

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 71

NAME: LEON GREENMAN

DATE: 20 AUGUST 2004

LOCATION: LONDON

INTERVIEWER: ANTHONY GRENVILLE

TAPE 1

AG: First of all Mr Greenman, I would like to thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview with us. And perhaps I could just start by asking you to state your full name please.

LG: My name is Leon Greenman.

AG: And where were you born?

LG: I was born in the East End of London, my birth certificate says between Whitechapel and Bishopsgate.

AG: And when were you born?

LG: At number 50 Artillery Lane, right next to the Synagogue that was then, I was born in 1910 according to my birth certificate.

AG: And what sort of people were your parents, let's start with your father, what was his name?

LG: Barney, Barnet Greenman, he was born in Whitegate Street, also in East London, and he had several professions, cigar maker, diamond polisher, as the time went on, what I remember.

AG: And had his family lived in England for long, or had they arrived relatively recently?

LG: No, my father and mother must have been living in the East End of London a long time before I was born. On mother's side they arrived from White Russian parents by the name of 'Morris'. They escaped from Russia during the antisemitism and other things and they arrived in London and that's where my mother Clara was born. On my father's side I derive from Dutch grandparents: Isiah Groenteman, or Joseph Groenteman, as my father used to mention when we talked about the family. My Dutch grandparents already

in 1700 went to America, came back to Holland and tried again, visited America in the eighteen hundreds, something like that, according to the family tree, and one of those grandparents stopped over in London, and that's where my father was born. So I was born in London, my parents were born in London; I'm a double Englishman I would say you could call it, according to English law.

AG: What sort of man was your father, how do you remember him?

Tape 1: 3 minutes 35 seconds

LG: Oh, later on I remember him in Holland because my Dutch grandfather wanted to get back to Amsterdam, as the history goes, and at that time, it's about 200 years ago, when somebody in the family, the parents moved away, the whole lot of the family moved with them. Different than today. So my father got a house in Rotterdam, my grandparents went to Amsterdam. But I remember I don't remember my grandparents, I was quite young, maybe I was five years of age or something like that. So we landed in Rotterdam, at six I went into the Dutch schools in Rotterdam, and passed two schools, and left school at fifteen.

AG: So going back to London, do you remember London?

LG: Not at that time, but later when I revisited it, yes.

AG: And what about your mother? What was your mother's maiden name?

LG: Clara Morris, that's what I remember, and I also remember that I was very young, two and a half, when my mother Clara passed away. My father used to tell us, medical science wasn't then up to much at that time, mother ought to have had only one child, and she produced six. Three boys and three girls.

AG: And where did you come amongst the six?

LG: I was the fifth, and Kitty was the sixth.

AG: Could you tell me what were the first names of the brothers and sisters?

Tape 1: 5 minutes 31 seconds

LG: My older brother was Charlie, and at sixteen he joined the army and went to Ireland, Daisy followed. Daisy got married but passed away at 21, heart failure, at that time medical science wasn't up to much. I remember those things, I was only twelve then. Dinah, according to later research by me, Dinah was born in Amsterdam. And she lived in London a long time. She went to Holland later on. And much later, during the war, she went voluntarily to Auschwitz, she really thought that in Auschwitz you went to work. She was very friendly with a Dutch family Cohen, very much with the two sisters. Well, the two sisters and their husbands and children were called up to go to the camps by the

Nazis and that would have left Dinah alone, as she used to tell us, and she said 'Well I work in Auschwitz or I work in Holland, I don't want to be left by myself, I'm coming with you to Auschwitz'. But Dinah never returned, and neither did the Cohen family. That's what I remember. Kitty was in Holland now and then, but then she lived in London; and during the war Kitty lived in London. Later on she got married with Joe Hyman, a soldier in the army. Her husband died after a few years, and left Kitty alone. So Charlie, Daisy, Dinah and Kitty. Leon, that's me, I was living then in Rotterdam, and after one or two light jobs in factories, my father said 'You've got to learn a proper trade', and I became an assistant to my father's hairdresser.

AG: Before we get there can I take you back, can I ask you a bit about... you were going to, you started talking about your schooling. You said you went to school in Rotterdam. What sort of school was that?

LG: in Rotterdam, yes.

Tape 1: 8 minutes 15 seconds

LG: Well I was taught as anybody else was taught, it wasn't University stuff.

AG: Was it a Dutch school or a Jewish school?

LG: Only Dutch, yes.

AG: And were there other Jews in the school, in your class?

LG: I remember a few Dutch children [Jewish children] were amongst my class yes, but mostly non-Jews.

AG: And how did you get on? Was there any hostility to you?

LG: Alright, I was, at the very beginning in school, during a music lesson I told the teacher that I could sing a song which I had composed. I couldn't read music on paper, but in my mind, so I was called in front of the class to sing that melody. I remember that. Much later on I joined the showbusiness as a singer, but that comes much later. And at fifteen I left school, I wanted to go out into the world, and I became an apprentice to a hairdresser, I was taught thoroughly how to shave men's beards. At that time, it's a long time ago, none of us knew that shaving men's beards would help my life a little longer in the Nazi concentration camps, but that's a different story.

Tape 1: 10 minutes 0 second

AG: And where did you go and work... who did you work for?

LG: For a hairdresser in Rotterdam, and later on I went to London and had my own little Ladies saloon in Bow in the East End of London. I went back to Holland. I lived in

Holland again, and, I sold my hairdressing saloon and went back to Holland, and worked as a hairdresser in Holland, became a manager of a hairdressing saloon, and so on. But for my hobby I wanted to be a singer so I studied how to use the voice and singing at the Academy of Music in Rotterdam, it's no more, it's gone.

AG: Was there any music at home, in your family?

LG: Yes, I remember that my father bought a piano, I was going to learn the piano, play the piano, in my schooldays I used to sing. Second Tenor they called it then. And I had a piano teacher in Rotterdam, who used a stick in his hands, if you touched the wrong note he used to tick your hands. And I didn't like that. My youth at home, I didn't mention that. My mother died when I was two and a half, father was left with six children, too many to cope with. He tried. Maurie and Dinah went into a Dutch orphan home, in Rotterdam, until they were 18. Maurie became a first class tailor. And Dinah became a saleslady in various shops, when they came out of the orphan home, this was. Charlie was away in the war in Ireland, the First World War. Kitty was in Holland. She married Hayman Stott, a Dutchman. I remember him being sent away by the Nazis, that's much later. Anyhow, I became a member of a light operatic company.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 48 seconds

AG: Could I take you back to your youth and childhood. I understand it must have been difficult without your mother.

LG: Yes. My youth wasn't easy. My stepmother, because my father took a housekeeper to look after us, Kitty and Leon. Charlie and Daisie were not in the home anymore. Dinah was away, and Maurie was away, in the tailoring business that was, and Kitty and myself were left at home. My stepmother wasn't an easy person.

AG: Your father remarried?

LG: Later on he married the housekeeper. She was from American descent so she could talk our language. He married her, so she became my stepmother, our stepmother. But life wasn't easy. I admit it wasn't easy. But for me, it's always been later on, I thought that was the overture, the beginning of a piece of music, or beginning of anything, the overture to my life in the concentration camps. That's all what I can say about... Neighbours used to say I was my mother's 'eye apple', and I remember one illustration, one picture in my mind of my mother laying on the ground at home, she had fallen down, and Mori was in the room, my brother Maurie, a lot of people, neighbours were called in, and we stand looking at my mother on the floor, and Maurie took me by the hand, and took me into the garden. He would not like me to stay looking there at my mother. Father had been out, buying a bottle of wine and some cakes for some birthday, as he came into the street in Rotterdam where we lived, the well-known Jewish street Helmerstraat, number 10 A, and some of the neighbours walked to him and told him what happened to my mother, and my father saw what happened, he gave the cakes to the neighbours standing there, but the bottle of wine is going to be saved until the baby, Kitty, gets

married. And that bottle of wine went with us wherever we lived, and the bottle of wine was opened when Kitty got married in London, with a Jewish soldier out of the army.

Tape 1: 16 minutes 0 second

AG: When you were a boy, how was the Jewish life in your house?

LG: I went to Hebrew School, I was taught a lot of Hebrew and prayers and all that, and I used to follow it up, when I was a youngster, and I must say now that I don't know, I can't read Hebrew anymore. Of all what I learnt, a lot of it was left probably in the camps, I know three prayers which now and then I use. I was a better Jew before the war than after the war. But I'm still a Jew. And I'll always be. Although I don't go to synagogue very often, I still believe.

AG: Did your family go to synagogue in Rotterdam?

LG: Yes, we were members of the Rotterdam Synagogue, we paid our dues, and so on.

AG: Do you have memories of attending synagogue?

LG: The Old Synagogue from seventeen something, was rubbed out by the Nazis in the war, the Shul we belonged to was changed, that was before the war, was demolished and rebuilt, it was a new Shul, a Liberal Shul this time, so, orthodox went, a liberal Shul and that was bombed. And I remember I walked on the ruins of it. Because I was with the bombing of Rotterdam, 10th to the 14th of May 1940. I was walking in the bombing, I helped, and I saw the people laying on the street, and all what was going on, being shot by airplanes on the street. I remember all that. So synagogue time. We still lived a liberal life. That was in Rotterdam. As I told you I joined a light operetta company, I was in with artists singing and entertaining. Once a month we gave public performances. And during one of those performances, a young lady walked in, sat down and listened to me, I happened to be on the stage singing my songs, that was Esther Van Dam. She was born in Rotterdam, but lived in London and worked in London, and was on holiday in Rotterdam. We got acquainted, later on she went back to London, and I followed her. And we got married on the 9th of June 1935 in Stepney Green Synagogue in the East End of London.

Tape 1: 19 minutes 6 seconds

AG: Can you tell me a little bit about Esther?

LG: Esther could make her own clothes, she was in the clothing industry, she had long black hair. An incident which I might as well tell you. We were members, or I was a member of a Jewish Youth Club, from about sixteen years upwards, and older. Over a hundred... we started with a few and that went over a hundred members. And I was one of the members and I was on the Committee. And we had the habit of... seeing the ladies, and one of them was Else, my wife, at that time, being seen home after the shows, or after the meetings, whatever, see that the girls get indoors, and say cheerio until the next week.

And I remember Else, my wife told me that when she got home at her mother's house, that's where she was lodging at the moment, on holiday, she told her grandmother this is the first boy to see me home and didn't press me for a kiss. Yes, I remember that. She told me that later on. My love life was very very early in my youth. Not love life, but I must have fallen in love when I was very young, and it never materialised. It happens like that in life, things you want don't happen, things happen which you don't want but it happens.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 12 seconds

AG: Where did your wife come from, what was her family background?

LG: Well, Else was born and went to school in Holland, and in a school where they taught a lot of things, of household and all that. I know nothing about her father. I met her mother later on in England, in London, I tell you how. While we were in the house of my wife's grandmother, a lady getting on for eighty, she mentioned to us 'I looked after your wife since she was a child, because of family circumstances and may I ask now for her to stay in Rotterdam looking after me in exchange, because I'm getting old'. At that time I was an antiquarian book trader, I travelled the book sale rooms in Amsterdam and Leiden, and Rotterdam and so on, but also in London, Sotheby's and other book sale rooms. And I said 'Yes, you can stay in London, I'll travel backwards and forwards to England', and that's how we make our life, and that's how it happened.

Tape 1: 22 minutes 39 seconds

AG: So was your wife also from a sort of mixed Dutch and English background?

LG: Her mother married for the second time, and this man lived in London. This man's wife had passed away, that was the sister of my wife's mother. So it's a family. There were four other sisters next to my wife, there's only one alive now, she's over seventy, the other sisters all passed away down the years. So we got married and went back to Holland and we stayed in the house of the grandmother. This was in Rotterdam, in Rotterdam. And my book business grew, buying and selling as best as I could, it was quite a young beginning, and as it happens my father was in the antiquarian book trade. I sold my hairdressing shop and became a partner to my father-in-law in the book business.

AG: How old would you have been?

LG: Twenty, twenty-one, something like that.

AG: Please tell me about your business in antiquarian books.

LG: Well I lived in London, shortly after marriage we went to Holland and I started the partnership in Holland. My father-in-law stayed in England, in London, and we bought books, he bought books in England, I bought books in Holland, and so on. And the partnership didn't last long because when the war came, it was in 1930 already I think,

the downfall of the American... what do you call that?

AG: The stock exchange.

LG: Yes, and no Americans came to London, and we depended for buying books on the American people. And the schools and universities in America, that's what we used to do. The mailing business. Before that we had a shop in Brighton and what was an empty shop, we rented it, we built it up, sold the books, until the Americans didn't come anymore, we were losing money, not many customers, so we, the whole lot we had, our books went to the salerooms and I went back to Holland to try to go on, and my father in law stayed in London.

Tape 1: 25 minutes 50 seconds

AG: And how did you manage in Holland? Did you continue selling?

LG: We, I remember that we started in our little way in the house of my grandmother, later on we moved to a bigger house because the books I was buying needed more room and we moved to a bigger house. And we tried. And we had a typewriter, we used to send out a lot of paperwork offering books, we used to buy books, sell books, go round anywhere, trying to find anything that we could make use of. And it was 1940, no, it was 1938, I was on business in London, in a book saleroom, buying and selling, that I came out of a book saleroom and I saw people digging trenches in the streets, and they were queueing up for gas masks, I queued up for a gas mask, I got my gas mask, and I thought there is something going on, in Germany there were a lot of wrong things going on, so I thought it would be a war, so let's rush back, so I rushed back to Holland, to Rotterdam the next day to collect my wife and to leave for England. Holland was too near to Germany. And when I got home I found my wife sitting and listening to the BBC news bulletin. In the sitting room. And we listened, and we heard Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced in his speech 'There will be no war between Germany and England'. So we thought there's no hurry to get back to England, we wait six months. And we go to England. We sell the little stock we got and we see how we go on. 1938 came and went, nothing happened, ninety nine came (he means thirty nine), still nothing happened and 1940 on the 17th of March our little baby was born, Barney.

AG: You had been married for five years then?

LG: Yes, and I remember one evening, it came to pass that my wife said 'I want a baby, I want a child'. And I said 'No, I don't think we ought to have a child because there's trouble in Germany there's a war coming, and what's use in having that child, it might be bad, you never know', my wife cried, I gave in, and nine months later our child was born. Barney Greenman. He was born in the confinement hospital for women in Rotterdam, which is now a different place. The building is still there. So Barney was our baby. He was wonderful. In our life he was loved by everybody, we had a lot of fun out of it. All what I got is photographs and memories. And then it happened. 1940 came along, Rotterdam was bombed on the 10th till the 14th of May 1940, the Nazis occupied Holland,

almost immediately the laws for the Jews in Holland...

AG: Before we get onto the Nazis.

LG: Yes.

AG: How were your relations with Dutch people and before the war and the occupation. Did you have Dutch friends?

LG: Oh we had a lot of friends coming to our house. As I said we were, I was a member of the Jewish club, it had over 100 people. All Jewish. They used to come to my home, I used to go to them. All of them have been taken away because of the war, and those that were in hiding passed away in the last two or three years. And the relations were good. I was building up my business, and we were making a go of it, not easy, but we were making a go of it. If I found some special picture or books, we sold it on the quick if it was interesting. So the business was building up. And the rest in life was alright.

AG: Did you notice any anti-Semitism among the Dutch?

Tape 1: 31 minutes 42 seconds

LG: Not really, not really. In school one of the kids used to call me... I don't think they called me... I didn't take any notice of me... 'Jood', 'Jew', but we got on well. But in school there was no need for me to join the non-Jewish religious half an hour or twenty minutes. I was then to sit by myself in the class or with another Jew, we need not go to Bible class. I remember that.

AG: Were you in Holland aware of what was happening over the border in Germany?

LG: Yes. When it started in Germany, we didn't believe everything, but we started reading it, we start hearing it and so on. But, ridiculous enough for myself, 'The army, England, the Allies will soon be here and it will be over, they will beat the Germans and we will be free again'. I never knew, I never thought it would take a turn the way it did. Otherwise I would have said 'No war with Germany or war with Germany, away'. But I absolutely didn't know. But that was ignorance of me. I admit.

