

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Weinberger
Forename:	Harry
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	7 April 1924
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

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Name of Interviewer:	Helen Lloyd
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 53 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****TAPE: 92****NAME: HARRY WEINBERGER****DATE: 10 MARCH 2005****LOCATION: LEAMINGTON SPA****INTERVIEWER: HELEN LLOYD****TAPE 1**

HL: This is an interview with Harry Weinberger, on the 10th of March 2005 in Leamington Spa and my name is Helen Lloyd.

HW: My name is Harry Weinberger, I was born in April 1924 in Berlin, in Bundesratufer number 7.

HL: And how much do you know about your father's family?

HW: My father's family came originally from Poland. I loved my grandfather who also lived in Berlin. I know very little about my father's earlier family, but his two sisters emigrated to what was then Palestine and I think my father would have been happier if he had gone with them. And I remember my father's sisters, my aunts, and I've got a very favourite cousin in Israel who is my age.

HL: Can you name the members of your family as far as you know them?

HW: Oh yes, my aunts were called Adele and Esther, and Esther had a son called Theo who changed his name to, his name was Theodor Erhard changed his name to Mordechai because he ended up as a colonel in the Israeli army. And I am still in touch with him. When he left the army, he studied in America and he became a lecturer at one of the Israeli universities.

HL: And you say that you remember your father's father, do you know what he did for a living?

HW: No idea, I think he used to be a businessman. I loved him, his face lit up when I went to see him. I say this because my mother's father who also lived in Berlin was quite different. In his presence we couldn't make a noise, we were supposed to be well-behaved, I think he was quite religious and I think he also died in Berlin.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 5 seconds

HL: What do you know about your mother's family and what did they do for a living?

HW: I don't know, when you are a child you don't really want to find out and I was then. We were a family who got separated by the war, and the strange thing is that we never afterwards talked about earlier things. I don't know why this is, I would have loved to ask my father but

my parents... After the First World War, my father and his brother-in-law, my mother's older brother started a factory. They had both been in the army and when they left they worked, they started a factory, which supplied some materials to the German railway and over the years they employed more and more people and they did very well. And both my uncle and my father knew people who were painters and composers. We had a friend, my parents had a friend called **Oshero** who was a Russian painter. I thought at that time all families had a painter and I was very interested in what he did. I copied his work but I never told anyone about it because I thought if I said that when I grow up I wanted to be a painter it wouldn't be encouraged.

HL: Because the family was in business?

HW: Yes.

HL: Can you tell me what your uncle's name was?

HW: Yes, his name was Joachim Koppel. It was because he had an enemy, a personal enemy among the top-Nazis that it was decided that the family should leave Germany. and the factory in any case was taken over by the German government fairly soon. And my uncle had an estate in Czechoslovakia and my mother was very fond of him, so instead of emigrating to England or Palestine or America, we went to Czechoslovakia.

HL: Now, we'll come on to Czechoslovakia eventually, but I would like to ask about your memories of Berlin, from when you were born in 1924 until when you left in 1933?

HW: At the end of 1933. We had a very large flat in the Tiergarten district and that's where even now, quite a lot of diplomats live. It faced the river Spree and my earliest memories were of barges and tugs going up and down the river. We had a cook and a maid and a nanny and my mother's cooking consisted of telling the cook how many guests there would be for meals.

Tape 1: 6 minutes, 24 seconds

When we went on holiday we had people who looked after us we rarely spent time with my parents. And I thought that's how most people lived. I went to school, the Hansa Vorschule, and had friends until January '33, when suddenly there were distinctions made between Jews and non-Jews. I had a friend whose father had shot down about eight Allied planes in the war and I raced home to ask my father how many he'd scored and my father told me that he never aimed at living people and I was deeply embarrassed, I couldn't boast of any people he'd killed. We had, I suppose, a slightly different life from most people that I remember because I was not on very good terms with my mother and my mother was a distant person. I was brought up really by my governess or nanny, Liesl, and I was in touch with her even after the war.

HL: Was she Jewish?

HW: She wasn't Jewish, she was engaged to someone who'd been in U-boats before she became a nanny and she married him afterwards. He was quite a high official and they had a yacht in the Baltic and I was allowed to go sailing with them, which is not what I would have expected of my parents when I met them afterwards but my time in Germany was very happy. and I saw demonstrations, I saw clashes between Communists and Nazis, I saw real violence in the streets and I knew that we had nothing to do with the Nazis and when Hitler was

appointed Chancellor, my father said 'he won't last longer than four weeks' and didn't take him seriously.

Tape: 9 minutes 15 seconds

Unfortunately, quite a lot of people didn't take him seriously. We had a, what do you call them, porter, concierge, called Fölzmann in the house and in February '33 he turned up in full Nazi uniform, which was a bit of a surprise. When the Reichstag burned, I saw from our windows the glow in the sky and heard the fire engines and was very aware what had happened politically. But like many others we thought it would all be over soon. I didn't notice any of the anti-Jewish boycotts or demonstrations. The school I was at..., I didn't know any fellow Jewish pupils. I remember we went to Sans-Souci to see the castle of Frederick the Great and I remember the names of our teachers: Fräulein Hut, Fräulein Hase and Frau Direktor Tiezenthaler. And there was no nonsense about 'Heil Hitlering' or anything like that. Not in my memory and not while we were in Germany. But when the grown-ups said that we would leave Germany I was very upset and I remember walking through the streets near my home, trying to memorise them, I didn't know how long it would be until I'd see them again.

HL: You say that you witnessed violence on the streets. Can you remember any particular incidents?

HW: Yes. Demonstrations of people with red flags and people raised their fists because it was a Communist demonstration, and some SA-people in Nazi uniforms started a fight and I saw someone knifed. And that was the first time I saw someone really badly hurt and I went home and reported it. My mother was very upset. And I saw several demonstrations on several occasions, saw people in uniform... but it was a big city. I remember going to the Scala to see the clown Grock, and there are jumbled up memories of so many instances where things were good that the few times when there was a fight on the street or some people getting very excited... It was only afterwards that it meant something to me.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 53 seconds

I used to go on holiday to the Baltic, to Swinemünde, which is now Poland and Aalbeck...I have a lot of memories but they were of insignificant things.

HL: You say your family knew a lot of artistic and musical people; did you have a cultural life as a family?

HW: Like, I suppose, all our friends, we had original paintings of people at home **Grisha Oshero**v who was a young Russian. I think he must have been a prisoner of war who stayed in Germany. He stayed with us and at table he was the one who had to tell jokes or amuse people. And I knew that he wasn't taken as seriously as other grown-ups who were in business. I could distinguish that people who painted were perhaps not quite as important as other people who earned a lot of money.

HL: Did you go to concerts or the theatre as a boy?

HW: We went to the Scala, which was the equivalent of the Palladium, we did go to theatres, I did go to museums but no, I don't remember any concerts.

HL: Art galleries?

HW: I don't remember in Germany going to any art galleries. My father loved reading, we had a large library and there were a lot of guests. I don't even remember at any time going to the synagogue though my father I think must have gone. And I had a young cousin, Achim Becker, and I think his father was very religious and he told me that on a very holy day, the Day of Atonement, you were supposed to fast. And he wanted to try out whether it would be possible to eat a ham sandwich and he asked me to eat it and I remember that he took a step back when I ate it because he wasn't quite sure.

Tape 1: 15 minutes 41 seconds

But as a very small boy, and that stuck very much in my memory, I was going for a walk with my father and I asked him if there was a god and my father who didn't use many words, simply said 'no', and that was it. Of course I saw prayer books in Hebrew and German and what I couldn't understand and what I did ask my father was why if god was so powerful did he have to be praised all the time. And I have a lot of sympathy for people who have a real faith but I was never one of them.

HL: The cousin who took a step back over the ham sandwich, was he from your mother's side?

HW: Yes, he was from my mother's side.

HL: Because you mentioned that your mother's father was perhaps quite devout. What about your mother?

HW: He was!

HL: What about your mother herself?

HW: My mother said in later life, when I met her again, she said it in German 'man kann nie wissen', one never knows, but my father didn't believe and I think my mother was an agnostic rather than an atheist. But she did keep, because of her parents, she did keep certain rules. I don't quite remember what they were but there was... They were always connected with eating.

HL: Any kind of Friday night observation?

HW: Yes, she lit candles on Friday night.

HL: And you say your father must have gone to the synagogue, do you mean for social reasons?

HW: Yes, social reasons and he was very interested in Zionism. I remember them discussing things and that's when I heard names like Jabotinsky and ...[sounds like Ushuskin], people who..., and Herzl, and I remember a photograph of my father's office where he had a big picture of Theodor Herzl who was the founder of Zionism.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 4 seconds

HL: Was there a great deal of discussion of politics in your background?

HW: No, my father was a Social Democrat and voted Social Democrat and explained it to me. But we had many Jewish friends and as I said my mother's family were much more into religion and that was taken for granted by us. But our cook was Protestant and took me to church and I thought 'interesting' but didn't think much about it.

HL: Have you got any memories of the church or where it was?

HW: Very vague memories, but Liesl took me to a Christmas market and I bought a mechanical mouse and I wound it up and it looked like a real mouse and my mother got terribly cross with me.

HL: Would you say that you were part of a Jewish Community?

HW: We must have been but I wasn't aware of it. We had friends who were not Jewish and friends who were and there wasn't a great deal of emphasis. I wasn't made to go to synagogue, we had no religious instructions at the school I was at, and my brother went to a Gymnasium, which is a grammar school, near where we lived and I think he was...He accepted religion much more easily than I, and there is a crazy memory; once on a Saturday he wanted me to carry a handkerchief for him that was the extent of his religious beliefs.

HL: Would there have been Jewish pupils in his Gymnasium?

