called Ruth Morris.

RL: Where was she from?

RE: An English girl from - oh dear - not Sheepfoot Lane, the other one that goes down from Sheepfoot Lane, after Bury New Road, the name of the road?

RL: Coles Lane?

RE: No, down, down that way. I will ask Michelle.

RL: But a Manchester girl?

RE: Oh yes, yes. So were her parents, fifth or sixth generation Manchester.

59 Mins 31 Secs

TAPE 3 WITH RUTH EDWARDS

00 Mins 00 Secs

RL: You were just telling me of your son and his wife, and you remembered where she came from?

RE: Hilton Lane

RL: Hilton Lane. And they have two daughters. How old are they?

RE: Twenty-five and twenty-two.

RL: Are either of them married yet?

RE: One is married; the one of twenty-five.

RL: Who did she marry?

RE: Mark Clines.

RL: And where do they live?

RE: In Ferndale Avenue.

RL: In Manchester?

RE: Yes.

RL: Do they have any children?

RE: No.

RL: What is she doing?

RE: She is a lawyer.

RL: She is the lawyer. Right, we have done your son so we'll go on to the next one.

RE: Michelle?

RL: Michelle, and if you tell me again her education and

RE: She went to the King David School. In those days I was very unhappy with the King David School. I let her stay there until she was eleven. But she didn't pass her 11+ so I sent her to a private grammar school called Ashmead (?) but Michelle didn't like school. She was not interested. She stayed there until she was of school-leaving age, whatever it was at the time. She left on the Friday at Easter and had a job lined up at Kendal's hair-dressing department on the Tuesday and started there right away. She was there for three years and then the *Yom Kippur* war came and Michelle decided to be a volunteer. So she went to Israel for seven-and-a-half months and came back ill, and has been ill ever since. I am not blaming Israel for it, but it did happen there. That is Michelle in a nutshell. She got married, she got divorced and she is here.

3 Mins 00 Secs

RL: Is she working?

RE: No, she can't work. She had six major operations and I have lost count of the minor ones. And we are glad to have her.

RL: And then, your youngest daughter?

RE: My daughter Karin, yes. She went to Stand Grammar School, but not from the King David School. I took her out when Michelle left. She went to Broughton Primary School here and they were very, very good with her. The brought her out and she got Stand Grammar School. She went there until she did 'O' levels. She didn't want to stay on and she went to Salford College in catering. She was interested in domestic science. She was there for two years and, after that, she got a job in different schools, including the King David School, and she had a few years. She worked right through till five years ago in catering. She got herself a very high position in the - we call it the Toast Rack but you know where I mean. She was there for a long time in a high position. She loved the catering but somebody was installed above her. The job was offered to her. She didn't want it so they installed somebody else and there was no love lost between the two ladies. So, when we said it was time that we retired, she said "Right. I am coming into the business." So she and her husband came into the business. He worked for us for a few years beforehand and she had her job. Then it was theirs.

RL: Who did she marry?

RE: She married a boy called Barry Osbiston.

RL: Where was he from?

RE: Manchester. He lived at that time - what was the name of the street - Melham Drive.

RL: And do they have children?

RE: They have two daughters. One daughter, the elder one, has just gone to University to Liverpool this week to read history and the younger one has left King David School this year and has gone to Bury College to do travel and tourism. But, I think she will eventually come into the business.

6 Mins 03 Secs

RL: Did your children have a Hebrew education - the ones that weren't at King David? Your son ?

RE: My son went to ... (inaudible). He went to *Talma Torah* when he was young and, afterwards, he went to Haydon Park to Rev. Gulich. Michelle went to ... (inaudible) in The Shrubbery and so did Karin. But Karin had a Jewish education because she went to Broughton Primary so she had a Jewish education there.

RL: What synagogue did you join? Did you join a synagogue here?

RE: When we were first married everybody talked us into joining the United Synagogue. Not knowing one from the other we jointed the United Synagogue. When we moved here none of us wanted to go to the United Synagogue because it was horrible in Merton Road. So we joined a Holy Law and became country members for the United. I had a fall-out with them over a stupid thing, but I did and we finished with them completely and we stayed with the Holy Law and have been all these years now. That is why, when we moved from the house to the flat, my husband didn't want to move far because he wanted to walk to *Shul*. He didn't want to change *Shul*. He wanted to stay with the Holy Law and walk to it. You can walk to it from here you see.

RL: Has your religious observance changed over the year?

RE: No.

RL: From childhood onwards?

RE: Not really, no. I still do the same things.