AG: But in 1938 you'd considered coming back to England?

LG: Yes, in a peaceful way yes.

AG: What happened when the war broke out? Was your situation changed?

LG: Yes, after the bombing, as I said.

AG: I meant when the war broke out and Holland was still neutral, in September 1939 did you, you didn't think of going back to England?

LG: The war in Holland?

AG: Well the war between Britain and Germany.

LG: Well the Nazis were already in Holland but we didn't know. Hiding. I remember people saying 'The Nazis are dressed up in Dutch coastmen uniforms, and hiding in the ships in the river, and things not everyone could believe, and I didn't know, and it happened, when they bombed Rotterdam, and they would have bombed Amsterdam and Utrecht and the other big villages if Holland kept on fighting. Holland capitulated because the Dutch army wasn't worth anything. A lot of Dutchmen died because the German army was really above everything. I remember. If you looked at the soldiers and you saw what weapons they had, and how they were doing, you knew. But that's all what I knew of the soldiers, but until the laws came along, you could read in the papers and see it pasted on the walls that every Jew has to register at a town hall, and if you don't, then you will go to Mauthausen. Mauthausen was a terrible camp at the camp, later on what we knew, and so, I went to the town hall, I had four Jewish grandparents, from Russia and Amsterdam, so I was a full Jew. And so was my wife, became... an English Jew, I was an English Jew, it just didn't matter, you were Jewish, and that's how we lived, according to the laws.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 30 seconds

AG: Do you remember the arrival of the Germans? And the bombings?

LG: When the bombing started I was in a street which is still there, the Zaagmolenstraat, I had a colleague in the book business and that day it was a Tuesday afternoon, or Tuesday morning, this man could buy books, and sell books. And I used to visit him, and we always used to talk a lot about politics. He was probably a political young man, maybe a communist, I don't know. I wasn't interested in politics. I was interested in the book business and in how he was sewing books, and he was teaching me a little bit what I could do with a book, restore a book, and then, it was a Tuesday afternoon, about one o'clock, or just gone one o'clock, we were sewing and speaking at the back of the house in one of the rooms when I heard a loud 'boom' and we rushed to the front of the shop. I could see in the distance smoke and bombs falling, and it was terrible. And then we knew that something was going on. I said 'I'm off home', and I run through the streets, and I had to run from one side to the other. Because the aeroplanes were shooting people in the street, and I met people I knew, a bleeding arm, I remember. And another one came to me 'Oh Leon' and said 'what am I to do, where's my wife?' I said go to your wife at home, I don't know where she is, I've got to get to my wife'. So I went home, and grandmother and my wife and the baby were in the middle room, which was our bedroom, they were alright but of course crying and they were unknowing, and they were of course glad to see me and I was glad to see them then I went out of the house because behind our home was this Central Station, now the name Central Station, then named DP, DP Station, DP Station, and that was on fire. And that was a street away from the street where we were living. And sparks were going onto the road, and the bombing, or whatever it was,

smashed the windows of some of those houses, and the curtains were hanging out and catching alight. And I remember orders were given by men 'Get wood and close those holes of the glass', so we got pieces of wood and did our best, but luckily the wind turned away and our street was left unharmed. Later on the station burnt out, I remember the trains passing through that station, at the side we could have a look, and there were all these French soldiers coming from France. That's what I remember. It was a mess-up. And then came the laws...

Tape 1: 39 minutes 18 seconds

AG: What about the Germans, do you remember them coming into Rotterdam?

LG: I saw them marching in the streets, yes.

AG: How did you feel about that?

LG: Terrible. Terrible. It was what they had done. They knocked out Rotterdam, the boulevards and the streets. I could see now a cross, the ruins, which you formerly couldn't see. The flat where Dinah was living was finished, burnt away. I remember a school near to my street was in ruins. The street where I used to live before I moved to a bigger house was ruins. I stood on it and I what could I do? And then came the laws for the Jews, after registration. Your name, and address, very clever thinking by the Nazis because when the day came and they wanted the Jews out of their homes, sent police to the town hall, a thousand cards, and on the cards were the names and addresses, so they could go easy and get the people out. But you had to register. I had a wife and child, so I had to live according to those laws. What I did was listen to the BBC news bulletin every evening between five and six and the news bulletin, and next morning I used to go round to my circle of my Jewish friends, and non-Jews, telling them what I'd heard, how the war was going on, pep them up a bit you know, I didn't really know what was going on, I just heard them, what they said, moving or what. Until we had to give up our radio. The Jews had to give up their radios to the police station, the radio had to be tuned in, not tuned in, had to be working, so you couldn't put any broken down radio, because the inspector had got hold the plug, plugged in and it must be playing correctly. And I remember when I put my radio down there was a whole queue of us, and I looked at the screen, and I forgot to move the hand from the BBC what I was listening to. So I took a step forwards, and then came a name and they came, and it wasn't an English name. I don't know what would have happened if he had said hey you've been listening to so and so. Not to say that all police was bad, but, afterwards the policemen took us out of our home later on. But that was life for the Jews. No use of the trains, no use of the buses, no use of the trams, not out of your house after 8 o'clock in the evening, shop between 3 and 5. If we find you before or after in the shop, we send you to Mauthausen. You never knew who gave you away. I met good Dutch people and bad ones. So you had to live as the Nazis wanted you. And you tried to live with it as best as you could. But all the time in my mind of course, I hated them for what they were doing. And then a time came...

Tape 1: 42 minutes 45 seconds

AG: Can I just ask you, did you have to wear a yellow star?

LG: Oh yes. That was one of the laws, everybody has got to have a star sewn on his clothes. That meant you go to a shop and you buy the yellow star, a piece of yellow flannel, on there is a star and the word 'Jood', 'Jew'. And you had to buy this for a penny or so and wear it on your jacket or coat. So that they see when you wear your clothes on the street, that's a Jew, and that's another one, and that's another one. Well, I had friends, Jewish friends, a lot of them. They were all having stars, so even an Englishman, and I couldn't think, I wasn't a political man, I didn't know about international law, I didn't know about the Geneva conventions and all that, it didn't come up in my life. So, everybody is wearing a star, they know me, I know them, I wear a star as well, and I sewed a star on my jacket and coat, so did my father and all that, my father was still with us in Rotterdam. So that was it. No libraries, not go into to libraries, not into the cafes, no picture houses, no swimming baths, my wife and myself had swimming lessons, and we used to go there regular, no swimming baths, you mention it. I couldn't go nowhere. I walked to Schiedam, which is at that time an hour and a half at least, on a long road, from Rotterdam to Schiedam, now they built it more towards it, it's still a long way. Going, walking, when you walk you know, you didn't use a tram, you didn't go by train, you were not allowed. But I walked, and I took a chance. And I walked around in the little town of Schiedam, and I went into the shops where I used to go before and 'You got anything for me? Books, or prints, of what you've got'. And that's how we used to try to get the pieces.

Tape 1: 44 minutes 57 seconds

AG: How did you used to manage for money?

LG: We had very little money. What we had I forgot to tell you that. The Nazis had a law, everybody had to register, and I thought... I was angry with the Nazis, I'm not going to give up my passport.

AG: That was a British passport.

LG: A British passport yes. My wife's and my own. She became British because she married me. I wait until it's really necessary, because if they get my passports now, they come and get me; they put me in prison, what's going to happen to Else and the kid? I might never see them again or what, I don't know. I'm not going to give up my passports. Ok, so what are you gonna do with them? Ok, I'm going to give them into hiding. So I gave them, the passports and 758 pounds, all the money we had at the time, business money, to non-Jewish friends which I had known for several years, because the son of these people was also being taught piano, and using his voice at the Academy of Music where I was a member. And they promised me they will look after the passports and the money, don't worry about it. I put them every night where our goods are standing, in case we're bombed out, I can grab the lot. That's what they told me. And I believed them. When the day arrived I wanted my passports they said 'we haven't got them. What

passports? We have no passports'. So we argued. And she said alright, you were frightened of the Nazis, you gave us the passports, we became frightened of the Nazis getting to know, it's always been a puzzle to me, how can an outside German smell that you got passports? But she said the Germans might find out, and we burnt them. We tore them up and burnt them. And nobody can prove that we ever had the passports. So I was without passports. When the day came and the Nazis called me up, took me out of my home, 'I don't need to go with you', 'Passports!' and I had none. Ok. My father was still in Rotterdam, I was at that moment I was still in Rotterdam, so I didn't think anymore, it was stupid of me, but I thought to myself wait and see. Time went on. A very difficult life, ration of food, we were hungry, but we managed in a little way, we carried on, 1940, 1941, 1942. On the 8th of October 1942, in the evening, about 10 o'clock, or 20 past 10, I remember looking at the clock. A ring at the door. And we were laying in bed. What can you do? Stay up? We really went early to bed. Playing the old records over and over, a bit boring, and we go to bed. And we heard these airplanes going from England across Holland into Germany and that's how we lived, a couple of years, until, on the 8th of October 1942, in the evening, in the dark, a ring at the door. Who can that be? Nobody rings at the door during that time. So I got jumped of bed. We lived on the first floor of that house. I pulled the rope, I remember a door opened, I remember the light of a torch shone in my eyes, and I remember a man's voice: 'Greenman!' And I said yes. And up stormed two policemen. Dutch policemen. Leather jackets and wellingtons. And when they reached me they said get dressed and come along. And I said I don't need to come along. And I said I don't need to come along, I'm British. I don't need to come along... I'm forgetting a lot now.

AG: Tell me if you want to go back.

Tape 1: 49 minutes 41 seconds

LG: OK. And I said... I took them into the living room, showed them my birth certificate, and a letter, which I had received from the Swiss Consul in Amsterdam, who I'd asked a long time before that for new passports. They never sent them. So I got permission to leave Rotterdam for several hours, and I went to Amsterdam and I was in front of the Secretary Miss Jansen from the Swiss Consul in Amsterdam, before you see the Consul you got to present yourself to the Secretary, Miss Jansen and I told her my history, I'm English and that and that, and so and so. And she said 'You can take your star off, you're English'. I said well, I'm with my friends, I keep it on. Maybe somebody might say 'Oh you're not wearing a star and you're a Jew, and someone, a wrong one, might hear that and they get hold of me and say on purpose 'you're not wearing a star'. So I got to be careful, my wife and child. So anyway, no passport. So he said you show your documents, my birth certificate and that letter, and when I saw Miss Jansen she said I show you into the Consulate. So I went and saw Mr Prodelier, the Consul himself, I can still see him, a well-set man, and I said I'm Leon Greenman, and I sent you forms, filled in and photographs, for new passports, for my wife, my child and myself. And he had a pile like that of forms on his desk, he looked at them, and I said 'Look, that's mine, they're still here, and my wife and children were concerned too, and it's about eight days ago I sent them to you.' And he gave me a look, and he closed the lot like this and said

'go home, you'll be alright'. But they never sent me the passports. That's the Swiss. And way back the British Consul wasn't fair with me. When I noticed the war was coming on, my child was born and I had him registered at the British consulate in Rotterdam as a British subject. And while I was there, I had asked the Consul 'What's the rumours of war?' He said 'We don't know'. And I said -'How are we gonna get back to England in case of a war? On the quick. He said 'Well sign the register and we'll take you back when the staff of the Consulate leaves for England'. And I signed. And when the day arrived, they never came and got us. They left us behind. And that's the British Consul. Now the Swiss Consul let us... didn't do nothing for us. So that was that. And way before that, the Chief Inspector, Mr Roos, from Rotterdam Police. I was called, one evening, we were having dinner, and there was a ring at the door, the door opened, I think my wife opened the door, there was a man in front, he came up and said I'm from the police, Haagse Veer Rotterdam, the main police station, I, you're still here, we want you to come to the office tomorrow morning. So I went the following morning, half past nine, and I was let in the room, and the Chief Inspector, Mr Roos, 'r', double 'o', 's', I sat opposite him and he talked to me. 'What did he talk about, what I was doing?' or something like that, and he said 'What was your father doing during the war?' All of the sudden. I said during the war I was a child, I don't know about the war. My father was in the intelligence service in the First War. But I didn't know much about it, I was only a youngster. And then he said: 'You Jews turn around and turn a questions into something we don't want'. And when I heard 'you Jews' I thought to myself oh ya he's with the Nazis and not with me. And then he said 'Are you British or Dutch? You have a Dutch grandfather'. I said I'm British. I said -'you look in your register, we had British Passports, when we came after our marriage in 1935, into Holland'. 'Yes', he said, 'I know you're British, but I'm not going up the wall for you, I'm stamping you as Dutch Jews.' That's what happened. After the war I went to Roos and told him what he did. And he made excuses. It's a terrible story.

AG: I think the tape is coming to an end, so we'll have a break now.

TAPE 2

AG: Leon Greenman, tape two. You were just telling me about the evening when the Dutch Police came to collect you. Could you go on and tell me about that.

LG: Well, it was the eighth of October 1942, I can remember looking at the clock, I can only tell you what I still remember, I can't forget. A ring at the door, looking at the clock twenty past ten. We were asleep we woke up, after eight you were not allowed out, now who can that be? So I jumped out of bed, I pulled the rope, we lived on the first floor of that house, and the street door opened and I remember the torch lights shining in my eyes, because there was a blackout on, and there was blue light in my eyes, and I heard a man's voice shout out 'Greenman!' and I said 'yes'. And up stormed two policemen in leather jackets and wellingtons. And they said 'get dressed and come along'. And we went into the sitting room, I showed them my birth certificate and the letter from the Swiss Consul, I had asked the Swiss Consul for passports and they never came. Mr Prodelier didn't do his job right. While I was arguing with one policeman the other policeman went into my

room, there were books put away, I remember I had a rare watercolour of old Rotterdam on the wall, he took that down and I said 'Please leave those things be, they're my goods, buying and selling'. -'Oh you will get these when you come back.' I never got those things back, and I don't know the policeman who did it. Probably not alive anymore. But it proved you could do a bit of 'saving' in the homes of the Jews and it happened in mine. Anyway, Grandmother came out of her room. Grandmother's name was Rosa Fransman, and I can still see her in her morning coat trying to button up, and she said 'What's all the noise about'? And she started to cry, and my wife started to cry, the baby was certainly crying, and I gave up, and I didn't argue anymore, and we got dressed. Much earlier than this, probably a month or two months before that, Jews received letters from the Nazis and in that letters it stood what you were allowed to take along to the camps. We were allowed to take a blanket and some medicines. Very clever thinking of the Nazis. So we had a blanket for each, and we had a pillow case, with some Norit tablets these black tablets in case your stomach upsets, some plasters, some pills and stomach tablets, that's all what we had. So we were dressed and got walked down the stairs. The street door opened and in front of our home stood a coach. And in the coach were already some Jewish people, also a young Nazi, seventeen, sixteen, seventeen years of age. Tall, swastika band around his arm, and when we got on he demanded 'Sit and be quiet'. And we sat there...

Tape 2: 4 minutes 23 seconds

AG: Was he Dutch or German?

LG: German. A German Nazi. A young one, six foot tall, bullying, you know. So that coach went through the turning, stopped overall in the streets, on the boulevards, wherever it stopped it took Jews out of their homes, until the coach was plenty full with Jewish... and then it went through Rotterdam, crossed the river Maas, across the river bridges, the Maas, and on the other side of the river we were told to get out of the coach, the coach had stopped which is now known as Loods Vierentwintig, still just plain, and a lot of huts stood there which used to do trading with America, now we had to get into Loods Vierentwintig, Hut 24. And I remember when I got in there, I saw faces of members of the family, friends whom I knew, kids running after one another playing about, all the sad faces, and also four or five SS soldiers. So I went up to one with my Birth Certificate and this letter from the Swiss Consul, I wanted to prove that we were British, I wanted to get back home, he waved me away he wasn't talking to me: '-Show your documents when you get to Westerbork'. Westerbork is a camp, a Nazi camp in the North of Holland. That camp was erected for German Jews in the thirties, Jews escaping from Germany. Built for one thousand Jews. And two days later we were put in a train of direction Westerbork. It stopped at Hooghalen, we had to get out of the train, there were no rails from Hooghalen to Westerbork camp. Later on, and I was there while they were building it, rails were laid on from Westerbork right up to Hooghalen. So later on people outside could not see the trains, they went right into the camp.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 54 seconds

There was no-one there when we arrived, but when I was there I saw the man and the

youngsters helping laying the rails. I was looking at it. I can still look at it. Placing the woods and all that, yes. So we arrived in Westerbork. We had to get into a barrack. There were typewriters, a man by the typewriters. We had to be registered. '-Name?' -'Leon Greenman'. -'Religion?' -'Jew'. 'Jew. -Nationality?' -'British'. -'You're British?' -'Yes'. '-OK'. Now the Chief Administrator in Westerbork was a German Jew. Kurt Schlesinger.