HW: He never mentioned them but my uncle's younger son Heinz went to the same school. The first-born, Bernd, he couldn't do anything wrong, he was the brightest, the best, the most gifted person, and throughout their lives, they lost everything except school reports of Bernd and they weren't at all good. When I saw them later [Laughs], I was rather surprised.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 2 seconds

HL: Do you think that your fellow pupils knew you were Jewish?

HW: I didn't make any secret of it but I don't remember. My best friend Kurt Feltchens whose father was an airman in the First World War and whose father became a Nazi ... I don't think that it made any difference. I must have told him because I made no secret of it.

HL: What about your father's factory, would he have employed people of all backgrounds?

HW: Yes. There were three people who ran it. Joachim Koppel, my mother's older brother who was the Managing Director, my father and Achim Becker's father, Siegfried Becker, who was the husband of my mother's younger sister. Those were the three important people.

HL: What was the factory called, or the firm called?

HW: I don't know what it was called, it was in Tempelhof near the then airport, and they employed hundreds of people. That's all I know.

HL: Tell me about your memories of things beginning to change at the beginning of, I think you said 1933, January 1933.

HW: There were loudspeakers in trees and the voice of Adolf Hitler and a sentence he repeated over and over that he had fought for fourteen years and Germany must wake up to its

destiny. And as children we imitated that voice and said 'Vierzehn Jahre hab' ich gekämpft' because we made fun of his Austrian accent.

HL: Can you still do that accent?

HW: I could, I suppose, I don't know if I can...can I stop for a minute? This goes back to many years later, can I just tell you, I have a friend who is a historian. He used to be at Warwick and now he is a professor at Columbia, Volker Berghahn, very close friend, and he always asked me about Germany as I remembered because he knows everything about Germany but he wants to know what people really felt and what it was like. And one day I went to...I used to have exhibitions in Stuttgart and he asked me if I could try and get a record of Hitler speeches and I went to a market and there was a stall where they sold these records and I asked to hear one and immediately a crowd of people - that must have been in the '80's - made a circle around me and said, 'Well, we all went along with it'. They didn't know why I wanted it, and when I played it (I brought it back to Volker), and he always had the reputation, with Churchill, of being a fantastic orator it made no sense at all!

Tape 1: 24 minutes 52 seconds

He shouted things like 'Germany is in front of us, Germany is above us, Germany is behind us, Germany is in us', and each time he was interrupted by thousands of people yelling 'Sieg Heil!' and it made no sense at all. And his German was the German of a very uneducated rebel-rouser. At the time I just made fun when I was a child because his German wasn't German, not the German that I knew.

HL: Did things change for you at school at the beginning of 1933?

HW: Not at all, not at all. But for seventy-five years or seventy-six years I hadn't thought of that: we had twins called von Renzienhausen who were aristocrats and I was friends with them, too. And it wasn't till much later in Germany that someone who started, who made a speech at one of my exhibitions who said people of my age who were born in 1924 there are not many of them around. And I suppose all the boys who were at school with me couldn't have survived the war but that...I just wanted that as an aside because it was with hindsight that your memory sometimes changes things. And I want to be accurate.

HL: At what point did the Nazis take over your father's business?

HW: Not until we had left. We heard that because another uncle of mine who later emigrated to what was...no it was still Palestine, he went as my father's, I don't know what to call him, not substitute, but he tried to run it down. But I never heard details about it. I only knew that the factory was still going for about a year or so, afterwards, but my father's income stopped and he never found his feet again. He lost his position, he lost his confidence.

Tape 1: 27 minutes 39 seconds

HL: Is this the time to move on to Czechoslovakia or is there any more to be said about life in Berlin?

HW: No, all I remember was life was very easy in Berlin.

HL: Tell me about the move to Czechoslovakia.

HW: When we emigrated, we emigrated with a cook and a maid and all our furniture and my mother's jewellery. And we went to live in a place called Český Těšín, which was on the border of Poland and not far from the German border. And I was sent to a Czech school and I had lessons. Czech is a Slavonic language, which is totally different from German and I thought I had to learn it so I did. And within a year I passed the equivalent of the eleven plus to go to grammar school in Czechoslovakia, and my parents took it for granted, they didn't make a fuss at all. Later I thought, 'My god, what did they expect of me?'. And Czechoslovakia at the time ... We had a very large flat and then my father wasn't allowed to work and I know that my mother's jewellery was sold, most of it was sold and then my father's library was sold, by weight about the equivalent of a six-pence for a hundred weight, something ridiculous and some of the furniture we had, not all. And I'm not sure what my father did, I think my uncle helped him financially and my mother kept telling my father to do what other people did and work on the black market and so on, but my father would never do anything that was illegal or improper. He was very, very straight.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 19 seconds

And we lived in Czechoslovakia in Český Těšín for about four years, and at the beginning of 1938, policemen came to tell my father - a lot of people knew German - told my father that as Germans we were not supposed to stay in the border district and we moved to Brünn in Moravia. And my father, instead of throwing him out or being short with him, was too friendly in my eyes and he offered him a drink, which I didn't think he should have done. And we went to Brünn, Brno in Czech, and we had another large flat but with much less furniture. And I think things started to go wrong. I was very aware of the negotiations with the Sudetenland. I think my parents started to talk about emigrating and one day - and that is very clear in my memory, I used to listen to the radio - and one day a German voice said 'We have taken over the state'. And we heard a noise and went to the window and there were motorbikes and tanks and the German army had invaded. And my mother started to scream 'It's not too late and we should try and get out'. And my father kept his cool and said 'No, it's too late, and we will stay'. And at the time, there was a river near Brünn, and I knew people who had little boats, kayaks, on the river and I used to go and talk to them and take some of the boats out. I sometimes skipped school and I was again in a grammar school but I think it was more or less predominantly a Jewish grammar school and I didn't like it very much. I used to take days to go to the river and when an envelope appeared at my parents in the post, I knew it was from the school and I opened it and it complained that I hadn't been to school and I wrote, signed it with my father's name, my father's name was Martin Weinberger and I said 'he wasn't very well' and my father never found out.

Tape 1: 33 minutes 50 seconds

And the German army, when they were on...when soldiers were off-duty, they would go on the river and I talked to them in German and they were just normal, young people. But then an SS-unit called SS Standarte Holzweber came from Austria and then difficulties started. That was the first time I saw them actually kill a Czech policeman and hit people when there was a demonstration or some German soldiers were marching, they didn't take their hats off and they were accosted by the SS. And once I saw them, there was a restaurant and people were sitting in the open air in front of it and the SS were asking people's identity cards. And I suppose they must have found some Jews and they pushed them through the glass windows. I saw that. And at night there were screams and I knew some young people who wanted to do something against the SS. People used to have anti-Nazi literature, the brown book and other things and they couldn't get rid of them and we collected them and deposited them somewhere, I don't

remember where. And I was out at night with some other young people and we had fights, I remember I carried a shoehorn, metal with a hole and I used it as a, as a weapon.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 8 seconds

And there were some people in Nazi uniform and I, I had one of them They attacked our little group and I used this shoehorn and I was on top of him and two Czech policemen came. It was late evening, summer, and two Czech policemen, who obviously thought I was Czech, physically tore me off this person. I think I would have hurt him badly and they told me to run away and it wasn't until I was around the corner from the street that I noticed that I'd been hurt, too, and that there was a lot of blood. I called on friends and I rang my parents and said, 'It's too late I'm staying out', and I didn't tell my parents. And at school, one day, a boy teased me because of my name and I went for him, I had a terrible temper at the time, and it took two teachers to get me off that boy. Bt they didn't punish me and it felt highly unlikely that I would ever get out alive. On the way to school on one day there was a line of tanks drawn up and in each tank there was a man in the black uniform with a black beret and I thought, 'Yes, its easy for them', and how it must be to be in charge. And other people who wore the white stockings of the then Nazi-party would 'Heil Hitler' them and look up at these people in the tank and I thought this was ... It was unlikely that things would ever be alright again or that I could get out of this place.

Tape 1: 38 minutes 56 seconds

One night the teacher I had in Český Těšín, Juračka, who had been transferred to Brünn came and wanted to speak to my father and said he would look after valuables for us. And suddenly he spoke German! It turned out that when he was in the Austrian army in the First World War, he was an officer in the army. I only heard him speak Czech before. And my father gave him some of the rest of the jewellery of my mother's and some silver and my stamp collection. And there was a sequel to this after the war. But there were screams at night and one day Hitler came to Brünn and we were...two armed men came to the door and wanted my father to go down in the cellar and I wanted to go with him and my mother screamed and said no, but when I said I wanted to go with him they said yes. And all the people from the house were assembled down in the cellar and some uniformed people put a machine gun in front of the entrance and said, 'If there is any commotion outside none of us would survive'. They said it quite undramatically. And then, there had been a musician who lived in the same house, he had a flat upstairs and he wasn't there but after a few minutes they brought him down and he was unrecognisable. He didn't want to come down so they hit him with their guns. And that scared me.

HL: How old were you?

HW: I was fifteen. And after the visit in the afternoon we could go back to the flat. And it wasn't just Jewish people, Czech people, everyone. We lived on the side of a big square where they had a parade and obviously Hitler had taken the parade. And then, I don't remember quite how it was negotiated, but at first it was my sister only who was supposed to go on the Kindertransport to England. It was summer of '39 and we went to Prague and stayed at the Hotel Ambassador, which at the time was the Headquarter of the German army. and my parents didn't go there in order not to be molested but they always stayed at the Ambassador.