RL: Has your experience affected you in any way?

RE: Only the loss of my parents. It would have been nice for them to see me. Well, when I had the children and that is because I know how much pleasure my grandchildren have given me. I used to have the older ones staying with me

overnight and I used to take them back on a Sunday to Edmond and we used to say, "Do you want us to come up every week? It is too much." And he used to say, "Mum, you don't know what grandparents, what it is. We never had them so let them enjoy it." And we have. We have had a very good relationship with all four. It is wonderful, which my parents never had.

9 Mins 00 Secs

RL: Did your children belong to any clubs or ...?

RE: Oh they did. Edmond was very much with the JLB and Michelle was with Maxine, and Karin - I don't even know if she - she used to go to Maxine and all over the place. But they did go.

RL: What is Maxine?

RE: Maxine was a club behind the JLB.

RL: What kind of club was it?

RE: Well, it was all Jewish people there. They used to have a drink, have a dance and talk. A social club I would call it.

RL: And your granddaughters?

RE: Oh yes, they are very busy. They are in everything, the ..., the theatre group. Now she is in the new JUA. She is something in there which they do for children in Israel which she wants to go and see next year. I don't think Victoria did as much as she did. Debbie and Rachel don't do anything. Oh yes, the FZY she used to go to and she used to go the project down here in the Jewish Telegraph Office. She used to come down here on Wednesday to go to the project.

RL: Do you and your husband, over the years, have you belonged to anything?

RE: No, we haven't. We go with the 45 Aid-Society and with the AJR, but we don't belong to anything.

RL: When did you first connect in with the 45 Aid?

RE: Well, when it started, whenever that was.

RL: From the beginning?

RE: Yes from the beginning. Not so much with the AJR until in the later years. They never bothered with us. They never wrote to us, they never did anything, so I never knew it was a thing. It is only recently the AJR have come to the fore.

RL: So how long have you been connected with the AJR?

RE: I don't think more than ten years, if that, since they started having meetings in the Morris Feinmann Home. I started going, otherwise I didn't do anything. The 45 we used to go to their dinner dances, we go to the memorial services. We have a tablet in the ... (inaudible). We have a tablet in the *Shul* as well - a window but before that nothing. Not with the AJR.

12 Mins 10 Secs

RL: Of course. What was Mendel's surname?

RE: Biel, Mendel Biel.

RL: He was instrumental in starting the group?

RE: That's right. That is when we started. Whatever they did, we did. Whatever he asked us to go, to do, we did.

RL: Did you take out British nationality?

RE: I did, yes. I can't remember when but I did. I think I was living with my auntie and uncle in Macclesfield. I, was about 18 or 19 when I took it out. Not before.

RL: How would you describe yourself in terms of nationality?

RE: Well, I don't feel I am Austrian in any way, not in any way at all. I feel more British than I do anything else.

RL: Would you say you have got any kind of continental identity?

RE: Yes, I have. I have a German passport. Unfortunately I didn't know I had a German passport. I could have claimed a lot of money. But it didn't come to the fore until about ten years ago. I never looked at my papers. I have got all my school certificates right through from the Hebrew to the German school, right through. I have got my naturalisation papers, my - you know you have to have certain injections - all those papers that I have paid my taxes in Vienna. I have all the papers you can imagine. My mother put that all in and sent it in a Phoenix bag. Phoenix was an insurance company in Vienna.

14 Mins 39 Secs

RL: What about the diaries you have?

RE: Diaries, yes.

RL: When did you do those?

RE: At night. When did I start? There are some missing but I have moved so many times that I am not surprised.

RL: How old were you when you started?

RE: 1940.

RL: What language are they in?

RE: English.

RL: In English? And how many years did you write them?

RE: Right until I got blind.

RL: When was that?

RE: '97.

RL: 1997?

RE: When I completely lost the sight in one eye although I could still see a bit through the other.

RL: Have you read through them recently.

RE: I wish I had. Now I can't but I wish I had. The same with the letters from my parents, I wish I had read through them.

RL: Coming back to the idea of identity and you said you feel you have got a continental identity, what does that mean to you?

RE: It doesn't mean a thing to me now because it doesn't. I can't get anything out of it. I was only interested in getting some money out of it. I was ten years too late. When I phoned Liverpool and said I have just found my German passport and they said, "Madam, you are ten years too late." So that was it.

RL: Do you feel different to the English in any way?