AG: A Jew?

LG: (Nods) Who had escaped out of Germany.

AG: Sorry, a Jew? A German Jew?

LG: Yes.

AG: A Jew was in charge of the...

LG: Yes.

AG: How can that be?

LG: Well, read my book. And I'm telling you now. Well he came out of Germany in the thirties, with so many Germans, as a Jew escaping from Germany, went into Westerbork, became very friendly with Koenrad Gemmeke, the SS Commander in Westerbork, the man who got ten years in prison for what he had done in Westerbork, and he was made Chief Administrator. Six foot tall, bald-headed, moustache, Hitler moustache. And in Westerbork a few times I approached him and told him 'We're British, get us out of here, put us in the hands of the Red Cross'. He never did. There was one incident even, which I want to mention. So I was a few months already in Westerbork, we could have done with more food, the rations were smaller, built for a thousand people, if there were 1400 or 1500 people, rations were small. Black market bread cost a lot of money in Westerbork camp, people with a lot of money, hidden money, probably they bought it. We didn't have a lot of money. Anyhow. Yes. The first day in Westerbork you marched out with some men and a truck filled with bricks. Back to Hooghalen. Alright, so I was with some men, three or four men. And we arrived at Hooghalen, unloading the bricks, never used a brick before, anyhow while I was on the ring, I said 'What are they building with these?' -'They're building an SS barrack.' I said '-Oh, SS? That's German. I don't want to work for the Germans'. So when I got back I said 'Well look, that evening I said to the barrack of labour, and I said 'I'm English, and I don't wish to work for the Germans'. '- And where I was today I had to work for the Germans, I'm not doing it'. -'Ah but you got to work.'

Tape 2:10 minutes 30 seconds

Now I wasn't an electrician, I wasn't a carpenter, I was of no use. So they gave me a job 'Essenholer' it means getting up at five, or present yourself at five or quarter past five at the kitchen, collecting the milk for the babies, on a trolley and you hand out the milk to

the babies in the camp. Oh, that's alright, because I was working for my own people. OK. That went on alright and then I had one morning a mate of mine, in Westerbork, he said – 'Leon, he said, they picked up two hundred men in Rotterdam from the streets last night'. – 'Oh yes?' And I thought of my father. And they're in barrack 51, I think it was 51, the prison barrack, so I got out of my bunk early in the morning and I went to the prison barrack, I couldn't get in, the doors were locked, nobody there. So I climbed up at the side of the barrack, opened the window and shouted my father's name: 'Barnard Greenman!' Barney! And there was a lot of men there, smoke, smoking, and yes, after a few times, my father appeared. I said 'Don't leave the barrack, stay there tomorrow morning, I'll come and see you in the morning and we'll talk. And while I was talking, all of a sudden, I was pulled on my leg.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 15 seconds

And somebody, some voice I heard: 'Wer ist das?' Who's this?, and the man who pulled my legs said 'This is the Englishman'. And the voice of Kurt Schlesinger said: "Komm nach unten oder ich schicke dich nach Auschwitz!!" Come down or I send you to Auschwitz. That was Schlesinger. Caught me, standing there, that wasn't allowed. And I shouted down to my father: "I'll see you in the morning!" And I jumped down, which I can't do now no more, and I stood in front of Schlesinger, and I said 'Mr Schlesinger, you can't send us to Auschwitz, because I'm British.' Any moment it can be proved. He walked away. Some weeks after that, maybe three or four weeks, we were called up.

Tape 2: 13 minutes 13 seconds

AG: Were you living with your family in Westerbork?

LG: No. The women, my wife and child were sleeping in barracks, the women slept in different barracks. And the men could see their wives after ten o'clock in the morning and say goodnight at eight, half past eight, go back to their own barracks, in Westerbork. That was life in Westerbork.

AG: And were there people being transported in Westerbork?

LG: Every Tuesday morning, it's like this. Every Monday morning going into Tuesday morning, two o'clock, half past two, everybody is in the bunks, asleep, but there's in every barrack the lights go up and there's a table, and on every table there is a man with a paper in his hands, and calls out the names printed on the paper of people who've got to be deported.

AG: Did people know what that meant?

LG: Yes, because I've seen it many times during my four months there.

AG: Yes, but did you know where they were being deported to?

LG: To Auschwitz, for work.

AG: To work, but did you know they were going to be killed.

LG: No, if I would have known none of us would have gone, we would have made a war, we would have killed ourselves, we would have fought, we would have waited until we were shot there, no, none of that, a lot of people think so, but it wasn't a holiday time. The time was rotten and bad around it. No. Anyhow. I'm asleep in bed, or half asleep, laying, and I saw it several times, and then the man reads out the names, and then all of a sudden I hear 'Leon Greenman, get dressed. Tomorrow morning deportation. Esther Greenman Van Dam, -my wife- get dressed, tomorrow morning deportation. Barney Greenman, get dressed tomorrow morning deportation'. My kid. What could I do? There was no one there to help, so we got dressed, I got dressed. The same thing happened in the barrack of my wife, where my wife was sleeping, she got dressed, and the next morning we joined at the side of the English barrack, in that barrack the American Jews living in Holland and the English Jews living in Amsterdam and Holland had to live in that barrack. 'De Engelse baraak', 'The English Barrack'. Hardly nobody knows about this, I don't know.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 41 seconds

AG: Just to ask you about that. The English and American Jews living in these separate barracks, were they deported? Or what happened to them?

LG: Gone. All gone. Deported.

AG: Including English and American Jews?

LG: Yes. If you didn't have a valid passport...

AG: Ah, yes, I see. But if they had... So these were also people that didn't have passports.

LG: That's right. They were living for years in Amsterdam, and they were old, they didn't know, they had an easy life in Holland, and the idea was then 'Nothing could happen to us' so they didn't see to passports and they just kept on life. So none of them had documents to prove... Maybe some of them had but I don't know about that.

AG: Sorry, go on.

LG: I don't know about that.

AG: You were waiting with your family outside the English barracks.

LG: I remember standing in a queue, next to my wife with the baby in her arms, in a long queue, moving up foot by foot towards the gates. Behind the gates the waiting train to carry you further. And so I look up and see Schlesinger talking to Gemmeke, the SS

Commander. And I said to my wife, there's Schlesinger, we walk up to Schlesinger and we try to stop next to him, and as we stop you tell him we're British, we need not go, we're expecting, we're still expecting documents to show that we're English. We need not go. And the queue moved up and we came to Schlesinger, and my wife said that to him, he gave us less than few seconds look, and he turned to Gemmeke and said: 'Das ist abgewesen im Haag und die müssen weg!' That's refused in The Hague and they got to go.

Tape 2: 17 minutes 42 seconds

In The Hague there were the headquarters of the SS. Through the gates we went, into the train, and the train usually left at twenty to eleven, quarter to eleven. And half an hour later, about half an hour later, we were on German soil. That's how it happened. On the way to Auschwitz, to work. So we sat on the train, opposite each other, we couldn't see where we were going.

AG: How many people were on the train?

LG: This was a group of seven hundred people. About a group of seven hundred people. I can still see women and men, old ones with sticks, I can see young mothers, pregnant mothers, I can see mothers with babies on their chest, and a lot of youngsters. Say a group of seven hundred. We couldn't see where we're going. The windows were covered up. No food, no drink, it took thirty six hours before we arrived somewhere which they told us was Auschwitz.

AG: How on earth, how did they manage, women and children?

LG: We couldn't. We had to manage! Look, we were already a few years under Nazi rule. And that was a very frightened life. You dared not talk, you didn't trust anybody, you didn't trust your best friends, in case somebody gave the wrong word out. We were surrounded by spies, we were surrounded by non-Jews who could give you away for money! An outsider can't understand that. You can't understand that, nobody will, because it's a thing that's gone, but it did happen that way. We were frightened. A very frightened life. You wanted to live, but the life what you had was very little, and the least thing was wrong you were beaten up or something like that. Later on in the camps. In Westerbork I didn't see any beating up. Later on I heard that they did. But I didn't see it. I don't like telling lies. One lie and it's no good what I'm telling you. That's my principle. And on the other side, if something I say you don't understand, one that I said, let me please explain, so you will understand.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 19 seconds

So we were frightened. No food, no drink, you sat opposite four people, opposite four people, an old fashioned train. A lot of doors at the side, and what could you do? You sat with your wife. She took the baby into her arms you whispered, you talked a bit, you hoped. You didn't know what's happening. You go to Auschwitz to work. 'What work?' 'Oh we see when we get there'. The war won't last long, what happened in Rotterdam, the bombing, that won't last long. Soon the Americans and the Allies, the French and the

English will come along, and then we'll be home again. Stupid thinking, because we didn't know. What else could you think about, talk about? One thing I remember, I said 'Else, we're going to Poland, Auschwitz is in Poland, it's a cold country', it's January 1934. To me it was 17-18 January 1934 [January '43?], but the book says it was 20 or 21st, a few days make no difference. When we arrived. We sat in the train and I said 'If you want to get married, get married, but be sure that you marry a man who's good for the child. Because I'm going to a cold country, I might be ill and won't get home. But the child? Don't forget the child, the baby'. He was two years ten months old, not quite three years, but a well-to-do strong baby as I remember. He could carry a chair like that into the passage in the home already. Anyhow, she said 'That goes for you as well. If I don't come out'... we didn't know whether we'd come home or not. But this was our talking, 'You can get married, and get a wife who's good for the baby'. So we were level with that. Nothing mattered to us as the child. And the war wouldn't last long. That's what we thought. We were kidding ourselves. Later on I kidded myself for three years.

Tape 2: 22 minutes 38 seconds

OK. The train stopped. It was quite, I remember, we were half asleep half awake, probably hungry, we had no food, the baby in her arms, and then I heard 'RAUS! AUS! ALLES LASSEN! REGE, SCHNELL! SCHNELL!' German men shouting out orders we could understand. 'Get out of the train, on the quick, and leave everything behind. So we got out of the train, then we stood on the platform, we left our blankets in the train, blankets in the train, it's cold. January 43, look it up, very cold. 'Oh, I'll pick them up later on'. There we stood. Shouting around us, pushing, shovelling, bullying. What was wrong? That was new to us. Anyhow. Seven hundred standing there. It wasn't Auschwitz where we were. Birkenau. We'd never heard of Birkenau in Holland. They kept that quiet. Birkenau, the biggest extermination camp there was. So we get out of the train, it's not Auschwitz, it's Birkenau. And there we stand out of the train, and a little way along the rails, through a passage an arch, the entrance of Birkenau. So we walk to Birkenau and we got to stop somewhere there behind, at the back of the Birkenau entrance. We stand there for a moment. An SS officer comes around with a club in his hands, and he separates the women from the men (gesticulates). And the men, the men stop, and the women from the men, (gesture) past the men, where I stood, there goes my wife and the child in her arms, and the other women, stay there on the right. I throw her a kiss (gesture), and there she is. And we wait. There the women, and here the men. A minute probably passed, and I hear one of the women cry out: 'I want to be with my husband!!' And she walks away where she was, and I still can see it on the right, there stood the SS with the club in his hands, and she also was behind him, and he turns around, and brings the club down on the woman's head. Down she goes, crying, and he kicks her in the tummy. The first criminal offence. I never saw this before. This was terrible. But he never let us a lot of time to think about it.

Tape 2: 25 minutes 29 seconds

He comes where he was, comes to the men, the women there, the men there, and he puts the club on our shoulder, on the quick, 'You, you, you, and you', fifty men of the rest, and get to march away. Birkenau, you've never been there have you? I hope you go there.

It's a big place. And we were marched down the road: 'Laufen!' So we walk, and a few minutes later, we got to cross over in that, in that piece of land, a large piece of land. We couldn't 'Stop'. And we stop, and I look to my right, and I look around, and on my right I can see movement. There's a truck coming along. And the truck stops in front of us. And it's loaded, as I look at your faces. Heads of children and women, all close together, plenty of them, and there stood my wife with the baby in her arms, standing. No room for sitting. All standing, on top of one another. I call out her name: 'Else!'. She couldn't have recognised me, or didn't hear it. The truck after a few, a minute, it went. And I never saw them again. I had to find out how or what. Later on I found out reading the books. And this is what happened if you want to hear it. The truck goes away, the people in there, the women, the children, are promised a shower. And they go away, the truck moves and they stop in front of the bath house. They leave the train, the truck, they're told into, get into the bathhouse, undress, hang up your clothes, neat and tidy, all somebody clever thinking, tie your shoes together if you've got shoe laces, you'll find them all back after your shower. And you do that. Then you're ready to go into the shower room. The doors are locked, and you're waiting for the water to come down from the ceiling. But no water comes down. But the fittings are there. Never mind the fittings. They're fake. No water. On the other side, outside the barrack, usually a soldier, as the book says, not my book, other books says, a locket is opened by a soldier, sometimes wearing a mask, and he throws down Zyklon B gas. It's a tin of little balls like peas. And they fall among the waiting people and they create a gas. People smell it and they breathe it and they start coughing. Because the bathroom is really a gas chamber. You know about that...

AG: Yes.

Tape 2: 29 minutes 5 seconds

LG: So it took three to fifty minutes and the people were dead, and the people were taken out, somebody had to take the people out, the bodies out of the gas chamber, somebody had to clean the gas chamber. Long hair of the women were cut, and saved, and sent to Germany, the German industry, they made use of the long hair, making lining, for suits, was one of them; gold teeth were extracted melted and sent to Germany, to Hitler. And then the bodies had to be taken out of course, and cremated. Burnt. A different thing with my wife and child, and those people between January and half March, the people that were killed in Birkenau in those days in the gas, the ovens in Birkenau weren't ready yet for the burning, but the bodies had to be burnt, because next day bodies arrive, people arrive. So they were put on top of one another, some woods, and probably petrol, and set alight. And the bodies burnt, the ashes had to be crumpled up, and dug deep into the ground. And that's how my wife and child ended up. And those thousands of people during those periods. Holland was one hundred and four, one hundred and six thousand Jews, Dutch Jews, who didn't come back. But at the time I didn't know all this. I thought that that doesn't happen to my wife and child. Gassing, gassing I picked up from whispers. It took months to accept that they're gassing people. How? When I work with thirty, forty men, unloading trainloads of cement and coal and rails and bricks and stones, unload the trains and bring them and put them down. And one of the men says 'I can't lift that bail today, my knees, my legs are ..., will you do it?' I said 'OK', so you help him

out. And that happens a few times, until the Kapo, the Kapo is a professional criminal, a rapist, a murderer, a swindler, taken out of the prisons and out of camps by the Nazis to govern us. The Kapos were given a barrack and told this is your barrack. Every Kapo got a barrack, a small barrack. 'There's a thousand men in there, and they're bad men, that's why we got them here'. They're here to work and die. And you can do to them whatever you like, we shan't interfere.' The Kapos made our life every minute difficult. We were afraid of those men. If they gave you a beating, you felt it. Anyhow. So that's where those people ended. But I didn't know about that, I didn't want to believe it. But then that man who I helped now and then with the cement sacks, I used to say 'Where is so and so?' -'Gassed'. -'What do you mean gassed?'-' Gassed, finished with. Too weak to work'. -'Ah, when you're too weak to work, the gas chamber.' Then I start believing it. But that didn't happen to my wife and child. I didn't want to believe it. It kept me alive. Somewhere my wife and child, was working, I'll see her in the end, and we can talk to one another. There were only two occasions that I gave up this life... when I wanted to give up this life. I didn't want to believe that my wife and kid were gone. I kept on living, and that, I was kidding myself, fooling myself, I didn't want to believe the in and outs. I had fleas, I had lice, I had scurf, I was very hungry, I fought the hunger by shaving the beards of the prisoners, they had to be shaved every Saturday. So that's what the Nazis said, when they march out to work on Monday, with a clean face. And who had to do the shaving, not the village barber, we, amongst the prisoners. Amongst the prison were ex-barbers like myself. And you shaved all day long, one was lathering, one or two others was shaving, and you got the shaver from the chief barber Kapo in the barrack, we had to hand that back, there's another story in that. Anyhow. And for that you received payment. Not money. I never saw money in the camps. You got half a litre, if there was any left, half a litre soup on a Sunday. And if there wasn't any, you didn't get any, dare not to talk about it. If they want they'll beat you up to ask you what you're thinking, what did you say. You just took everything that came your way. Your former life did no more exist. You had a different life now. A terrible life.

