

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Land
Forename:	Frank
Interviewee Sex:	Male
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Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

Date of Interview:	11 July 2017
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Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Jana Buresova
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**REFUGEE VOICES**

Interview No. **RV208**
NAME: **Frank Land**
DATE: **11th July 2017**
LOCATION: **Devon, UK**
INTERVIEWER: **Dr. Jana Buresova**

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

The interviewee is Frank Land. And it's at his home on the 11th of July 2017.

Frank Land, thank you very much indeed for kindly agreeing to be interviewed for the AJR Refugee Voices Project.

It's a pleasure to be interviewed and it's a pleasure to do it for the AJR. And we're very grateful that you've chosen me to do this. Thank you.

Thank you. May we start by hearing something of your family background. Where you are from and your life there?

Of course. I was born in Berlin in 1928. I have a twin brother. So we came within twenty minutes of each other. My parents were partly German, partly Austrian. My mother came from Vienna, though she was born further east in a place called Zwinniaz which is- I think- now in by Byelorussia, but at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. My father came from a Berlin family, which had been... one of those families which was becoming very assimilated. My grandfather... had actually been riding with the f- with the Kaiser. So they regarded themselves very much as a German family. My father had a number of brothers

and one sister; altogether there were eight of them. And most of the young men fought in the First World War. Indeed, one of them, an elder brother, got an Iron Cross for being one of the first people to - if not the first - to jump from an observer balloon which had been shot down. And he jumped by parachute and- and survived.

[00:02:31]

Oh yes. So my uncle, his name was Kurt, was an officer in the German Army. He was in the Observer Corps which observed from a- observed the enemy lines on a balloon and his balloon was shot down. And he escaped by being one of the very first people to jump by parachute and escape - alive. The family itself was fairly affluent. My family business had been to provide the lighting for Berlin - the gas lighting. And the particular innovation which they introduced was that the light could be controlled from a central point, and all the gas lights extinguished and started up. It was called '*Fernzündungen*' [*remote ignition*]. So, they lit up Berlin and many other cities. My father started his own manufacturing business. He was part of the family business, but he started his own manufacturing business that was concerned with building compressors - air compressors - which provided the lifting capabilities in garages for cars. The hydraulic lifts for cars. And as far as I know, they did very well there. It's quite clear that they were badly hit by the Depression and the inflation and depression. But I know very little about that. So, by the time we were born, which was right in the middle of that, I'm not sure to what extent the family fortunes declined. Certainly, we were not aware of any of that, but they must have done. Certainly, by the time Hitler came in we were still affluent. My father I think as a young man had been a bit of a card. I know he had a large number of dogs he had five dogs – boxers. I know very little about his early life, but the impression I get now is that, as I say, he was something of a card. But he was also a good businessman. And he built up the business in conjunction with... some engineering people. He was not an engineer himself. My mother came from very different background.

[00:05:30]

What were your parents' names?

My father was called Louis. My mother was called Sofia, or she was called . So, she's always known as Soscha Landsberger. My father was Louis Landsberger. But her family name was

Weinberger. As I said earlier, she was born in Zwinniaz which is out in the- in the, in the East although it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And as far as I understand it, her parents were the landowners of what was a Jewish community. So, it isn't the traditional *shtetl*, but has some affinities with it. The local people spoke Polish and my mother, I remember still, sang a Polish lullaby to us when we were- when we were very young. Now they- that family moved from Zwinniaz to Vienna in I think about 1904 or 1905, when my mother was very young. She was about five years old. Her interest has always been on the artistic side. She studied at Vienna University. She, I think, mixed with quite a lot of the artistic community. There had been a relationship between my father's family and her family one generation earlier. Her- my mother's uncle married one of my father's relatives. Across generations. So, we have relatives who are both uncles and cousins.

What did your mother study at the university?

[00:07:37]

She studied art, as far as I know. Again, I wish I knew more about her early life. I know she has a brother - Dick - who became a very well-known lawyer- a very successful lawyer. And whose life story and his escape from Hitler's Austria - Hitler's Germany - is itself an interesting story. Another story perhaps to tell another time. But he did escape. Anyway. My mother came to Germany I guess in the middle 20s... '23, '24. I'm not quite sure of the exact date. Married my father. Had 'the boys' - myself and my brother Ralph - in 1928. And she continued her interest in art. She became a... housewife but continued to practise art; in particular she went in for photography at that time. My father, when Hitler came, was optimistic. He was one of those who thought this would blow over. This can't- this can't survive. As children we were not really aware of anything. I do remember vividly the 1936 Olympic Games, and us rooting for Germany...in the- in the games. We were then children, but we were collecting cigarette cards of the athletes and so on.

Were you- would you say that you were protected from events around you?

I think we...

Or was it because you were too young to...?

I think we were too young at that time; we were about six, seven years old. We became aware of everything – of- really Kristallnacht was the awakening. But for my parents there had been an earlier awakening. The brother, Kurt, who had got the Iron Cross and who was a prominent lawyer, was arrested and sent to Dachau... I think about 1937. Before Kristallnacht. I'm not sure about the- I'm not absolutely sure about the date. And that, I think, was an- an, an awakening. Then... the... Germans expropriated his company, or rather, made him sell it to his partner, who perhaps- we think- stabbed him in the back. But by that time... and Kristallnacht, it became clear that there was no good- this wasn't going to blow over. This was- this was a... a question of survival.

What were your personal memories of Kristallnacht? Do you remember being afraid, or...?

[00:10:54]

I remember Kristallnacht very vividly. Simply the amount of glass of the shattered glass in- in the road. You could see Jewish shops having been... totally destroyed... just destroyed. Also we were- by that time we were in school and there was talk about it. We saw the... Nazi youths jeering and shouting at us. We also became very conscious that in the parks, where we used to- the park benches were segregated for Jews- Jews only. This peculiar thing, we were all told we had to have special names. Israel or Sara or so on. So yes we became acutely conscious. And of course we knew that our uncle had been taken away. Now he was I think quite an influential person, and he got released relatively quickly. But by that time, it was absolutely clear that we had to get out. And that was true of other members of the family. And they started applying for visas really to get- get away. And the family was scattered.

Could I come back- step back just one moment?

Of course.

Your moment of realisation about this hostility...

Yes.

...towards Jewish people. Given that your family was very highly assimilated...

Yes.

Was it a shock to be treated in this way? Or, had you been- had you experienced anti-Semitism prior to that point? How did you react?

[00:12:51]

Yes. I don't think we were really aware of it. I do also remember very faintly in the... sort of 1933, 1934 as very young children, as infants, sort of watching a parade and cheering.

I think... the extent of it began to dawn on us as children gradually. Although Kristallnacht was an awakening, it was more of an awakening for my parents I think than for us. We were very conscious of it. But things gradually evolved. ...We didn't hear much about my uncle's detention in Dachau. That- that wasn't shared with us. So we weren't really aware- very much aware of that. I think it was a gradual dawning. And probably Kristall- well, Kristallnacht was a very vivid memory. The one which perhaps is more long lasting, is the segregation which took place in the parks. That we couldn't- that suddenly the park benches had "*Juden...*"- "*Juden only*" on that and we- and we couldn't sit with our- others.

Were you bullied at school?

No. We went at- at school we went first of all to an infant... infant school, which was run by a Jewish lady. And I think we were mainly Jewish people there, but I wasn't conscious of that at all. But subsequently, when he went to junior school, it was a Jewish school. A- a Jewish school - purely Jewish school. And... again one of the vivid memories is the first day at school with a *Zuckertorte* [*Zuckertüte*"], *cone which German children have on their first day of school*]. You know? The thing- It's a great thing when you're going to school.

What was the name of the school?

...Theodor Herzl... I think! I have- I have the records somewhere. I have some report cards from us... in- in the files. We were certainly there. We were very- my brother and I- wonderful thing about us, we acted as a unit, almost. So, in- at one level, we were very social

with each other and so on. But we were probably somewhat cut off from other- others. We didn't make friends quite so much as others, because we had ourselves. Not that we were very- very conscious of being isolated. But we were shy and at school we were fairly slow. So we- we went up through the various classes sort of... at the very marginal level.