RE: No, not at all. I mix with non-Jewish people all day long but it doesn't bother me. It doesn't bother them and it doesn't bother me. They know when we are going to have the New Year. They know we are going to have the black fast. I don't make a secret of it. They know when it is Passover. They all get their matzos so it is nothing.

RL: Have you ever come across any anti-Semitism here?

RE: No, never. Not even on the market. No problem at all. As a matter of fact, I am one of the oldest now on the market and I have got the respect now you would not believe from all the people. Nobody calls me by my first name to start with. I am Mrs. Edwards everywhere. Others they call it but not me. Not my staff, you know what I mean, but the people, the stall-holders or anybody. I have always been Mrs. Edwards.

17 Mins 47 Secs

RL: Did you say that you felt at home here?

RE: Yes, I was. I also feel very much at home on the market. It doesn't bother me being there.

RL: What are your feelings towards Israel?

RE: I hope they have a very peaceful life. I would not like to live there. I don't mind going to visit, but I would not like to live there. If they have peace that is all I want. I have got relatives there and I would like them to think they are going to have a peaceful life, the young people, my sister-in-law's family - all the young people. My daughter's going over to Israel on Monday to stay with them and all the cousins.

RL: Before the war, was your family interested in Zionism at all?

RE: Well if they were I don't know. They never talked about going to Palestine.

RL: When was your first visit to Israel?

RE: In 1970 to this nephew, to the first nephew, to his wedding. We couldn't have afforded to have gone any sooner anyway, but it was 1970, January.

RL: How did you feel?

RE: Fine. The first time we went we visited the country. We went for a fortnight and we visited the country as it should be done. We haven't done it since and we have been many a time. We saw what there was to see and we did a trip every day. It was not a holiday I can assure you, but it was worth doing. Now when we go we are too lazy to go anywhere. We just see our friends and family and that is it.

20 Mins 16 Secs

RL: You mentioned how you have made return trips to Vienna?

RE: Yes.

RL: When was the first trip you made?

RE: The first trip was in 1965. I didn't go, my husband went on his own. We had arranged with a stone-mason to have a stone put up for his father. His father died a natural death in a hospital and they buried him in a special part of the cemetery where people who died naturally were buried, and he wanted it up for his father. He did it. He went with a friend over to Vienna. Well, there was no one there to say anything to him, but he said his *kaddish* and that was it.

Afterwards we went in '75. It was a very quick visit. We got a very cheap trip from Luton - bed, breakfast and hotel for £27. I mean we couldn't resist it. There were four of us going. We went to the stone and we had a very nice weekend. After that, we decided it is time to take the family, so we booked for the three children to come the in May. Unfortunately, Michelle took ill and she was a very long time in the hospital. She said, "You go. I will go another time." So Karin, Edmond, my husband and myself went. He videoed everything: where I lived, where my husband lived, the grandparents, uncles, wherever everybody lived. I could tell him and he would video it.

I don't know whether it was a year after in July or two years after in July but my cousin from America said she was coming to Vienna to show her granddaughter where they lived. So we combined the trip to see her with Michelle. We met in Vienna and we spent a day together - not even a whole day - but it was very nice to see her. We stayed there for a week and we really did quite a lot. You see, every one of my children was interested in different things. Michelle was interested in one lot of things and the others were interested in different things. We saw everything, things that I didn't even know about.

23 Mins 20 Secs

RL: How did you feel coming back?

RE: I would not speak German. My husband had to do all the talking. I just could not bring myself to speak German. I don't think my German is even good enough to speak now. I would really sound bad. I understand everything that was being said. I didn't feel bad at all. The only time I felt bad was the time I went without the children, when I went to see that old lady who was still living there. And that did bring a few tears. But when we went with the girls I treated it more as a holiday than anything. We didn't start with any taxi drivers like some people did. We didn't say, "What you did, or what your parents did." We didn't ask and young people are young people everywhere. You would be surprised to find how many *Hasidim* are living in Vienna. They didn't stay on. They have all come back, but you would be surprised how many there are. The second district where my husband came from, you can see them walking around with the *tzitzis* out and *peyes* down, just like they used to. So, how they feel is the question. But we had friends who started with the taxi drivers, "What did your father do?" Well, if you start with people you get answers and you get into an argument. But if you don't ask you don't have any problems. We had to take taxis everywhere, except the underground sometimes. But we didn't start with them and they didn't start with us.

RL: Have you received any kind of compensation?

RE: Yes, I have received a pension. We both get a pension from Austria. Well, they are now saying you are still supposed to get You can get forms. Michelle got some from America. We got some from Vienna. My sister-in-law has filled them out. She has taken everything with her to Israel and she is going to see what can be done, but I don't think we will get much.