Tape 1: 42 minutes 18 seconds

And one floor was taken over entirely by the army and I thought it very funny to be in the same place with two guards outside the front door. We spent several days in Prague and I

visited my uncle's first wife Paula who was unable to walk. She had a fantastic house with a lot of paintings and it was a museum to my two cousins, Kurt and Heinz, all their toys were displayed and she told me about Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann and different people that she told me to read their books. And then one day we went to the station and we had a little case, my sister was four years younger than I, and there was a train and an older person whom I had met skiing - I used to ski a lot - said 'You can be a Reisebegleiter', one of the accompanying grown-ups, and gave me something to put on my arm and we said good-bye to my parents and got on the train. The train went through Germany and at every station there was military music, there were people in uniform and we were nervous because we weren't quite sure what would happen at the end. And then we were in Krefeld and SS control came through the carriages. The train had been sealed. There were some very young children and no grown-ups at all and when the SS came they made funny remarks about us and I thought 'Ja, it's my country, too'.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 20 seconds

And then we crossed the border and went to Holland and in Holland there was a welcoming committee, they gave us food and we were filmed and we got off the train and then... I don't quite remember whether we had to change trains but we went to the Hoek van Holland. And then we boarded a ship, an English ship, and I wanted to go to the loo and I didn't know..., I didn't want to ask anyone. And we were given tea which I thought was weak cocoa because I had never seen tea with milk before. And I don't remember much of the crossing but we arrived at Liverpool Street Station, each with a little cardboard nameplate and people came and picked whomever they wanted. And my parents had alerted my mother's younger brother who'd lived in England and he came and said unfortunately, there was illness at home. He couldn't take us. And I said good-bye to my sister, she was taken to some..., oh yes, the **Banscott** School where a lot of people went, refugees, and I went to a boarding house. That was my first time in England.

HL: We will come to your life in England in a few minutes...because I'd like to back-track to Czechoslovakia and ask, were you..., did you have to wear some form of identification as a Jew?

HW: Well, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia practically all Czech people wore a little badge with the Czech colours. All the Nazi-sympathisers and Germans wore Swastikas the Jews wore nothing. I wore nothing. That was easily identifiable. I never raised my hand in Nazi-salute, people did out of fear. At a shop, I was in a shop and three SS men went in and very aggressively said 'Heil Hitler' and everybody answered 'Heil Hitler' and they came to me and they stood in front of me and they said 'Heil Hitler' and I said 'Guten Tag'. Nothing happened. I would never say 'Heil Hitler' I would never raise my hand and, as I said, I had a temper and I had no fear of them.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 30 seconds

HL: And when you were at school, in two different schools in Czechoslovakia, how were you treated?

HW: The first school in Český Těšín was run on military lines. You had to... if you had forgotten your homework, or didn't do it, you had to stand to attention and say 'pupil Harry Weinberger reports that he hasn't done his homework'. And there was corporal punishment but I very rarely did my homework, I was never punished. Other people, the slightest thing and they were punished. It was a very strict school and at break, in front of the headmaster's

office anyone who had done something that some of the staff disapproved would have to stand outside the headmaster's office and at the break-time he would come out and hit them in the face and then go back. Yes, it is one of my funnier memories of Czechoslovakia. When a boy joined the school from another school we would send him immediately to the headmaster's office, the headmaster at break-time would come out, hit him and neither the boy nor the headmaster would have any idea why (laughs). I still think it funny.

HL: What about in the second school how were you treated there?

HW: In the second school we had a Headmaster called Unger who couldn't keep control. I was very good at art and I liked the art lessons and I sympathised with him. And again I came across his work long after the war. He died in Theresienstadt and there was an exhibition in Coventry with his work. I got the catalogue.

HL: What was his name?

HW: Unger... Unger. He was a nice man but not a good teacher. No, I was never punished at school I think the teachers probably guessed that I would have retaliated. I was very quick tempered; it took me years to get over it. And I did get over it.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 24 seconds

HL: How did the Czech people treat you as a Jew?

HW: I liked Czechoslovakia, I thought we had found a second home there and it was a very free and easy country and it was a beautiful country. And I joined a ski club in winter in Český Těšín and we were surrounded by mountains and I didn't see any difference between me and other people. And Juračka, this teacher who had no children, wanted to adopt me and asked my parents if he could. And I had friends, I still remember Duchan Konečni. It was a good time but I don't remember how my parents managed to pay for it or how they managed. It was something which I didn't question at that time. I would have loved to have known later. It must have been hell for them and also to say good-bye to one's children. Incidentally, my brother Bernd who was four years older than I had left home and come to England to work in a factory as an engineer. We were not close, it's a long time ago.

HL: Did you see any signs of anti-Semitism among Czech people at all?

HW: None at all, none at all. But I do remember in '38 when Austrian refugees came that people adopted a superior attitude towards the refugees. They felt they were a kind of lower class. It didn't feel threatening. Czechoslovakia was allied to Yugoslavia, to Russia, to France.

Tape 1: 54 minutes 4 seconds

When there was a crisis, I remember seeing some Russian uniforms, and the Czechs until the Munich agreement were free. And it didn't mean anything to me that it hadn't existed until 1918, that Český Těšín was a mistake, they simply drew a line along a river and didn't realise that half the town was Polish – Těšín – and half the town was Český. But I don't know what kind of official papers my parents had, I had a German passport, I felt German at the time.

HL: Were you able to have any cultural life while you were in Czechoslovakia?

HW: I had lots of friends, I don't know what you mean by cultural life because I did sport, we all did sport, I was good at middle-distance running, I swam, I skied, I loved skiing I won a downhill race...

HL: Did you paint?

HW: Yes, I drew and I painted all the time but nothing has survived from that time.

HL: Did you have any art tuition - apart from the art teacher that you mentioned - at school?

HW: No, none, none.

HL: And did you go to galleries and...?

HW: Not in Czechoslovakia but I do remember going to concerts and listening to classical music. That wasn't encouraged particularly, I just liked it and learned to distinguish different composers. And on the whole, I liked my life in Czechoslovakia.

HL: Where were the concerts?

HW: I don't remember the concert halls; I don't remember much of the architecture of Brünn or Český Těšín. I read a lot, I started to read, I read all the German classics, I read Russian, in translation of course, I read the Czech classics, so-called Czech classics in Czech, I read French classics, I couldn't get enough, I read and read and read.

HL: We'll move on to England on the next tape, is there anything more you would like to say about your life in Czechoslovakia?

HW: No.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 38 seconds

TAPE 2

HL: Harry Weinberger, tape two. Now, you brought us to England and to the station, where your relatives were not able to take you in, can you take up the story from there?

HW: I found myself in a boarding house in Finsbury Park and there were a couple of people, older than I was who had come out of Germany, I don't know when, and they took me to a cinema. And my first visit to an English cinema was amazing. The cinema organ, half way between the two main programmes, the cinema organ came up from the floor and words appeared on the screen and people sang along with the cinema organ. I had never seen anything like this before and I thought I'd landed in a lunatic asylum. It was the strangest thing that I had seen. The food also was quite different. And one other thing: on the journey from Harwich to Liverpool Street I thought most of the houses were unfinished because I was used to see painted houses and not bricks, plain bricks. I don't remember much about the first few days in England, everything was different, but coming out of what seemed to be hell, to come to a country deep at peace was very strange. I met people who spoke German and I said, 'There'll be a war soon' and like the boy in Dad's army, 'Don't be stupid', people called me stupid and had no idea what happened on the continent. And it was decided that my sister, my cousins, my uncle's two children with their nanny and I would go on holiday to Seaford. It

was the school holidays, summer of '39, and for some reason it was possible to stay there on holiday and very sunny days I remembered, it was very peaceful and very nice. My uncle who had come to Liverpool Street to tell us that we couldn't stay with him, he came to fetch us and said, 'War had just been declared'. And when I said, 'I'm afraid I told you so', he got very cross with me.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 43 seconds

My sister was dispatched again to Bunce Court School and I was sent to a place called Eastfields High School for Boys in Buckinghamshire and it was a very strange school. The boarders, it wasn't a large school, had parents who lived abroad or were service people, no other refugees. I didn't speak English, the food was very bad and there wasn't much. We were there for a few weeks and some officials came from London to see if London had to be evacuated. At that time they expected some casualties. Would it be possible to put them in the school? And they took one look and the headmaster was carted off. He was a very strange man, the school was shut as a school and I was taken to Woburn House, which was then I think dealing with a lot of refugees, and someone decided that I would go to a school called Amersham College in Amersham, which was a very nice, little school. I still don't know who paid for it, whether my uncle contributed or whether Woburn House contributed. And then I was sixteen and was asked to go to Reading to appear before a tribunal to decide whether I would be a friendly or an enemy alien. And there were three geriatrics and I stood in front of them and they asked me all kinds of questions. By that time I spoke a bit of English and when the interview finished, they decided I was an enemy alien.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 10 seconds

Then I was sent back to school. The way I learned English was, I took the Count of Monte Christo out of the school library and a dictionary and I looked up every single word, and I can still spell like a dictionary. But I didn't let on for quite some time that I also understood what other people were talking about. Then came the invasion of France and officials panicked and a lot of people were packed off to the Isle of Man to be interned. I had appendicitis and was sent to Holloway Hospital and had my appendix taken out. Two detectives came to arrest me but someone rang Amersham College and Mr. Hollands who was the headmaster, came and decided that he would look after me and he guaranteed that I would not commit any offences or do anything wrong. And the officials allowed me to stay at school, provided I didn't leave the school grounds, not during term time and not during holidays. So I was more or less marooned in Amersham. And then the bombings started in London. And the first time I heard bombs, we were in a dormitory and there were these sounds, strange sounds, very scary. In the morning we found that they were miles away. That was the first time I heard bombs. But then some of the German planes didn't want to face anti-aircraft fire and dropped their bombs anywhere before they got to London. And Amersham, the main street burnt at night and the Sixth Form were sent out to help the firemen put out the fires and a local policeman came and saw me. It was very bright, very light because of the fires and he said, 'You're not supposed to leave the school grounds'. And I wasn't angry I was just surprised at the officialdom that remembered that I wasn't supposed to leave the grounds.