[00:16:02]

What about on the way home from school, or going to school? Were you ever attacked or bullied? Did you live nearby?

We lived relatively closely. My guess it was about a ten-minute walk, but I can't really remember. Yes. There were several occasions - particularly after Kristallnacht - when you saw gangs of the Hitler Youth. And they didn't attack us. They jeered, and they said, "Juden..." "go to..."- whatever. And that- that made one more- more conscious.

Did that alarm you? Did it worry you?

Again, I think we protected each other. By being twins, we felt less threatened than if we'd been individuals.

Yes.

I don't know whether my brother will reported a similar thing, but that... that- that struck me as something. One of things, as you well know, is the way memories- false memories build up. And you build myths- mythologies about yourself. And... as I say, we were very young. We were seven, eight, nine... We didn't come to England until we were ten years old. And we- that's still quite a young age. By the time it came to leaving, then we became very conscious indeed that this was a- suddenly serious, what was happening.

[00:17:45]

When exactly did you leave?

We left in April '39. But the preparations for the leaving of course went... went on for what

seemed a very long time. And again a... vivid memory, is selling up. We had a flat in Berlin. Incidentally, I've got a picture of that. At least I think I have a picture of that. Because our flat in Berlin- quite a- what seemed to us a huge flat... It was probably quite large. And putting out all our belongings and people coming in and showing them around and... selling things and the pride when we actually managed to sell something to - to other people. So it was an exciting thing rather than a worrying thing. At a young age, things are more exciting than worrying.

Yes...

And I don't think we were aware of the problems in getting out. In arranging, in being left... in getting visas to go to England. What I know in retrospect is, that other members of the family had to go to various places. So people went to France, to Holland, to Israel... and more distant members of family to South America and China. They were- to Shanghai. They were more remote members of the family. I remember staying- while things were being prepared I remember staying with one of our uncles, while my parents were doing things. Oh I know what that was now. I'm sorry. False recollection. At that time my mother was pregnant. And we children - my brother and I - were sent away while she had her baby. And the baby was a daughter who died at birth. She was a- yeah. So she- she didn't- she didn't live. That would have been a sister.

[00:20:02]

How did you and your brother react at the time? Or you didn't know?

We didn't- we were told very little about it. ...I don't actually think my father was the father. I don't know whether I'll mention that as well. I don't think that- as far as we knew, it was a relatively happy and contented marriage. We were not aware of any... frictions. There might have been some behind the scenes, but we were shielded from that.

Did you have any sense of foreboding about leaving your home and going to a strange foreign country?

I think it was a mixture of excitement and foreboding. Excitement: Yes, it's a new adventure.

Although I remember other things as being fitted out for clothing for England. And... We were told, or rather, my parents were told, or had- my parents had an idea of what English people wore. So for example, there was an expectation that boys wore knickerbockers. Which of course they didn't. [laughs] So we were fitted out with knickerbockers. I know that our shoes were dyed brown because we thought all English people wore brown shoes. And one of the earliest things when we came into London, was being dressed in these- funny clothing and literally being jeered at by the- by the little boys in...in- where- where we landed up. I don't remember much of the journey. I know we went by train from Berlin to the Hook- Hook of Holland. That we transferred to a...a ferry. That we landed in Harwich, and that in Harwich we were met by relatives. I said that earlier that there was an- one of my father's... In fact my father's sister had married my mother's uncle. And their children... came to meet us in London.

[00:22:48]

They were grown up by then. They met us- sorry- they met us at Harwich, and we came- went on a train to London. And they had arranged housing for us. I know that when we got to London we went to a place in Kilburn which had been- I think it was a flat in a- in a house. I don't remember very much about it. ...I don't remember an awful lot about those early days in London. I do know that my father spoke a little bit of English. My mother, less so. And we, none at all. But, I think we fairly quickly learned English. We were- very quickly went to- were taken in by a school – the local elementary school. Essendine elementary school... in- in Kilburn. And the teachers were very sensible about the way they managed to get us to learn English. They put us at the table was one of the bright boys in the class. His name was John Wilson. I rem- remember him. Tried to case- chase him up, but never been able to find him again, this John Wilson. But we seemed to learn English fairly rapidly. But again, a curious memory: The school was adjacent to an asylum. At that time people who had things like spina bifida or some of those things, were treated as asylum seekers- not as asylum- as mentally... damaged. So there was- there was this- this other school, the asylum school, next to us. And they actually adjoined. And when we were out in the playground, we could talk and see the children on the other side in their various stage- stages of- some of them very badly damaged, in wheelchairs or...or really demented. And some of them very... very sensible. But we didn't know that. At that time they were all mixed together. But that- that's the kind of thing one remembers.

[00:25:35]

How did you respond to them? What were your feelings at the time? And how did you feel in general...in London?

At one level, one felt frightened of these- these things. Certainly... no feeling of comradeship or anything like that. No- no feeling of mutuality with them; they were different. That was the- the most notable thing, yes.

And in- in your own school, how were you accepted by your fellow pupils?

As I say, the- the teacher we had- I don't remember the teacher at all, but I remember that we were in a way ... treated quite well. And we quickly became part of that school. And I don't think we were so much aware of our difference, until we got home. When we went home- at home one spoke much more- one was inclined to speak German, although my parents tried to speak- tried to speak English. Again, one of the memories one has- my guess is this is one my brother might have told as well. It's going out shopping to the local co-op with my mother and my mother asking for a "flasch" [from *Flasche*- bottle- sounds like English word flesh] of orange juice. Of orange... These silly- these silly- one remembers these silly things which are minor things. The next big memory is actually evacuation. The war starting. We- we arrived in April. By the time the war came in September, we must have been fairly- fairly assimilated in English.

[00:27:49]

We, we- I think we, were quite good at that. But at the- As the war started in September, evacuation came, and the school was evacuated. The whole of the Essendine School was evacuated. And again another vivid memory is getting into the long queue waiting at Warwick Road underground station, where we were taken by- where we were taken with our gas masks, our labels identifying us, but not having the slightest idea where we were going.

Was that frightening for you? Did you feel terribly insecure?

Again, I think again it was a mixture of excitement and trepidation. And again, being twins helped us... because we always had each other. And my guess is that was an enormous help for us. What I do remember is we went... by train, to... Watford. And at Watford we were de-trained. We didn't know where we were, but we saw the 142 bus... which came from- from where we'd lived in Kilburn. So the 142 bus, we- we knew immediately that we were quite close to London. And we were then taken by coach to the village of Bedmond, near Abbots Langley... and we went to the village hall. And here, Ralph and I have very different memories. My memory is- so his story is slightly different to mine. My memory is, that we- In the village hall all the local people who'd agreed to take evacuees, took their pick. And when they'd taken their pick what was left was a few people - relatively few in number - who were 'different'. And of course, Ralph and me were different. I should say... there were three of us.

[00:30:16]

My brother, myself and my cousin Peter. My cousin Peter was- had come to England on a Kindertransport with his sister Miriam. Now Miriam was in a different school, and she went elsewhere. I'm not sure where she went at that time. She was the- she was about the same age as we were. Peter was four years older. Cousin Peter was four years older. So at the village hall there were two of us with our cousin Peter and a few other... children. We were then taken by the local Women's Voluntary Service around the village to other houses where they had thought they 'might' take evacuees. It became two one house right at the end of the village. A house called 'Silver Dell', where the husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gentle, had agreed to take two girls. But nothing else. Anyway the Women's Voluntary Service took us- they took this- took us there. And she sort of took pity on us. Three boys, instead of two girls, speaking not that good English...German. Anyway, she decided to take us in for the night and see what her husband said. Her husband was working at de Havilland's [aircraft company] as a carpenter. I don't know whether you know the de Havilland Mosquito plane? It was built of wood! So, he had a job at de Havilland's as a craftsman. Anyway. ...They decided to keep us. They had a son themselves - Jack - who was two years younger than we were. We didn't realise it at the time, but for Jack it must have been terrible. Suddenly finding three elder brothers in the house. But...

[00:32:49]

How did you all get on?

Sorry?

How did you all get on?

How...?

Did you get on all right?