Tape 2: 34 minutes 57 seconds

AG: What happened to you? You told me about what happened up until you were separated from your wife and child and entering, could you say what then happened and how you were introduced into the camp?

LG: Well, after my wife went away in that truck, I never saw her again. What happened to me? The men, fifty men were marching, and we had to stop in front of a barrack, and I heard a man's voice shout out 'Wie viel?' And I heard a man with us shout out: 'Fünfzig!' And the German said 'I've asked for three hundred and fifty. Alright, we'll take another two hundred from the next lot that will come in'. The next day or whatever it is. And I thought oh they're counting us... We were driven into the barrack, and I still can see it, two men, in civilian clothes, but Nazis. And they said 'Empty your pockets. Jewellery, money, tobacco, watches, rings, hand over!' But we had nothing. We had given it already in Westerbork. But I had my birth certificate in my pocket, and I took it out, and the letter, from the Swiss Consul, I thought I'll show him here, then they'll know I'm English. I says, in my way: 'Ich bin Engländer'. But they were Polish, they didn't

understand English or German I don't think. And they dragged them out of my hands, and wanted to slap my face. So I duck, and my eyes meet hundreds of photographs on the floor, and letters and envelopes, left there by people probably days before we had arrived. The photographs, the letters were there. But where were the people? I never saw the people. Well that went on. Fifty men we were chased out of the barrack, into another barrack: 'Undress. All your clothes off'. I had my best clothes on. I had a pullover with a bit of black in it, that my wife had made, knitted for me, I had a thick winter coat, and shoes, all dressed for cold in Poland. Alright. Leave it on the floor. Along comes a prisoner in white-blue striped uniform, with a clipper in his hands, and he clips off all the hair, hair from underneath your arms, hair between your legs, all your hair. And you let it be done. Unless you get clubbed about. It's so new. You're nothing, you're nothing. You let it done. And you look at one another. You've just come from home, you're tall, you're small, you look alright, you're fat, you're skinny, you're what. Then we were chased out into another barrack and that was the bathroom. And you get a shower, a two minute shower. No soap, no towels, nothing like that. So you get a shower, and you lay down on a wooden floor to dry.

Tape 2: 38 minutes 43 seconds

Anyway while we finished with the shower we're standing there, talking, thinking, what happened to our wives and children, and in comes a man wearing a beret, and a band around his arm. He's a Kapo. And one of the men says 'Where are our children, our wives and children now?' He gives us a look, brings his arm up, and walks away. And we say to one another the man can't speak, he can't understand what we're saying. He comes back, this man, and one of us asks him again: 'Where are our wives and children?' And up goes that arm, (gesture) with the finger. And we still can't understand it. And he walks away. But it meant 'door de pijp'. 'Pijp' is Dutch, 'chimney', through the chimney, up to heaven. But it was new to us, we didn't understand it, until somebody later on explained it. I didn't want to believe it. I always kept hoping alright, it will end, it will end some way, you'll be free again. But it never came. Work was very hard, under the trains, cement, sand, coal, brick, stones. Digging the ground, laying cables, electricity cables, phone cables, enlarging the camp. Real hard work. Several things happened during that work. Something about being hungry: you try all ways to get that hungry feeling away. One of the things was that little extra soup once a week, for shaving the people. I used to go into the other barracks and ask the Kapo 'Can I sing a few songs?' Knowing that perhaps he would give me some soup. And then I used to sing three or four songs, as best as I could and then he gave me a half a litre soup and I went out and I drank that. Of course camp soup is very watery, it's made out of water and cabbage leaves, no fat, no meat, no pork, nothing. You weren't there to get strong, you went there to work and die. It was made like that. Anyhow, that little made me keep alive. Now in Auschwitz itself you don't work, you sleep, you are there, you're living there, you march out to work and you march back again. You walk out to your work. All the people I've met "What work did you used to do in Auschwitz?" No, you only stay in Auschwitz. Your work is outside, miles away, ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour, and you march back again when your work is done. With a guard, an SS guard and all that, and a Kapo. That was life there.

What else did you want to know from that?

Tape 2: 42 minutes 30 seconds

Oh yes, I told you various things the matter with me, the winters were terrible, you weren't dressed for it, you had a jacket and trousers, if you were lucky you had in the beginning the trousers and jacket belonged to a man bigger than myself, and he was dead, murdered, and the clothes were chucked to you, to dress, and later on you got your white and blue striped camp uniform. And... where was I now?

AG: Perhaps you could tell me the sort of weekly routine, if you can call it that, how it operated with working...

LG: Oh yes, well you marched out to work then, all according to what had to be done, you had a Kapo with you, you had an SS soldier, who was responsible for you, in case you run away, then you would be shot, and you marched back again and you had to be accounted for, and so on. And the day passed like that and every day was the same thing. And you were lucky if you weren't beaten up, and the biggest enemy was hunger, hunger, but you could do nothing about it. Near where, near Auschwitz where I worked, on the grounds, not far from where I was working, there were British prisoners of war. Their camp was about three kilometres from us, and whenever I saw them, and nobody was there to see it, no SS, no soldier, no Kapo, I used to make my way to them, if possible. And I would stand next to them and say 'I'm English, I'm from London, you hear me?' Have you got some cigarettes? Of course three cigarettes I could swap with the boys in my barracks who were cleaning out the soup containers, and then sometimes I would take one, two or three cigarettes. Or they left me a piece of bread, or whatever it was. That was the British Prisoners of War. It happened once when I was caught I had spoken too long with the Englishman and I didn't notice who was coming up behind me, and it was an SS in civilian clothes. A big fellow. And he said 'What are you doing speaking to prisoners of war?! Where's your work?' And he marched me back to my Kapo and he said: 'I found your man speaking to British prisoners of war. Do you know what that means?! Are you going to see to it now, or shall I see to it tonight?' And my Kapo said 'I'll see to it now sir, I'll see to it', and this Kapo started beating me up left and right, and I fell down, and I got up, and he beat me again, and I fell down again. And the other man stood looking and then he walked away, the Kapo walked away, the SS... And my Kapo said 'Sorry Leon, but I had to do that,... he was watching me so I had to do it, and if I hadn't done it he would have done it in the evening, and then you wouldn't be talking to me anymore. Of course in the evening you were beaten up in such a way that you had to be carried away to the gas chamber and you wouldn't be alive anymore. And of course that was very bad talking to a prisoner of war, or catching a man not working. The SS did that. So I was lucky in that way. And my Kapo said -where are the cigarettes? And I said I had no time, so they had no cigarettes for me. Alright. But what a fool to be caught. And then I had to be more careful. Some of the prisoners of war when I next saw them said '-You're marching out with us tonight. We'll give you an English uniform. I said no, look at my face, look at my hair, I've got no hair. Look what I... I'm nobody really, and as soon as they see me marching out with you... that's the British wanted to get me out that way, but I didn't do that, I didn't want to. Well, that winter I became very ill, I

had pneumonia, and I was laying in hospital. But there are no hospitals in camps, they are barracks, you sleep under a blanket on a broken mattress. And if your body doesn't heal quick enough you're no use to them. So you go to the gas chamber. So I had pneumonia, and I was, I remember, very thirsty, and the doctor refused me water, he said 'In the condition you are it's bad for you. And the doctor went, and in the barrack was walking one of the prisoners, I called him over, I said: 'Get me a cup of water, I'll give you my bread, which you never, never do in a camp. That piece of bread is all what you get. So I gave him my chunk of bread because I didn't eat no more, water, I drank the water. And I had a dream and in my dream I was looking all over for my wife and child. A lot of people, but nobody knew about them, nobody said to me and then I thought 'They're gone'. 'They're gone'. They're not alive anymore, I'm giving up. And I woke up, out of my dream, and the man next to me said... no, I said to the man next to me 'When the food comes you can have my food, I don't want to eat anymore'. And he said 'Hast du kein' Hunger?' Aren't you hungry? I said '-Ich ess' nicht mehr.' I don't eat anymore. I don't want to go on. In broken German. So he said in German later on: 'Tell me, what's happened?' I told him my dream, and how my wife and son had gone, I don't want to go on. I'll join them. So he said: 'Suppose your wife and child does survive and you're not here. That's not fair'. So I thought I'll try a little longer, and I started eating again. That was the first time I gave up, really. The second time I was fit again and I worked, and Hitler gave the order all the camps had to be evacuated. No one is allowed to stay behind. 'The Russians are nearing Auschwitz and no one can stay there to give evidence'.

Tape 2: 50 minutes 15 seconds

So everything is got to march out. I was then in Monewitz. Birkenau, Auschwitz, now Monewitz.

AG: Can you tell us a little bit about what Monewitz was?

LG: No. The same as Auschwitz.

AG: Yes, as Auschwitz, could you explain I mean just for the tape it was a section of the camp?

LG: Yes, a section of the camp, it was a big camp about three or more kilometres higher up the road. And I was one of ten thousand prisoners, so it must have been a big camp. It's no more now, they demolished everything. I was there last year in May. I'm going again next month. So I marched back to Auschwitz from Monewitz, I was one of the ten thousand. And we arrived at Monewitz and I saw so many men, thousands of them, going all different ways, and that's where I joined a column of thousands of men, the Death March.

AG: Do you remember when this was, when was the date?

LG: Yes, January 1945. When Germany was losing the war you know, the Russian army was moving in, and all everything had to be emptied, no evidence, they still had no time to wipe out everything, but they still did wipe out a lot. The Russians, according to the

books, the Russians found four thousand sick men still in Auschwitz. Those had to be killed off, but because the Russians were coming they didn't kill them. Not to say how many live yet. Anyhow I joined the Death March, and that meant five, five, five, (gesturing) columns of five men. Your arms under one another, you had a blanket with you, one hand had my blanket like that, and the other hand was tied, and that hand into one another, and that hand, so I was in the middle of two men on each side, and we marched, as best we could walk, and if you stopped, everything behind you stopped. And that was not allowed. The Nazis were running away from the Russians. If you stopped, everything was stopping, and that was not allowed, you were shot, finished. If you fell down because you couldn't walk anymore and they thought probably you're only making out as if you couldn't walk anymore, you were shot. And if you tried to run away, as I'm still seeing it, beautiful snow ground, January 1945, cold and snowing, you run away, the SS took the gun on his shoulder, easy, and the man didn't get home. Well, whenever I fell down to the ground, because I was finishing, I only had this (points to his forehead) and my legs, my feet, I had holes in my knees, my feet didn't bend anymore, I felt finished.

Tape 2: 53 minutes 52 seconds

Everytime I when I fell down, this man next to me, his accent, I thought he was a Frenchman, and he dragged me up: 'Come on Leon! We're nearly there! Hey Englishman, wake up! we're nearly there! Keep on! Come on!' And that's how he saved my life. We got to Gleiwitz. Gleiwitz is no more they took everything away in Gleiwitz, since May last year, or this year, last year. No, this year I was there. Now I got to Gleiwitz, we all went out, you know, now follows a five day journey to end up in Buchenwald, Germany. Gleiwitz is still in Poland. Five days in open trucks. Too many men in trucks. Every morning three four five or six men were taken out dead. And we were told by the SS 'Carry!'. We were carrying one man on our shoulders, each arm a man, and each leg a man, and you carried him like that, to the last. 'Don't throw them down! You put them down neatly on top of one another so there's room for the next lot that come in. And that's how I carried them. Until I thought this is bloody murder, this is terrible. And on the other side of the train, the waiting train, I found back the wagon where I was sitting in, I dropped in because I was afraid the SS guard would see me but he was on the other side. And I got in. And I told the mates 'What I've seen now is terrible'. But nobody took any notice, we were half dead. There was nothing anymore. And that journey continued until we got to Buchenwald.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 57 seconds

And I got, I was last year in Buchenwald to make this film of mine, my life, and I got, I arrived in Buchenwald and I went into the archives and I said to the lady there, is there any news here, because I used to live in this camp Buchenwald for four months, my Buchenwald number is one hundred and twenty thousand nine hundred and thirty one, and she looked at me, and she went away from me and she came back with a paper, and she said is this your number? And it said on the paper 1945, January 45, three thousand eight hundred men left Auschwitz for Buchenwald, arriving in Buchenwald totally unfit for work. And that was right. We went into a bunk, a bed, and we laid there, including myself, our bodies didn't do it no more. Only my mind was there, thinking what are they going to do. I didn't care anymore. We couldn't. This happened but before we went into

our beds, we were coming up from outside, now I'm still outside the barrack. Thousands of men want to get out of the cold into the barracks. The barrack doors open and a prisoner in a green coat, a camp police with a club in his hand, started hitting us. And we all draw back and we started to fall, and they're walking on us I'm shouting out, and they lift me up, everybody is away, is opening, so I walk to the barrack, the barrack door opens and I'm left in, totally dirty. And I was told: 'undress', and off comes the uniform, it was totally dirty, from the march and all that, the death march, and I'm ...

Tape 2: 58 minutes 27 seconds

AG: Leon, I'm afraid the tape is coming to an end, so we're going to have to stop for a moment.

LG: For a moment, yes, alright.

TAPE 3

AG: Leon Greenman, tape 3. You were just telling me what happened when you came to Buchenwald, beaten up, then left alone in a barrack, told to undress.

LG: I wasn't beaten up in Buchenwald.

AG: Well, people trampling all over you.

LG: The five day... open trucks, carrying the dead men, to the last... and then it entered the Buchenwald camp. We all had to get out. I remember I was let in into a barrack, and when I came into the barrack I was told to undress because I was all dirty, and what I saw was a few dozen men, skin and bones, crawling on the floor towards a leaking water tap in the corner, trying to get themselves themselves up, letting the water go in their mouths, let go, and then they fell on the floor and they were picked up and taken to another corner. I remember all that. And I remember there was a Dutchman, who was a hairdresser, he was cutting the hair from a prisoner, and I said to him in broken German first and then when I heard his talk I continued in Dutch, and I said: 'Are they gassing us here?' And he said: 'No, he says, if they...' - 'What am I... why are they telling me to... clean up the prisoners then? If they were doing that then we're going to get gassed.' But there was no gas chambers in Buchenwald. ? You were hung or shot. So there was no gas chambers there. Now there's three thousand eight hundred people, if that would have happened in Auschwitz, in Birkenau, Auschwitz Birkenau was only three quarters of an hour from one another, we would have been gassed. In an hours time we would have... but they couldn't do that in Buchenwald, and they couldn't kill us all, because where they're gonna put thousands of bodies when the Americans walk in? So we remained alive as best as we could. And those that didn't stay alive, they died, but I somehow am here. But it all happened so help me God. It's a terrible thing and it mustn't happen again, but that happened to me.

AG: Can you describe to me conditions in Buchenwald while you were there?

Tape 3: 3 minutes 14 seconds

LG: Yes, well we laid in bed. What I remember I laid in bed. A lot of prisoners were suffering with dysentery, that's diarrhoea. Next to me was Oskar Rothschild, a young German, he came out of Germany into Holland, he told me later on he had a gentleman's clothing in Groningen, in North Holland, but he was very ill, he was skinny, he was half dead you could say. But he could talk yet and he could remember. And the doctor told me 'look after him' and whenever he wanted to go to the lavatory I had to help him to the lavatory, and so on and so on, I looked after him, and there were other people as well I tried to look after. I could come out of bed. Yet I couldn't work no more, but to talk now and then with them, or help them to eat, or what it was. Somewhere here in this museum in their back room is a letter which Oscar Rothschild gave me, a piece of paper written in Dutch, with pencil, when you get to Holland, come and see me. Because he believed, and he lived for it, 'I want to get back to Holland, to Groningen, I want to continue there. Come and see me', and 'Thank you for looking after me'. Today it's not on show, I don't know why they didn't put it in the show, maybe it's not interesting for them, but it should be in their archives. So also there's a window there from the house where I was born, with bricks in there I took out of the house where I was born, the number there, number three door, I took out. The letterbox, I took out when they were demolishing this house, I asked the demolisher, 'Can I take some things because I was born here'. I took them here, to this museum, years ago.

