IMPORTANT

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REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV273

NAME: Ann Callender

DATE: 25 January 2023

LOCATION: London

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[00:00:00]

Today is the 25th of January 2023. We're conducting an interview with Mrs Annelis Callender and my name is Bea Lewkowicz and we're in London. Can you please tell me your name and your place of birth and date of birth?

My name is Ann, or Annalis Callender. I was born in Berlin on the 17th of December 1919.

Thank you so much, Annalise, for agreeing to be interviewed for AJR Refugee Voices. Can you please tell us a little bit about your family background?

We lived in Berlin in a flat, a very large flat in Wilmersdorf. My family consisted about my father, who was a *Regierungsbaumeister* [certified master builder] and my mother, who didn't do anything very much, except look after us. We had – and I've got a smaller sister called Brigitte and we also had a maid. The flat was large and we had – the maid had her own room and bathroom. I went to school. I can't remember the first school I went to but then it was the *Hohenzollerngymnasium*, where I apparently did quite well. I was quite good at art and mathematics. But I – when Hitler came, I was once put in front of the class, 'this is what a

typical German girl looks like', because I had blue eyes and fair – blond hair. But not long after that I was chucked out of the school because I was Jewish, although I didn't really know it until my birthday. **[00:02:03]** I think it was my thirteenth or fourteenth birthday when nearly all the girls who had been invited had some sort of excuse for not coming and then I was told that I was Jewish. I didn't even know what it meant because we didn't keep anything. Oh, we did keep Christmas, we had a Christmas tree, but in a non-religious way, just presents [laughs]. And I was then sent to an American school to learn some English for a few months. I can't remember how long for. And after that my parents, who didn't really discuss things with us very much – we didn't realise quite what the dangers were but we realised that we obviously – our life wouldn't continue the way it did then [clears throat]. And so they thought they should prepare me for life abroad but they didn't quite know where it would be. They were thinking about Yugoslavia, they were thinking of Argentina and in the end, I actually finished up in England. But before that they sent me to a place in – a commercial college in Switzerland, [clears throat] in the French part of Switzerland where I stayed at a *pensionnat* [boarding school], sharing a room with three or four girls who were mostly Swiss but there were a few German girls there as well. And I became good friends with the Swiss girls. Well, I had this friendship until they- have all died. So, I learnt French and I learnt shorthand typing and I learnt keeping books, which later on stood me in good stead because even after I was married, I kept the books and I kept – I looked after our financial affairs. **[00:04:03]** And when I got a certificate which was not recognised by anybody afterwards, so basically that was a waste of time. I then finished up in Geneva, in a domestic college, where I learnt everything apparently that was needed, like cleaning, cooking, making beds, ironing, etc. And when I had finished there, my parents sent me to friends, with an English couple on holiday. He was a doctor in Cambridge. I think he was Jewish as well. So, when things became desperate, they asked them to help and they found a job for me as an au pair girl. And this au pair girl was with an elderly lady. She probably wasn't more than fifty or something [laughs] but she seemed definitely elderly. And this lady basically was very kind-hearted but she didn't really know what to do with me. So I helped – I just helped generally but most of the time I wasn't doing very much. But she even introduced me to her friends and the friends' children and I – and after a while when war became close, she decided to shut up house and go somewhere safer. In fact, Cambridge was a target and it had quite a few bombs fall on it. And in the meantime, I had nowhere else to go, so I took a room somewhere. My

mother came as well. We shared a room together, whereas my father was trying his best to find a job, but in the end, he worked for the firm he had worked for before, a Swiss firm, making like lacquer and paints. **[00:06:02]** So he worked for them, although he was totally unsuited – unsuitable as a salesman but he did work for them. And he then found – got himself a furnished flat in Belsize Park I think and my mother went to live with him, and I was there on my own and I got various jobs. I worked for an – in an antique shop, which was quite educational for me but it shut up because nobody was buying antiques during the war. I worked for a dressmaker, I worked for – in an office and I finished up as the university library, typing. Typing, for some reason, something from the Gutenberg Bible, [laughs] I don't know why [laughs]. But anyway, I typed it. And in the meantime, I was a pretty girl and there were lots of nice young men around and so I had a – quite a nice social life there. And on one of – at one of the cocktail parties at one of the colleges, somebody jogged my elbow and I had a glass of sherry in my hand and that sherry went flying over a person standing next to me, who happened to be a young RAF officer. And to cut a long story short, I finished up getting married to him. And so, we married in 1941. Of course – oh, I forgot to say that of course I was pregnant by that time, so – but anyway, we got married. And once Tony was born, I became a camp follower and he qualified as a pilot. He was flying – he was buying, er, flying – flying boats, mainly from very unwelcoming places in the north of Scotland, including Islay. **[00:08:09**] And I followed him and I still remember one place – very difficult to find somewhere to stay because he of course had – was in the officers' mess and I wasn't. So, in one case I finished up in a temperance hotel, where I had to cook on a peat fire, which wasn't fun. But then we travelled around with him all over the place, including somewhere in Lincolnshire and somewhere – four or five different places. No sooner were we settled in one place then we were off, he was posted somewhere else. And the last one is in Birchington, where I had just found a very nice place to stay when he was posted again, so at that time I'd had enough and I went back to stay with my parents in London, despite all the bombs, flying bombs and rockets and whatever. And they lived in a block of flats but when the – when there was an air attack we went down into the basement where we thought at the time it was safer but it obviously wasn't. And from where they are, we could see the fires in the East End. And eventually the war finished, my husband was demobilised, he got – all he got for his five years of service, which incidentally he had to give up his studies as a – he was studying for a PhD and had to give that one up, and, er, which he went back to that later on.

But anyway, we got married and the first job he got was a teacher at – in Huddersfield at a technical college. And so, we were in Huddersfield for about two years, where we bought our very, very first house, a tiny, tiny little bungalow. **[00:10:06]** And my husband then decided he really wanted to do his Ph – finish his PhD, so he was at Durham University but we couldn't find anywhere to live in Durham, so we found somewhere in Newcastle because Newcastle was then part of the university, of Durham University. And I managed to find a – in Gosforth I think, the – one of the suburbs of Newcastle, I managed to find not exactly a flat but a couple of rooms and use of kitchen and bathroom, where we could stay with Tony, by that time was about – what was he? Five or something. So, Tony went to school there, for school. And I got a job as a dinner lady to get a bit of money and to get out and about. So, my husband eventually got – after two years he got his PhD and then we decided he'd get a job and he applied to various universities and he had a big choice. In the end he decided to accept Bristol University and so we managed again in Wiltshire to find a place to live, which was a big – a conversion of a very large manor house which once I think was occupied by the mayor of Wiltshire or – not the mayor of Wiltshire but of something or the other. And it was very inconvenient but we weren't fussy at all. So, we had a very large bedroom, a converted kitchen, but of course there was nothing, no fridge, no washing machine, nothing. **[00:12:00]** In the end we got a tiny, little tabletop fridge [laughs] because we needed somewhere. So, we spent two or three years in – no, we spent thirty– yeah, about three or four years there. And that – my younger son was born there, in Stratford-on-Avon. And after that he managed – my husband decided that this wasn't the job he wanted to do forever so he applied to the Civil Service and was accepted at the Ministry of Defence and where he spent many happy- I think- years. And we bought a house in Edgware, a brand new house, which was very, very badly built, and so badly built that we could hear the neighbours arguing and we could hear the dogs barking. And we could hear that the – the central heater installed which was in the attic and the vibration of the central heating [laughs] boil, whatever, went right into our house and we said we really couldn't stand it anymore. And so we finished up in Stanmore, where we've been ever since.

How many years have you been here?

We got here in ’66. So why we were here, well, my husband kept getting promotions which was very nice and then he got a temporary posting to Australia, Canberra, at the High Commission. And he was in intelligence, which of course I couldn't tell anybody and he – in fact he couldn't tell me anything. If somebody said what exactly does your husband do? I said, well, I can’t tell you because of course he had to sign the Secrets, er, whatever it’s called, you know, the, er – and even after he left he still couldn't tell anybody exactly what he was doing. **[00:14:04]** So, we became a member of the High Commission there. We were accepted as full diplomats and had all the diplomatic advantages and that's where I met all my ambassadors [laughs] and so on. And I probably can say that it probably was the best five years of my life because first of all, we finally didn't have to worry much about money, which before we always did have, and the social life was fantastic and Australia is a lovely country and we enjoyed – we enjoyed every minute of it. And in the end, we thought maybe we should stay here but we thought that life as non-diplomats wasn't going to be at – [laughs] the same- we probably wouldn't enjoy it, so we came back here. And that's it.

Wow. You raced through your life amazingly, without any questions. I would like to go back to the beginning a little bit, if I may. So, it is amazing, you're born in 1919, so you do have some memories of Berlin in the ’20s, I mean which is [overtalking 00:15:11].