Yes. Yes - yes. We got on all right. Again... He was quite a shy boy. Now one of the things is, we bonded very well with the father, Mr. Gentle, much more. His son, Jack, was a much more gentle person; bonded very much with his mother. Not so much with his father, because his father, the- who worked at de Havilland's, was also a poacher. ... Very much of a country man. And we absolutely fell into that life. We really loved that life. He went- he wasn't a,a,a poacher. He could use a gun; he could use a catapult. We set snares. We did all sorts of nasty things like that. I remember again the first... pigeon I shot. So- and the pride of that sort of thing. So we were doing that sort of thing. So our life with the Gentles, we enjoyed that very much.

Did you cope with the food?

With the food? We had no problem with the food that I remember. But of course home life for my parents was very, very different. And again I regret now. We were so scarcely aware what they went through. My father, under Regulation 18B, was interned at the Isle of Man – at Ramsey, Isle of Man. I'm not sure how long he was interned for. But he was one of the lucky ones who was- who, who - who really was part of the Jewish community.

[00:35:14]

Some of the Jewish refugees were unlucky. The British tried as far as possible to separate the Jewish refugees from the pure Germans. But they didn't do it totally successfully. And some of the Jewish refugees who came in with the Germans and very often with the worst of the

Germans, really had a very rough time. But my father was lucky. He was one part of that Jewish community which became famous for - later on for - the Amadeus Quartet...and so on. And my father became the- who'd previously not done any kind of domestic work at all, became the - for his local group - the cook!

Do you know where he was interned?

Ramsey, Isle of Man. ...And I'm not sure how long he was in... in there. Perhaps- I think nine months or a year. I'm not sure. In the meantime, although my mother had relatives in London, she basically had to cope on her own. And she had to go earn money. She had to survive. And we, as children... made demands on her during the Blitz. We asked her, "We'd love to have some shrapnel." So she went out actually to collect shrapnel to- to provide with us. As we were quite near London, we did manage to see her quite often. She came to visit us in Bedmond. And later on during the evacuation, we- which was around twenty-five miles- we went to London to see her. But she had to survive. The house she lived in was bombed. She had to find alternative accommodation. And she had to scrape a living. And she did this using her artistic talent. She made handbags out of felt. Felt was the only material which was available at the time. And she sold it to some of the best stores in - in London.

[00:37:44]

And really built up a little business that way. She must have worked tremendously hard. And again, as a good Jewish mother, her children came first. So she did- she did everything we demanded. And we went- we didn't realize what we were putting onto her in doing that, on top of everything she had to do until my father came back. But she also had friends, including, I think the guy who was the father of the daughter who also came to England, who was a family friend.

Did you and your father [brother] miss your own family a great deal? Were you homesick when you were evacuees?

I don't remember being homesick. Again, this is a period when my life- when... everything is exciting in a- in a way. We became- there was a- in a sense almost, a gang. We became part of our school, against the village school. We were separated from the village school. And

there was a rivalry and competitiveness between us and the village boys, which sometimes led to fights, certainly to confrontations. Very often more to confrontations than to fights, but occasionally fights. ...And we were very much involved in that. We... got bicycles. We learned to ride bicycles. We lived on our bicycles. At school - our school - as the numbers reduced, people went back to London, joined up with another London school, St. Paul's. And we shared the village hall... which became our school which was separate, as I say, from the- from the village school itself.

[00:40:06]

And I remember we were- there was- the village hall which was not built as a school. There was sort of a line of people... I think – taking one class and next door another line taking a different class. And I remember that on the left-hand side we were- there's a music lesson and on the right-hand side there was a history lesson. And we were much more- I was certainly much more interested in the history lesson. Then suddenly the teacher asked me “What's a quaver?” or, “What's...” something like that. I'd get- didn't have the slightest idea. And that's the one occasion where... I was caned. Now Ralph will probably tell you same story. I'm not sure. And he'll say he was caned. I'm not sure whether we were both caned or whether only one of us was caned. Memories get- get mixed up.

Did you talk a lot to you and your brother about your experiences or your views or if you missed your mother?

Yes. We must have done. I don't have many- many memories. It's events- particularly events which are memories. So... a typical event as I say- said earlier, we bonded very much with the- Mr. Gentle.

He made it easier...?

The father. But he was... both a craftsman and we enjoyed that, but also a countryman and in particular a poacher. He was a well-known poacher. His family was what I- what one might call the 'yeoman stock'. They weren't the serf stock. They were the sort of middle... range in the country. And his parents had been more prosperous than he was. ...But he built his own house. He was a [inaudible] he had initiative... No, the particular event I remember is - he

was building greenhouse and he needed bricks.

[00:42:26]

And one of the- in the- in the church yard there was a wall which was falling down. So he asked us to take some bricks from there. So we had a trolley at the back of our bikes. We filled it up with bricks and we took it. And we were caught by the police who gave us a warning - a ticking off. But as I say, one remembers events like that. I remember an event going to- actually sometimes going into Watford. And... I think it was possibly the first time. And we were waiting for the bus to take us back to Bedmond, but we waited on the wrong side of the road. And we waited and waited and got extremely anxious. And I think we finished up in tears before somebody took pity on us and said, "Well, no - no. The bus is on the other side," Again: events. I remember a fight with the school bully called Rutherford who was actually not quite... normal. But I remember the fight and beating him.

Jointly with your brother?

No I think myself. I might- again he'd probably say the same thing; it was probably him who did it. Maybe it was jointly. They can't distinguish between the two. But these are the sort of things. Certainly we became very much a member of the family - the Gentle family. And we called her Mother Gentle and Father Gentle. And... partly because we were there we weren't- we weren't homesick. We were extremely lucky. I mean some people- evacuation experiences were much worse. Many were more neutral. Ours was actually positive - good. It helped us enormously.

How did your mother feel about that? Did she show any resentment?

No, she didn't.

Or was she pleased that...?

She was- she was- she was pleased. And my mother and Mrs. Gentle and so on became quite friendly. My mother - for a time during the flying bombs - actually came- also came out- out there. Although she lived separately. Lived separately. But she- she left London for a short

time; went back to London later. My parents in the meantime - and again, we knew relatively little of that, but we knew something of it - were building up their business. My mother in particular had gone from doing handbags to doing dolls' dresses. And... she became very successful at doing these dresses. She built up a- quite a big business, with outworkers. And when my father came back from... internment, he joined the business.

[00:45:37]

When did he get back, and when were you all re-united?

I – I can't remember exactly, yes? It sort of- I think he was interned in 1940 or it might have been late 1939. And... I'm not sure how long he was. Somewhere between nine months and eighteen months. I'm not sure which it is. Anyway, when he came back, he joined my mother who had by that time had begun to be- built a substantial business. And he helped her to build that business up. He bought a shell company called The East Surrey Engineering Company which became purveyors of dolls' dresses. And they became principal suppliers of dolls' dresses to Woolworths. So... that became- we knew- we knew that was happening. And again, we were by that time getting a little bit older. I remember coming back to London and helping to build- they bought a shop in [inaudible] Street in London. And with our carpentry skills we'd learned from our father we built them shelves and store rooms and so on in the- in the shop and enjoyed doing that. By that time we must have been getting to up to thirteen or fourteen years old.

And which school did you go to at that point?

Well we still went to this. We were in the evacuated school - that's the combination of Essendine and St. Paul's - until the age of fourteen.

Oh, so you came back to the same school in London.

[00:47:36]

Yes. That's it. At the age of fourteen, of course elementary school finished. And we discussed... I don't know whether our parents were involved in this as well. But we certainly

discussed with the headmaster... what we should do. And he suggested to my parents- I know that we were by that time regarded as quite bright, having sort of slowly got better, we were regarded as quite bright. That we should join the post office because- as messenger boys- because the post office provided a safe and progressive career. And if you were bright in the post office, you could progress. My mother with her university education and her ambitions for her boys, would have none of it. She at that time in London went on various schools trying to persuade – the secondary schools - trying to persuade the head teacher to take on these... boys who just graduated at fourteen from elementary school... with pretty poor education in a sense. And the headmaster of Willesden County Grammar School decided to take us on.

Where, sorry? Where – sorry? Which school?