Tape 2: 9 minutes 11 seconds

Then we had several raids, once there were incendiary bombs that fell all around the school and we rushed out and put out the fires and I took the fins of some of the bombs but I found an unexploded bomb and I took it to a workroom and put it in a vice and I wanted to open it and see. Some of them had an explosive device and the headmaster came in and he was absolutely speechless and he could just wave me away from the bomb and army bomb disposal people came with a big box and gently put the bomb away but the fins I had as

bookends for many years after, I still got them. And some of the staff were called up and replaced by Dr. Fuchs and Dr. Wolf who were German refugees, and I had a particular friend called Lesley Brooking who was my teacher and became a personal friend. And he - I've still got a drawing of him - and he introduced me to people who lived in Amersham and who had musical evenings where someone called [sounds like Dechorsky] who was a concert pianist played Mozart and Beethoven and we went there regularly until Mr. Brooking was called up and I never heard from him again. I don't know what had happened to him. In 1941 I did the Matric and got permission to work in a factory where one of my uncles, Joachim Koppel who had many interests in different countries had a financial interest and it used to be a Zip company but a section of it was turned over to the war department to do war work and that was the work I did. By that time my brother had been sent to Canada where he spent years...

HL: As an internee?

HW: As an internee and I was a toolmaker trainee and learned to work with my hands I had to change digs every times because...

Tape 2: 12 minutes 7 seconds

On one occasion my landlord said that he isn't going to harbour enemy aliens and I was out in the street and didn't know where to find a place, so I went to the police and said, 'I've just been turned out of my digs where can I stay?' And one of the policemen had a cousin or an aunt who let rooms and that's how I got my next room. And then I found a more permanent place with a man called Evans, a miner, I lived with him for a long time. The work started at half past seven in the morning and it was a ten-hour day and Saturdays we worked as well but not the whole day. And Saturday evenings I used to go to the cinema in Cardiff and at the entrance to the cinema they had a table full of sandwiches and I wanted a sandwich on one occasion. And I was very proud of my hands that looked always oily and dirty although I washed them and I started to count out my pennies and the girl serving me said, 'It's alright, you can keep your money'. And I was partly pleased and partly offended. Then I made an arrangement with the people who ran the factory that one day a week I could go to the school of Mine and Technology in **Treforest** and do a part-time engineering degree. Because it was engineering and I worked with machines I was allowed the day off and I did the first year of this course but I got bored with engineering and without telling anyone I went to Cardiff Art School and I said 'I want to be an artist' and they said, 'Well, what do you want to do?' And I thought artists had to know all about anatomy, so I said I want to study anatomy. So on the day that I was let out of the factory I was given a little desk and some bones to copy and I sat there copying the bones. Until on one occasion a man called Kerry Richards who turned out to be one of the important artists in Wales came and saw me and said, 'What are you doing here?' and I said, 'I'm learning about anatomy'. And he said, 'Nonsense, come with me'. And he took me to a life room and there were a lot of people with their easels in a semicircle, standing, and in front of them was a naked lady, a vast lady, I had never seen a naked woman before and I certainly hadn't imagined anyone that size, so he asked me to do a drawing and I was far too embarrassed to go near so I stood behind two people and drew their shoulders and their easels and in the distance this vast lady. And I didn't tell anyone at the factory and I went on doing this course, life drawing at Cardiff and I got to know Kerry Richards quite well.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 58 seconds

From time to time when I could, I went to a recruiting office and offered my services but they always said, 'Laddy, go back to war work, it's a reserved occupation'. And I certainly didn't want to join the pioneer core. And there were people in the home guard, all refugees they

were known locally as Majesty's own enemy aliens (laughs). And they got into terrible difficulties because of the exercises where they got lost and knocked on people's doors with thick German accents and English uniforms, asking the way back to Pontypridd wherever they were and it was a joke. I don't think that anyone took the home guard seriously. And then in 1944 suddenly it was possible to join up. Before that on one of the Saturday evening parties that I went to I found a girl who I was very keen on and not being used to talking to girls and not knowing what to say I simply went up to her and said 'will you be my girlfriend?' I was nineteen I think at that time and she was a few months younger. And to my surprise she said 'yes' and we had a very good relationship. At weekends she would tell her parents that she would stay with a school-friend and she came to stay with me, but the landlady didn't like it and I lost my place again but I found another one, I think the place was called Nantgarw between Pontypridd and Cardiff.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 20 seconds

The girl's name was Eva, Eve Evans and when I was finally able to join the army she said she would wait for me. And it took quite a long time until I was sent for and I went to the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, then based in Maidstone, and that's where I did my training. I had read just before going to the army a book by Hans Fallada called *Wolf unter Wölfen* and it was a story about a young German who joined the German army and the main idea of the German army was to completely humiliate and bully recruits until they did whatever they were told to do. So I expected the same from the British army and it wasn't nearly as bad. Some people couldn't take it at all. And there was a corporal in charge of our hut who said, 'Some of you are not very civilised'. And at night people should wear pyjamas and every evening he took his uniform off and there were his pyjamas, he wore them day and night! And there were quite a number of things that happened, which seemed funny to me. The first time we were taken by lorry to a place where we learned to throw hand grenades and they had to be primed and two of them exploded before they were handled by anyone so we had to collect up all the hand grenades and were taken back by lorry to the barracks and as the lorry stopped, one of the soldiers turned to the sergeant and said 'fooled you' and he had two of the grenades in his pocket, he could have blown us up. People were not very bright, and at the time I think it was true that some people who were in front of a court were told that they could either go to prison or join the army. And a few people joined the army instead. We met some very strange people.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 24 seconds

HL: Before we move on can I just clarify a few things. You went, after you left school after you'd taken your Matric did you go straight to the factory in Wales?

HW: Well, no. People I knew at the time said, 'You can't be ...' Nobody suggested I should go to university. 'You can't be a lawyer, you can't be a doctor, you can't practice in England you must work with your hands'. So everybody suggested that I work with my hands. I didn't want to work in a factory and I went to...I don't remember which harbour it was, I went to a harbour and joined the merchant navy and I showed my papers and I was told, 'No, you can't'. So in the end, that was my first paid job, I went to the factory, I got six pence an hour, the board and breakfast cost about three pounds, I think I had four pounds or four pounds ten.

HL: Was this about 1942?

HW: 1941 to 1944 I worked in the factory.

HL: What was the factory called?

HW: It still had the old title Aerozip but it was only partly doing zips and there were a lot of people like me in reserved occupations who worked... We made parts of motors and parts of I think machine-guns and all kinds of things. And they had to be very accurate and there was a person who controlled. My girlfriend Eva worked in a factory not far from us as a controller to make sure that things were absolutely right. We had some German toolmakers, non-Jewish, who had been recruited because it was a mining area and there had been unemployment and before the war they wanted German technicians to instruct British workmen and they laughed at the workmen because they had strict German discipline. And the Welsh people didn't take very kindly to it.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 11 seconds

HL: And then when you were allowed time off from the factory to do engineering, did you do art instead in that time without telling them or...

HW: Yes.

HL: ...or was that your spare time?

HW: Yes, but the first year I did engineering.

HL: And then art secretly while they still thought you were going off to...

HW: That's right. Yes.

HL: And were you managing to paint in your spare time during...

HW: Yes, I didn't have money for materials but I had water colours, and I had pens and pencils, and I had paper. And on one occasion my cousin Heinz who by that time lived in London came to visit me and to my horror I found out that he wanted to be an artist. And when I saw his drawings and he had done some shading that went slightly over the outlines, I thought I had nothing to fear. And when he came to visit me we went to Pontypridd and we did some drawings and the sergeant and the home guards heard us speak German and wanted to arrest us. And we said 'no', and we went to a fish & chips shop and he came with reinforcements. We had to go to the police and we had to hand over our sketchbooks and for all I know, the Welsh police still has my sketchbook and Heinz's. We were denounced as having made plans. Well.

HL: How did you get out of that one?

HW: Nothing happened, except they confiscated our drawings. I think the policemen at the station laughed he knew where I was working and Heinz had only come to visit me.

HL: What had happened to your sister during this period?

HW: I didn't know. My sister, I had no contact with her at all and later my sister used to say that both brothers abandoned her; one was in Canada and the other one...I really didn't know where she was.

HW: Back then to your time in the army, 1944.

HW: Yes. There was a young lieutenant who pointed to his pips on his shoulders and said 'I didn't get that for nothing.' He was very strict and kept boasting about being an officer and the first time we had live ammunition in an exercise he got shot in the back. All kinds of things happened in Maidstone.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 17 seconds

HL: Did he survive? He was in the army corps

HW: Yes, yes, he wasn't badly hurt, friendly fire it's called. The training was quite tough but not nearly as severe as I thought the German army had. And towards the end of our training we were asked what the next step would be. We could choose. Some people wanted to get out of doing things like..., they wanted to go to the education corps and become cooks or batmen. I said to the officer who interviewed me I wanted to go to the war, that was the idea and he said, 'Laddy that can be arranged.' And he also told me that it would be advisable to change my name. And I said, 'Yes, I'll change it to Mac Weinberger.' My friends always called me Mac for a long time afterwards. Some of us had wanted to go to the Jewish brigade, we had heard roughly that it was in Italy and we wanted to go there. What we didn't want was to be sent to Japan, to the Japanese theatre of war. And a few weeks later, I think I had about six days leave and then we went back to Maidstone and were issued with all our kit and we were sent to a place in Baker Street which I never found again, on the top floor, and we were told in the case of air raids or V-bombs we would not be allowed to go down because there were too many people on the staircase and the lifts wouldn't work. And we stayed there for about a week. For breakfast we had full English breakfast, bacon and egg, served by sergeants and that made me feel a bit scared because we had been told that corporals or sergeants were infinitely high above us and their were not approachable and there they were serving us.