AG: Could you tell me what happened to Oskar Rothschild?

Tape 3: 5 minutes 37 seconds

LG: Yes. There comes a day in Buchenwald, right, mostly laying in bed, non-Jews received little parcels. And I remember a Frenchman; I don't know if he was a Jew or not, I don't know, because there were Jews and non-Jewish prisoners in the camps, it wasn't only Jews... the most were Jews, yes. And Oskar said to me, 'take my piece of bread, to the Frenchman over there, I can see he's got gingercake, give it to him, and get, I want a piece of his ginger cake. I said '-Man if you eat that you'll get more dysentery!' He said: 'Take my bread and get the piece of ginger cake!' And I thought to myself 'Well, I can't misuse this man, Oskar is very sick, let's do it. So I got out of my bunk and with that piece of bread, and I said 'Can you change that piece with the prisoner there?' And I got it, and I gave it to him, and he enjoyed it. Well that went on and on and on, until the Americans came, and I came out of my bunk, and I didn't go out of the camp until the next few days, I remember in Buchenwald one day the Americans came in, there's a dozen of them behind one another, I can still see the tall American soldier and the Kapo of the ward said: -'Du sprichst Englisch, du sprich mit die Leute'[His German]. You speak English; you speak to the Americans, because he was afraid that he didn't. So when they came in, I introduced myself, 'I'm Leon Greenman, and I speak your language, and I'm glad to see you, and what can I do for you?' And one of them said... Now in the barracks, it smelled of death, it smelled camp smell, we didn't notice it, we were living in it, but those soldiers just coming in, they smelled it. And I can still see the

tall fellow taking a handkerchief out of his pocket and saying 'I've seen it, we've seen it!'. And I said 'you've seen nothing! Don't go, please stay!'. Now the Americans were there my talk becomes a bit forceful. So I took them to every bed, I lifted up every blanket and I said look, skin and bones, the man is alive, but look at the skin and bones. And every bed, I said, show them what they've done to us. Of course I was now under protection so I talked, I didn't care no more. My urge was to tell, to show, and they did. And then I came out of my bed, I walked outside to a Jeep, an American Jeep, not far from my barrack, and I shook hands with the soldier, a young man, and he said... I talked to him in English of course, that was alright, he understood, and he was surprised to see me, a prisoner, an Englishman. And he said 'you want a biscuit?' And I said 'Yes please', so we went to his booth, he opened his box, and I don't know where all the hands came from. They all grabbed the biscuits, and there was none left for Leon. And I remember that. Anyhow I didn't mind. Later on I wandered about out of my barrack, I still slept in my barrack, I wandered around, they got to know that I was a singer, and one of the Americans said can you make a concert for the soldiers here, that and that evening.

Tape 3: 10 minutes 20 seconds

AG: Before we come on to the Liberation, I wondered if there are other things you wanted to tell me about your experience in the camps. You mentioned earlier that you experienced medical experiments.

LG: Yes, that happened in Auschwitz, in the beginning, in the first six months. Yes. I had holes in my heels, I remember I had a lump coming up in my arm, and I didn't want to be handled by the doctors, I was afraid of the things I'd seen, I'd seen men with open wounds, being operated upon and all that. I was afraid of the doctors. So I rubbed it away, and it came up here, a lump like that, but I had holes in my heels, and I wasn't well, but I could hardly walk. And that morning, I went to the barrack because every other day they looked at your wounds, they bandaged. They didn't have a lot of bandages. They put crepe paper, Christmas paper around a dirty a bloody open wound. How long does crepe paper last? Anyhow, so I'm there and I remember a whole ring of men, all something the matter with, and I was there as well, naked. And you stand there, and there's a man in a white coat, and he's a doctor. I don't know, a doctor. And he looks at our bodies and he comes to me. And he sees my number on my arm. And he writes that number down on a piece of paper and I take no notice, it's happened before. So he goes away, I get my bandage, it's still open, it was open, and I went back to my bunk, and I fall asleep, I was ill. The next morning: 98288, come on, come down! So there were two tiers, one underneath, one in the middle the bed, and a bed on the top, and I always liked to sleep on the top, you got fresh air. I look down, there's a doctor there, so I climb down, he gave me a long coat, and sandals, and I had to follow him to another barrack. That barrack is now called, known as block ten, barrack ten. You can't get in it. I couldn't get in it this May time when I went to Auschwitz. They're hiding a lot of evidence. The Polish government. Anyhow: 'Sit in a chair' and I sit in a chair, and there's another doctor there, so two doctors in white coats, pressing about with instruments, chromium instruments, long ones, short ones, tubes, bottles of water, and I thought this is a hospital, this is a clinic, ya I wasn't wrong this was a clinic.

Tape 3: 14 minutes 8 seconds

So I says to one of the doctors, and that's at the beginning of Auschwitz when life that's coming to you is not experienced yet. So I said 'What am I doing here? What am I here for? And one of the doctors says 'We're going to use a new apparatus, a new way into your bladder. I says I've got nothing wrong with my bladder. But I've got a hole in my arm, have a look. And my heels. And I'm here with my wife. I shouldn't be here, I'm English. So he says alright, alright. So I stopped talking and maybe five or ten minutes go, or longer. I hear one doctor tell the other, 'He's not coming today, you better take him back'. So they took me back. I went into my bunk. The next morning the same thing. 'Come down', I went again and I sat there in a chair. I wasn't there for half a minute, the door opens, and in walks an SS officer. What I then could I remember, a beautiful, probably tailor-made uniform. Beautiful. And decorations. Medals and other things on his chest. And he came in passed by, didn't look at me, went to a window, and then I heard him say 'Anfangen'. Commence. Begin. So the doctor came over to me, tied my arms with leather straps, to a chair, I had to spread my legs, my legs were tied with leather straps to the chair so I couldn't move. Then they got hold of a kind of tube with an instrument on there, and they put it into my penis, and they turned it around and took it out and put it back again and I remember they pumped out of a glass liquid into me, and I let it go, and the doctor said 'Don't let it go, hold it...' So, they pumped it again, and I held it. And they were messing about with my body. So that went on, they took this thing out, messing about and I thought to myself 'Ridiculous what they're doing here, what is it for? I've got nothing the matter here' This went on for five or ten minutes, or maybe longer. They were putting it back and they were talking to one another, whispering to one another, and I heard one doctor say loud enough that the SS could hear it 'Das ist ein Engländer'. 'This is an Englishman'. He hadn't finished the word 'Englishman', the SS comes away from the window, comes to me and says to me in English 'You're British?' And I said 'Yes, Sir I'm from London, born in London and I shouldn't be here with my wife and child, can you get us out?'. -'No, he says, you take your complaint to the political department. I'm here to supervise the medical department', and he walked away. So he wasn't going to get us out. And the doctors continued with me. And then they went so deep I thought to myself 'Aaah I can't walk no more after this', so I shouted out 'You're hurting me now!', and without moving away, he said 'Lass' ihn gehen, er braucht_nicht wieder zu kommen'. (18:09) They came to me, unstrapped me, took me back to my barracks, and for the whole week, when I had to pee, blood came away from my body, and I still don't know what they were after. And I in the books I read that they used to do that to women, inject the women, cut pieces from their vagina, send it up to Germany, to a well-known university, to see what injection had done to the flesh. To the man, the testicles, they were cut, and all that messed about with and I consider myself a bloody good luck... a lucky man, a lucky man. So I was back in my barrack, that went on, that was Auschwitz, this healed up a bit, I hope so it did, I never knew after if I could make a baby or not, I don't know what they did to me. The books say various things they were making. They were using us as mice, as rats, we were nothing to them. And we had to die... just the same, while we were there, make use of them, that's what their method was. I'm very lucky to be healthy; I don't know what happened to the others. I know that in Amsterdam there was a woman who had the same done to her. That's what I wrote in a newspaper. But not everybody wants to talk about it, but can talk about it. But because I

took an oath, I made a promise to God at the very beginning in Birkenau, which I haven't told you yet. In Birkenau, it must have been the second or third day. One of the men was beaten up. He had left the barrack and that wasn't allowed. And the Kapo was raging. And he beat this man up in a terrible way.

Tape 3: 20 minutes 13 seconds

And I never saw so much blood on a man's face and head, and this man was crying out from the pain. And I saw a Kapo take a gun out of its hold and says to us: I can shoot him, but if anybody of you gives that trouble, you get the same trouble. I went to my bunk that night, I was very frightened, we were all very frightened, we never knew what these people could do. So I prayed to God, 'don't let my wife be beaten up, and I mentioned a lot of family members, and I said and don't let me be beaten up because I couldn't stand it, and if you get me out of those camps, or out of this camp or the next camp I didn't know yet, get me out, don't let me die from hunger, don't let me die from beatings, I promise you, that I, if you can get me out and make me fit enough, I will tell the outside world what happened in the camps. I will keep that promise. And I started this in 1946 in March, and I have a letter proving it. And I'm still doing it. But the British National Party doesn't want this, they attacked my house, they want to murder me, I'll show you the papers, they're in there.

Tape 3: 21 minutes 56 seconds

AG: What happened to you... you told me that the Americans came, what happened to you then?

LG: They asked me, they set up a concert for me, I collected a saxophonist, who could play the saxophone, there was no piano. The Nazis had plenty of musical instruments taken away from the people they had killed, musicians were arrested, and everything. So I sang my bit ... and in the evening I went home, I went to my barrack late, with a ration of six or eight tins of army rations for what we had sung. I remember that.

AG: What was the, what was the mood like, what was the situation like when the Americans arrived?

LG: The Americans... I remember I was now walking around in the barracks. The Americans were there, there was no-one to stop me from going into the barracks, and I went into various barracks and I saw the bunks, the things... they were empty, but then I went to a barrack and I saw Americans there, and laying in the bed, and I went there and I listened to what the Americans thought about, and I remember this young American was showing photographs of his family, to the other fellows. And I heard him say 'I don't know what I'm here for.' And I looked at him, and I said to him: 'Soldier, may I tell you that you saved my life'. And I told him who I was, and they were just in time to save our lives, what they did save. If he wouldn't have come, if he had come tomorrow or next week, who knows we wouldn't have been here. Then he understood. And on another occasion I was walking around in one of the barracks and I saw an American, he had a thing in his hands for eating and in there was a steak, a lump of steak, and he was looking

around where to throw it or what, and I says, I said ‘Are you trying to throw this away the way you are looking?’ –Yes, he says, it’s tough as the sole of my shoe’. I said well, sorry, I haven’t had a bit of steak meat here for three years, I’ve been a prisoner.’ He said ‘Do you want it?’ I said ‘Yes please’. And I ate the steak for the first time. And he said ‘Do you want any more?’ I said ‘yes, I’m still hungry’. So he took me along the road to the field kitchen of the Americans, and I had potatoes and some more food to eat. Ya, I remember all that.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 39 seconds

But life was alright until Hitler gave that order, and the Americans were there, so we were free to go. I went to the Americans very soon and I said my name, and my address, and proving that I was British and told them what had happened to me, could they give me a passport, I want to get to Holland to do a bit of fighting, because Holland was still fighting, until the 11th of May I think. And in my mind I want to get my own back. So they said well, come tomorrow, we’ll think about it. So I went back to my camp, to barrack and the next morning I went there and they were all different Americans. The Americans were rushing after the escaping SS and that went on for a while. The Americans gave us thick soup, we couldn’t eat it, I could, I was always hungry. A lot of men didn’t eat. A lot of men died after they saw the liberation. I remember the Kapo of the barrack said to me ‘Come along, you can shave, you can cut hair, come along’. In that barrack were 42 men: beards and hair, for weeks they hadn’t been shaved. They were really in dirty condition. And they were ill, ready to be thrown away in the gas chamber, and nobody would have known. He said ‘clean them up!’ And the whole day I had to stand there, cutting their hair with a clipper. And shave them with a razor. Some of them couldn’t even sit in their chair. I had to hold them. They were Polish Jews. And I did that. And I can’t forget that. That’s another incident.

Tape 3: 26 minutes 56 seconds

So there was the singing incident, the shaving incident... what else? Then I walked around and I came to the barrack with the gas chambers. And I stood in front of it. I think there were six there, and I stood in front of one, and the door was open. And in there I could see the body of a prisoner. They were partly burnt. No meat, but I could see the bones, the ribs, the legs, the hands, the arms, they were not crushed and taken out. I thought ‘there, there, that’s what I’ve been hearing of’. A lot went on in my thoughts. And I turned around, and I nearly knocked up against four wooden cases. High like that, about a quarter, a quarter centimetres [a metre?] long, you know, a couple of feet long, four of them, up to the edges with ashes. Swept out the thing. Waiting to be taken away, but they weren’t taken away, they were standing there. And I looked, and I grabbed, and a hand came out with ashes and a piece of bone. In my mind that’s evidence for the outside world. That’s what I found there in Buchenwald. That’s what they did to a prisoner. If you want it I’ve got it here with me. I think I got it here with me. That’s another incident. I was there last May, I’ve been there a dozen times to the camps, May last I went there, and I went into the same barrack, the ovens were still in there, but they were cleaned. There was nothing in there. So I went out and I stood outside, and I happened to stand next to something on the floor. It was a large metal cover. And then I heard a woman say ‘they used to lift up that and throw the bodies down.’ And then I

thought yea they did, the dead bodies they wouldn't feel the smack, the drop on the floor anymore and they only were seconds away from the ovens. That's how it was. See the little thing I did not know? I know now. And it matched. Throw the bodies down there, you don't have to carry them down. Throw them down, and on the heap, put them in... and another lot of prisoners put them in the ovens. That's how we used to do it. Luckily I wasn't one of them. But I had to shave. And the incident one day, one Sunday morning. The Kapo of that barrack, a young Kapo, six foot tall. He was a Polish Jew. And also another Jew. I was beaten up by Jews. That let themselves be Kapos. That morning the Kapo announced he wasn't a Jew, he was a non-Jew. But he had always an under-Kapo with him or what. There were two of them. Shouted out: 'No one is allowed on the beds! The beds are being painted!' OK. This was early morning. I finished shaving, because I shaved all Saturdays right through the day to the early evening, and Sunday morning a few hours. These thousand had to be shaved. So we did that. And so I was ready Sunday morning. And I remember I had a piece of bread. Which I probably had saved, and I didn't finish my ration, and my ration was small as well. Anyhow I had that piece of bread underneath my cushion. And I noticed that the painter, the Polish Jew, was nearing the bed where I was sleeping, had to sleep. My bed. So I went there, I took my boots off, climbed on the bed, it was in the middle, not underneath, not on top, and I made sure that I didn't touch any of the wood, and yes I got my little piece of bread out. And this painter, he said looking there, he said 'Oy, the Kapo said you're not allowed to climb the beds, and you're just climbing the beds?!' I said 'I didn't touch the wood, look my shoes are on the floor, I didn't do nothing wrong.' And I used to shave this man when it was his turn to be shaved. So I went away with my piece of bread, and I start talking to prisoners there, you know they talked to one another. Sunday afternoon, sometimes you might start to work, sometimes you didn't, all according to what time. All of a sudden the Kapo was facing me, from the barrack. He says: 'It was announced this morning that nobody was allowed to crawl on the beds. You crawled on the beds.' -Ah yes Kapo, but I was sure I didn't touch any of the wood.' And he started beating me up. And I fell down to the floor, and he walked away. I stood up and amongst the prisoners who was watching, stood this painter. I said 'You're a dirty Jew!' 'Du bist ein schmutziger Jude!(33:11) Du hast es dem Kapo gesagt! Ich habe gar nichts gemacht!' So I don't... I ? Ten minutes later the Kapo comes to me and said 'What did you call him?' I said I was wild. You beat me up for nothing, and he did it, and I don't think it's correct that one prisoner gives away another prisoner just for nothing. And he beat me up again. Severely. Really, I had a thick lip. Oh yes. One of the prisoners whispered: 'Bleib liegen'. Stay laid. Yes. The two Jews got hold of me, ya, they beat me up. One gave me up and one beat me up twice. I once was ill and ... if you worked, ... if you could leave the hospital in the first few days, the first three or four days, you were allowed to go into the kitchen, to help making the food for the SS. What did you help? You had a barrel, a large barrel full with boiled potatoes, in the skin. And you sat there with three or four men just out of the hospital, prisoners, and you had to take the peeling off, clean, and put them in another barrel, and you went on all day like that, and that were the peeled potatoes for the SS. If the Kapo wasn't watching you ate some of those potatoes. And one day they called out: 'help to carry the canisters', the metal canisters for the soup, the soup used to be unloaded from the truck, carry them into the kitchen to be cleaned. So I and another prisoner got hold of one, and we carried, both one canister into the kitchen, and went away, got another one, and