Willesden County Grammar School. By that time, my parents were living in Cricklewood, in Ashford Court. We had a flat in Ashford Court and Willesden County Grammar School was a... cycle ride away. Walking time would have been perhaps an hour. But cycle time was fifteen minutes - something like that. And we went to school. And he took us on into - although we were fourteen and should have gone into third form - he took us off- took us up into second form into the B-stream. But after one term in the B-stream of... the... second thing, we were upgraded to the A-stream of the third form. And for a time, we languished near the bottom of that. But gradually improved. And by the time we came to fifth form and sixth form we were quite good.

[00:50:29]

Curiously, because we'd been to elementary school, there were certain parts of our education which were almost totally missing. We'd done virtually no mathematics and never got- never caught- never managed to- managed that. And we'd never done any grammar. So I still don't know any grammar. You can ask me what an adverb is, and I might just be able to answer that, but only just. Pronouns? I- I'm still confused about them. Doesn't mean to say I can't write good English. I can write good English, but I don't know the- the grammar. So in the debate of what we should teach youngsters, I- I know what I think.

Did you find- did you find - you and your brother - did you find this very discouraging at first

in the grammar school? Or were you determined to succeed?

I think we found it challenging. And again I think it helped to be twins and supporting each other. We helped each other to learn. Later on at university that meant we could actually share that- what we would do is, there were two recommended textbooks. Most people only read one. We took one of the textbooks each and then discussed it. So that- that's taking advantage of the twin... the twin side of things.

When did you go to university? And where?

[00:52:48]

We- we took our Higher School Certificate at Willesden County Grammar School. I should say first of all- let me go back a little bit for the full story. By the time we came to the fifth form, we were not the top of the class, but we were amongst the... relative elite- sort of in the top- within the top ten. And a small group of us - four of us - took a similar set of courses with a teacher called Miss Stephenson. And one of the courses that we took was economics. And she took economics at the same time. So she was always one lesson ahead of us. And more than anybody, it was she who encouraged us. I mean many people talk about a teacher who did the- who changed things for them. With us it was Miss Stephenson. She took us under- our hand. She- she was a geography teacher, but she learned... She learned economics in front of us. So by the time we came to the sixth form we were this small group of four students, one of whom was the brightest student of all of us. He really was very bright indeed. Again, another story to tell there. So many stories. Anyway, we got our Higher Schools. We got quite good Higher Schools and applied then for universities. This was in 1946, I guess - 1947. Yeah. Applied for universities. And we sat scholarship, because we wanted to do economics. We set the scholarship for the London School of Economics...but were not accept- were just - just - below the level at which we got a scholarship. So we were accepted by Exeter. And we went to Exeter, which was then a University College taking a London degree. And we were going to go to Exeter when we got news, that the app- deferment from National Service which we had applied for, had not been granted to us. So, our next step would have been, as for most school boys at that age, to go into the National Service.

[00:55:04]

But then it transpired that my father's naturalisation had taken place at a particular date. And there was a small window when we were not eligible to do the National Service because of my father's natural- naturalisation never having been- taken place. I'm not quite sure exactly what, but we were not eligible. So we were not allowed to do the National Service. At the same time, the news came through that the London School of Economics would take us after all. Although we hadn't got the scholarship, we'd done sufficiently well to be taken. So we didn't go to Exeter. In 1947 we went to the London School of Economics, both of us, to do economics. And what we'd intended to do was anthropology. Now when we first got there, each of the... subject- subject heads... laid out their table on what's- what's good about them. The guy who did anthropology - a famous anthropologist - was so boring that we decided not to take anthropology and took international trade and transport instead. We- we... We joined the London School of Economics. It was an interesting time, because at that time, nearly all the students there were ex-service. And we were amongst the ten percent which was from school. And so it was interesting, but one was also - one feared - very, very small and very, very little against all these guys who'd done so much in the war. And who were all much older than we were. And it was particularly difficult, because they took all the girls. [both laugh] So... We were relatively shy, but we were relatively slow on that side. ...So... we went through university, very close together. And one of the people who was also a student there - fellow student - though I didn't know her, was the person who later became my wife: Ailsa. And she says she remembers the two of us, always walking through together wherever... the weather, there were the two of us walking together. Whatever it is, in 1950 we graduated.

[00:57:57]

We had almost identical marks. Our average was- our average mark was almost identical. Although if you look at the distribution it was slightly different. It was- ee got good upper seconds - not far from firsts. And we were both taken on, then, into the economics research division... to do research. Because we thought we would be interested in academic careers and we were just sort of on the fringe of that and we were good enough. Again, a vivid but horrible memory. Horrible, really. I mean... We applied for a PhD two one of the top American universities or to the top American universities. We wrote our proposal of what we were going to do. When one looks in retrospect, it is- absolutely rubbish. [laughs] I can see

somebody looking at it - tearing it straight up. We never got- we never got into American universities. But the thing was typed up for us by- you remember, I mentioned my cousin Peter?

Yes.

Perhaps I should say something else about him? ... Well let me finish this story first. His sister, Miriam, typed it up for us. And she by that time was- had a lover in- a member of the BBC, who was a BBC person. Also a refugee. But that ended up unhappily, and she killed herself. And her father, Robert, had stayed in Germany. Had been a slave labourer and was absolutely broken in health. Her mother Ruth survived as well, but also killed herself. So mother and daughter killed themselves. Robert didn't survive long after the war. He was too broken in health and died. I still have some of the correspondence between him and my father after the war.

[01:00:35]

Now I mentioned- going back a little bit, I mentioned Peter earlier. Peter was four years older than us. So he left school... before us. ...It wasn't clear what he was going to do. My parents thought he should take an apprenticeship. His parents- don't forget- were still in Germany. He was then called up, went first into Pioneers- Service, and then translated to Tank Regiment and became a sergeant tank driver. And at the Normandy land- landings, his tank was lost behind enemy lines, but forced his way clear, and he came back. For reasons which we cannot quite understand, when he came back we were still friendly. And suddenly for some reason he felt some kind of injustice had been done to him by our side of the family. And he cut us off completely. He- he totally refused to speak to us. And that's still remains to this day, when he's in his nineties.

Was there any connection do you think between that and what happened to his mother and his sister?

There are part- there are possible connections. I don't- I don't understand it. It might be that he felt that... my parents, who were in the sense looking after him too, give us, the twins, preference. He might have felt that more strongly that he, with his very different

circumstances with his parents, was neglected by my parents. Now as I understand my parents, this simply wasn't true. But I can understand him feeling that. Because he didn't go to university. He went into the army and he was very much left on his own in that sense.

But were you aware at the time of the suicide?

Were we...?

Were you aware of the suicide at the time or did you learn about it later? And how did you feel about it?

[01:03:07]

We certainly were aware of Miriam's suicide, because by that time we were at university. We also knew about the...the problems his father and mother had. Yes, we- we were aware of that. And... Yes... We were very much aware of that and in fact the tragedy of that. But it didn't affect us in any- in that way. At a sense... slightly remote.

Yes.

No, not something which happened directly to our family. And again perhaps this kind of intimacy between twins... had- helped, helped in that. This is for psychologists to answer.

The possibility that he felt out of things.

Yes - yeah. Yes - yes. Interesting. We've tried to make connections with Peter several times, and Peter certainly came to my mother's funeral. My mother died at the age of- in the end died at the age of just before ninety-nine. Days before she was ninety-nine. She had hoped to live to 100 but didn't quite make it. More stories about my-

Which- which year was that?

She died in 19- just before the millennium, I think, 1998. Yes it must have been 1998, because she was born in 2000- [correcting himself] She was born in 1900. She was born in

1900. So she was born- she died at the end of '98. She'd lived with us for eighteen years by that time. Both- first in London, then in a different part of Devon? and then in the- in the last- in the last place we stayed, in Devon. And we weren't going to move from there while she was alive. She had her own flat there, and her own... studio so to speak. And she continued to work as an artist. Jewellery, she was a member of The Goldsmiths' Company. She was a student at the Camden Institute up to the age of ninety-two and so had a Students' Card, which she held proudly. And you can imagine a ninety-two-year-old doing jewellery, soldering, with a soldering iron. She was still doing that... at the age of ninety-two and a little bit more. Then she had a fall. Broke her hip, and never quite recovered from that. And from then onward there was a sort of decline. But she still had a steady hand. She could still carry a half pint of beer...without spilling it. I can't... Yeah, well maybe.