Tape 2: 30 minutes 14 seconds

And one day we were taken by lorry to a station and we went to Greenock. And in Greenock we were taken by a tender to a big ship, a Dutch ship, the name I have forgotten, and it was crammed full of soldiers. The journey we were on took over a fortnight and first we sailed into the Arctic Circle. There was a convoy of twenty-two ships, including two aircraft-carriers and several destroyers. It was very exciting to see. We were all given life-jackets with little red lamps on it and you pressed a switch and the red lamp would come on and mine didn't work and I went to a sailor and I said, 'My light doesn't work', and he said, 'Whether it works or not, if anything happens nobody will stop for you.' I've seen films where people who were torpedoed were picked up by another ship and the sailor said, 'No, this doesn't happen because it means that the next ship can get torpedoed too, you'll be left alone.' And he said, 'That won't worry you either because the water is so cold you won't survive.' It wasn't very cheering to hear and a friend of mine and I we decided to anticipate anything bad and we'd go into a lifeboat. And at night we got into a lifeboat that had a little tarpaulin over it but it was so uncomfortable and cold that we decided to take our chances. I had a hammock down in an enormously crowded mess; there were nearly 2,000 people on board. At night you were not supposed to smoke on deck or show any light or throw anything over board; it was considered dangerous, a U-boat could pick it up. Then I was alright until we got to the Bay of Biscay. We went right up north and, across Ireland and then down south and it was very exciting to see the convoy during daytime and I remember on one occasion, sitting in the crowded mess, we were only allowed on deck in batches and sitting there, and a very young officer came to give a lecture and he said..., he started by telling us that the average mental age of the British

soldier is ten and I said, 'What is the average mental age of the officers giving lectures?' And he said that he wanted that man's name and number. And people crowded around him and he shouted for military police to get him out and that was the end of the lecture. People were excitable and officers were not much liked. Do you want me to go on?

Tape 2: 33 minutes 54 seconds

HL: Yes. I'd like to know a bit about your relationship with your fellow soldiers because you had such a different background from them.

HW: I had one friend who I called Jolle, I don't know what his real name was. Like me, he wanted to eventually join the Jewish brigade and we were together and we...we were alright with other people, we talked a lot and smoked a lot and drank a lot but I don't remember any particular, special incidence. No.

HL: Had you known many Jewish people in England and in Wales in the preceding years?

HW: I knew someone at the factory, funnily enough his name was Franz Kafka who joined the Czech army and got badly wounded near Calais. I knew a few people, not many Jewish people and in the free time that I had, the few hours, I was with Eva. Yes, I did know Jewish people and I wanted them to come to the army with me and I was very disappointed when they refused to come.

HL: So, to proceed with the trip...

HW: Well, there were bits in the army where, because I didn't sleep at night, or where my memory isn't clear, but the journey was interesting. We went to...in the Bay of Biscay I was asked to get a bucket full of hard-boiled eggs and then I was sick. I was sick for nearly two days and I was very upset and embarrassed, no pills or doctors or anything.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 20 seconds

Then it got better and then at Gibraltar the convoy split up and our ship went on a zigzag course to Africa and I don't know which country we stopped there for a day and then sailed on to Naples. And we disembarked in Naples and we were taken to a big army camp outside the town. It was surrounded by barbed wire and there were people constantly patrolling outside the camp and we were in tents for about eight people. And the first morning we woke up and we noticed that two tents had gone. Italians were very good at pinching things and in spite of the barbed wire and in spite of the guards these tents had gone. And I'd forgotten to say that few people like me who'd come from Maidstone, we were attached to a unit whose commander had either been on leave or wounded, with a very young lieutenant in charge of us. And he told me on the ship that the British army will fight to the last alien, to the last foreign soldier. We were on route to the eighth army and there were Poles and Indians and all kinds. Anyway, in Naples we were told we were not allowed to go into town and that we would stay there a few days and Jolle and I, we decided to investigate and to go into town and a lorry came with supplies and we hopped into the back of the lorry and we went into Naples and in Naples there were big signs 'out of bounds to other ranks' and we didn't think that there would be many military police about and we went into town and there were signs 'Egg and Chips' and we were surprised to see some with topless waitresses. It was wartime and we were in Italy.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 19 seconds

Anyway, after a few days in the camp, we were again taken to a station and a train stopped every few miles for some reason or another until we went to Casino, where the battles had been. That was long after the battles and the train stopped and suddenly there were a lot of civilians and the commanders we'd been with sold all their equipments except their guns and their blankets to the Italians and they got drinks instead and I said to the officer, 'How can you justify it? We were told it would be a court martial offence if you loose a pair of shoelaces.' And he said, 'lost in action'. And after that they were totally drunk and the train went on and on, I don't know how long for, for hours or days, I don't remember, until we came a place near Rimini in the North and then the train couldn't go further, the tracks had been destroyed. And then we were taken by lorry to a place, a kind of village where the houses were almost completely destroyed and we were told to make ourselves at home and of course we thought we'd be picked up by trucks again but instead we made little nests for ourselves, we had groundsheets and blankets. And then we had to carry all our equipment and walk. Oh, at night you saw the flashes of the guns. And I was all right until some old people - there were no young people about - saw us and crossed themselves as we went passed. And then...

HL: Why did they do that?

HW: I think they felt sorry for us. And some tanks went passed us and Jolle said something like, 'Good luck mate', and one of the men in an open tank turned around and told him to...you know, every other word was a swearword. We all talked a completely different kind of language.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 8 seconds

And then things got confused. We got...we lost the commanders and we were sent to a holding unit and I remember on one occasion a sergeant telling us, it wasn't like a football match where there were rules and I found out afterwards that the army did leapfrogging; there was a unit and that stayed put and then another unit went forth, and at the time, the German army was in retreat and the sergeant wanted few of us, about eight or nine, to see if things were clear. And there was a clearing in front of a wood and there was a hut and at that time, I don't know why and I don't know how, but instead of the normal gun we had machine pistols. And we had forgotten all the things that we were taught in the army. We remembered Errol Flynn and films where some people take cover behind trees and one person will dash forward and that's what we did. And when we got to the hut and we kicked in the door. There was nobody about, it was a store for the German army and it had been abandoned. And instead of taking it and bottles and things we just emptied our machine guns into this, we totally wrecked it, probably because we had been afraid. A few times things happened. It was near the Yugoslav border on one occasion I remember, there were two other things that I remember really of wartime. It was very embarrassing. I got separated from the others, it was only infantry there were no tanks or planes and I saw a German machine gun aimed at me. I suppose a film actor would have shot them or said, 'You're my prisoners'. I remember that I wasn't afraid at all I was just acutely embarrassed. And I turned around and nothing happened, they didn't fire at me. I thought afterwards that they were as pleased that nothing happened as I was.

Tape 2: 45 minutes 20 seconds

But I didn't tell the people I got separated from, and then I stuck to the others. And on another occasion I remember, waiting for an attack and lying at the edge of a field and it was very early morning, we hadn't slept, and that was the first time I saw German soldiers near. They came near and surrendered. And someone arranged for barbed wire to be put around the field.

And it was like a herd of goats, they stank, whether it was fear or they hadn't washed or whatever, and one of them was very frightened. I put my hand in my pocket to get a cigarette out and he sort of cringed. And, I don't know why, I offered him a cigarette and he gave me an iron cross. That's the only thing I've got from the war. And on another occasion a staff car with a German officer came and asked where he could find our headquarters and I said in German, 'You can get out here', and he was so surprised. The end of the war came a few days before the real end in Italy and at some stage, I don't remember whether it was before the end of the war or after, I finally ended up with the Jewish brigade, and Jolle. That was near a place called Brisighella on the **Segno** River, and we met these Israeli soldiers and they were surprised that we'd come from England and someone said, 'The war is finished' or, 'There is an armistice'. It wasn't finished and we were lined up. I was in the first battalion, there were lots of people and we stood in a U-formation and the sergeant major, I don't think he was Jewish, he stood in front of us with a list of names and he read out the names of the people who had died in the war and that was the most impressive thing that I had ever seen; no speeches, only the names. And then people started to fire into the air and there were some casualties because of it. And some people got drunk.

Tape 2: 48 minutes 40 seconds

And we were still there and the war had gone on to Austria when I was ... Oh yes, the colonel of our unit, the brigadier, brigadier Benjamin, he was Jewish but the colonel was not Jewish, he came from another regiment, and an order appeared on a tree trunk I think, saying that troops fishing in the river, if the fish are less than I think eight inches long have to throw them back into the river and if we need any other way of measuring, we could use our pay book. What the colonel didn't realise was that people threw hand-grenades into the river and what came up..., that was fishing. He had led a sheltered life. The brigade was sent on to Tarvisio on the Austrian boarder, I don't think that the British authorities were very keen on having a Jewish fighting unit on Austrian soil. There was, I found that out later, a Palestinian regiment of 27,000 people, 7,000 were the brigade and that was a fighting unit. Some of the brigade people went to find survivors from camps, brought them in British uniforms to Tarvisio. I was then on guard, on the brigadiers guard, I saw him, he had a cover under which he slept and he came out in the morning just wearing a towel and a monocle and at night, when some survivors came from camps I think the brigade got them back into Palestine. And on one occasion there was a young boy and the on next lorry that came another boy came out and they were brothers and they had thought each other dead. It was incredible to see them because by that time we had found out what had happened.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 24 seconds

And we also met some people who had Polish parties and who had nothing but contempt for us who thought we had an easy life, they had years of fighting.

HL: What was the name of the place you were in as the camp survivors were coming?