Well, I – I remember the [clears throat] *Kurfürstendamm* and I remember, [clears throat] as I put in my biography, I remember visiting a café with little tables and little lamps and little telephones. And you could sort of look around and I think each table had a number and you said, I'll ring up number five over there, and number – and so you had a – so it was a sort of perfect place for people picking each other up, I should imagine. [Laughs] I don't know whether that was the idea but it probably was. We had a little garden somewhere, well, allotment really, which was used more for picnics and things, very –

Schrebergarten?

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I remember going to the swimming pool quite a lot because there was – because the weather was quite hot and of course in the winter the tennis – I could play tennis as well. **[00:16:07]** In the winter the tennis courts became ice rinks, so we went skating

there. Yeah, I remember my parents sending me to, er, dance, er, learn dancing. And I remember that I was even shortsighted then and I found it difficult because when people came and winked at you and I couldn't see, I'd just see them [laughs] try to ask you to dance with them and I couldn't see and it quite embarrassing.

Ballroom dancing?

Yeah [laughs]. Yeah, ballroom dancing.

Were they happy then to go to dance classes?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And of course before Hitler came, I mean we had nice birthday parties and so on. We went on holiday.

Where did you go on holiday?

Well, my grandparents, one set of grandparents lived in Karlsruhe and the other one lived in Darmstadt, so we usually went to Switzerland and – but on the way down, my father, who was then working for the paint family – the paint firm, my father had a car so we went down by car and we usually stopped off to see the grandparents. And I remember the grandparents, the Darmstadt ones were obviously very, very old-fashioned. He was a sea merchant before he retired and lived in a sort of over-furnished flat full of little, er, you know, souven– well, it could be souvenirs but little bits of porcelain and stuff like that.

What were their names, do you remember their names? The grandparents.

Yeah, they were the Kassels.

Kassels. First name?

Zacharias, his name.

Zacharias, Zacharias.

Her name was Anna. And the ones in Karlsruhe, he was one – he used to have a department store in Strasbourg. **[00:18:07]** And of course when Strasbourg kept changing the nationality, it was [inaudible] was German. And when it became French again they were chucked out, so they went to live in Karlsruhe. And they were called Erlenbach and he was called Oskar and –

They had a department store?

Yeah.

What was the department store called in Strasbourg?

The funny thing, when I went a couple of years – no, about five or six years ago I went to Strasbourg with one of my sons and his family, I actually saw it. It's now a block of flats. It's become a block of flats. It was right in the centre. Well, presumably it was called Erlenbach but I don't know what it was called. But then they went to live in Karlsruhe. And that's – we spent our holidays in Switzerland, usually in a hotel for a couple of weeks. It was what one did in those days. You stayed put, you didn't travel around. You just stayed in one place and because the rooms were without, er, you were lucky if you had a basin in it but you certainly had to go out and maybe queue for the loo. And –

What, so summer holidays, you –

Huh?

On summer holidays you –

Yeah, the summer holidays. Once or twice, I went with my father, who was a very keen skier, skiing in Czechoslovakia, which was nice.

And can I ask you, speaking about the grandparents and that links me to the question, being Jewish or not knowing that you were Jewish, what were the grandparents? Was there any indication that they were Jewish?

No. No. Nothing.

No. So tell us a little bit about it.

No, nothing at all. I mean we never actually – basically, we didn't talk about religion. There was no – but my parents didn't talk about politics. It was – I don't really know what we spoke about, probably childish things [laughs]. **[00:20:02]** And the grandparents both seemed very, very old, probably weren't but they were very old and they didn't really know what to do with children [laughs].

But again, you had no indication that they were keep –

No, no.

But they were Jewish, the four –

Yeah, of course they were, totally Jewish, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Then my mother had a sister who was a bit of a bohemian. Apparently – again, I only heard this later on – she was – had a lot of lovers and so on. But on Kristallnacht she committed suicide. And my father actually had gone down to see her because my mother was very worried about her so he was caught up, I think it was in Munich, caught up in Kristallnacht. But –

What was your mother's – your aunt's name?

Hanna. Hanna Erlenbach. And she was a very attractive woman, 'cos I've seen pictures of her. And while I was still in Switzerland, I think it must have been in '38 or something, my father was caught and sent to Dachau. And then his biography – I mean in his biography he tells us what that was like. My mother, I don't know how she managed it. She managed to get

him free, probably bribed [inaudible] and they eventually came to England with very little money but most of the furniture, which of course was huge because the Germans, well, one had big furniture, which was totally unsuitable for the flat they finally rented. And so they were – they had problems really acclimatising themselves to life in England but in the end they managed, they coped. **[00:22:04]**

So was he arrested after Kristallnacht or on Kristallnacht, your father?

He what?

Was he arrested on Kristallnacht and sent to Dachau?

No. No, not on Kristallnacht. No, it – but at a time later, it was it, yeah. Yeah.

But at that time, you were not in Germany anymore?

No, no. I've already got – heard things sort of second-hand when – of course had no emails, got a letter, occasionally a phone call, but phone calls were again something exotic, so I didn't know about this for a long, long time. So, I never really heard the details. But there again, my son, the one in Norfolk, who is interested in the family, my father brought a biography in German which he then translated into English quite badly. And my daughter-in-law put it back into proper English and typed it out. And he talked about his life afterwards and before.

We'll come back to it. Just let's go just a little bit more back. What other memories have – you said you lived in Wilmersdorf. What was the address, please?

Hmm?

Where did you live in Wilmersdorf?

Well, I lived at Xantener Straße. I lived there, which is not far from a little open space, a little- Olivaer Platz where you could – which had trees and lawns and so on and people sat,

went there for a walk and so on. We walked to school. Well, of course what else was there? [Laughs] yeah. No. I mean there were trams and things. I know a tram went through the – through the road. I'm trying to think what –

Could you describe – was it a apartment you lived in?

Yeah, it was a flat. It was a flat.

A flat. Which floor? ***[00:24:02]***

We were on the second floor. And there was a yard behind, with another set of flats at the back and somehow the flats at the back were considered inferior to the ones in the front, so one had very little to do with each other. So I don't even know who lived there. But I mean I lived in this flat for what, fifteen years or something but I never knew anybody in the flat behind because they were – [laughs]. I don't know. Probably perfectly nice people but I never met them.

And what sort of area was Wilmersdorf? What – who –

It was a – a nice area. I think it was considered a very good area of Berlin, yes. In fact, when I went to Berlin, you know, I was invited back by the Germans and I went back and I went – I wanted to see the flat but it's now become a doctors' surgery, so I never actually saw it again. I mean I saw the house but – it's still there, it's still the way I remembered it but it had a lift. In fact, it had of course central heating and in the winter, we had some windows which were kept in the cellar which were put in to make it into double or almost treble glazing, so the flat – Berlin was very, very cold then. I don't know, it probably still is [laughs] in the winter. But with the help of these extra windows, which were taken down in the summer and put back in the – into the cellar. And –

And you said you had – that you had a sister.

Yeah.

So did you share a room or did you have your –

Yeah, we shared. We shared a room. But unfortunately during the vital years, I was either in Switzerland or in Cambridge and she was in Edinburgh and I don't know, we – we never seemingly got very close. **[00:26:06]** And I suppose the closest we got when she was very, very ill with cancer and I saw her quite a lot then. But before that – and she, as I said, was in Edinburgh, went to school in Edinburgh, had quite a better – probably a better education than I did because I missed out on education altogether. And she went to Canada for a bit, hoping for a better life but she didn't stay for very long, came back, worked at a firm of builders, Laing's or something in Mill Hill for a bit. Never got married, never had a proper boyfriend, and died of kidney cancer when she was about forty-three or something. And I had quite a few friends in Germany but the non-Jewish ones all fell by the wayside, which was of course quite a wake-up call for me.

What was it like for you? I mean at what point – you said you didn't know you were Jewish. At what point you under – did you –

Well, at – I think it was my thirteenth or fourteenth birthday, you see, when they suddenly all decided that they could – for some reason or the other they couldn't come to the birthday party. And it was only then that my parents told me and I didn't even know what it meant, you know –

What did they tell you exactly? What did they –

Well, they probably said, well, we – I can't [laughs] – I can't really remember exactly. I can only guess what they told me but it was quite a shock that – I mean I was like everybody else, you know, enjoying the same things, doing the same things, eating the same things, because we ate what everybody else ate, pork, sausages, the lot, whatever. **[00:28:10]** And then suddenly, as I said, well, they got slightly different from us, you know, they – hmm, I suppose they went back a little bit over the history and so on but I don't think I really took it in very much. And – yes.

It must have been quite a shock for you.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Did you –

And then because after that I led this sort of very disjointed life, you know. There was really no continuity until basically we came to get this house in Edgware, only after that, that we live a proper family life. And before that, everything was sort of slightly 'what will tomorrow bring?' kind of feeling.

Precarious?

Yeah. Yeah.