[01:06:15]

Did you ever, with your parents discuss the suicide at all?

No. Well we might have done. We might well have done. Again, I regret that we didn't really do the kind of things which we're doing today here: question her much more about her early life, and so on. I a sort of found some quite interesting things in the records I have- have of her, from the 1920s in Berl- in Vienna. She was then a Zionist and there was a Zionist newsletter published in Vienna. And I've got copies of several issues of that, which I've actually sent to the Sussex University - to their centre. I thought they might be interested in that. She was a Zionist. She called herself a communist though she was very bourgeois. I don't think she was ever really that communist, but she called herself a communist. But one other interesting thing is - talking about Zionism and Israel and Palestine - there is a kind of contempt for non-Jews sometimes. And particularly for Arabs and black. And I remember the way she used the word '*die Schwarze*'. It's the tone she put into that which is very much inbred in the culture she lived in.

[01:08:16]

And this is reflected in today's Israel too. I've been to Israel many times. At one time I was doing some work for the United Nations and went for the Labour Office. And I went to Israel every year on a productivity project and worked there for several months a year. And... At

first, Israel seemed interesting and exciting and the people new. But gradually one became aware amongst particularly young people of the growing militancy. And I began to like what I saw in Israel less and less. So... I had relatives in Israel as well. But- so I have got very mixed feelings about Israel. On the one hand, the heroic side of it. On the other hand, the dreadful... situation with the Palestinians.

Had you ever thought of living there?

[01:09:41]

Not really. Not really. Maybe at a- at a very early- at a sort of early- earlier stage- post university, possibly. Because we had relatives there. One of my father's brothers lived there with his family. ...And more distant relations also lived there. But no, and we made our life in English. We came- partly perhaps again because of being evacuated to an English family we became very English that way. As I said earlier, Mother and Father Gentle was our second family. And because my parents got along well with those- with those, this was frictionless. This went without friction; they liked each other. And they learned from each other. And I mentioned earlier the son Jack. I think because we were there, we went on, had ambitions in life. Instead of being just a country bumpkin as he might well have been – become, he became ambitious, he went to grammar school, he did well at university. He became an entrepreneur on his own - an innovator - and became very successful. Very successful indeed. And...we are still friends. We see each other occasionally. He lives in Norfolk and sees my brother more often than me, but- but that family has stuck together. So that- that's delightful in a way.

A strong influence.

[01:11:25]

Yes. Yeah - yeah. But so there's clearly- we had an influence on the way his life developed, and he and his family had a huge influence on the way our life developed... and the kind of attitudes we have and the culture, we... we live in.

You mentioned his success. Perhaps we could turn to your success career-wise and your

special oral history project.

Sorry...?

You mentioned his, Jack's, success. Perhaps we could turn to your success, career-wise.

Yes. Yes.

And to your oral history project.

Yes. Yes. Well... Love to talk about that. [laughs] Yeah.

Where did you first work, after the research...?

We...

...at the LSE?

First of all I worked for about a year and a half I think in research. Started actually doing a PhD but never- never completed it. I chose a subject which in fact I should never have chosen, but that's by the way. But then... we decided that we should look for an alternative to the academic career and we start looking for jobs. And we went to several places where we were interviewed. And I was interviewed by J. Lyons and Company and was accepted by them for a job in their- what was called their 'statistical office'. Their statistical office was really the major clerical office- the major informational office for them. Accounting office- cost accounting office for the bakeries, and the kitchens and so forth.

[01:13:09]

And I got a job there as a clerk. And I worked there as a clerk- as an accounts clerk for a little while. And that again was a very informative part of my career. It didn't last long, but working there... I actually saw much more of what work is. Not what is written about in a textbook, but what it is actually like. But Lyons at that time - which I didn't know - were developing their own computer. They decided that they could start the computer from their

own personnel - their own employees. So they did a troll of people who might be interested. And I thought this looked- I didn't know anything about it, but this looked quite interesting and I even think my bosses put me up to it. 'Said, "You should apply for that." And I applied then. Did an aptitude course. That aptitude course I think lasted two or three weeks. It was very, very tough. And I don't think I would have survived it without coming home and with my wife - by that time my wife – and doing homework. We lived together anyway. We're doing our homework. And as a result of that, two of us from that course were accepted to join this new venture, the LEO computer: Lyons Electronic Office computer. So I came in to the computer set-up in 19... at the end of 1952 or early 1953. I can't remember which it was. And at that time on the programming and systems side, there were just three or four people. On the engineering side, perhaps a few more - the ones who built the computer. And I joined the systems and programming team. So I'm very much one of the early people, but not first generation. Just into the second generation because the people who taught me were the first-generation ones who were the ones for whom it was totally new. And the computer- the Lyons computer did its first operational work in November 1951. And I joined, as I said, about a year- a bit later- a year or so later. So by that time we had a working computer Leo1 at Cadby Hall.

[01:15:58]

And I joined that pretty small team. I became a programmer. I was a reasonably good programmer, though not one of the stars. Some of the people- other- my colleagues were much better. But I was good at understanding systems. I understood what computers were used for. And that's been my strong- my- my- it's basically been my career ever since. How can we best use computers? What are the constraints on using a computer? How should we use a computer? And I worked my way. At that time at LEO?, it seems incredible now the number of different jobs- new jobs - total innovations - we did in a very short time.

That must have felt like a tremendous adventure.

There's- yes. There's a book called "*In the Beginning*", in which I have a chapter, in which I describe that. If you're interested, that's something ...to look at. Anyway, I became- first of all, I became a senior programmer. I was- headed a programming team. Then I became more involved in marketing. We called it 'consulting', rather than marketing, because we had the

idea and that was true at the beginning is- we had to- people who came to us to buy a- to buy- thinking- thinking of using computers, had no idea how to use them. So, our job was not just to sell them computers but to advise them how to use them. And as I said, that's- became my strong point. And I- first of all, as LEO expanded - became LEO Computers Ltd. – I had begun to have offices elsewhere. I became head of- I became Chief Consultant.

[01:18:11]

Then the 1961 or '62 Lyons sold LEO to English Electric. It was called a merger, but it was really a sale and English Electric took over. By this time, our company - including myself, very much – had acquired a kind of arrogance. We knew best. And we were suddenly joined as the... second- as the partners of English Electric, whom we had some kind of contempt for. So that merger in many ways didn't work terribly well. And... there were- there were many problems. One of my bosses- in fact the guy who- was who was the managing director of the LEO company, became number two to the English Electric person, who was a good man, but intellectually far below Thompson. Thompson was a first-class mathematician; he was really- he was an exceptional person. And suddenly he was number two to... this English Electric guy. Unfortunately he had- it was too much for him and he left LEO and he never-never got back into the mainstream. Anyway, I persisted with the company till 1967. At that time, one of the new computer consultancies was advertising for jobs. And I was beginning to think maybe I should make a change. And I applied for that job and I was given that job and went back to LEO and told them. It was- I told them I had this new job with CEI Arms, the company. And they immediately upped their price- upped their... thing. Made me chief consultant and- and so on and persuaded me to stay. But in a sense, the bond had been broken. And then the next thing is, Ailsa was invited to take a... visiting professorship in the States, in Wisconsin. And the people at Wisconsin said oh, they would take me too... for a sabbatical.

[01:20:05]

Could we just fill in in a little gap there please? When did you marry? And what did your wife lecture in?

Right. Going back to that. My wife had joined the LSE a year before I did in 1950. She had

come from- she was ex-Forces. She had been in the Canadian Women's Army. She'd spent the war years in Canada. Had joined the Canadian Army at the age of sixteen, faking her age to eighteen. And the main reason she wanted to get into the Canadian Army, is she hoped she would get an overseas posting and go back to the UK, where her father was in the RAF. She and her mother had left for Canada before the war, to see whether there was a possibility of the whole family moving. And they'd been cut short by the war. So the father was in- in England and they were in Canada. So she joined in- he joined the Canadian Army from school. When she came home to her mother she said, "I've just joined the Army." Her mother said, "Huh! That won't do." She went to the recruiting office, put her age down and joined as well.