HW: That was outside Tarvisio. Yes, outside Tarvisio. But then one day, one of the officers came to me and said... I had given the name of my parents and they'd found out through the Red Cross that my parents were - no, that was before Tarvisio, that was just towards the end of the war - that my parents were in Zürich, in Switzerland. And there were three other people who had relatives in Switzerland and that was the first leave I had. And we were given a fifteen-hundred-weight that was not quite the size of a lorry but bigger than a Jeep with a mounted machine-gun and we were told that we could make our way to Switzerland. And the British Eighth Army was on the Eastern side of Italy and the American Fifth or First, I think the Fifth Army was on the Western side and the German army was in the middle, fully armed.

And we drove through German lines and we ran out of petrol and we asked for petrol and I gave them cigarettes for petrol and they were very polite, the officers saluted us, until we went to Chiasso at the Swiss border and the Americans were hostile and wouldn't let us through so we split up. I went to a kind of pub and I met some Italians who said for cigarettes they'll take me across. And in the evening, at night actually, a girl and some civilians, obviously fascist, came and we were taken across the Swiss border and I lost the others. But I was keen to see the Swiss border police and when I met them, they took me to a hut with a telephone and I rang the British consul in Zürich and he alerted my parents and we met in Lugano. I had exchanged things with the partisans before and I carried a pistol in my pocket and I had it still in my pocket when I went to Switzerland. And my parents turned up and I hadn't seen them since 1939 and this was early 1945, so six years I hadn't seen them.

Tape 2: 54 minutes 30 seconds

And I had remembered my father as a tall blond man and my mother very energetic and there were these elderly people, very quiet, grey-haired man, not quite as tall as I'd imagined him. And they didn't ask me what I was doing in uniform, where I'd come from. We, it was a strange time, we were sitting at a table in front of a restaurant and I had gotten my handkerchief out and I pulled a gun out and I put it on the table and my mother's eyes were glued to the gun and... I was probably just showing off. And I said, 'Let's hire a boat', and my parents said, 'yes', and we went on the lake. They must have thought me completely mad. They didn't ask about my sister, they didn't ask about their brother they were very subdued. That was the first time I saw my parents again. Later I saw them more often and, if I just may continue, a few days later, I don't remember how many days leave I had, I went back but couldn't find the brigade. They had been moved to Holland, which had been flooded by the German army in retreat and it was full of mines. And German prisoners of war had volunteered for better conditions to lift the mines and the brigade was supposed to oversee this. At first I met them in Eindhoven and an officer told me that - I had been in a theatre of operation in the Italian war, and I had matriculated, and I spoke German - that they wanted people for counter-intelligence in Germany. By that time the war had finished and Germany was occupied and I would be sent to Germany. I said, 'Yes, alright' and went to Germany to a place called Bad Driburg, it was near Bad Oeynhausen, that's where the headquarters were of the German army. And incidentally while I was there, a poster appeared on an official notice board, signed Montgomery, Field Marshall, thanking all the troops under his command for their services. And I took this poster off and we were lined up and an officer said, 'Whoever took the poster should own up and nothing will happen.' But nobody owned up and I kept this poster for years until many years later, I sent it to Montgomery and asked if he could sign it and he did and sent it back to me. So I had the printed signature and his signature. Well, that's a souvenir!

Tape 2: 58 minutes 13 seconds

TAPE 3

HL: Harry Weinberger, tape three. Now, you'd been asked to be an intelligence officer. Can you take up the story up from there?

HW: Well, I went to, I think it was in Bad Driburg, there was a castle that belonged to a General von Haase who was executed after the anti-Hitler plot but his family still lived there. There was a school room and when I arrived we were sitting at little desks and on each desk was a pen and suddenly one pen exploded and we were all under the desks. I was only an ordinary soldier, all the others had had higher ranks in the army or navy or air force. And the

reason that the pen exploded was that they had been disguised detonators that had been dropped by parachute to partisans or French resistance people. We were told not to take anything for granted and that we had to sign a secret order that we wouldn't reveal what would happen. The training lasted several weeks and we were told about the German organisations. For example some of the leadership of the Hitler Youth had disappeared with vast sums of money and we were supposed to look for them. And we were told not to fraternise with locals, but I did. There was this girl called Uschi Eschrich, her father had been an anti-Nazi but he had been sent as an engineer to Poland and now he was the mayor of the little town. He said, 'Poland was a pig sty and we had to clear it up.' And he was an anti-Nazi! Anyway, his daughter Uschi became my friend. And I had a commanding officer called Major **Wascha**, who had been a Czech national and I was a sergeant by then. We had all kinds of commitments but I noticed that some of the higher ranks had done a lot of black market deals. When we got our orders we had to go to an office and sign the order. One day I went to the office and the sergeant major who sat at the desk looked at my name and said, 'You can't sign and you're taken off the corps.' And I asked why, and he wouldn't tell me. The next thing I heard was that I had to join an infantry unit, a Scottish regiment in Hamburg and I went to Major **Wascha** and complained and he said, 'Well, we have trouble with people. You never know what happens but don't go to Hamburg'.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 42 seconds

So when I didn't go, I was asked to see the colonel. And that was an elderly colonel, sitting behind the desk and from his ribbons I could see that he hadn't been to the European war, he'd been in India. And he said, 'You people give us a lot of trouble' and I had a bit of a temper and I said 'we people were alright when you needed us and I am not interested anymore' and I took my medal ribbons off and put them in front of him on his desk and I unbuttoned my uniform and I was supposed to stand in front of him and I took a chair and I sat down. And he got bright red in the face and he shouted, 'Guard!' and he sent me to kind of, it wasn't a prison, it was a guard room attached to the German barracks where the British had taken over. He didn't tell me what it was all about and I thought it was because I knew that the higher ranks had done black market deals. And a major came to see me in this guard room and he told me, 'You can't act like a Michael Kohlhaas in the army.' And I didn't know who Michael Kohlhaas was until when I read Heinrich von Kleist's story about Michael Kohlhaas who, I think in the 15th century had his daughter raped by the local count. And he went and he took the count's horses and burnt his castle and in court, Michael Kohlhaas was told, 'For raping your daughter, yes, you were in the right but you shouldn't have burnt the count's castle.' And he was hanged. But I didn't know the story except that this major told me, and he also said he was Jewish and until then I hadn't realised that it had anything to do with Jews. And I want to finish the story because I found out why it was...

Tape 3: 6 minutes 27 seconds

I was in that place for several days but the men in charge of that guard room let me out during the day if I'd give them my word that I'd come back in the evening. They threatened me with a court-martial for refusing to carry out an order and I told Uschi. And Uschi had a brother who'd been in the air force, in the Luftwaffe and had been released and she gave me his uniform jacket and I did a self-portrait of myself in a German Luftwaffe. I thought if I am being court-martial and they threatened me with all sorts of things because I didn't carry out an order I thought I would simply disappear as another German prisoner of war and I'd stay in Germany. I had nothing to keep me in England. But eventually another officer, another colonel came and said that a mistake had been made and I was given my back pay and I had the choice of either going to this infantry unit. Because I was too young to be released in 1946, I would either serve my time or get an honourable discharge and go back into civilian

life and I said I'll take an honourable discharge, I didn't want dishonourable. And I was sent back to England, together with a young Welshman who also had trouble with the army and he told me his story. He was in tanks and in one of the last battles in Lüneburg, up in North Germany, they had a lot of young prisoners, Hitler youth, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen year-olds and their hands were up, they had surrendered. And the tanks were lined up and an officer came shouting, 'No prisoners today!' And they were machine-gunned to death. Nowadays that would be in the papers and they would be war criminals and so on. My friend didn't want to stay in the army and he got a medical discharge. He couldn't sleep after that.

Tape 3: 9 minutes 12 seconds

He had to fire at young people, these sort of things happened. Anyway...

HL: I am not sure I fully understood the trouble that you were in. When the officer said 'we've had trouble with you people' did he mean Jewish people, did he mean the Jewish brigade...?

HW: I don't know, I don't know. I simply didn't understand. But at the art school, when I was later at art school with Jerry **Mansell** who had been a high ranking officer in the intelligence corps, he promised to look it up. He went to the war office and looked it up and it turned out that my cousin Theo had been a Haganah officer. At that time there was trouble with Arabs and Jews in Palestine and the British army after the war were sending soldiers to sort things out. And when it turned out that I had a cousin who was an officer in Haganah I was no longer allowed to work in intelligence corps. And that saved my life afterwards because when the Arab-Israeli war started, I volunteered with two of my friends. We had a medical in London, we were taken to Italy to a port, I think it was Bari, and we all had military experience and we had to show our pay books and my two friends were taken on board and because it said intelligence corps in my pay book, the men in charge said, 'Not today'. They went to, I think it was Lydda. Theo told me later that as they were taken off the ship, they were taken straight to a battle with Czech rifles that were all unusable. The Czech communists had sold them defective guns and the Arabs took no prisoners, they were all killed and Ben Gurion decided not to make it public. They lost about 2,000 people, which would have probably finished the war if it had been made public, and my two friends died. I've got a photo of one of them.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 57 seconds

Anyway, I had anticipated this when I came to England and I lost sight of my friend. I got demobbed and found out, I don't remember how, that Kerry Richards by that time lived in London. I called on him and he said he was a lecturer at that time at Chelsea School of Art and why don't I come to Chelsea. So that's how I became an art student. But I had to register with the police as an enemy alien. I came out of the army and I was again an enemy alien! And I walked into Chelsea, in the middle of a test, we had to draw a London street scene from imagination and we handed in our work and the next day it was handed back and I had a mark of ten. I was delighted until I found out that it was a ten out of a hundred and it was the lowest mark, and I asked why, and I was told that in reality, if you look at people, there isn't an outline and I used outlines. And I think Picasso and Matisse would have failed the same test for the same reason.