brought them in, and out comes a Kapo, a Jewish Kapo, a Belgian Jewish Kapo.. by the sound of his voice. A big fellow. He says: 'Not two Jew carry that! One carry that!' '-I'm weak, we are weak'. -You're not weak! And he kicked me between my legs. Down I go. Oooh, that hurts! I got knocked out. And one of the prisoners went into the kitchen, and told Saggi, 'They're beating up your fellow'. It was a Berliner man, a cook, ya, a nice fellow, and he came out and says: 'Who did this!?' And the Kapo standing there and says 'I did it.' And he said 'If you.. you got no right to touch any of my men, and if you do it again I'll make a complaint.' So I was beaten up. It made no difference whether they were Jewish or not. Most of them were non-Jews, but some of the Jews allowed themselves to become a Kapo because a Kapo got as much food, and could walk around the camp, free. A Kapo was looked up to you know. I could have become a Kapo. I used to go in singing, begging for a little soup by singing some songs. One evening I went in, I was very hungry, always hungry. There was not enough soup for giving to me in my barrack, so I went out and that evening this happened. I go into the barrack, the Kapo, 'Etwas zu singen für die Leute?'. (37:19) Can I sing something for the prisoners? And he looks at me, and he looks at my number on my jacket. 'Du hast nicht zu bezahlen für Essen, ich mach dir Unter-Kapo, und du bekommst viel Essen!'. I'm going to make you under-Kapo and you don't need to go out begging. And I mumbled something, and I didn't want to do that. Oh I thought, that's a wrong one. I don't want to be a Kapo. And I walked backwards, and I was near the door, and ran away through the doors. Otherwise I would have been an under-Kapo, with a stick in your hand, and you've got to make your fellows work, and hit them if they don't. I wasn't going to do that. So that's another incident in the camps. So what else? So many things happened? Pinching one another's bread. They must have pinched my bread a dozen times. In the beginning you put your piece of bread on the bed, where you slept. And be careful you don't upset the blanket of your bed. Underneath the blanket is the broken mattress. It's really like that. But the blanket's got to be nicely... so when an SS looks from a distance in the barrack, it's got to look nicely, through all the beds. If that's not, you get done. But eating, you can't sit down, there were no chairs to sit down, there were no tables to sit at, so you stood next to your bed, and that meagre little soup you got, and that piece of bread, in the beginning you had a slice of sausage, soon that was finished. In the beginning you had a sugar spoon of jam, that was soon finished. Talking about sausage. That slab of sausage, you know, thin sausage. It was that morning, we got liver sausage with our piece of bread. And one of the prisoners came to me: 'It's the Kapo's birthday today. And we would like to collect your pieces of sausage'. And we gave all our sausage to the Kapo. Have it. If you would say no, they would kill you. That was the Kapo's birthday. So the Kapo had... That's another incident I can remember. That was part of life.

Tape 3: 40 minutes 11 seconds

What else can I tell you? What else? Oh yes. I was wandering around in Buchenwald and I come upon a heap of belts, a heap of guns, and a heap of leather jackets. And an American soldier standing there with a gun in his hand. They were SS stuff taken out of the barracks. They were saved by the SS. And I said... I went up to the soldier and I said: 'The Germans have taken everything away from me, may I find a jacket for me?' -'Go on, one, go ahead, and get one for me as well!' So I went to the jackets, tried several on, and I thought well this one fits me, and I took one out and I went to the soldier and I said

'your not shooting?' He said 'no shooting'. I said: 'This is yours, and this is mine, thank you very much'. And when I went to my barrack that evening, there was a young Polish Jew, as you come in the barrack as I pointed out as I still remember, a young boy, maybe fourteen, fifteen, eighteen years... He was a tailor, he was learning tailoring. So I came in and I said 'Wie viel Suppe? Wenn du machst... I don't know, in broken German and I point out to him the brass buttons I didn't want on those things. And he said 'Drei Suppe'. Three soups. I said no, not three, just taking the buttons off and putting other buttons on. He said OK, you see to the buttons, 'Du bringst mir die Knopfen', I think it's called 'Knopfen' in German... I made him understand. So two portions of soup later on I gave that to him because I had other soup given to me if necessary. And I went to a barrack. That barrack was from the floor almost high up to the ceiling, and a barrack is big, filled up with clothes, mostly coats, all kinds of coats. And I tried to climb up on the clothes, and I looked for the buttons, and I took the buttons. Took them off. And those buttons are on the leather jacket, and the jacket is at home I think, I've never worn it, it's at home, where I live, I hope I can still find it somewhere. But that's another thing you see. But the idea, I was laying on a heap of clothes, which also one day in Auschwitz, I was to do something, pushing a car or something, and I saw a large car, from top to bottom with clothes, they had just come away, probably from near the gas chamber, the clothes in rooms where people undressed themselves. I look at a lot of clothes. It never came into my mind then, that, the gas chamber, they were coming from the gas chamber. It never came into my mind. I remember that, a lot of clothes, ya, clothes, but where were the people? They were murdered. What else can I tell you?

AG: Shall I take you to the liberation, because you were telling me about when you were liberated, and you started telling me about singing for the Americans, I didn't quite... could you...

Tape 3: 44 minutes 30 seconds

LG: Ya, in Buchenwald that evening, one evening, an American came to me, probably somebody told him, or he heard me... 'I want some music for the Americans, a dozen or two Americans could come into the barrack and somehow made themselves at home and wanted some amusement.' And I said 'Well I can sing', I can find out if there's any violinist, or I find a violinist. At the very beginning, oh yes, at the very beginning... let me first finish this, but this is later on in Buchenwald, but it happened also in Auschwitz, in Birkenau... So I found somebody who played the fiddle, the saxophone, and maybe another instrument, and I was a singer, and in turn we gave solos, a violin solo, for two or three dozen American soldiers in the evening, and that's what I remember, and they gave us rations, tin rations from the army. In payment. Er, oh, come on now...(trying to remember).

AG: It's to do with singing, you were....

LG: I told you that one, singing in the barrack for some soup, that I went into the barrack begging for soup if I could sing, if the soup was there I would get a half a litre soup for singing. Ah yes, it's back to me. 'Thank you very much', at the very beginning of

Birkenau, the Kapo's birthday, or the Kapo with one or two of his colleagues, they want music. 'Wo sind di Musikers?' 46:50 Where are the musicians? Are there any musicians! 'Danzig, a man from Amsterdam, Mr Danzig, I remember, he played the violin, probably a professional violinist, Danzig, later on he didn't come out. And another prisoner by the name of 'Schrever', I didn't see him no more, not alive anymore, and me. Three of us. We could sing, and he could play the violin, so we said we can do it. The Kapo... every barrack at that time had a chimney going from one end of the barrack down to the other side, and you could warm by burning wood, pieces of wood, trees and all that, and the barrack would be nice and warm. And we had to get out of our beds half asleep, and we used to stand on that chimney, and the Kapo was behind the curtain, his bed was behind the curtain and he made room then and said -'Let's hear it!' And the violinist probably began, and the other one sang, and I sang. And when the Kapo thought it was sufficient, he said 'go back to your beds', and we went back to our beds. And that went on several times. Sometimes you had a little soup the next day, a little drop of soup left, sometimes nothing, but you don't dare to say if there was nothing. So they made use of us that way, and they had music, they were probably eating, and we were poor beggars for food half asleep and having a terrible life. Then, gosh, I forgot. Say again what you just mentioned. I'm getting old now....

AG: I didn't, I had hadn't said anything for quite a long time...

LG: Singing. It's to do with singing. So one evening... we always sleep in bed, and it was maybe one or two hours after we went to bed, so we were asleep, or half asleep, the Kapo comes out from behind his curtain, in the same barrack, and he shouts out: 'Aus der Bedden! Schnell!' Get out of the beds, quick! Half asleep, we get out of the beds, but before he said... that he said 'Wo sind die_Musikers [sic]?! 'Where are the musicians?' We had to come out and stood on that chimney, and then he shouted out 'Everybody of the beds!' And everybody half awake, climbed down the beds, old, young, out of the beds, the young ones looked old and the old ones looked... And we're standing there, and the Kapo said: 'Into the beds!' and everybody climbed up into the beds, and we were watching it, I was looking at it, and he shouted 'Out of the beds!' Out they came again. Into the beds! Into the beds. And that went on for a hell of a time. And all these poor men were tired, tired. And he had two young men with him, youngsters, prisoners, with a stick in their hand. And if you didn't walk, get up quick enough, you'd get a tick on your head. And that was it. And then he said: 'Nacht!' 'Night', that means good night', no, and then he said 'In die Bedde!' and they all went into the beds, and he said 'Nacht', that means 'night', good night, and all of us said 'Nacht!', and then he said 'Das ist gut, so will ich das haben!'. We hadn't said good night to him, and he was he was what do you call that? Not satisfied, he was insulted. That happened as well. Ya. I got too much up there.

Tape 3: 51 minutes 37 seconds

AG: Perhaps I could take the story on a bit and ask how long did you stay in Buchenwald after the liberation?

LG: It was 11th April and I left on the 24th, 25th April, it's about four months, ya.

AG: And where did you go from Buchenwald?

LG: I remember still in the camp, that a lot of prisoners, Polish, Jewish, whatever, non-Jewish, there was a day that the Americans unlocked the gates of Buchenwald, and thousands of men went out into the villages. Did the wrong things probably with the women. Chickens, radios, they came back with those things into the camp. And the public told the Americans. So the Americans said 'no one is allowed out, and the gate is locked.' No one is out. So I said to one of the Americans that came in then, I said 'Look, I speak your language, I'm English, I didn't go out with the group, I didn't hurt people, I would like to talk to my men, you are my people, and I got a letter, I don't know where it is, also in here somewhere: 'This man has the right to leave the camp'. So whenever I wanted to go out, I showed the guard: 'Here, I'm allowed to go out'. That's how I used to mix with the Americans in the barracks, where I was, that's one incident. Until the day came that... I got papers to leave and that was the 23rd, 24th of April, that I came out of the gates, I was walking on that road, I wanted to go back to Holland to do a bit of fighting, in my mind, I wasn't weak but I wasn't strong at all but I ? back, and asked an American: 'Are you flying to Holland?' 'No, we don't fly', and on my walk, I thought to myself what's the hurry? You're free now, no more bullying, no more kicking', and a jeep pulls up, and I heard a man say 'Are you the man that wants to fly?' I said 'Yes, yes, that's right, that's me. Are you?' He said 'No, we're not flying, but here's a lady from London, England, she wants to talk to you. A lady from England who wants to talk? I hadn't seen anybody from England for three years, and out of the Jeep came Anne Mattison. She was a journalist from the *Evening Standard*, in London, she came out and she talked to me, she said I want to know something, tell me something about the camps. I said "If you put my name and address where I used to live in England, in London so my brother and family in London can read that I'm still alive, if you put it in the papers, I'll tell you". And I told her, and she did. And a lady came running into my brother's house and said 'Look, isn't this your brother?' And it was, he read: 'Leon Greenman, so and so, and so my brother knew that I was alive. And that was that, that was another incident. That article you can read, the *Evening Standard*, I think it's Colindale, has libraries and you can see that you can find it, that article is in the *Evening Standard* of the 23rd, 24th of April '45. Anne Mattison, and she gave the title on that: 'The Barber of Buchenwald'. I wasn't a barber in Buchenwald, but she used that for a journalist idea. But you can see that.

Tape 3: 56 minutes 9 seconds

AG: From Buchenwald, did you go back to Holland, or did you come back to London?

LG: Buchenwald. No, in Buchenwald, after I spoke to the journalist, I had difficulty in walking. And I met Americans, and probably it was a high one, I couldn't walk, hardly, and I wanted to go to Holland, and I didn't go to Holland, they said I had gangrene coming. And I didn't know, but I couldn't walk anymore. And they said 'we're flying you to Paris, and in Paris we'll take you to hospital and we'll have your leg seen to. And they flew me. To Paris. I remember landing in Paris, I knew I couldn't walk, I was

finished but I went on. My mind was still there. I remember talking to American soldiers, and one was very high, and they asked me about what happened in the camps and I've been telling them things I remember. And then the plane landed, we landed, and going into one of the houses of one of the things there, one of the rooms, I remember seeing, I think it was a kind of café or something, a load of doughnuts, and I was hungry and the American with me he said 'go on, help yourself', and I had some doughnuts, and then they took me in a cab they took me to a consul, no, that's later on...

Tape 3: 58 minutes 15 seconds

AG: Leon, I think we're going to have a break now because the tape is going to end.

LG: OK.

TAPE 4

AG: Leon Greenman; tape four. You were just telling me that you were taken to hospital in Paris to have your leg seen to.

LG: Yes. I could hardly walk. And I was told I got gangrene. So I had to be taken to the nearest thing and they thought of Paris, and I went to the Hertford British hospital, it was on the border, with Paris, in France, and there Dr Schwartz, told me 'You got gangrene and you got to have your toe off, my big toe on my left foot. And I didn't want to, I didn't want to, I didn't want Hitler to have a piece of mine. Well he said, if you don't do it now, then in six months time or sooner, you'll have to lose your foot. Well I didn't want that in any case, so they took my big toe off my left foot. I've got nine and a half toes, and I can get about. Later on I get rheumatism in my knees, I got two knees, one artificial I think, and the other one was replaced. So I was in Paris. I lay there in hospital, Dr Schwartz, who told me his parents were taken to Auschwitz, when the Nazis occupied France, and he wanted me to tell my stories for the BBC. So they called the BBC one morning, and I was laying in bed telling them something of what I told you today and then the BBC didn't air it, because it was too bad for the public to hear. And they never aired it and the gramophone record which at that time was made of me, they gave to my brother, and it's somewhere here in the Museum.

Tape 4: 2 minutes 10 seconds

There is a tape made of my talk, in bed, in the hospital.

AG: How long did you stay in Paris?

LG: In Paris, after that when I left hospital, French visitors, who lived behind the hospital came and visited us, and they got acquainted with me, and after I left hospital they gave me the right to live with them, and that was a few months, until I left Paris.

AG: Where did you go from Paris?

LG: After that, it wasn't easy to leave France, you had to be seen to, you had to have papers to leave, so alright then, I went from France to Belgium into Holland, I had heard of my father coming out of Westerbork camp, by way of the Red Cross, and I went through Belgium into Holland arriving there in the evening or the early evening, I remember walking on the street in Rotterdam since three years or more, and I spoke to a young man there I said 'Would you like to go to number so and so, there and there', not far from where I was, 'And tell him that his son Leon will see you any minute'. And he did, and then I approached my father's house, and I saw my father, very meagre, you know, he had been in the camps, and I stayed there. The next day I went out to see how many of my family were alive in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, none of them were there. None of my Jewish friends which I knew from the clubs and all that, none of them there. One or two had hidden underground which I only knew later on, so I was everything really. A lot of non-Jewish friends, business people, they were not there.

AG: And how did your father survive?