26 Mins 04 Secs

RL: Do you miss anything from that culture?

RE: No, because I didn't have it. I was not involved in any culture in Vienna.

RL: Just from the way of life, was there anything you miss that was different?

RE: No, I was too young. My routine was the same. I didn't do anything special. I went to school, I came home and that was it. I went downstairs to play.

RL: What do you think you would have done if you hadn't had to leave? How do you think your life would have been? Did you have any dreams?

RE: No, I had no dreams. I only know that we would have been a lot poorer. We would not have had the luxury we have had in England, because here it is absolute luxury even though people cannot appreciate it, but, believe me, it is. I would not have had the life-style that is a cert, to go on holidays, to have a car. I mean, till I could drive, I had my own car. No, I would not have had the life-style I have here. Impossible!

RL: Is there a message you would like to give? Anything else you would like to say?

RE: I will say I am one of the lucky ones that came over, who had a lot of things here from home. Although seven years weren't very happy, I was still lucky to have had them because, without them, I would be where everybody else was.

RL: Thank you very much.

RE: Thank you.

28 Mins 10 Secs

THE NEXT SECTION IS COMMENTARY ON VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS AND DOCUMENTS THAT APPEAR ON THE VIDEO, all comments by Ruth Edwards.

28 Mins 23 Secs

This is a photograph of my grandparents with me when I was two years old. Her name was Czarne Bick and he was Baresh and my name was Ruth Schneier. It was taken in Vienna in 1928.

This photograph is of my parents and myself in 1929 in Vienna and ...

This is a photograph of the Hebrew school outing in Vienna 1934. I am in the front next to the boy who is holding the ball who was called Stephen Minsk.

We had a flat in this house, number 9, and we lived there until 1941. It was in the 20th district in Vienna.

I went to the Hebrew school three times a week for two hours and this is one of my reports. We used to get them twice a year and it was very pleasant. We had a lot of fun there and we learned quite a lot to write Hebrew. I went there - I started in 1936 and it finished in 1939 when I left. This report is 1936.

30 Mins 19 Secs

This is my tax certificate. Although I had never worked, I was only twelve at the time, I needed a tax certificate. It was handed to me on the 18th January after a lot of queuing and I left Vienna on the 14th February after that - 1939.

This is my medical certificate which was issued to me on the 30th January 1939 to say I have no serious or mental illness and after that I could leave Vienna which I did on the 14th February 1939.

This is my German passport which was issued to me on the 26th January 1939 to come to England that I used on the 14th February 1939. It was issued in Vienna.

This is the first page of my passport which had to have a red letter "J" written on it. It doesn't, didn't bother me at all. I was glad to get it.

This is a little *Koffer* which was mine which I brought with me with my own personal things, given to me by some people I cannot even remember - like a pencil sharpener like a frog, a needle case; one or two coins of Austrian money; a little bird that has a pin-cushion; a yo-yo that was given to me to learn to tie my shoes; a *Hanukkah dreidl*; a German *dreidl*. I think the *Hanukkah* one belonged to my grandfather, a knife that belonged to my father; an egg-cup that one of my uncles made during the war.

33 Mins 15 secs

This is a photograph of my family. Three of them are my father's cousins - Esther, Lena and Isaac. Florrie is Isaac's wife and Wolfie is their son. This photograph was taken about 1945-46 in Manchester.

This is my School Leaving Photograph of Grecian Street Central School in 1939. The second row, the second one is a very good friend of mine called Rita Starke. I am next to her and the girl holding the tablet for the school is called Thea who was from Germany.

This is our wedding photograph on the 19th June 1949. Besides Sydney and myself there are the rest of the Manchester family who are all cousins - second to me and first to my father. The two bridesmaids, Vivienne and Anita, and the oldest one is where I used to work in Macclesfield, their daughter. The best man is Mark Cohen. It was taken in the Sabrina Street Shul hall, Manchester.

35 Mins 24 Secs

These are my three children - from left to right Karin, Edmond and Michelle. It was taken in Prestwich, Manchester, at a wedding 11th July 1976.

These are my diaries from 1940. I kept diaries up until 1997 which I had to stop because I lost part of my sight. Everything I wrote is true and anybody is allowed to read it. There are no secrets.

This is a photograph of my four granddaughters which was taken for our 50th wedding anniversary. There are Victoria, Rachel, Debbie and Florence who is the elder, from 19th June 1999, Manchester.

36 Mins 53 Secs