[01:22:31]

So they joined together. Anyway, in- they- they each had quite separate careers in the army. Then the- their father in England became very ill. And so they applied whether they could get compassionate leave. My wife was then found out that she was under age, so she was discharged from the Army. And the mother got the compassionate leave and they came to England. And in England- they were a short time. She did have a matriculation and then applied to LSE. And she got into LSE with- got a grant under the- the FSSU grant. And she took economics. Graduated the same year as I did, and we were in the research division together. And we met doing research in the statistical machine room... pounding our statistical machines doing our- our research. And we formed a friendship and that subsequently development into a relationship. I came to live- she had a house at that time in London, which her father had bought for her in Leytonstone. And I went to live there. I- let's just say, "We've been to the Valentine's ball, and never came home from that." So we stay- went home with her and stayed there. I remember my [inaudible] ...committee and said, "No, he wasn't fit to be that." And I was absolutely sure they were wrong. I know I- knew it was wrong. And I fought that decision. And there was an appeal and there was- I, I got referees. It was a long, drawn out process. Whatever it is, he wasn't given tenure. In effect sacked. And he went back to the States and is now one of the most prominent professors in the field. They made a great mistake. But nevertheless I said, "This- this is- I- I simply cannot accept that. This is a resigning matter." And I resigned.

[01:25:10]

And which year was that?

That was I think in 1986 – '85 or '86. It was probably '85, because in 1986 I was appointed then Professor of Information Management at the London Business School. So as I said, the London Business School for- on a five-year contract. And when I finished that contract I- I thought it was time to retire. In fact, I went back to the LSE first as a visiting professor. And then they made me, rather surprisingly, an Emeritus Professor. Because normally an Emeritus Professor's- normally I would have had to retire from the LSE to be an Emeritus Professor.

Yes.

But I retired from London Business School. So in fact, I became an Emeritus Professor at the LSE, and still quite active in the department. And in a sense the department was always rather welcoming to me. I had a very good relationship with the department. I'm saying this partly because... Ailsa went more adrift- went further adrift from her department than I did from mine. So I'm still regarded- well-regarded by the LSE. I was... still by the department, by my successors and, and - and so on.

Did teaching give you a lot of satisfaction? Or- or did you prefer being active in industry?

I...

Or both at different times perhaps?

[01:27:01]

Yeah. ...I'm one of those teachers - those bad teachers - who likes to teach to those who like me. [Jana laughs] That is, to who take the subject, who are enthusiastic about it and go on and teach them. I can go into tutorial mode any moment with them. But I don't teach so well those who are... less interested. Now, a good teacher... does exactly the opposite. A good teacher takes those. So, I've always had this- I get very good- I get very good grades from that particular cadre of students with whom I gel, who like the subject - who are interested in the subject. Less so, with the ones who take the subject because either they think it's an easy

subject, or it's a way to make money or - so on. Or are simply not interested in the way I teach it. The particular slant I take. And I have a particular slant. So, yes I do- I do enjoy teaching to- to that group. I- but in particular enjoyed taking... research.

So when did you marry, and what did she- when did she teach at the LSE?

She - she what?

She- you said that she taught at the LSE.

Yes. Well she- when she was a research assistant as well. She became a research officer. She did a PhD. She... And this might be of interest to you. Her PhD had- she had two supervisors: Doctor Helen Makower and Doctor Morton. Now Doctor Morton - George Morton - came from Czechoslovakia - and Brno, actually. So that's another connection. And she did her PhD in operational research. She became interested in operational research. Operational research is the use of mathematical techniques in solving operational problems. It was developed first in the war. For example, how do you fire... depth charges... to maximize the chance of getting a... a submarine. Previously, this had been done sort of random firing and hopefully- but there's in fact a way to get the best pattern, which is most likely to get... the - things. Operational research does the mathematics for that kind of thing. Another kind of thing is, how do you design a queuing system in a- in a hospital. There are all sorts- all sorts of operational problems. What is the best mix if you've got- require certain nutrients in the- in cattle food? What's the best mix of raw materials to get that... thing, given the price of the different nutrients? That is her field. And...

[01:30:26]

Is this what she ultimately taught?

This is what- this is what she ultimately taught. She became a professor of operational research. And in fact when I joined LSE... I haven't said how that came about. Going back again, in 1947... That didn't... In 1967, '68 the National Computing Centre wanted to fund research and teaching in this new subject which was then called 'systems analysis'. How do we use computers in an administrative and business sense? And they wanted to fund two

universities. And one of the university- universities which applied was the LSE and the other one was Imperial College. And Imperial College and LSE were awarded the grants. And LSE then... recruited me to take up this post- this new post - in 1998- in 1968. So that's how I came to join LSE. And the department which did it was the statis- statistics department, of which Ailsa was a member. So husband and wife became part of the same department.

[01:32:06]

So that brings us back to what you were saying about- what you were saying earlier.

Yes.

About- in your- in terms of your careers.

Yes, yes.

Yes.

Yes - yes. So I had sixteen years an industry and then I had the rest of my career at the London School of Economics. And developing this new subject, building up a department - building up a very successful department. And some of the people who are now some of the best-known professors in that were our PhD students in America and the UK. ...And I- when I retired I was- sorry, I must do a bit of correction. In 1980- In the middle 1980s, I had a major quarrel with my seniors at the LSE. What's happened is that one of my PhD students, a young American who'd been extremely good, applied for, and had a- got a job as a lecturer. Applied for tenure. And the powers that be - a committee - said no he wasn't fit to be that. And I was absolutely sure they were wrong. I know I- knew it was wrong. And I fought that decision. And there was an appeal and there was- I got referees; it was a long-drawn-out process. Whatever it is, he wasn't given tenure. In effect, sacked. And he went back to the States and is now one of the most prominent professors in the field. They made a great mistake. But whenever it is, I said, "This is- I- I simply cannot accept that. This is a resigning matter." And I resigned

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[01:37:38]

Did- did you and your wife discuss teaching techniques? Did you discuss your own work together?

Yes. Yes. Curiously enough there was a- there's a- I was once asked, "What is the secret of your long life- your long marriage?" And what I said is that we don't understand each other's subject and don't talk about it. In fact, as a computer programmer she's done a lot more computer programming than me and more than I have- much longer than I. But I'm not a mathematician; I don't really understand the- her mathematics- mathematics. Her view of what is important in terms of teaching differs somewhat from mine. She is much more narrowly focused than I am, and probably to a much greater depth. I am much more- broader in my- in my interests. So, yes occasionally, but it's never been a main thing that we discuss our way of teaching. It's- it's never a subject we say, "OK, we've got to discuss our.... ?We should do it- be of interest to do so." We've got our own ways that way, very much. She's been a very successful teacher in her field, but it's a different kind of field than my field. In particular the way she... she- she treats it. So she is a specialist, and she is... tightly focused on that. I am much more generalist. And that's, that's- that's a major difference in the way we... did our academic careers.

When you left your LEO project...

Yes.

Did you miss it? Did you regret the departure?

[01:39:27]

There...The- two things there. One is that I felt one of the reasons I left is I had been doing, doing, doing... and had too little time to think about it. And that the academic- going to academia gave me the opportunity to do so. But the other side of it is, in doing it- going into academia and becoming much more robust in the thinking side one loses also touch - to some extent, touch - of the practical side. And the practical side was changing so rapidly. And I

wasn't able to keep up with it. Particularly in the last- in the last few years. I mean, up to a time I was- for a time- for at least a decade or so, I was well- well up to date with it. But then it gradually began to slip away. And that's- that's in a sense, a regret. But that wasn't while I was at the LSE. While I was at the LSE I was still very much in touch- touch with it. But the ability to think about the subject I think was very important to me. And my- any contribution I have made, comes really from that part of my career. My early part of the career, yes, I was doing, doing, doing and yes, these things worked quite well. But- and I was doing it successfully. But if I have to think back on it... now, I know much more what I was doing and why I was doing it. And that's perhaps quite important.