Do you remember – because I distinctly remember, I have another interviewee, didn't know she was Jewish, and she wanted to – the way she found out, she wanted to join the BDM, you know, and there were problems. And then she was told she had one Jewish grandparents, then it became two Jewish grandparents, and then at the end it was four great-grandparents.

Oh, I see. Well, I –

Do you remember anything like that?

No, I had really no problems. It obviously didn't worry me too much, except that my life was changing sort of more or less overnight. But I mean the fact that I was different, I said 'I'm not different. I'm still exactly the same, so why do people think I'm different?'

And do you remember any particular friend who you – who didn't come to see you any more or –

No.

No?

No. No. I mean there were one or two who stayed loyal but I suppose these were all sort of people you felt you wanted to invite because they'd invited you, you know, instead of having twelve girls you probably only had four or five, you see, that sort of thing. **[00:30:15]**

And this one would have been – so your birthday is in December.

Yes.

So when was – would that have been, when people didn't show up?

That would have been about '34 –'34, something like that, yeah.

Hmm. And then you said you had to leave school. And when was that? When –

Well, that was probably in '35 when I was chucked out of the school. Well, chucked out [laughs]. A polite letter, sorry, etc, etc, etc. And as I said, '35 or maybe early '36, I can't remember. Because I went to Switzerland in- I would say about July 1936, something like that, so it would have been end of '35, early '36, because I wasn't at that school for much more than six months, I seem to remember.

And I mean you were teenaged at that time, from '33, between '33 and '36. Do you remember yourself experiences of, well, anti-Semitism or –

Er, no.

Were you targeted? Were you targeted?

I think I'm a – sort of quite an optimistic kind of person and more positive, so although I lost friends I still had friends, I still could do things. And obviously, my parents were fantastic and I still blame myself for not being grateful enough for what they did for me because they – I must have cost them quite a lot of money and forethought to try and prepare me for life elsewhere, you know, a life, a sort of cosseted life at home, suddenly being on my own two feet, coping on my own two feet, but I've become quite – quite an independent kind of person, which I think all stems back from that. **[00:32:32]**

Do you remember discussing it? Did they say now it's time, it's better if you go to Switzerland? How did that topic come up or –

No, I don't think I remember discussing it but I think usually they said, you are going to Switzerland. They said – well, I think obviously the talk must have been around that we can't stay, we can't stay here forever, it's dangerous because there are signs that, you know, they'd heard about, you know, the usual kind of word of mouth, we have heard what could happen, so I think we would like you – to prepare you for going somewhere else. Yeah, and they did – obviously their flat was for sale.

And do you remember what were you thinking at the time? Were you happy to –

No, I was very homesick at the beginning. I wasn't happy at all. But it was only of course much, much later that I realised the sacrifices they've made and I felt I wasn't really showing my gratitude sufficiently to them.

Well, at the time – and you were – how old were you when you then left to Switzerland? How old were you? Were you fourteen or –

How old was I when I had my –

When you left to Switzerland.

I was about fifteen and a half, sixteen, yeah.

Very young.

Yeah, yeah. And of course, in those days you were much younger than you would be now at fifteen, and now at fifteen you're practically grown up, you know exactly what's going on, you know, about how much this costs and how much that costs and, you know, what the future – what am I going to do, what am I going to do with myself. **[00:34:20]** In those days you just let things drift by.

Yes, you were more protected.

Yeah. Yeah. And I certainly let things drift. I didn't ask enough questions. That's all in my afterthought now, you know, but nowadays people would ask questions, why, why, why are you doing that? And I mean you didn't really sort of argue with your parents. Your parents knew best and that was it. And probably in the end they have known best.

And what about their own situation? I mean your father's work and their friends.

Well, yeah, their situation wasn't good because they had of course for a while – he lost the job he had, he was doing as a *Regierungsbaumeister* and he'd been working for this Swiss firm for a bit. And yes, obviously they were worried but they never – of course I was in Switzerland and they never told me that they worried. And then of course, when they arrived in England, I don't really know what help they had but maybe the Swiss firm did help them. But he continued trying to sell these paints and things. And they made friends with other refugees of course and were – I mean East Finchley essentially, I think was – had quite a lot of- it must have been really difficult. And during the war my mother made felt animals, you know, giraffes and zebras and things, she bought felt and made and stuffed them and actually sold them to some of the big firms, so that made a – so they managed some money and he got some compensation eventually. **[00:36:16]** But instead of getting a regular pension he I think got a lump sum, which I think he later regretted. He said 'It would have been better if I had kept the pension.' But somehow, they coped.

What about their parents? What happened to them?

Eh?

Their parents?

Well, all of them except one of my grandmothers died before the war, before it all happened. The mother – grandmother was caught and she was in a concentration camp in France, Gurs.

Gurs?

And later on, when my husband and I went on holiday in France we, well, we were in that area and we happened to find then there was still a big plaque there saying 'This is where the Gurs concentration camp was.' And it was – it's quite high up and it gets very cold. How she coped, I don't know, but she survived. And then she came to actually live with my parents for a bit. But my parents' flat was very, very small and she wasn't happy and of course she didn't know anybody, so after a while they found a care home in Germany where she spent the last few years of her life and where she was happy. But the rest of them of course they all escaped this by dying before.

Hmm. So, who was – what was the name of the one who came to England? The grandmother.

Well, both grandmothers were called Anna [laughs].

Oh, they were both called Anna?

Yeah [laughs]. Yeah. She was called – even –

And you're Annalis, so –

[Laughs] Yeah. She was Anna. She was Erlenbach. Anna Erlenbach, yeah. **[00:38:06]** And no, she was – definitely wasn't happy. And of course, she had, er, I think she was ninety-one

when she died, so she must have been in her late eighties or early – and it's quite difficult to find yourself in this kind of situation, although anything after a concentration camp would have been better.

And she had lost her daughter, who said – who committed suicide.

Yeah, the daughter was the one – the other daughter committed suicide.

Were there any other children or just –

No. There was – no. My father had a stepbrother who emigrated to America at some point, I don't think I ever met him, and then went to I think was it LA and they lost touch with each other. I don't think – the stepbrother was quite a bit older. I think the – my grandfather's first wife must have died, hence the older brother. And there was quite a big gap, so they lost touch. I don't know what happened to them.

Okay. At least do you know how your parents met and where they met or how they –

Well, they knew each other because they somehow, I'm not quite sure, they were somehow related to each other. They might have been second or third, fourth cousins or something. But there's a connection in the family. And I think in this album my father's got a family tree and it might very well tell you. So they knew each other. And I think my mother's parents weren't very happy about it, you know, but they got married and in fact, she lived happily ever [laughs] –

Why not?

Yeah, yeah.

Why not?

I don't know. I don't know. That – probably they had somebody else in mind or something. Just as my parents-in-law had somebody else in mind for my husband [laughs]. **[00:40:04]** And they certainly weren't happy. It took a long time for us to get together and be on really, really good terms [laughs].

Did they object to you because you were a refugee or –

Oh, German, refugee, Jewish, and of course I wasn't Kathlyn, because Kathlyn was the one they'd earmarked for him.

Kathlyn?

Kathlyn, yeah [laughs]. In fact, at times they tried to call me Kathlyn and I said 'No, I'm not Kathlyn.' 'Oh, I'm sorry.' [Laughs]

Where were they – where did they –

[Laughs] They lived in Stockton-on-Tees.

They had different expectations?

Absolutely, yeah.

Uh-huh. But you managed it.

[Both talking at once] I managed it [laughs].

How did you manage that? You...

Okay? That's my story.

Okay. Just some questions again going back to Berlin. Are there memories you have about, I don't know, did you go to the opera, music? What –

Yes. The very first opera I went to was the 'Countess Maritza' in Berlin and that was an eye-opener. That was a present. Well, of course, we went to this occasional cinema. I remember seeing the very, very, very first television. It was in a shop window where you could – they had this very tiny, little place and I could see something happening behind that television. Oh, that will never catch on [laughs]. What else do I remember? Well, I remember going skiing in Czechoslovakia, which was lovely. And I did go a bit of – I did a little bit of skiing when we were in Switzerland but not much. Never since, but my family now has taken it up in a big way, [laughs] except this year because there's no snow. **[00:42:00]**

But you – and you said your sister was four years younger.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

So, when it was decided later that you would go, there was no question, she was too young to go with you or –

Well, I – I was in Switzerland then and I was very – I suppose in their mind, halfway there, you see, and she – my sister was still living at home. And as I said earlier, in those days at sixteen, where we – you were still a child, you weren't grown up or – no, she was – she would have been thirteen or twelve, so she was still very much dependent on my parents. She wouldn't have gone off by – on her own.

Hmm. And then how did – how did she manage to come to the UK?

Well, she came with my parents also in '39. She would have been sixteen then. Yeah, she would have been – she would have been –

And what's the visa? You said – do you know how they managed to get a visa to the UK?