HL: Now, before we move on to your art career, I'd just like to backtrack on two things: first of all, what had happened to your parents in all those intervening years, beginning 1939 until when you met them in Switzerland?

HW: Yes, yes. I was very embarrassed. My parents had..., my mother was a very good bridge player and in some bridge club she met some people who were very wealthy and who lent them a flat and, I suppose, helped them financially because the Swiss government didn't allow my father to do anything.

HL: But how did they get to Switzerland and when?

HW: I still don't know. During the war - and my father would never do anything against the rules - C and with Swastikas on his passport, they went to Switzerland. The Swiss turned back a lot of people who tried to get into Switzerland but for some reason not only were they allowed to live there but they were not interned. And the family were called Brod. And my parents had their support. My father had a cousin called Cartagena who was a medical professor and he worked in Switzerland. Whether he helped them I don't know. I met Professor Cartagena afterwards. It's possible that he helped them. The family Brod...my uncle I think compensated them for whatever they had done for my parents and in later years I gave them some pictures.

Tape 3: 15 minutes 16 seconds

HL: But as far as you know, your parents went after they'd said good-bye to you at the station, shortly after that?

HW: They went...

HL: They went from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland?

HW: No, they stayed in Czechoslovakia and their silver and everything was confiscated and after the war had broken out, I don't know how long afterwards, they went to Switzerland. They stayed in Switzerland until things cleared up a bit in Germany and then to my great embarrassment, they went back to Germany. And they went back to Berlin and they didn't find any of their friends or colleagues, probably they wanted compensation, I don't know. We never talked about it. In old age they came to England and they lived in Swiss Cottage in a flat. By that time my parents had a pension from the German government.

HL: And how did you feel going back into Germany at the end of the war?

HW: I was delighted to see that the Germans were no longer a 'Herrenvolk'. They were full of excuses, they thought that nobody has ever suffered as much as they had done although Bad Oeynhausen and Bad Driburg were not bombed, they were perfectly like a peacetime place, except that of course the British army had taken over the best houses. And the population, they were not without food. I never got to Berlin until many years later. I had strange experiences. On one occasion, when I was still with intelligence corps, I wore uniform and there was a train, - there were not many trains. I had to go to some place and I don't remember what it was about, and a middle-aged man sat opposite me and as the train got going he said to me 'what does a German do in British uniform?' And I hadn't said a word in English or German to anyone...

HL: Did you feel yourself still to be a German?

HW: Yes. It was very familiar to be in Germany again. And on one occasion, it was a summer's day, a hot day, I had taken my uniform jacket off and in the intelligence cops we all

wore our old insignia and the brigade had a blue-white-blue square with a yellow Star of David in the middle. I remember that the Jews had to wear the Star of David. Well, I wore mine after the war.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 23 seconds

I had taken my jacket off and I was smoking on a hill, on my own, I had a few hours leave, and a young girl came and sat next to me and we heard some children come up and she said, 'They make as much noise as the Jew's school' and I said, 'What do you mean?' And she came for a cigarette and she sat next to me and we shared cigarettes and, 'Well, Jews make a lot of noise'. So I got hold of my jacket and I showed her the Star of David and she got terribly embarrassed. Terribly embarrassed. And I said, 'No, don't be embarrassed'. And we talked and I knew her for a few days, she was a nurse in a German army unit, she wanted to find her parents, and I got..., German people weren't allowed to travel on army transport and I got a driver to take her near where she wanted to go. But that was strange, I remember that very clearly. And then I met some people who'd come out of camps and I thought worse than killing people was taking away their dignity. It was really awful to see them. And I forgot to say that on one occasion, in Italy, we came across a caravan, with some young Hungarian-Jewish girls who were used by the German army as prostitutes. We found tickets that German army were issued to go there and these girls wouldn't talk to us and we put some chocolate down and we went a distance away and then they took the chocolate. And the tickets were sent to Nuremberg to the trials and the girls were sent to Palestine and were taken into care. I found out later.

HL: So now, back to Chelsea Art School, tell me about that.

Tape 3: 21 minutes 0 second

HW: It was, I found out later, one of the top Art Schools in England, I didn't realise, I didn't like it very much. I had been drawing and painting for a long time and the restrictions of art school to do things to the taste of someone else wasn't very congenial. And I had a friend called Susan York... Art school at that time was a finishing school for some girls and all the men - I was the only non-commissioned officer, they had all been pilots, or commanders in the navy - were very serious. Some of the staff said they never had art students like that before. We turned up early in the morning and we worked. But at the end of a week we had a large wall and we had to pin our, our drawings were pinned against the wall by the staff. They gave us a weekly subject and my friend Susan York and I, we found ours at the very end always and at the centre were the most satisfactory pictures that were like illustrations to Woman or Woman's Own. Until Kerry Richards took over and he started by saying, 'Pin your work where you think it should go', so Susan and I went to the extreme end and put ours up and he said, 'Let me re-do it'. And he put ours in the centre and he liked my work. But a Mr. Coxon who disliked my work and another one whose name I can't think of right now was an Royal Academician. We were drawing from life and we had little donkeys, these little stools that you sat on and drew. And there was a girl next to me and this man sat next to her and said, 'Oh, lovely drawing and the arm is a bit to long' and he made some comments and nobody spoke because we all wanted to hear - Pitchfalls was his name, R.A. Pitchfalls, he was an R.A - and then he came to me and in the silence he said, 'Yours is a very ugly drawing'. And he was a real gent, and then there was break and he waited for me at the door and he apologised, he said, 'I'm so sorry but yours is a really awful drawing'.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 4 seconds

And I raced over to the Royal Academy where he had some work and his paintings were of slippers and a pipe and I thought, 'I have to start worrying if he likes my work'. But I was disenchanted with the criticisms that we had. Except one man remembered me years afterwards, that was Henry Moore. But he taught sculpture and I was a painting student, only occasionally we came across him. And I then looked around, I wanted to find a painter who I could work with and who could teach me in the evening and I had very little money, I had a grand of 225 Pounds a year and I lived on that. And I met Kokoschka, but Kokoschka had the reputation of making little Kokoschkas. And I came across Martin Bloch through family connections and he was a painter whose work I liked very much and he took me on at one Pound a lesson and I stayed the evening and I stayed long enough to be invited to have a meal with him. And unwisely, I mentioned it at the Art School that I had lessons with him and it didn't go down very well.

HL: Why not?

HW: He was an expressionist painter, he was quite well known but the kind of art that was then taught was useful but very understated, grey and grey, very naturalistic. And I could draw like that, I could do portraits, I could do the kind of work that we were supposed to do but near the end at my course at Chelsea, the then headmaster, Williamson, called me into his office and said - the school had 50% of the marks and the then Ministry of education had 50% - and he said, 'We will fail you', and I asked why and he said, 'Because your colour is crude and vulgar'. I was the only one who used colour, everybody else did grey and grey. So for my last term I went to Goldsmiths College and the then head-teacher there was called Gardener, Clive Gardener, and I told him what had happened at Chelsea and I said, 'Can I work here and take the exam?' and he said, 'yes', and of course I passed.

Tape 3: 27 minutes 5 seconds

And I met some of the staff at Goldsmiths. None of them were as hostile or as difficult as I found them at Chelsea. Although we had one or two teachers I got on with but the ones who mattered and who were the so-called academics they didn't like lines or colour.

HL: Were you living on your own in digs or...?

HW: I thought one day, if London put out blue plaques, they'd run out of plaques because I lived in so many places. I had a room in Battersea, I had a room in Kensington. I had lived for two years in the King's Road in Chelsea. Now there is the fire station, it was a bombed building. Whenever I asked people to visit me they never turned up because nobody thought you could live in a place like that, but it was cheap. The doors didn't fit, the staircase was faulty and dangerous but it was all right. And then I had another room in Chelsea and when I was still in uniform, on my last leave before de-mob, I met Barbara. We had a family connection. I was supposed to fetch something from her home and she came to the door. She was a schoolgirl, aged sixteen and at that time, I think girls got brownie points for going out with people in uniform. And I asked her to come to the cinema with me. And we did start going out regularly but her parents were horrified and sent her to Switzerland to learn to speak French and told me not to write to her and told her not to write to me. If people want to make sure that two people get together all they have to do is to tell them not to write to each other or not to see each other. I used to take her to terrible American films where everybody smoked. People said things like, 'Rub him out left', and left he would rub him out. She told me later that she hated those films but she came along. And one day she decided, she'd ask me to go and hear Beethoven's string quartets. There was a string quartet called the Löwengut String

Quartet and we went to hear all the late Beethoven string quartets. And then we went to the Matthew Passion in the Albert Hall and subsequently we went year after year.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 37 seconds

But Barbara spent quite a long time in Switzerland and I kept her first letter to me from Switzerland, where she said 'I didn't understand a word of the things you told me but soon I'll be seventeen and then I'll be grown-up and then I'll understand everything'. She went to art school at the Central, she went to the Central School and she used to sometimes fetch me from school. She were the only girl I knew who wore gloves, not because it was cold but you wear gloves. We went to the Blue Cockadoo on the Embankment in Chelsea. I was in school with someone called John Berger who became a writer afterwards. And we all admired his work until years later when I found out that he had got hold of some reproductions of Picasso and he copied them and at that time Picasso wasn't very well known in England.

HL: Which school were you at with John Berger?

HW: Chelsea Art School. We were friends at that time and also with his wife but he left her and married someone else and we lost sight of each other. And I had my first exhibition, no, I think after Chelsea, I had an interview with Sir William Coldstream at the Slade, and I thought of course I'll get in, and he offered me a place. Afterwards I thought I was very stupid I had had enough of art school, so I didn't go. If I had gone to the Slade, I suppose I would have stayed in London but as it was, I went to have a teacher-training year in Brighton. And during that year, we got married.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 1 second

HL: Which year was that?