You're now involved in your own oral history project connected with LEO...

[01:41:19]

Yes. What happened- when I retired I became more active. First of all, some of my old colleagues from the very early days... joined together to form something called the LEO Foundation. And our object was to put what had happened with LEO... half a century earlier, to put it on the map. Because LEO had been largely forgotten; it had become a footnote. If you look at the American literature on the history of computing we didn't exist. And yet, we were pioneers. We were the very first ones to do business computing; nobody'd done it before. So... the object of the LEO Foundation was to put us on the map. And at the same time, there had already been for some years a LEO Computer Society which was mainly a social club for ex-LEO employees, reunions and social things. And the LEO Foundation and the LEO Computer Society in a sense merged and changed the LEO Society from one whose interest was in social things, to being really one in- into this thing of remembering LEO and... putting it into... into proper- its proper position. And I became... chairman of the history committee of the LEO Computer Society. And one of the projects we did was the oral history one. And we've- we've got- we've just enlarged that because some people don't want to be interviewed in an oral- a narrative history. Some people just write their own- write their own stuff. And if you look through it, there's some very good stuff. We've just published a little book called "*LEO Remembered*", which has got basically anecdotal about what happened to some of people. But there are also both serious papers - quite a lot of serious papers - which describe some of the innovations, and how it came about. And how it came about that LEO became such an important place and who the people were. In a sense, I think

of- what we have in front of us at the moment is a tapestry with a very elaborate picture on it. And what we're trying to do is to unpick the threads; where did they- where did they come from? [inaudible], "How did this come about?"

It's a valuable record.

A valuable record... hopefully that people will take- well, we know that we're getting traction. We're now getting all sorts of people interested. We had recently for example, a letter from a school in America where one of the students has picked up on, and is doing a project on LEO, which would never have been possible without that. So, we- so we've been very successful in putting LEO on the track. And we're now working on this heritage project with a number of museums... and a number of archives, in trying to make that work.

And there's a plaque on the site of where Cadby Hall was?

[01:44:54]

Yes, there is. There's a plaque on the site of where... Cadby Hall was. I'll show you the picture of that later. And perhaps that can be part of the story. It would be nice if it were. Yes the plaque was- was opened in November last year. And Dame Steve Shirley and I were the ones who... to say, 'opened' see the plaque. And we had speeches for various people including the sort of... Mayor of Hammersmith and various other people. And members of the old Lyons family... who one tended to forget. But the Lyons family were of course important; they were instrumental in this happening. One of them - Dominic Lawson - Dominic Lawson... father of Nigel- Nigella, who was the columnist in the *Sunday Times* came to this opening and wrote a- wrote his Sunday column on it. Again this is part of the archive, now.

And many people will now perhaps have forgotten about the Lyons Tea Houses and that Cadby Hall was in the Hammersmith Road between Hammersmith and Kensington.

Yes, yes – yes, yes. Yes... to think of the place. That was a busy factory... making- with the largest Swiss roll machine in the world! [both laugh] ...And all sorts of...sort of thing. Yes, it's all re-developed into flats...

Yes.

And so on-no, that was the birthplace of business computing. ...And survived for many years. But in the end, the British Computer industry didn't survive. And again, one of the things of interest is: why not? There's recently been a book by an American technology-historian of technology, who wrote a book. It was published only a few weeks- earlier this year called, "*Programmed Inequality*" [M. Hicks, W. Aspray, T. J. Misa, MIT Press, March 2017] ...and it surmises- it traces the history of British computing, about its early successes the early lead it had, and how subsequently it was taken- overtaken by the Americans. And she puts it down to... gen- gender differences. The UK Civil Service basically excluded women- women from the top profession. Whether it's true or not this is not- but it's an- it's an interesting thesis. ...I've just reviewed that book.

[01:48:08]

But you were part of that exciting, adventurous development.

Yes. And one of the things about being in this industry: it has never stopped being exciting. I mean, the rate of innovation, the rate of change... has been... fantastic - fabulous. And in some ways good, in some ways pretty terrible. I mean all the things which are now taking place on the cyber side - cyber warfare, cyber surveillance, cyber spying... the dark side. Did you know that's the sub... substantial? I think it's about half of the traffic on the internet is pornography. It's a flat level. So there is a very dark side to... what we've invented. There's also- there is this- and one of the things I'm on- on about is, that on the whole, academia and so on, look at the positive side, and forget the dark side. So when they talk about AI [artificial intelligence] they talk about what AI can do for us. They talk about the threat of it in terms of what it will do for our jobs, but they don't look at it in terms of how the dark side will exploit it to a disadvantage. I think that's the main... that's what- in academia, we ought to be looking at that side as well. We don't do it enough. That's my piece of... That's my piece of... hobbyhorse... riding. [both laugh]

That's- that's a very interesting comment.

Yes.

May we return to your family and your wife? Is your wife Jewish?

[01:50:06]

No. My wife is not Jewish. I married out. My wife comes from a family- but part Scottish family, part Midlands. The family... middle-class family. Her- my wife's father- the family had been in the sports business. And before that, they had been in the mining business. But at the business side of mining.

What was your-were your parents still alive when you married?

Yes.

What were their responses?

I think there was a certain amount of scepticism on both sides. Certainly my... Ailsa's parents... had had very little contact with Jewish people... and wondered what Ailsa was letting herself in for. My parents- my father warned me about some of the possible problems. But when the two families met, they got on extremely well together. So there's- they appreciated each other. Unfortunately my wife's parents both died relatively young. They both had cancer. My father-in-law died in his late fifties. My mother-in-law who had also lived with us for some time before she died - that's before my mother was with us - she died of cancer in her early seventies. So my wife, at ninety, is doing very well.

And would you like to say something about your children, and perhaps their attitude to Judaism?

Yes.

And how they- how you've brought them up?

[01:52:03]

Yes. We- in having had a sectarian upbringing, with a Jewish consciousness, but not... Not any particular... Jewish... separatism- my mother, as I said earlier, was a Zionist, and more so than my father. My father's family I think was more- more assimilated than my mother's. We brought up our children... certainly not- the sectarian way. Certainly neither of us- and I don't think any member of our family has ever been religious. I don't know any of my father's side or my mother's side who had been religious Jews. So they were always sectarian in that sense. We brought up our children to try to have some knowledge of where they came from... and so on. But left them to think for themselves, and what they did. As it happens, none of them have married Jewish... Jewish. But in particular our two daughters, I think, have a greater consciousness of their Jewish heritage. My son, I suspect, less so. One of the interesting things is on the recent- Europe- Europe... Britain... what's it called? Bret...

Brexit?

Brexit. ...Brexit is, they've decided to... become German. And the reason for that is, that their children are really more cosmopolitan... more cosmopolitan. So, one of our granddaughters has got a Spanish boyfriend. One grandson's got a Portuguese girlfriend. The other one's got- got an English- English boyfriend. But they're- and, oh, and the father of the baby... is French. So, there is a great cos- cosmopolitanism. So they felt that by being German, they could retain this cosmopolitan part of their life.

How do you feel about that? And the...

I would not do it under any circumstances. I simply don't feel like it's- it's the right thing for me to do.

[01:55:00]

Had you ever thought of going back to Germany to live?

No.

Or your parents?

I've- I've- I've always been an English patriot. And somehow taken on board that if we play Germany at football, we simply have to win. And I resent it bitterly when we don't... and the Germans win. I've always had that feeling. I love going to Germany because I can speak the language and I can be a tourist who speaks the language.

Yes...

But I look at it as a tourist, rather than my parental home. I think over the last few years, that has shifted slightly. I'm much more likely to see good in the Germans. And that's partly the way the political situation has changed, but also the way that if I go to Germany now you can see the remembrance of what they've done. Far more than anywhere else. Where they can see: "The family of so-and-so lived in this house" up on the on the wall.

Yes.

That sort of thing. That the Germans have become- have become both conscious of what they did and are trying to do something about it. So I- I don't feel the resentment I used to feel. I think Ralph still feels it stronger. I- I mean he said- he more or less said, "I'd disown my children if they do that." He wouldn't have done, of course. But ... yeah, feels much more strongly about this.