I cannot remember any of the paperwork. I must have had – because it was all arranged by my parents and they just said, well, you're catching this train and you're – and you will be met in London and you'll be then put on a train for Cambridge and it was all organised by them. I had nothing to – well, I – at nineteen I was still a child. I'd never done anything on my own and I was still dependent on other people telling me what to do.

Despite few years you had then in Switzerland by yourself?

Well, I was – in Geneva I was on my own but even then my parents had organised it, organised the school, they'd organised everything there.

And could they come to visit you at all? Or could you go back to Berlin?

Well, while I was in Neuveville at this commercial college I think I saw them – I saw them once because they had their usual holiday in Switzerland. But I've never been back to Berlin during that period. **[00:44:00]**

They thought it was too dangerous?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And how did you feel? I mean you went to commercial college and to this household school that you were given the skills, let's say, was – it was clear for emigration I assume?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

How did you feel about it? Were you interested in learning how to cook and –

I – I don't know. As I said, I was still very, very childish, I just accepted this and I said, okay, it might be useful but I don't think I felt anything in particular. Well, I felt glad, I've got – I've got a certificate to show for it. But I still wasn't – I still wasn't independent then. It was really only in Cambridge that I became my own person.

And were there any other refugees in Switzerland you met?

There was one – I'm trying to think. I think there were – there was one person but I didn't get on with her [laughs]. I made some Swiss friends but I didn't seem to get on with her. But in Cambridge I had a very good friend who actually also married a – one of the boys she got to know in Cambridge and emigrated to America. And I met her once when we were in America, so I met her once and she seemed perfectly happy. But I don't know where she came from. I think Wiesbaden or somewhere like that.

And can you describe a little bit when you left Berlin? How did you get to – can you describe the journey leaving Berlin?

Well, I think my parents took me. We went – I think what happened was, we went on a holiday as usual and on the way back – I knew it was happening – and they dropped me off and with all the bits and pieces required. And I felt – I think – I remember feeling very, very upset about this. **[00:46:02]** And as I said, I was homesick for quite a long time but then after a while I, you know, you go with the [laughs] – yeah. But once before all this happened, my parents wanted a holiday on their own, so they put both my sister and myself into a *Kinderheim* for holiday in a place called Hindelang which was a very pretty place [laughs]. Once we drove through it a few year – many years ago [laughs] and it's another place I hated because I – and I was homesick as well, although my sister was there but I was homesick and I didn't like it at all. Hmm, I remember that.

So, in Switzerland, when were you dropped off there?

In Switzerland, that would have been in '35, '36, something like that. Yeah, I – no, it was '36. '36, yeah. But I was in Switzerland for just two and a half years.

And was there part of you which was relieved to be outside Germany and mostly- or not?

I don't remember feeling very much at all, quite honestly. I think I was a very selfish kind of person in those days, you know, I thought to myself, well, I'm okay. You know, I think that was me then, thinking back. Of course, the way I feel now, I think I ought to have felt differently but I didn't, as far as I remember. I think I was maybe a bit upset because life was changing around me. As I said, before that everything was different and I didn't know what was going to happen tomorrow. But basically, I sort of tried to put up with things as they were, you know, you adjust. **[00:48:01]** But as far as feeling concerned, as I said, I think I was quite selfish.

You were also a teenager and you had to get on with it.

Yeah. I mean basically I missed my – when I look at the teenagers now, I said I missed out on all that [laughs]. But of course, in those days I think teenagers didn't have lives like that, did they?

Probably not.

No [laughs].

And was there anything – you said you could – you had your own luggage. So, what did you bring? What did you – anything of importance?

[Sighs] Look, just remember how long ago all that is [laughs]. Do you know what I mean? You might interview people that only have to remember fifty years back but I've got to remember when I was eighty, eighty-odd years back [laughs].

More than that. I'm only asking you because I see you've got such a good memory. Otherwise, I wouldn't ask you [laughs].

I don't remember. Well, presumably I had some luggage because I remember I – when I came to England, I still had a gramophone, for instance, [laughs] with my favourite records [laughs].

And what were those records?

I remember that I definitely had my gramophone still because I remember taking it on a punt on one of these outings, you know, playing. But I know one of my favourites was Nat Gonella. Ever heard of him? An American negro but it – I mean [laughs] –

Nat...?

Nat Gonella. Quite well-known at the time. Probably singing spirituals or something, I don't know. But – so yes, I remember that I still had that when we get to Cambridge. So I don't know what else I could have had, you know, a hand luggage. I can't have had much more. Obviously I had very little. And in Cambridge of course, during the war I, as an au pair, all I got was a bit of pocket money and once I was on my own, I earned very, very, very little and I had to weigh up whether to buy some food or buy a new pair of panties or something, underwear [laughs]. **[00:50:06]**

So let's come to the UK. What – can you describe the journey from Switzerland to coming to England?

Well, all I remember was that I crossed the Channel to- it wasn't Dover, it wasn't Calais-Dover. What's the other one? Anyway, it was a longer Channel journey and the Channel was very, very rough and it was a horrible journey. And at the other end I caught a train to London and in London there was a cousin of my mother's, quite a wealthy woman, and her husband used to own a cigarette factory in Berlin or something. And quite a snobbish woman and she met me at the station in London and thinking back, that you would have thought that she would have invited me back to her house – she lived in Hampstead – and say, well, you've had a nasty journey, come and spend the night here. Nothing. She put me straight on the train to Cambridge. And in Cambridge I was met by the old lady, who was about as I said, fifty [laughs]. Son's secretary – the son was a, as I said, was a professor at university and her – his secretary met me and took me to the old lady. And the old lady, Mrs Charvet, took me

to, took – showed me her room. Very nice. Nice house by the river. And it was a very nice reception and as I said, she was very kind and –

What was her name again, sorry?

Charvet.

Charvet?

Yeah.

How do you spell that?

Well, C-H-A-R-V-E-T. It's a French name. **[00:52:04]** And I must say she was very nice. I mean she wasn't actually used to people like me. And she had – she already had a refugee, a much older woman, who was in the kitchen and she was a sort of general maid. She did everything. And I was almost like a visitor because as I said, I helped serving at table when she had parties. And I remember one occasion when one of the guests gave me a tip and I felt very humiliated then and I remember [sounds upset] I felt, well, you're working here, you're not a guest. And so yes, she did quite a lot of entertaining, so I helped her.

What was her back – was she married or she lived by herself?

Well, she was a widow and obviously very well-off and she had this professor son and obviously, yeah, plenty of money, a nice house and as far as I could judge then because I probably couldn't – nicely furnished. I couldn't judge.

But did you feel they took you in, in order to help or they needed – do you see what I mean?

No, I think they took me in because they wanted to help, not because they needed help. They really took me in and I felt it was a great kindness because it was the – an easy introduction to what was quite a tough life afterwards because once she left, as I said she went to somewhere

safer and shut up the house, I was taken over by another professor's family. There were two children and there I was put in the attic, sharing the room with some other maid or something, and I had to do all the horrible jobs, sort of cleaning a fire, ashes and so on, emptying pots and whatever. You know, a nasty job. And I still remember one day, because my English wasn't very good then and I – she said, 'Well, you can go out for a couple of hours.' No, 'You can go out for a couple of hours.' **[00:54:10]** And of course, a couple of hours, I didn't know what it meant, so I was out for about the whole afternoon and she said, 'I said a couple of hours.' And I said, 'Well, that was it.' 'No, a couple of hours. Two hours.' And so, I was told off. And of course, that was the sort of job where you had one half afternoon and every second Sunday or something like that. So, it was really quite horrible. And then when my parents came over and my mother decided that – she let my father, you know, find something to do in London. She came to Cambridge and she got herself also a job, a live-in somewhere, a live-in maid. And then she decided that it would be best if we both lived together, so we shared a room and we both, as I said, we both went out to, cleaning. And I don't know how clean we were but anyway, [laughs] I know how – I've got a cleaner now and she certainly isn't very good [laughs]. And I said I hope I was better than that when I did cleaning [laughs].

That must have meant that even if you don't know it you must have had a domestic service visa when you came.

I must have done. I must have done, yes. I don't know anything about – I don't know anything about any of the paperwork. It was all done above my head.

But if you came straight to those positions, it is very likely.

Yeah.

So, you had the contrast between the two families at the beginning.

Yeah.

And what was the – what were they called, the second family? Unless you don't want to say, which is okay.

Well, that's another name, at the moment I have – I've forgotten it.

Okay, so that's – it's no problem.

Yeah, but it's [laughs] – but I mean it's just as well I wrote my biography when I could still remember everything but that's the one thing that I'm a bit worried about, that I'm forgetting names. **[00:56:16]** Names of towns and people, I forget that, but I mean everything else is all fairly clear but I'm a little bit worried about that.

But were there – the second family, was a English family or –

English, Jewish. I think they were called Waldorf.

Oh, so the second family was Jewish. The first one, not?