LG: My father survived because when Mother died he took a housekeeper, he married the housekeeper, and she was a non-Jew. Pro-Jewish, but non-Jewish. And they talked the same language so they married. Later on my father was in the camps, and probably the Nazis at that time, sometimes, made the mixed marriages go home. Sometimes. And that happened with my father. And he was some time in Auschwitz, a long time I think, and then he got out. And then we met, there was no family left, what was we to do, so I said let's go back to England. There was an office in Rotterdam where survivors coming back from the camps could get some pocket money, I borrowed some money for the passage to get back to England, and on the 22nd of November 1945 we arrived at Gravesend, Tilbury Docks 05:27,[met] by my brothers Charlie and Maurie, they'd been demobbed from the army, and to start a new life. I was very ill, Dr Phillips in the East End of London saw to my health, it took about a year before he said 'Well, I think you're capable, now go about finding out for yourself what to do'.

Tape 4: 5 minutes 52 seconds

AG: Where were you living in this year?

LG: I was living sometimes at Charlie's place, sometimes at Maurie's place, father got a flat with my stepmother in the East End of London, then Maurie died at 42, that was a punch we never recovered from. In my case I had to make a start, and I started... my brother Charlie took me to a Jewish organisation in the East End of London who were supposed to help their people. I asked for a £500 loan to start my book business somehow, they refused, they said you can have £50, but guarantee you can pay it back within three months. And I thought to myself I can't do that, so I said 'Keep the money, I go my own way', and I had to start on the ruins in London, with a suitcase in my hands with a few things I could buy now and then, to offer to the people, and that's how I started. The government gave me 25 shillings a week, improved it to 35 shillings. I didn't smoke, I didn't bet, I didn't drink, but it was still not enough, and then I said 'Keep the

money', and that's how I started and had a pitch at Petticoat Lane Market, and then Mori died and left a pitch in Petticoat Lane market, and I took over that pitch, but he left a wife and four children. Yes. Four children, two boys and two girls. One girl lives now in New Zealand, the other lives in Barnet, no she moved to Dorset. Samuel has got a second hand shop, pictures and books and other things, not far from Finchley, and who else is there? Clary lives in New Zealand. Barney became a first-class solicitor, and he died about eighteen months ago, and I knew them all since they were children.

AG: And what did you trade in Petticoat Lane?

Tape 4: 8 minutes 16 seconds

LG: Well, Maurie was selling... Maurie never wanted to be... He tried in the beginning with tailoring, but he didn't like it working for another governor, he like to be his own governor, so he started on the markets, demonstrating apparatus for women's hair, curling women's hair. And I did the same thing.

AG: And did you manage to make ends meet doing that?

LG: Yes, that's what I could do. Making ends meet, pay for your pitch, and make enough money so that you could eat. And that grew over the years.

AG: And what did it grow into?

LG: Well, I was for over forty years in the market. Summertime wasn't bad. Summertime, nice weather. In the winter time it was crippling, snow and ice and cold. But I had to do something; I wasn't clever enough for a bank robbery so I had to do that.

AG: So you worked in the markets for...

LG: Yes, Over forty years. All the markets in London I did. Every day I went to a different market, if the police didn't chase me away... I offered my little goods, little statues I could buy in a factory, and special Christmas things you could buy a lot of things, and that's how I made... I ended up with ladies' handbags later on. I'm retired now, twenty, twenty five years ago I retired. Yes.

AG: What were the other market traders like?

LG: Ya, they listened to my talk, offering goods to the people. Some of them became friends; some of them became so-so. I haven't found any left. The last few years when I go over Petticoat Lane market and I ask, they don't know. All the old ones have gone, they are in a home resting, or they passed away. I'm still here and I don't understand why, but here it is.

AG: You said you started off living with one or other of your brothers. Was that in the East End, or where was it?

LG: In the beginning it was in the East End where they were evacuated. I forget the word... where he passed away. They lived in Bletchley I think it was. And he went out to the toilet one evening and he didn't come back. And his wife and his son found him lying. And they took his body to the police station opposite where they lived and he passed away there. And that same 24 hours I was intending to see my in-laws in Lewes, telling them how my wife passed away and the baby, Maurie's wife came to London, knew that I was leaving London, sent a telegram that I should not go, when Dolly arrived at my place where I was living my father's place, or Charlie's and she said Maurie went out to the lav and died. A heart attack. At 42. And then the family got together, her family got together with my family, promised this and promised that, it never came out, promised, find a shop, we will finance it, and never did. So we were fed up with that. Mori had a license in Petticoat Lane, that goes over to his wife, so I helped his wife on that pitch. Later on we went out separate, and shared everything fifty-fifty, whatever we made to bring up the four children.

AG: So you took over the responsibility to bring up those children?

LG: Partly, yes.

Tape 4: 12 minutes 7 seconds

AG: And where did you live during all those years?

LG: In the East End of London. In Landpark Road where Mori was living and before that it was Chaucer Road, and then I moved from Forest Gate to Ilford, where I'm living now.

AG: What was the East End of London like when you came after the war?

LG: Well I remember a lot of Jewish people lived there, Petticoat Lane and the markets around there, and the people, Jewish people, Sunday morning we were busy, we trade there, we went home after work, and that was it. That was us. Visit your family when you could, and that's all what I remember.

AG: Was there still a lot of Jewish life in the East End.

LG: Of course. There was. This was a long time ago now. Now all those Jewish people moved away. Once passed away, their children moved away from the East End, became accountants or solicitors, or doctors, or whatever, a better life, and their children become better and better. I had no children, I got no grandchildren. If I want to cuddle a child... whenever I see a young boy, a young girl running about and the parents caring for them and I think of my own time when I was like that, now I got to go to friends if they have children, to cuddle them. That's how life is. It's not pleasant, but... I'm not crying out about it, but it's happened like that.

Tape 4: 13 minutes 44 seconds

AG: Did you, em, go to any Jewish institutions or synagogues in the East End?

LG: No I didn't go to synagogues. I didn't visit a lot of synagogues. I don't go to synagogues every day. Sometimes I go when I feel like it. In the camps, on the big day Yom Kippur I used to fast, even when I was very hungry I used to fast and not eat my bread in the morning, hide my bread on me until one o'clock when I started getting a headache, then it was, I've done my duty, keeping half a day instead of the whole day. And that's I passed some of the holidays like that. And now on the Yom Kippur I fast the whole day when I'm home. I pass a few hours or not in the Synagogue, all according to what I feel like. I got no woman next to me so I live alone, and there's no children, so I can't see that I must go into a synagogue and I must do... I believe in my way and there's a lot of things I don't accept anymore, but I don't talk about them. If a rabbi got to make his living by telling, a Hebrew teacher must tell what.. that's his living. So the young ones take it and that's it. I did my barmitzvah not when I was thirteen, I was ill and couldn't do my barmitzvah. But I did my barmitzvah a few months ago, in May, like some of the children from Germany, the Kindertransport, the people are now forty, fifty, sixty years, six of them, seven, and myself, did the barmitzvah, in May. So to the Law, I'm a proper Jew now, but the lot I missed.

AG: You mentioned your in-laws, your wife's parents; did you have any dealings with them? You said you went to tell them about what happened?

Tape 4: 16 minutes 3 seconds

LG: Well that never came to pass until much later, when I went to see them and then I told them about what happened to Else and the child. And the mother was not a very healthy woman but she passed away later on and later years, the father passed away the sisters all gone, there's only one sister, living in Newcastle, Yetta, which I knew when as a child, with the father and the mother and Else and all that. Very small baby at the time. She looks a lot like my son when my son was young. And I correspond with her. But otherwise there's nothing left really. In Holland I got one or two friends. Sometimes I hear something from them, but Jewish people, a Jewish family, I have none.

Tape 4: 17 minutes 15 seconds

AG: Did you ever make any enquiries about tracing what had happened to your relatives?

LG: Every Jew in Rotterdam had to go to Loods 24, their barrack, to be registered. And from there they were sent, and there's about 12 000 Jews out of the 13 000 who lived in Rotterdam, in Rotterdam only, what about all the other towns? Every Jew had to register. So they went to Westerbork, I was there when I saw many of them be deported, because I knew them, we lived close to one another, so it was family it was friends, from Westerbork to Auschwitz, but I never saw them back again. One or two hid themselves, were lucky not to be caught, and they came back after the war. But they're gone now.

The last eighteen months or two years I think I've lost three or four friends, in their seventies, eighties, you know. I ought to be gone. I don't know why I'm here. But I told the Lord what I was going to do and he's helping me. That's how I look at it.

AG: Can you tell me how you started to inform people about the Holocaust?

LG: Yes. In the very beginning when I landed here back in England on the 22nd of November when the doctor saw to my health, after and on and off I heard, specially on the market, people arguing about the Holocaust, 'That's not true, and that's not true, and it was done that way'. And when I happened to hear it, I used to say: 'May I tell you a little more about that and that', because that and that happened, it's not like you said it, but it's how I've seen it and heard it'. And then, one day a man shouted out: -Why don't you go into the schools and tell the youth what you promised your God?' And I did. It woke me up. And I did. And when it started.

AG: And when was this?

LG: In 1946, that was my first one. In the, for the... (I've got this thing in my pocket). But my niece Clary, Mori's daughter, worked as a secretary in the Makkabi Athletic Club in the East End of London. And she happened to tell Mr Roselar who was the president of that club, I have an uncle who's just come back from the camps. And they invited me to come along, asked me to come along, and 'tell us'. And she said yes he is willing to come along, and that's where I did my first talk. And then after that one school told the others, and they're still doing it, and one school told the others and they called me into the museum.

AG: So you've been doing it for over fifty years.

LG: Over sixty, yes. And I'm still doing it. (unfolds the letter) I've got the letter here.

AG: We can't actually take any photos of the letter at the moment.

LG: But you can read it, it's not a big letter.

AG: Not now, we'll do that afterwards.

LG: Oh. And my passport is here. It's all here. If something happens to me the police will see where I belong.

AG: Well, how was your story received in England in the post-war years.

LG: Up to now, very good. How can I tell? By the letters I receive of the students, dozens, or fifty, or 98 letters, pupils say 'We didn't want to ask after the talk, because it might hurt you, why was this, why was that'? Questions. And I sent letters back with questions answered. All people go away, the teacher, the lady teacher kisses me on the cheek and thanks me very much for talking and the boys and girls from 13, 14, 15,

upwards, and some of them are young women, 15, 16 years old, and they come and say let me give you a hug, yes...

AG: Was that the same when you started in the 1940s?

LG: No, no, not like that, because the kissing was then not done, and I don't think so, I don't remember that. But they ask me again and again, and if it wasn't any good, I wouldn't be asked back again, and there's a school here, I'm going back in November, and it's six or seven times I've been back, and they want me every year, because I think the way I'm talking, understandable, and they want it.

Tape 4: 22 minutes 18 seconds

AG: And which school is this?

LG: Parmiters School in Garston, near Watts, Watford. Ya.

AG: You must have been quite a rarity in this country, a camp survivor.

LG: I must have been one of the first ones to talk.

AG: How did people react?

LG: Well some of them believed it and some of them couldn't understand. Some couldn't understand. Sometimes I used to lay in bed half asleep or awake or thinking and I said to myself nobody really discovered what was really going on. How could they do what they did? I myself! So outside people who haven't been there and haven't read, there wasn't much written at the time, they had to believe it. Or what. Until later on the evidence was shown. So everybody went to the camps and see it. And you can still do it. I take troops of people there. Now yesterday evening, yesterday afternoon, I was phone out of Manchester, from Manchester, I was a guide twice, last year, and this year gone, in May I took 150 people in each case, to the camps. One day. Birkenau and Auschwitz, and later on in the evening to Krakow, where Jewish people used to live. It can be done in one day, but it's not very good. You want more than a day. Yesterday, late afternoon, evening, I was telephoned from Manchester, 'it's me, so and so, Oh yes, I got a phone call from Leeds, and Leeds wants to take, on the 10th or 17th of September 178 people want to see the camps, 'and they heard about you, they asked about Leon Greenman, can you tell us how to get onto him? I didn't do that she said, of course I want to have your yes or no', and I happen to be free that day. So I said yes, I'm willing to come along, they pay all the expenses, that's OK. And I'll be guide to over 180 people that want to see the camps, and they're flying there early in the morning from Leeds to Krakow, and from Krakow you got left and right the two camps, the main camps.

AG: When did you first go back to the camps?

LG: In 1986. Forty years after I was there. How come forty years? Well I thought this. A

lot of German survivors, and people out of the camps went to Israel. And I might be walking there, in the streets, the roads, and I hear German talk, or somebody might be talking to me, and maybe I don't like what they're talking about, or telling me, sometimes and I might be having a quarrel. No. I'm not going to Israel. I'm turning the story around now, though. Because I was telling you why didn't I go back to the camps? After forty years. I'm not going before that. And a Dutch group of fifty students wanted me as a guide. In Amsterdam somebody knew what I was doing, a guide, with fifty students for about three or four days in the camps. 'Would you like to come along?' And I said alright, this time I'll go. And why didn't I go before? Because I thought like this. All the barracks, men's barracks at Birkenau were made of wood.

Tape 4: 26 minutes 15 seconds

Set one alight, and the whole lot would have been burning away. The other barracks or whatever it was all would be damaged. And when I go there, I can't see anything... for me to say yes, yes, yes. And it stopped me from going, and when I went, the little bridge which is now wider, they modernised it, but the little wooden bridge, it always struck me, before you reach the barracks, you go over the bridge, I wanted to see that. Yes, there it was. So I wasn't dreaming. And then I went to the barracks, I missed, outside of the barracks, big enamel plates, upon which stood in Polish, 'Polish Artillery'. And I thought to myself, later on, I found out, that those barracks were formerly horse stables, the cavalry of the Polish Army. And they took the labels off, over the doors, I missed that. Alright, but the barracks are still there. And plenty of evidence. So I take people, they see it, they want to know, and I tell them. How we lived, what happened to us, and so on.

AG: And how did it feel for you the first time, to go back?

LG: The first time I went back I was kind of glad and not, I was bitter about what they had done, but the evidence was there, I had people around me who wanted to know so you start talking and we went home again and that was it.

AG: Do you also go to Westerbork?

LG: I went to Westerbork a long time ago. A long time ago. I heard that Westerbork was demolished, some silly people said 'Don't keep it, don't be remembered, so demolish it', so they had to rebuild the lot now in concrete. I went once or three times, as I remember, and that was it.

AG: It must have some very very painful memories for you, specially going back to Birkenau.

LG: Yes. It has memories. The pains, I don't know what you understand by 'p', 'a', 'i', 'n'. It's different pains. It's bitterness and what could I still do about it? You can't do nothing about it. And where are the murderers? Find them, fight them, tell them, punch them or kick them, like the way they did me. But find them. You can't find them. So I save my bitterness. And people ask me in the class: 'How do you think now about the German people?' Well, how do I think about it? For the first place you can't understand

what happened. I can understand that you think like that. That you think the Germans are OK. The German youth are still doing the things what the Nazis used to do. They don't like the foreigners, they do wrong things in Germany, so it goes on. The old ones, that did the wrong things are still alive drawing a pension, and urge the young ones go on, do it, because the German is a bad loser. And that's why I'm still anti-German in a certain way. Now we get people here sometimes from Germany working in the Library. And I don't talk a lot with them, to them, sometimes. They can't help it you can say, because they weren't born in those times. OK. But don't hinder me. If you hinder me, I'll lose my temper, I'll do the same, if you try to tell me it isn't true, or what, I would say go to Auschwitz, and have a look. Now Kitty Hart, have you heard of Kitty Hart? She was a woman, she was in Birkenau, took four German youths, four boys, seventeen, eighteen years old, to the camps, and pointed out what the Nazis had done, and they didn't believe her. That was wrong. You don't take four people there. If one of the four might say 'Oh it's terrible what we've done, the other three might say 'Hey, you're deserting us'. So you're afraid to tell the truth. Yes. Well it happened like that. They said it's not true. So, but I don't take four people. The least was fifty people, and now it's 187, the more the better. But, things have been taken away. I missed the three gallows, where I saw, in 1943, in July 1943, twelve men being hung within 20 minutes. Three had tried to escape, they were caught. For punishment, they got them hung. And there were nine innocent men, strong, fit men, as I can still see them walking, where you are, I saw it. That's not far. They ought to have told the SS 'Three men want to escape. They did not, they're gonna get punished for it'. And they were hung. Twelve. Then, there was a year later, or two years later, there were three gallows laying, hanging, standing there, at the back of the kitchen. And now if you walk on that road, then, you say 'hey, what does that mean, three gallows? Did they hang people here? And you can tell them, I, or any other guide, a Polish guide can tell them. Ya? Now I went and the three gallows were taken away. Why? Now when you walk that road you don't see them. And you're not interested. So you miss something what really happened.