Have you discussed it at great length?

Yes we've discussed it at some length. Yes. Not so much discussed it but e-mailed each other about it. Conversated by e-mail. Yes. He can't understand how they can do it. I understood it perfectly. And, and appreciate why they did it. Why they did it and... It's their perfect- it's their perfect- they have the right to choose and do this.

What do you think your own parents would have thought of that? Were they ever tempted to return home- to- to live?

[01:57:20]

I think my father would have thought, "Yeah. OK." As I say, he comes from this very assimilated family and who wanted to see the best of the Germans for a long time. I wouldn't... I think my mother, much more ideologically- she's much more ideologically focused than he was. I don't think he has a strong ideology. I think he was a very pragmatic businessman. My mother was very far from being- was very pragmatic in the sense that she was a doer and could do things and was very successful at doing things. But behind it there was always an ideology.

Mnn. And have you yourself in later years, been drawn more to the Jewish faith or not?

No, not. And partly because I hate some of the orthodoxy. I hate the orthodoxy both for its exclusiveness, that shoves everybody aside, and for some of its myths. I don't believe in these myths and... I don't think they sh- don't believe necessarily that they should be promulgated in an- in a way that they're not to be questioned... in an unquestioning way.

You've certainly achieved a lot. You and your brother complement each other.

Yes.

Did you ever compete with each other in your views... or professionally?

We- we always-

You are two individuals, but... identical twins.

We've always been very close, but we've always, in a sense, competed as well. So, when we were at university, as I say, the average mark was the same. And we were pleased about that. But we also say, "This is my strength, and this is where I was good and you weren't quite as good as I." We've always had some of that. So we were in the same business again, and we again at- at a certain level sort of competed... in that. Never in an aggressive way. We've never been aggressive to each other. I, I- I think in any way whatsoever. We have fought, but they were friendly fights. We loved wrestling, so we wrestled with each other. We were quite good at it. But I don't think we were aggressive to each other. Bantering, yes. But that's a different thing. But that banter is not- not Trump's banter; it's- it's genuine banter.

[02:00:19]

And... have you discussed the question of Jewishness as well? Has that entered your dialogues?

Sorry?

The question of Jewish...

Yes.

And how you observe, or not. Have you discussed that?

I take- I'm not observant. I'm- I'm absolutely proud to be Jewish. And I'm proud - terribly proud - of Jewish achievements. And there's- there's a risk in that, because a big part of Jewish achievements, one can sometimes neglect Jewish non-achievements or the other side - the nastier side.

But have you discussed that with your brother Ralph?

To an extent. I think it's an ongoing conversation. There are always ongoing conversations without saying, "Today we are going to discuss this."

No - no.

So they come as a side, they come as- in general things. We don't set up- we don't set each other up like this - opposite each other.

No, no...

"We will discuss- today we will discuss this."

No, no. But does it enter your conversation at all?

It jumps into our conversation and drops to our demeanour... and so on. So I'm- and this is reflected in the way I'm finding it difficult to relate to his current relationship. I find that really rather difficult. But that's his choice. I don't understand why he has to make a choice. Why in his position, with his wife- his- Jacqueline having died, being on his own. He does need companionship.

Would you have a message that you would like to record for your family, for future viewers of the DVD that - the complementary DVD – that will be sent to you?

[02:02:27]

I think that... one message is my intense regret at this stage, that I didn't bother to find out - that I neglected to find out - about my history. About in particular my parents and my parents' or our parents' thinking. I would have loved to know what my father was really like as a young man. I would have liked to have known much more of my mother as a girl and so on. Though I think I've got a more of a consciousness of her than of my father- my father. I said I think my father was a card or something of a card as a young man. I'm guessing. But I don't know. I watch on the television "*Who Do You Think You Are?*" and think of some of the people with my background, who've been on that, who've been most moving and interesting. I don't know whether you remember the one who went into the synagogue and I think her- one of her relatives came and sang- sang the... Kad- what is it called?

Kaddish.

Kaddish- the Jewish- sorry. It was so moving. And I regret in a sense that I'm missing out on that side of things. I would have loved to do that. So I would have liked to have known more about my... history and parents. The other regret is perhaps going our own way without helping our parents as much as we might have done. Though I'm not sure that they would have needed that help. But I feel now, although my mother lived with us for eighteen years, and perhaps that intimacy was there with my mother. I knew my mother very well indeed... and till right the end and all of that. But my father I know much less about. I regret knowing much less about him and not helping him more come to grips with things. Though I'm not sure he needed that help; he was really capable.

Mnn- they didn't talk about their pasts voluntarily?

[02:04:57]

They didn't talk about their past and we didn't inquire. They might have talked. They might have talked! I wish I'd known much more about the two families: the family in Vienna and the family in Berlin. I have sort of... the wrong kind of memory. I remember my grandmother Dorothea, because we had to kiss her, and she had a moustache. You know. But that's not what I want to remember people for. But that's what I- that's what I remember. Of course, as a young child that's what one does remember. But subsequently...

Yes- What...?

I'm sure that my... grandfather. [phone rings] Sorry, excuse me.

[sound break]

What then would be your message to anyone viewing your DVD?

I have another message, and that is to the government, to be much more tolerant of refugees. I am absolutely appalled by the way we are treating or not taking in refugees now. Having been a refugee myself, knowing about Kindertransport, the way the Dubs amendment has been totally neglected. I think it's absolutely- absolutely appalling. I am- I am deeply, deeply shocked by that. And so the message is for those of us who have survived, those of us who have succeeded and perhaps those who have not succeeded as well as I have - one doesn't have to have been as lucky as I was. We found refuge in this country, we've lived in this country, we have loved this country. And this can happen to people of any culture. It doesn't have to be a white person; it doesn't have to be... I think that's- that really is a message of importance.

Indeed. Thank you very much indeed again for kindly agreeing to be interviewed for AJR and for [??? sharing] your life and your achievements.

Thank you very much for interviewing me.

That's it? Then perhaps we can go to lunch. That's a good idea.

Great.

[End of Interview]

[02:07:33]

[02:07:40]

[Start of photographs and documents]

We can look at pictures and so on afterwards.

Photo 1

My father Louis, taken by myself and my brother on the studio on an old plate camera around I would say 1946.

Photo 2

A group of four sixth formers. The two Landsberger twins and Stephen Schafer and Henry Ohrenstein went on regular cycle tours. And this was a sort of cycle tour to the West Country. I think to Cornwall. And it was probably taken by Stephen Schafer on that cycle tour. We used to cycle hundreds of miles.

Photo 3

A picture of my mother as a child in Vienna with her brother Norbert. I'm not sure of their age but this is Soscha Weinberger and Norbert Weinberger. He subsequently became a lawyer.

She subsequently became the wife of my father Louis.

Photo 4

A picture of my mother's brother Norbert and his wife Edith. They had a hazardous escape from Vienna. I think if I remember rightly, he was caught in France when France fell. And

they escaped to and America as a domestic couple. He subsequently became a professor of jurisprudence at one of the American universities, and then returned to Vienna.

[02:09:51]

Photo 5

My cousin Peter who, with his sister Miriam, came from Berlin by Kindertransport in I think 1939. He subsequently joined the British Army as a Pioneer, then went into the tank corps and became a sergeant. He was behind enemy lines in Normandy at the D-Day landings but escaped, came back to Britain, and is still alive in his mid-nineties now.

Photo 6

My wife Ailsa, on the left in the Canadian Women's Army. On the right, her mother Bessie, also in the Women's- Canadian Women's Army. And in the middle, her father who was in the RAF as an officer during the war.

Photo 7

My wife Ailsa and I married in March 1953, and this is a picture immediately after our wedding at a Registry Office.

Photo 8

This is my wife Ailsa with our eldest daughter Frances. I guess around 1955.

Photo 9

Family celebration of my mother's Soscha's eightieth birthday, with her in the centre of the picture, in the bright dress.

Photo 10

This is Ailsa and Frank. I would guess around the mid-1980s. No particular occasion I can think of.

Photo 11

The twins. Frank on the right. Ralph on the left. After a celebration of an anniversary.

[End of photographs and documents]

[02:12:18]