The first one, nothing. No, the first lady wasn't Jewish. The second one I think were, although it wasn't obvious, you, it might have been a similar kind of Jewishness as I was. And anyway, they helped me. They – yeah. And –

And were there other domestic staff? Were there other people in the house apart from you?

No, it was my mother who worked for them. I don't think – I don't there was. I don't think there was, the Waldorfs.

So, the Waldorfs, were you two together? Or –

No, the Waldorfs actually helped me get the first job and they also helped my mother to find the second job where she was living-in somewhere. And they were very helpful and I think

they helped us to get a room where – which we shared. And then we went cleaning to various people. Various people.

Right. But I meant the family where you had the bad experience, where you lived in the attic.

Yes, well, that's the name [laughs] I'm trying to –

Okay, don't worry. Don't worry.

That's the name I'm trying to remember.

So, who were they?

He was a professor, a Cambridge professor of some sort. And they treated me like a slut, really, in a way.

So they're not understanding of where you came from or what – that you were in –

No, no, no, no.

A refugee or –

No.

And were there any other people working when you were there? ***[00:58:00]***

I don't think – I think I was the – I was probably the only one, yeah.

And how long did you stay there roughly or –

[Sighs] I remember I absolutely hated there. Probably not more than three months or something because then I moved in with my mother, we moved in together and did this

charring. And then when my mother – when my father was – established himself in London, we lived in Belsize Park, a flat there, rented.

Where in Belsize Park? Where did you live?

That I can't remember. It was a flat. It was small. Just two rooms or something. And –

A lot of- many refugees lived – there was something called Belsize Court, it's like a –

Well, we might have very well – we might have been there. Yeah.

Opposite the station there.

Yeah, it might have – it might very well have been that. And so then –

Gilling Court I guess is one of the other ones, yeah.

And so then I moved into a room by myself and did, as I said, various jobs. I worked in an antique shop, I worked at a dressmaker's, I worked in an accountant's office and – which was quite good but the accountant became a little bit too intimate so I stopped that. And then I finished up typing things out from the Gutenberg Bible at the Cambridge University Library. And then during that period I think, as I said, I had a very good social life and I met my husband and then I got married.

And sorry to come back to that bit about being too comfortable, the accountant. Do you feel being a refugee and being a domestic, do you feel you were in a vulnerable position?

Yes. Yes.

And do you feel that there were people there taking advantage of you?

Yes. Yes. Well, at the time I felt they were being helpful because, you know, I needed – I needed them, I need some – some people to employ me. **[01:00:05]** I mean of course, it's quite true they took advantage of me because I have no idea whether I was paid the right amount which I should have had. I have no idea. I mean I paid – I got paid just enough to survive. I mean fortunately, as I said, I was a pretty girl, I had – I got boys taking me out for meals and things and I was very grateful. I mean [laughs] – well, when I say meals, there was not much choice there, you know, soup and potatoes or something but at least I didn't – I didn't have to pay for it.

Because this is a topic I think, you know, when people talk about it, I bet one can't quite imagine, you know, that you were very vulnerable I guess, you know.

Well, I was because I was very naive, I was – I wasn't really grown up, I was very, very childish still, [laughs] childlike, I mean I think as probably girls of my age were in those days because they'd been protected by their parents. And as I was, I mean I had to make no decisions. In fact all the decisions were made for me. And then suddenly there I was, having to actually make decisions.

And even they were here they couldn't really help you I guess, your parents.

No, they couldn't because they had really no money either. They had problems themselves. No, they couldn't help me.

So the situation you said with the accountant. And what do you do? You could just leave the job or if there was somebody –

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I decided that I didn't really want that – I mean he was a married man and so on [laughs]. I said no, no thanks [laughs].

Hmm. But that also happened, you know, to children in Kindertransport families. Again, we don't know enough about it.

I – yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I think there were, you know, some people had bad experiences.

Hmm.

What I wanted to ask you, so do you remember doing – being in this domestic role and doing all these things? ***[01:02:07]*** *How did you feel about it? I mean how –*

I hated it. Absolutely hated it. But [coughs] – but as I said, that's when I made the decision that I couldn't stand that anymore and that was actually probably [laughs] the first decision I'd made in my life [laughs]. A real decision, yes. But then after that of course, I'm quite good at making decisions now.

Until then you didn't have to make a decision.

Yeah. Yeah.

Your parents did it.

Yeah.

And tell me, when you – when did you then see your parents first when they came over? Can you remember that moment?

Well, I suppose that I saw them in Cambridge. Yes, it was of course a great pleasure to see them and, you know, I think we all burst into tears and so on because even then I didn't quite know what they'd escaped from and that something – all I know is that- things had been really very, very dangerous in Germany. And yes, it was a sheer delight to see them again.

Did you pick them up from somewhere? Or how did they arrive?

I couldn't pick anything up [laughs].

You were working.

I couldn't pick [laughs] – no, I think it's possible that – while I was in Cambridge- I mean I know I shouldn't have done but again it was my decision, I couldn't afford to do it any other way, I hitchhiked to London to see my parents. And I think that's how I met them for – met for the first time and then my mother decided to come to Cambridge as well.

And you told us your father was imprisoned in –

Dachau.

In Dachau.

Yeah.

Did he talk about it at the time? ***[01:04:01]*** *Do you – did he look different to you?*

No. No, he didn't talk – I know he'd been somewhere horrible but he didn't – he didn't talk about it. But it's – as I said, in his biography he describes it.

And how long was he in Dachau for, do you know?

[Sighs] It must have been four or five months.

So quite a long time.

Yeah.

Did he talk about it?

No. No, he didn't talk about it.

And his memoirs, what [overtalking 01:04:25].

His memoirs, he wrote it all down, just like I – if I'm upset about anything I write it down. I've got it in my diary, I've kept a diary religiously. You know, when we – when my husband was posted to Australia I decided to- Well, I had a diary as a child of course, you know, 'seeing Hans today' [laughs]. You know, boys or something. But when we went – before we went to Australia I decided that yes, I've got to write it down and that was in '72 and I've written in my diary ever since. And when – if I'm upset about anything I write it down. It's like my father confessor.

But not when you – you don't have it from when you arrived?

No. Unfortunately I didn't. Unfortunately I didn't.

That would be really interesting.

But I tell all my family. I said, 'Look. Write things down and however trivial it seems, because you will find it interesting when you're older.' And one of them said, 'Well, I started it but I couldn't really keep it up' and so they don't. None of them do. So, I'm the only one who writes things down. And I can tell you what the weather was like in September 1981.

So, what did your father say about his time in Dachau, in his memoirs?

Well, it was pretty horrible.

Don't move now, don't move now. [Overtalking 01:05:55].

Yeah. No, I can look it up. Well, it just – conditions, you know, what they ate, how they slept and so on. It was quite horrible. **[01:06:04]** And the other people as well, you see, they weren't just Jews, there were other people as well.

And do you know at all – because I know some people were in camps, they came to Kitchener Camp. Does that mean anything? Did he have to go – when he arrived, did he have to go anywhere else or he –

I honestly don't remember. I don't remember. But presumably he had to be examined and questioned about things because I mean during that period it was so easy to get spies in, wasn't it, to get Nazis in to – pretending to be Jewish refugees.

But maybe do you think they got a domestic visa? I mean you said your mother worked as a –

I have no – as I say, I don't – I have no idea about it.

And again, how did they bring your – your sister came with them?

Yeah, yeah. Well, she – of course she was only twelve or thirteen then.

Yes, but they didn't stay together?

Well, she then – as I said, they had somehow or the other made friends with somebody in Edinburgh who – a woman in Edinburgh. I think she was a Quaker. Somehow, they got together with a Quaker who are known to be very helpful. So, she – this woman was married to either the headmaster or one of the teachers at Heriot College which is quite a well-known college. And so, they invited my sister to stay with them and go to that school. So as I said, she got this education there.

To be fostered or –

Yeah, more or less. Yeah, yeah. So she spent most of the war years in Edinburgh.

And how did she get on with them or –

What, with the people in Edinburgh?

Yeah.

Well, obviously she was very grateful and she – I think she was happy there. I mean on the whole she was not a very happy person but I think she was happy there.

Hmm, because I am trying to find out whether – I guess she was young, you know, that was a separation as well, I mean –

Well, the thing is, she wasn't very – she wasn't very healthy. I mean she had I think at – from birth onwards she had kidney problems. In the end she got cancer of the kidney. Maybe there was a connection, maybe it was just a coincidence. **[01:08:20]** But she hadn't been very, very healthy and so she wasn't a very happy person, unlike me, who – on the whole, I'm positive and optimistic and she was much more on the other side. But she seemed happy in Edinburgh.

So – but it broke up the family I guess, you know, for so many people.

Yeah.

Even when the parents came, you couldn't keep the children because you had to work or – and do you –

Yeah, yeah. Well, it's probably she was better off there than going to school in Belsize Park or somewhere else.

Yes. And did you see her at all in that time?