HW: '51, 1951. And we..., first I had a room in Brighton and then we had a little flat in Kemp Town in Brighton. And when I finished the course, Barbara asked me to come to her home, they lived in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and I applied one hundred seventy-six times until I had my first job. People had then just come out of the army and for every job there were between fifty and hundred applicants. And people with local injuries had priority anyway. I thought I'd teach at art school but my first job was in a London slum school, off the Harrow Road. However, after a few days at Barbara's house, her father said to me, - Barbara was out, she worked then for the head office in Baker Street of Marks & Spencer's, she did designs for them, she did textile design at art school - and he said that he was expecting friends from America and he needs the room. And I told Barbara, 'I don't want to see your parents again'. And we moved in with different people.

HL: How orthodox was Barbara's family?

HW: They had nothing to do with Jewishness. Her mother came from a Jewish banking family from Frankfurt, her grandfather was a banker, but her father's family had been among the first Jews in Berlin and the third generation baptised. And he showed me his German pay book as protestant and it wasn't until one day when he was a schoolboy in the then Sixth Form that he came home and said, 'We really gave it to the Jews today' that his father said, 'You shouldn't say things like that because your family was originally Jewish.' He was a very, highly intelligent, very clever man, an art historian; I have got a row of his books...

HL: What was his name?

Tape 3: 35 minutes 59 seconds

HW: Wolfgang Herrmann. And he had come to England very early on, and I think he didn't want his daughter to marry an art student who used swearwords and had no future to look forward to. I thought I'd show him.

HL: Did you look like a bohemian art student?

HW: Not at all. I didn't. But I wore my uniform until it fell to bits. Martin Blocher always said, 'An artist should look like a bank manager.' And he wore a French fisherman's outfit, trousers and top, Turkish shoes, pointed shoes and a Portuguese red hat that fell over one of his eyes and he thought he looked like a typical bank manager! I wanted to have a job and pay for us. Barbara's family could have but didn't help us, my family couldn't and also didn't help us. I'll be very brief about my jobs. The first job was in a very tough slum school called Beethoven School where I was the only graduate and where I had to teach swimming and mathematics and art. The children produced very interesting art, but when an inspector came he said we had the best library in the whole of London because it was locked. Only when an inspector came was the library unlocked. When my first year was up, a probationer year, I applied for different jobs and the next job was in a public school, Reading School. The school hymn was '800 years and more have passed since the Reading School was founded'. I could have spent my life there but I didn't want to. The headmaster Mr. Camp bought two of my paintings for the school and gave me Fridays off to do my own work but I wanted to get back to art schools.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 0 seconds

My next job was Manchester College of Art and after that I got the senior job as Head of Painting at Coventry. Meanwhile, Barbara wanted to... We had our daughter Johanna, and I relented as far as Barbara's parents were concerned. And Barbara's mother came for the birth of Johanna and we became a real family. For many years we had a flat in Barbara's parent's house, by that time they had moved from Hampstead Garden suburb to Hampstead Pilgrim's Lane, and eventually we had our own flat even closer to the Heath. Barbara wanted to have an interest; she didn't simply want to be a painter's wife, waiting for me to come out of my workroom so she went first to university at Manchester. We had university friends who looked like unmade beds and I thought Barbara wouldn't ..., I didn't encourage her, she wasn't vain but she was very good-looking and I wanted her to stay vain and good-looking. And she did her first degree, I think it was in Social Science, she did her next degree in History then she took a Master's degree, then she took a PhD; by that time we were here and she did it at Birmingham, and she wrote books about the police...

HL: Under the name Barbara Weinberger?

HW: Oh, yes. And the last book that she'd written, which was quite critical of the police although she used to go to Scotland Yard and hobnob with some of the senior police people. She was quite well known, she used to give lectures at Cambridge and Oxford but she was, as I said, a fellow of Nuffield College in Oxford and she was Senior Research Fellow at Warwick University, but the last book she would read to me, the manuscript, and I suggested certain changes, which she did. It wasn't until she was dead that I picked it up and saw that she had dedicated it to me. I didn't know that while she was alive.

Tape 3: 42 minutes 1 second

HL: And you were mainly teaching painting, how much of your own painting did you have time to do?

HW: More than I did when I left college. By the time I was in my late forties, my own paintings took off. I used to have exhibitions in Germany, in London, and I was in my late fifties when I left my job at Coventry. We travelled a lot. I had regular exhibitions, the last ten with Duncan Campbell in London. I wanted him to move to the West End, he sat at the end of Kensington Square, but he said he likes to have his gallery where most of his clients are within walking distance.

HL: And how much did your paintings sell?

HW: There is a very strict picking order. An unmade bed will sell for 150,000 Pounds but my pictures went for between 6,000 and 9,000 Pounds. I last saw Grisha Osherov [?] in 1933. By chance I heard many, many years later, that he had lived in Positano, in Italy. So one year we went, not that long ago, we went to Positano in Italy and booked into a hotel run by Dr. Respoli [?] who spoke English, and we became friendly, and I said, it's a crazy thing to ask, but has he ever heard from an artist called Osherov and he said 'do you mean uncle Grisha?' Grisha Osherov had gone to his parents, and his uncle Don Pedro was the local priest and in the hotel he showed me an Osherov painting of Pedro Respoli. When the war started, Osherov went to New York, I never saw him again but I knew that he was safe. I've got one of his paintings here; a cousin of mine gave it to me.

HL: And then bring me up to date with your life and what happened to your wife and your daughter?

HW: My daughter also had an academic career she has also got a PhD.

HL: And what's her name?

HW: Her name is Garber, Johanna Garber and her husband who was a lovely man, died before Barbara. He had a brain tumour. She has two sons, Jacob and Matthew. I am very, very, very fond of them. They live in Sheffield. Jake is now at University in Bristol, Matty is taking his A-levels this year. And Barbara was diagnosed with her illness. She wanted me to be there when the doctor told her the result. They didn't offer any chemotherapy or operation; it was beyond that. They said she had a year to live but it was five months.

Tape 3: 45 minutes 53 seconds

HL: When did she die?

HW: She died in 1996. She said she was lucky I was with her at the end, I won't be so lucky, she won't be with me. We had a very close and a very good relationship. And when she died, I couldn't bear to be in the flat, it was really hers in London, and sold it. I went a bit mad and did some strange things. It wasn't until about two and a half years ago, I met Lesley, Lesley Pehl, but she spells it P-E-H-L. And her great-grandfather came from Mark Brandenburg, Germany.

HL: Is she Jewish, too?

HW: No. But she is a lovely person and we get on very well. But for various reasons I made a trust for my daughter, for my grandsons and it's all legally hers, really and it depends on me never getting married again.

HL: How do you feel about being Jewish?

HW: I don't know how to answer that. I am Jewish but... I love being in Israel, I saw Jerusalem, Tel Aviv. Unfortunately, it also belongs to the Arabs and I don't know if there is a solution. I was quite ready to fight for them. Yes, I'm Jewish, but not religious.

HL: Is there any message you would have for people who watch that video in future?

Tape 3: 48 minutes 3 seconds

HW: Don't allow this to happen again, the whole Nazi-thing, when millions and millions of people went mad.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Picture 1 and 2

HW: My father and mother before they were married.

HL: When was that?

HW: During the First World War, just after.

Picture 3

HW: This is the family car, early on and...

Picture 4

HW: ...My father, mother, my brother and me. I'm the little one.

HL: Where was that?

HW: That must have been the Baltic, near the Baltic.

Picture 5-7

HW: My brother and me, probably in 1928, and...

Picture 8

HW:...this one as well in the Tiergarten, in Berlin.

HL: Who is the woman in the boat?

HW: That's Liesl, my nanny.

Picture 9

HW: That's me in Italy at the end of the war...

Picture 10

HW: This is I suppose a few weeks later

Picture 11

HW: My parents during the war in Switzerland

Picture 12

HW: That's me after the war

Picture 13

HW:...and my parents in old age when they came to England, I think in the 1960's.

HL: And can you name those soldiers (from picture 10) and say what happened to them?

HW: I don't know their names.

Picture 14

HW: Barbara, Serpentine, end of '40's, in the middle of a concert.

Picture 15

HW: That's me after the war, also '47 probably.

Picture 16

HW: And again, me and my sister in London, in the late '40's.

Tape 3: 51 minutes 39 seconds**Picture 17**

HW: When we were first married in Brighton, in Kemp Town, Barbara at the piano.

Picture 18

HW: Barbara, smoking I see.

Picture 19

HW: Manchester in the early '60's. Me, Barbara, Johanna, daughter.

Picture 20

HW: And me in my workroom, at home in Manchester.

Picture 21

HW: That's the Positano Trip, painted after the visit to Positano. One of the exhibitions, I don't remember the year. Alice Murdoch wrote the catalogue, she wrote three of my catalogues. This is the shortest.

Picture 22

HW: This is one of my German catalogues, this one was in Berlin in the '70's, in an official gallery, opened by the mayor of Berlin.

Picture 23

HW: This is the last exhibition I had with Duncan, Duncan Campbell, 2002. That's a Scottish picture. It was my tenth exhibition with him.

Picture 24

HW: When I was eighty, Leamington gave me a retrospective exhibition in the new gallery and asked me to write something for it. I'm now going to read what I wrote in the catalogue: My pictures represent my life – past and present. I have long been aware of the magical way in which art is able to reflect visual and emotional reality. Now that I am getting older, I find this awareness constantly confirmed. It so happens that painting today exists in a bewildering variety of styles. Much of the present day art is inaccessible to many people. This has always troubled me. I want my work to exist in the timeless tradition of painting, because I see that, when a particular picture is finished, it never quite matches my original intention. I start the next one immediately.

Tape 3: 54 minutes 34 seconds