Tape 4: 32 minutes 25 seconds

I drew on paper, three, four weeks ago, twelve men being hung, I learned how to draw and I sent a copy of it to the Auschwitz Museum, asking them why the gallows had gone, and I sent one to a man who I thought was the President of Poland: why Poland is hiding the things that are necessary to be known to the outside world? I didn't get no answer. Now I got to start writing and finding out where my letters were, and who wants those letters, and who wants the drawing. Yea I'm still fighting. They can say 'Ah, we don't want to hear that from you, you were a prisoner and that's all gone and we want to clear the lot', and when they clear the lot... Good luck with your film. Your film will tell it. And the other films that were made about the camps themselves. And last year, October, I went back with a Dutch culture-making films company, film, documentary films they made. They read my book and they wanted to make a document of my life, and for that I had to revisit all the camps. And we did. Took the whole month of October.

Tape 4: 33 minutes 55 seconds

AG: I'd like to ask you when and how you first became involved with the Jewish Museum that we're filming in today.

LG: Well, I had those things indoors, in a suitcase, and wherever I used, moved away from one address to another address, in the beginning I moved around, out of a room or whatever it was and that suitcase came with me, and whenever people came for tea and visiting me or whatever, and they say 'I always see that suitcase standing there, what's in it?' And I told them: goods which I got back from hiding in Holland, we didn't take into the camps. 'What have you got them in the suitcase for? Put it on show, and tell the people'. I tried them I think, I offered it first by letter, and they didn't want to know about it here, then there was a man who had artefacts from the camps, they wanted to sell it to this Museum, the Museum got no money to buy it, and then they must have thought oh, there's Greenman, he's offering it to us. And I wrote again and they came to see it. And when it came out of the suitcase, my wife's wedding dress, it's upstairs, children's shoes, a toy I made for them, his curls, all interesting things which we did not leave behind in the home when we were taken out. We left them in the hands of non-Jews, because the Jews had been taken away, and they kept them for me. When we gave them, my wife said: Keep them, save them, when we come back we'll have them back. If we don't come back you can do with them what you like. Well, I came back and I asked for them back, and they are upstairs. And they started making better photographs of them, better, clearer, and putting them in glass cases, which I didn't have, otherwise I would have done something like that on my own. In the fifties I put an advert in the paper: 'I'm looking for survivors to help me out with making a kind of exhibition of what happened in the camps.' But there was no answer, there was no money, so I had to leave it. And my book, I wrote in 1962, that's a long time ago, I couldn't find a publisher to publish it. And then in... I gave lectures, and during one lecture a journalist of a newspaper was listening, she wanted to interview me properly, she listened to me, and then I happened to say I got a manuscript here and I don't know what to do with it, nobody wants it, and she said... she had a look at it and then she said 'I'll help you'. Just like that, I'll help you. And she had a computer, and I said look I want it all as I've written it, the truth, no ifs and buts about it. And I was there at home, a dozen times, every time she was free to do it, it went on the computer, until it was a book, she made three copies of it and I took one of them to a publisher, and he accepted it, I think two and a half years ago, and it was published here in this museum.

Tape 4: 37 minutes 31 seconds

AG: What was the title? Can you tell us the title of the book?

LG: Yes, my title I made for the book was 'Fifteen minutes too late'. Because I mentioned probably this morning, when my wife told Schlesinger we're English, we need not go, anytime we expect documents that come, to prove it, she was right, we were right. We went away, twenty minutes, fifteen minutes after that according to what I heard in Auschwitz of a Dutchman who worked in the Registration Department in Westerbork, he told me this: "I'll never forget your name, Greenman". And I said "Why? What's wrong with my name, I haven't met you, you don't know me really". He says "I do. I worked on the registration in Birkenau, in Westerbork and this is what happened, I'll never forget. About twenty minutes, fifteen minutes after your train left, your name was called out:

'Greenman, come to the office, we found in the morning mail, documents, the Greenmans should not be sent away. But you were gone. I couldn't forget that. And that was the first time I heard it. So I was right. And my wife was right, but Schlesinger was wrong, and one more week he could have held me and in the mailing post, he would have had a better name than he had now. He died in America because when he was called in front of the Judge in Holland he wasn't to be found. Gemmeke got ten years. But Schlesinger wasn't to be found. He escaped to America. And he died in America. Because I got a letter from somebody in Canada who knew him and noticed what I was asking, where he was, and sent a letter to me and said he died in New York, in disgrace, and he deserved it. The letter says.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 30 seconds

AG: What was the title the book was actually published under?

LG: I showed it to the publisher, and he read it, and then he said all of a sudden just before we were drawing the contract up or a few days before that, he said a better title would be 'An Englishman in Auschwitz'. That sounded more interesting according to him, so that's what the title is now.

AG: Could you tell me just for the tape the name of the publisher?

LG: At that time it was Cass, Frank Cass, and Co. They are publishers, partners, or contacted with... oh tell me...

AG: Valentine Mitchell.

LG: Yes. And now they've broken up a few months ago. And now it's a different man, a different company entirely, somewhere up in England, who is now connected with my book. And now when I give a lecture I take my book along. The Jewish Museum buys it off the publisher. And instead of the readers that want the book ask for it at the publishers, the publishers sell the book and get the publicity, the profit out of the book. Now it's like this. I told the Museum a year ago: we can also do it like this. Wherever I go speaking I sell books, whether it's a dozen, whether it's three or four, whether it's fifty or eighty books, which has been done. But you buy the books. I sell them. I want the public to know and you don't pay me any profit, nothing, so what comes out of the books goes to the Museum, and the Museum needs money, that's how I do it.

Tape 4: 41 minutes 28 seconds

AG: What I'd like to ask you is whether you've ever encountered any hostility, or whether you've ever been attacked God forbid either verbally or physically?

LG: Well, I what I've been telling schools and people, the British National Party doesn't like me doing that. And in '94, Summer 1994 I was a member of a march of fifty thousand people of all kinds, black and white, young and old. And we marched from

Victoria to Alton, almost Alton, seven miles. And I was in the front of it as a survivor they took me in the front. And we stopped at the beginning and one of the stewards asked the police there, there were a lot of police there, let us pass by, we want to go to Alton and stop at the headquarters of the British National Party. And we were not allowed. Then I asked the policeman, I said 'I represent the millions of Jews who didn't survive, I'm the only survivor, let me put it like that, let us march to the headquarters of the British National party and we'll walk past it, we won't do anything wrong'. 'No, no, no'. And after that the police start hitting us, Nazis in balaclavas, from nowhere they came, from among the public and start hitting us, and seven men landed in prison, in Maidstone prison. I know. I was lifted up within minutes, by somebody behind a lot of bricks, and the policeman said from here; get right down to the bottom. And that's what I did. And then I saw the cars coming, people with bleeding wounds and all that, the police was beating the wrong people. That was the march. 1994. Now gone May, they sent me four Christmas cards with dirty insulting words and swastikas on it. I showed them to the police, the police said 'That's terrible, we want to make photocopies of them', I said 'Photocopies, I'd like some, if you make photocopies the things used to make the photocopies might ruin the paper and there will be no photocopies'. I said 'Give them back to me then because I want to show my public what they did, what they send me'. And that's what I sent you before, that's what I showed you before. So they're still after me. When I get home, the chain goes on the door, I'm never without a chain now, I live behind... all the windows barred up, so a brick can't touch the glass anymore. The insurance can't keep on paying broken glass.

AG: So you've had attacks on your house with bricks?

LG: Yes.

AG: How often and when did it start?

LG: It started in 1994 with the brick throwing, I've still got the brick at home, then in May, Christmas '03 they sent me those cards. And now I get telephone calls, when I pick them up, the thing goes down, no voice. And sometimes it happens, somebody in the street maybe, I don't know who they are, they see me come home, when I come home, I'm not indoors ten minutes, the phone goes. 'Hello' they put the phone down. And then three minutes later the phone goes again. 'Hello'. And I get up three or four times, and then I think to myself somebody out there wants to interrupt whatever I'm doing. So that's what they do as well. Teasing me that way, ya. So the door is locked, the house is alarmed, the letterbox is so alarmed that if they throw something in the letterbox they get a light, so I'm living like that. And if I forget to lock the door, which I hope I don't do often, and I'm laying in bed, 'gosh I forgot to lock up' I get out of my bed, ten, eleven o'clock, or maybe later on, maybe midnight, and I remember 'have I locked the door?' So I go down have a look, and then I have a look, and then I go back to bed again. Until the next day. I don't stay long in my turning, I don't know a lot of people in my turning, one or two, I've got good neighbours next door, and that's all. I'm not married. I wanted to get married, but it happened four occasions that Jewish women, I wanted a Jewish wife, Jewish children, if I could produce children I don't know anymore, this is years ago, they

asked me have you got a house? I didn't have a house; I was living in a room, in a flat.

Tape 4: 46 minutes 43 seconds

Have you got a car? I missed my exam; I didn't get to drive, so I can't drive. What are you living with? Well I'm on the markets, shillings, sixpences, half a crown items, and that wasn't big enough. So I stopped. And then I got acquainted with a non-Jewish woman for about six, eight years. She lived three hours away, so I went there, three hours there, three hours back, she had to come to me for three hours and three hours back, so about three years ago we gave up. So that's... ya.

AG: How long have you been living in your present home?

LG: Oh, for twenty five years.

AG: Could you describe to me your daily or weekly routine, how you live.

LG: Well let's take it in the evening, or in the morning. You're asleep, you wake up, I lack a lot of sleep, I wake up three or four times, twice, a night, I got to go to the lav, my waterworks are not right, what every man gets that in his life, what they call it, there's a name, I forget.

AG: it doesn't matter.

LG: Ya, so I wake up and I fall asleep again, and I get up at seven o'clock if a school comes here, this morning I woke up at six, to be here, I was very early here, alright that's the day. If I haven't got to speak I go to the shops, to the supermarkets, to get my food, and if I want something out of the library I go to the library, to look up whatever it is if it's necessary, otherwise I turn back home again, waiting for the bus, out of the bus, walking home, make my food, look at the television a little, if it's no good turn off the television, I got such a lot of things laying there, brochures and papers to read, so I start reading, in the evening the television, good, then I stay up and watch it, if it's good, I like a thriller, I like it takes all your worry away and if it's not, I turn the thing off and go to bed. I lay in bed I think, I listen to the radio, every morning, every evening to the Dutch radio, I listen to the bulletins, I listen to them so I know a little what's going on in Holland, and the English radio I listen to in the night and in the morning and then I fall asleep. Or I wake up in the mornings, get dressed, I wash myself thoroughly, which I still do, since the camps, not just on me face, half a body, nice, plenty of water, and that's how my life is until the next day again. There's no one there to talk to, sometimes I get somebody visiting me, sometimes somebody phones me up, sometimes, not often. And if I got a visitor, they got to go back again, they live hours away from me, they got a car probably or what, they don't stay long. I got used to that, many years now, I don't cry. Until I know, I got to leave the house, I got to be here, for a talk, or I got to go to a school, or they pick me up for the school. That's how I live.

Tape 4: 50 minutes 23 seconds

AG: Do you still have contact with Holland at all? Apart from listening to Dutch radio?

LG: I used to, I have a little contact, some people are still there, who I, well, friends from a long time ago. Every year I look over my old correspondence, and I find letters like yesterday I found a letter amongst all those letters, from old friends, 1988, and I then, I said to myself, they might still be alive, they might not. But I'll drop them a letter that I'm still here. That's how my contact is. So I posted one this morning on the way coming here, 1988, this was a youngster of about 15, 16, she heard me way back in Rotterdam in one of the schools, when I was in Holland and they knew I was in Holland, the schools used to ask me to come in and talk. And she was there during one of my lectures. And she got married, and they live in Holland still, and I thought to myself yesterday or the day before I wonder how they're getting on. And I wrote a letter, and in the letter I said I found a letter from 1988 about you, and it would be interesting if they read it, so many years ago, it's all part of my life, they're only minutes, minutes in there, minutes memories, otherwise I got plenty of memories, but that is it, and the days go on, and every day the same.

Tape 4: 51 minutes 58 seconds

Before, the last twenty five years, twenty, twenty five years when I retired from the market trading, yea then I got up and went to the markets. Every day to another market, yea, in London, or outside of London, Wales, yes, I wanted to make my life, I don't know if I've succeeded the markets I have up about twenty, twenty five years ago now.

AG: Do you do anything particularly to, in memory of your wife or your baby son? On their birthdays or anything?

LG: I got their photographs up in my sitting room, where I eat, and I see them many times, and sometimes I talk to the pictures, and I'm sure that they are not without me, I still, now and then things happen around me that makes me think hey, I wonder, whether it really took place, it was answer, or whatever it is. If I'm looking for something and I don't know where it is, and all of a sudden there. As if it's given to me or it's shown, you know, it is more about us, around us than we know. That's how I live.

Tape 4: 53 minutes 26 seconds

AG: I don't know if there's anything else in particular that you'd like to tell me.

LG: I hope that what happened to me and happened to thousands of us, millions have been murdered, of the thousands, hundreds are talking about it like I do, good luck, tell the world as much as possible, by telling we won't forget the ones who are gone, and hopefully it won't happen again. So you've got non-believers who go their own way, until they realise that they're wrong. And those that know about it are doing the right thing, keep on fighting, until you've done your duty, and this is my duty.

AG: Well, on that note, I think I'll close the interview and say Leon Greenman thank you

very much for doing the interview.

Tape 4: 54 minutes 38 seconds

LG: Unless you want to know about... oh you know about the medical experience don't you?

AG: Yes, you told us about it.

LG: OK, thanks very much for listening to me, and that's all what I could think of and at school sometimes, I'm finished talking when one, two or three students, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years, shout out: How about this, and how about that? Did you ever hit back, did you do this? That brings another memory in my mind and I tell them, so it makes my talk still better.

AG: Good.

Tape 4: 55 minutes 17 seconds

Wide shot, Leon Greenman with his arm uncovered. Number is tattooed on his arm.

AG: Could you tell us what this is please?

LG: This number on my arm, I received this the second or third day in Birkenau, I was one of the slave labourers chosen, one of the fifty slave labourers, those that did slave labour in the camps became a number. So I was given ninety eight thousand two eighty eight (98288), Leon Greenman does not exist in the camps. Your name went on a card, for administration, the Nazi administration, but you never heard 'Leon Greenman' in the camp. Nobody knows Leon in the camp. I don't know anybody in the camp by their name, we were numbers.

AG: Thank you very much.

Tape 4: 56 minutes 8 seconds

Book Cover: *An Englishman in Auschwitz*.

AG: What is this book?

LG: The book is all what I remember.

AG: What's its title?

LG: The title is *An Englishman in Auschwitz*. There are no Englishmen in Auschwitz. Englishmen were interned as British subjects. I happened to be unlucky. The Nazis saw me as a Dutch Jew so I went into Auschwitz camp.

AG: And when was your book published?

LG: In 2001.

AG: Thank you very much.

Tape 4: 56 minutes 44 seconds

Close up of document: *The Jewish Museum is very pleased to announce that Leon Greenman has been awarded an O.B.E. for his contribution to Holocaust Education in Britain.*

AG: What is this document?

LG: That tells you I got an O.B.E, an Order of the British Empire, given to me by Queen Elizabeth, about, it was ninety... it was about two years ago. Somebody heard me talk on and off and they mentioned I was worth a medal for the work I was doing, and that came to the hearing of the Queen, or the Ministry, and the Queen got to know of it, and I was called to Buckingham Palace. And I shook hands with the Queen, she asked me if I was connected with the Holocaust, and I told her that what I do, go into schools and tell the danger of antisemitism, and Nazism, and Fascism, she was quite interested in that.

AG: Thank you very much.

LG: So now I sign my name with O.B.E. behind it. I do. I didn't in the beginning, and somebody said 'What do you think you got it for, you should use it'. So I use it.

AG: Good.

END