Very little I thought because by that time I [laughs] was married and we were travelling around, you know, [laughs] so I didn't see much of her then.

What did your parents think of getting married at – you were quite –

But she was – me getting married?

You, yes.

They didn't mind. I mean they knew that I was pregnant when I was – got married and said, well, why not, he's a nice young man and he was good-looking and is a pilot. Okay, it could be dangerous but yeah, you know, they were quite happy. They got on actually very well. And they got on very much better with him that I got with his parents [laughs].

And you were just twenty-one when you got married?

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Hmm. And was that a sort of culture shock for you? I mean you said the parents were not happy but –

Well, it was a culture shock. It really was because – I mean they were nice enough people, very conventional. At least I thought they were conventional because, you know, best clothes on Sunday and a special meal on Sunday, maybe it was some chicken or the other. **[01:10:03]** But later it turned out, and it was actually a few years after my husband died – he died twelve years ago – when we discovered that there was a – that they had another baby, a girl, who suffered from – what is it, that disease they called, er –

Down's syndrome?

No, [laughs] not Alzheimer's as a baby. What is this, this disease that makes you sort of not grow up? Anyway, they put this child into a home, never visited her, nothing. So, it was an heir hunter who discovered that there was a little bit of money at large and would find the heir. So, they first got in touch with my son, Stephen and said, 'Are you related to Maurice Callender?' And Steven said 'Yes. What's it all about?' And he found out that this little girl

who had this mental thing had been in a home and left something like £5000 or £6000. I don't know how. Presumably she got an allowance in the home. And then he said, 'Well, the heir would be my mother.' And so, I had a long correspondence with them and I had to provide birth certificate, marriage certificates and everything else. And the – in the end I got the £6000.

Your mother-in-law?

At that – what – my mother and father-in-law had this child.

Yes. So, the heir would be your mother- in- law?

No, the heir would have been me because no – there – everybody else was dead.

Right, so it's you, yes. Yes.

Yeah, yeah. So, I got the £6000 and I took the family to a nice hotel for a weekend, so we – but – so they had kept that secret. **[01:12:06]**

Family secret.

Yeah. So, they weren't as conventional as all that. But very, very conventional. And of course, they hated everything foreign and foreign – horrible, foreign food, horrible foreign this, that and the other, and of course particularly Jews and Germans together – no [laughs].

What, so not an easy situation to be in.

Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

But eventually did they accept you?

Eventually. Well, they had to because I was there [laughs]. And yes, of course, they accepted me eventually and I accepted them [laughs]. I mean they moved out from this house. Eventually they moved to Scarborough and had a better house and they had a better kind of life and became – yeah, became family. But at first, it was hard going [laughs]. But fortunately lived such a long way away, so I didn't really [laughs] – didn't really mind that much.

And do you feel they represented a sort of part of British society, you know?

Yeah, I think that's – that sort of feeling was probably pretty general and probably still is. I mean up north, you know, [laughs] it probably is – it still is [laughs]. I wouldn't know [laughs].

But was it a problem for you? I mean how good was – how was your English when you actually arrived and by the time you married?

Well, fortunately, as I said, I didn't see them at first. In those days, travel – they couldn't afford to – you couldn't travel. I couldn't travel and I was, er, I really only saw them a few times during the war, a few times, and then afterwards I – I never stayed with them because when they first – when we first met them, they had a sort of outside loo, that kind of thing, and the baths in the front of the best room, in front of the fire, that sort of thing. **[01:14:06]** So, I felt, you know, what am I doing here? [Laughs] And then they moved and they – eventually they had a proper bathroom and they had a bit of a garden, they had, you know, so it became more up to date with things and – but we – I never stayed with them. We usually stayed in a hotel nearby.

Speaking of culture shock, what other culture shocks did you experience? When you came to England what was the most –

The food. The food. You know, I kept saying, I wish I could have a lovely sausage and saveloy and I said 'Well, that looks all right,' and then the first taste, [imitates disliking the taste] [laughs]. And on the whole I thought the food was horrible.

Compared to Germany and Switzerland?

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And of course they'd never heard of a lot of the things that were sort of common and garden food for us.

Such as...?

I mean even allowing for wartime, well, you know what the food – but probably even now in some of the places, you see. But – although now with a lot of foreign influence and Chinese, Indian and what have you – no, that was a culture shock.

What in particular? What do you remember? Which food? What was the worst or –

Whatever – it was – basically it was nothing really I enjoyed. You know, there were no lovely sauces, no, er – well, the one thing I liked, because [laughs] that's one thing my in-laws were good at, was Yorkshire puddings. And they specialised in Yorkshire puddings. And I must say, they did that very, very well. So, that was the one thing I enjoyed when I went to them [laughs]. But everything else, the meat, was tough, the meat was tasteless and I – yeah, it – I really hated it. [Laughs] I didn't like it.

And how did you manage with your husband? I mean, you came from very different backgrounds, you got married young.

Well, that was –

You became British.

Yeah, a bit of a job to educate him [laughs]. **[01:16:07]** But in the end, I mean he became – I mean he travelled quite a bit as part of his job, so he – yeah. No, no, he quite enjoyed the food I – because my food is still based on a lot of things I learnt when I was a child, you see, and when – what I learnt in Geneva, you know, and how to do things, you know.

For example, what do you cook? What is your continental cooking or –

Well, I like a lot of these Italian pasta foods, you know, I enjoyed that. But– oh, well, lots of stuff with mince, you know, mince balls, which I, you know, you can do mince in all sorts of things. And I remember that that's the sort of thing I introduced to my husband 'cos he – mince – 'That's mince.' I said, 'Well, you can make really some very nice things with mince.' So anyway, that was one example. And of course, sauces. You know, you have meat with nice sauces and maybe a bit of sherry or Grand Marnier or whatever in. But now actually you can eat very well in this country. But generally, you've got to pay for it, a lot.

And what was it like for you? You came, as I said, compared to other refugee, you became British early because of your marriage.

I became British automatic by marriage. Auto –

So you became British in '41?

Yes. Yes.

Yes. And was that important for you? Was –

Yes, I think it was because I didn't really want to be German any more. I mean once I began to realise what was happening and yes, I – that was important, yeah.

And do you remember, did you receive a passport? How does it – how did it work? It was automatic, so then –

Well, no, I didn't – we didn't need passports then because we weren't going anywhere. In fact, we didn't go anywhere [laughs]. **[01:18:09]** Well, my husband once he joined the civil service did quite a bit of travelling. But I think the first time I actually went abroad probably

wasn't till – I'm trying to think – '70-something. Er, yeah, not for many, many years anyway afterwards, yeah.

And I mean you were put in this position. You married young, you had a child, you were still young. How did you manage with little money?

[Sighs] By being very, very careful, you see. As I said, I am financially on the dot. I – even now I keep book and so on. So, I said, 'Well, we can't afford this,' so we didn't have it, you see. So, we did – and I was very much against hire purchase but I mean I remember this first tiny, little fridge we bought was on hire purchase because [laughs] we just said we really need it.

What's hire purchase? A loan?

Hire purchase, yeah, yeah. That – it probably doesn't exist anymore, does it, hire purchase?

That's where the –

Well, no, you – it is a loan with a lot of interest and – yeah, yeah, yeah. You pay it over one month, two years or whatever, you see, so – and of course our first house had a mortgage so that of course – a mortgage was important. But otherwise, we – well, no, otherwise, we weren't the ones who – we just coped with what we had. In fact, it's sort of lasted for me as well. I'm still – although I've got – I'm quite well-off now, I'm still very careful with money because that's sort of left over from the old days. **[01:20:00]**

You feel that impacted you?

Yeah. In fact, I've got to force myself. I said, look, forget about how much it costs, get it. And I said, well, really [laughs].

Yeah, you think that's an impact you [overtalking 01:20:14].

Yeah, yes, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Yeah. And how – were you accepted – because you said you travelled. I mean you had to travel with your husband and you followed him. What about the other families or officers or people you met and you were with a child? What reception did you get there?

A good reception. Yeah, they just accepted me. Yeah, on the whole they did. I mean the way I would be accepted, some people liked me, some don't [laughs]. You know, just like me, so I like some people and I – some, I don't. So, it made no difference.

Hmm. So, by that time you –

But during the war of course, you sort of tried to hide the fact that you were German because they said German – and I said, 'Well, I'm not really German. I'm also Jewish.' Well, that wouldn't weigh with them very much because you're still German.

They didn't understand it.

Yeah. Yeah. So, during the war we avoided speaking German and I knew I've still got this slight accent and people can even now – said 'Where are you from?' We – some people think I'm Welsh because apparently it sounds a bit Welsh. But anyway, I know I've got a bit of an accent.

So you didn't speak German to your son, for example?

Hmm?

You didn't speak German to your son when he was born?

No. No. No.

Yeah, so you had to hide it and of course there was internment, which didn't concern you.

Yeah.

But you said it concerned your father.

Yeah.

What happened to him?

My father?

Was – internment, the internment.

Yeah, it was on the Isle of – was it the Isle of Wight, wasn't it? Isle of Man, Isle of Man. Yes, he was on the Isle of Man. Yes, well, he writes about that as well. Yeah. But that wasn't as bad as [laughs] – as Dachau [laughs]. **[01:22:01]**

No, no, I'm sure it wasn't. But how long was he there for or –

Well, again, a few months. I don't know. I don't know exactly.

Maybe in that time your mother came to Cambridge? Well, could it have been?

[Sighs] Possible. Possible, yes.

Hmm. But she wasn't interned?

No. Well, unfortunately as I said, I didn't keep a diary then, which I regret very much. But no, and although my memory is not bad apart that – for names and [laughs] – and town names and people's names, but I – that, I honestly can't remember.

Yes, so he was interned and then released.

Yeah.

Yeah. But you said for your parents it was hard to adapt.

It was – it was tough, yeah. Yeah.

Because of their –

Because I mean they had a nice life in Berlin and then suddenly they didn't. And it's more difficult to adjust to that when you're in your fifties than if you're in your teens or –

And do you feel they adjusted or they managed? And what helped them?

Well, they managed to – yes, they managed to adjust. But my mother was never again really happy. I mean my father was a different sort. He was more matter of fact. He accepted things. But my mother I think still yearned for the old days.

How was it expressed or how – that –

Hmm?

How was it expressed, that yearning? Or how –

Well, [laughs] she was quite easily bad-tempered. She criticised me [laughs].
Whatever I did was criticised. Yeah, she was highly critical of everything.

Did she – did they join any of – did they join the AJR or any synagogues or anything?

No.

Did they join anything? ***[01:24:01]***

I'm not sure. They might have joined the AJR but they certainly didn't join the synagogue. [Inaudible] because he got some money from somewhere but I'm not quite sure where from. So, he might very well have joined the AJR. That's possible.

Were they ever thinking of going back to Berlin?

No. No.

Did they go for a visit or –

Well, they went abroad, they went on – to Italy, they went on –

But to Berlin. Did they go to Berlin?

Hmm?

Did they go back to Berlin to visit?

No. No. No. Well, I've been back because, one, when I had this invitation and then I went on a package tour which happened to include Berlin as well, so –

And what was it like for you to go back?

Well, the first time I went back to Germany was when we – when I went to – we went on holiday with the family. I felt disloyal. I said, 'I shouldn't be going to Germany. They've been so absolutely horrendously cruel. I shouldn't go back.' And then I sort of – we started talking to people and a lot of them said those were bad days and they shouldn't have happened and so I felt a bit softer. And I said, 'Well, this generation really can't necessarily be blamed for that.' But the first time I felt very guilty about actually spending any money there. And I just felt it was wrong that I should be there. But it's worn off now.

You felt you shouldn't be there.

Hmm-hmm. Yeah.

Did you feel angry or did you feel –

I just felt guilty. I said they've committed so many crimes and look at them now, living it up because I mean you can see these huge houses, they have Mercedes, what, just little Mercs, big Mercs, huge Mercs [laughs]. **[01:26:12]** And I said, look at all the money they're making and – well, I mean I suppose in a way they did try to make up a little bit by, you know, paying people pensions and whatever. But really not enough [laughs].

And what was it like to see the actual city, to – did you recognise places? Did you feel you could –

No, I did – I even found Berlin – I didn't recognise. I mean even though my house was still standing and the Gedächtniskirche was still standing, I didn't recognise any – it was – I said, well, Kurfürstendamm had changed. We actually stayed in the Hotel am Zoo or something [laughs]. I don't know where you stay when you go to Berlin [laughs]. Have you been to Berlin?

Yeah. Yeah.

But no, I didn't recognise very much there.

The Zoo. Did you go to the Zoo when – as a child?

Hmm?

The – Zoo. Did you go to the Zoo?

As a child, of course we did, yes. And there was the Tiergarten which we actually were – when we were there on this package tour, we went for a walk in the Tiergarten. But even then, I didn't really- Brandenburger Tor you remembered of course. But no, but the sort of surrounding streets where I walked or where I played tennis or that – and I think the old school's probably gone as well. Probably destroyed. Because when you look at pictures of Berlin after the war there seems to be nothing standing, just like the Ukraine, you know.

Yeah, yeah. So, you didn't have a need to kind of go back there or –

No, no.

You didn't feel a strong –

Because I know they want people to come back because [laughs] I think they want people – a few people have gone back, a few Jewish people have gone back and I don't know how they can. **[01:28:02]** I don't know how they can.

You wouldn't?

No.

To live?

No. No, no.

How did your parents feel towards Germany? The same or –

Bitter. Yeah. Well, I mean what else can you feel? I mean even though they spent, you know, half their lives in Germany and went to school, university and everything there, but I think that's something that's difficult to forget.

Yeah. And what sort of identity did you want to give to your children? I mean your son was born '41.

Well, I now actually feel totally English. And that's the identity – I said forget – I mean you should never forget the history, my history. And I try to keep to remind them that life isn't always easy, you know, you've got to go through ups and downs and I think I've gone through quite a lot of downs. But on the whole, the identity is – my identity is that keep going, whatever happens.

And you say you feel totally English. So, did you want to give them an English identity? You didn't –

Yeah, yeah.

You didn't feel you had to do anything extra or –

No. Well, the few times I've been to Germany, I nearly always spoke with a slight – my German with a slight accent [laughs] because I didn't want to be recognised as a German or anything [laughs]. But my German isn't that good any more, anyway, because if you don't use it, you lose it and I've definitely lost a lot of that. **[01:30:00]**

So, you spoke – you didn't want anyone – you – when people said how come you speak German, what did you say? Did you tell them you –

Well, school or something [laughs].

You didn't tell them you were from Berlin?

No, no. No, no.

Why not?

Well, I – I mean they were holiday acquaintances and I mean they had no business in knowing anything about me basically, so I mean if they were closer, you know, if they had become friends then of course they would know it. But I mean you don't have to tell your holiday acquaintances anything about your life.

And among your friends, was it something you talked about or –

Yes. My friends know all about it. Yeah, yeah.

And your children? Did you talk about your past with your children?

Yes, yes, they know all about it, every single detail, yeah.

And you said you wrote also your memoirs. Was it a few years ago or –

Well, I start – actually the first computer I inherited, I started writing it. That's about twenty-odd years ago [laughs]. And then I've – since then I've sort of improved it or rewrote it or something, yes. And then on my hundredth birthday, one of my daughters-in-law condensed it and made it into a kind of booklet and distributed it to all the family, so they all have [laughs] no excuse. They do know it. But if they've read it, I don't know, but I've told them often enough.

So, it was important for you to put it down, to put the history down?

Absolutely. Absolutely. Because quite honestly, you can't rely on your memory because I – even now I read – I reread what I wrote twenty-odd years ago and I said, my God, did that really happen? I said yes, it must have happened because I've written it down. But I don't quite remember it.

Yeah, memory changes and it's different in different times.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

And Annalis, what do you think for you is the biggest impact of your own experience, of your refugee experience on your life, later life?

Well, I think it's made me what I am. **[01:32:06]** I'm probably – I don't know. It made me a bit parsimonious, a bit – I've changed. As I said earlier, I forced myself not to be. It made me critical and it made me quite suspicious about people.

That's interesting. So, you think you – you don't trust that easily, you think?

Yeah, yeah.

And you think that's related to...

I think so. Yeah, I think so.

Your early childhood.

I mean I've got now since I live on my own, you see, and I've got plenty of time, that made me – I have time to think about it. And I said, yeah, I said why am I the way I am? I said, well, it's due to all the stuff that happened. I mean probably it's not a good idea to think too much about things like that [laughs]. I mean it makes you feel a bit egocentric about- anyway, that's how it is.

And what is – of course in your situation also most of your friends are not here anymore. I mean you're in a very unique situation, being your age.

Yes. Well, I've got really no proper friends left. Certainly I've got two pleasant neighbours who are actually not Indians, who are Jewish, but one very Orthodox, the other one more like me, not – they don't believe in anything. And I play bridge occasionally. Well, twice a month. And that's basically it, because everybody else is dead. So, I've become pretty self-reliant. And of course, my family, as you know, they're quite – live quite a long way away and even

the grandchildren, although they live in London, what with the traffic one way or the other, it still takes them well over an hour to get here by any kind of transport, be it car, Tube or whatever. **[01:34:13]** So, if I want to, say, open a bottle of something, I need – I can't do it. Well, I've got to a neighbour's, at next door, could you open this for me? [Laughs]

And how did you manage in Covid times? How did you manage? Covid. In Covid times?

Well, I must say they were very – the grandch – the grandsons in particular were marvellous and they brought food, they – one of the grandsons actually cooked for me. And they were really fantastic during – at the Covid time, especially the lockdown. And they came regular – even though they all do full – all have full time jobs they still managed. And the two sons who live such a long way away, they came sort of at least once a week but – so they brought supplies and of course, I went out when I could. So, we coped. In fact, I saw more of the family during that period than I do now, because now they're – the great-grandchildren are growing up and they more sort of, you know, what it's like to take the children to this, that and the other. One's playing football, the other one goes to ballet class and this one goes to singing lessons and –

And how many great-grandchildren have you got?

Three. No, four. I have got three granddaughters and one little grandson who is not quite a year old.

Great-grandchildren?

Great-grandson, yeah. Yeah, so I've got four, four of them.

Yeah, so you're in a unique situation. So, what is your secret to being your age and to have such an amazing memory you have and to live for [overtalking 01:35:59]?

I think basically, it's willpower [laughs]. **[01:36:02]** Willpower. But basically, not entirely but it's also taking a positive attitude, saying there are still things to enjoy. I said okay, I may

feel horrible but there's still like – I still enjoy looking at my amaryllis or something [laughs]. Or the birds feeding on the feeding box. So, yes.

Yeah. And is there something – I mean you left now so many years ago, when you were fifteen, sixteen. I mean amazing. Is there something when you think about Germany, anything you miss from Germany or from Berlin or –

No. No. No, I don't miss anything.

Or did – put it the other way around. What for you is the most important part of that German heritage, German Jewish heritage, however you want to define it, for you?

What do you mean? About – what will I like?

What is important for you? What, you know, from that background?

I suppose thinking about it now, I didn't think so then, I should have belonged to some sort of community. I feel that's something I'm probably lacking now because here I am on my own and I sort of really lack support in many ways. I mean on the whole I'm independent and I don't want constant support but occasionally, support would be nice. And if I'd been – I suppose if I'm still in – still were in Berlin or something I probably might very well have joined something, you know, [laughs] I feel – I would feel at home with but here, I have joined, as I said, the u3a. **[01:38:10]** I didn't feel really much at home with – although I enjoyed a writing class but I didn't – never felt it was a community. I joined the NCW, National Council of Women. I didn't feel that was a community. They were all talking about women's rights and whatever. And basically, that's the only thing I've ever joined.

Did you feel you didn't fit in or it wasn't –

Yes, in many ways I didn't fit in. I didn't find anything congenial there. It's probably me [laughs]. It's not you, it's me, I think [laughs].

And religion and being Jewish, that wasn't part of your –

Well, the only person I really get on well is my neighbour opposite, who is very – who is quite religious. We don't necessarily – well, she explains things to me about religious holidays and so on. I get on well with her. But despite our difference of opinions about that – and I mean she knows I don't believe in anything and she is a strong believer. And of course, she's very unfortunate. Her husband who's eighty-something, he had a stroke last July and he was in hospital where he caught Covid. And now he's at home and can't move and she's looking after him. So, I think she needs all her faith for that, which I think she has. And in a way I admire people who've got the faith to say, okay, everything is laid out, this is how it happens, it's meant to happen, and accept it. **[01:40:00]**

You don't see it that way?

No. Well, I accept it. I've got to accept it [laughs].

And amazing-, did you hear about the Association of Jewish Refugees? Do you know about them at all or –

I've heard about it but as I said to you earlier, I thought it was more about religion than what it really is.

Because do you know that – so – I'm so grateful that we're here talking to you.

Yeah, yes. Yeah.

Because you came to us through a very different route.

Yeah, yeah.

Through reading –

No, I really – yes, I definitely knew about it because a friend of mine made a lot of demands on it I think. Have you heard of Erica Judge? Well, she was – she more or less depended on it entirely. I mean she was a – one of those persons who had everything. She died last year but she – she talked about it all the time. But I really thought it was a religious association.

Well, I'm very pleased to say it isn't and I'm sure we will arrange the contact. I'm sure there is lots of things you can connect with and might enjoy really.

Yeah. Thank you.

But I think it's interesting, this aspect of joining something or not joining and whether, you know, one is inclined to find some sort of community or not. But yeah, it's interesting. Is there anything else I haven't asked you which you like to – you said you write a lot, you started writing things down.

Well, I went to this writing class and we were given certain subjects and I wrote a tiny, little story, some of them which I [laughs] – I enjoyed some of them which I tore up. And then of course I write my daily diary. And I used to enjoy writing letters from Australia and my father kept every one of them. **[01:42:00]** [Laughs] And I've reread them [laughs].

That's fun. You could publish them probably.

Well, no, but somebody can read them sometime [laughs]. Well, this diary I know is purely for me because when I die, there are about fifty little notebooks, big notebooks, nobody's going to read them but I've – I read them and I can relax with them.

And you don't mind if somebody – if your children will read them or –

No, not at all. I would welcome them reading it because I told them warts and all [laughs]. Told the diary everything [laughs].

And you don't mind the –

No. In fact, I would say if I die I would really quite like to – for them to read it [laughs]. But they won't. I mean they're – I mean nowadays I don't – for some reason they never have time for anything, with all these labour-saving devices, this, that and the other, they still have time for nothing.

Well, it's wonderful that you managed to write a diary.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm a great believer in it because I think it clears your mind instead of, you know, worrying you over and over again a certain subject. You write it down and I say, okay, I've written it down, I can look at it, you know, from a distance and that's it, I don't have to worry about it anymore.

And you hand-write it?

Yeah [laughs]. Well, it's a diary.

Every day? Every day?

Yeah, every day. Well, some days there's nothing. Sometimes I just describe the weather or something, [laughs] bloody cold or something [laughs]. Or I went shopping and I've had the tyres checked, I've, you know, sometimes really quite boring but then others are about three or four pages of it.

Well, it's interesting writing because you know now there is sort of writing coming out from second and third generation writing about their families and it's quite a lot [inaudible] in –

Well, I tell people to write things and they said, well, I've got nothing really interesting to say in my life. **[01:44:15]** I said, well, everybody's got something which is – might be interesting to – either for you in twenty years' time or your family.

And tell me, your sons and your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, how do they connect to your history? Do they feel at all any Jewish connection or any continental – how do they see themselves?

Well, they recognise it. They accept it. And as I said, my older son, Tony, he wants to have a – this German passport. His sons say, well, if Dad can have a German passport, perhaps we can have one as well, [laughs] so –

Yes. And it doesn't have to go –

Yes.

You.

Yeah. And no, I mean the thing is, they all are very broadminded. I mean they, for instance, one of my grandson is married to an Asian, the little girls are half – of course half/half and the other ones have got Jewish friends and I mean they're very broadminded and sort of accept everything that comes their way.

And do you think that's related or that's – what – do you try to instil that sort of idea?

Maybe. Maybe. I don't know. I think they quite enjoy telling my stories to other people [laughs]. But no, on the whole, they live their own lives, you see.

Yeah. And Annalis, what do you think about – I mean this whole situation today with refugees? Ukraine refugees coming to the UK. ***[01:46:01]*** *Does – do you see a similarity or resonance, does it –*

Well, I'm very, very sympathetic to the Ukrainians. I think that they're – I mean you can almost connect it with the Jewish refugees, except of course they want to go back. But I mean what is there for them to go back to? But the others, the Albanians, the Romanians, the – well, I suppose even the Afghans have got a reason to come over here but no, I think, in a

way the UK is too easy a target for not real refugees. I mean, real refugees, we should open the doors wide. I mean if I were younger I would definitely take some. But I really can't now. I'm just too old for that. But after my experience, because I mean the UK has been very good to me in many ways and I'm grateful for that and if I could give something back, I would.

Do you feel the UK – do you feel grateful that –

Yes, yes. Yes.

Despite your difficult experience as a domestic.

Yes, yes, yes. Yes. Definitely.

And do you think there is a political lesson to be learned from the 1930s for today?

[Sighs] Well, [laughs] when you look at the world in general, yes, there is still a lot to be learnt because people don't seem to have learnt, because I mean look at the sort of racial fights they have in various country, who goes – and the Pakistanis and the Muslims and the Hindus. I mean it's still going on. It's still going on. Not quite as bad as under the Nazis but yes, there's a lot to be learnt and I don't think people will ever learn. **[01:48:03]**

And Annalis because just we are now two days before Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK.

I know that, yeah. Yeah.

So, it's very poignant that we're speaking to you. Were you ever tempted to go and speak to schools or to do a sort of public speaking?

No, no, no. No. Because I honestly didn't think it would be interesting enough for schools because my experience- were relatively painless. I mean I didn't – okay, I suffered certain deprivations and I had difficulties but I didn't honestly think they were going to be interested.

Whereas this friend of mine I told – I talked to you earlier, who died last year, she came over with the Kindertransport and so she had quite an interesting story to tell. But mine, no.

Ah, I'm sure they would be interested if you change your mind.

[Both laugh] Yeah. Yeah.

Because, you know, there are not that many – I mean there are about 20,000 women, you know, came on this domestic visa and that's a story which is not so known.

Yeah, yeah.

But do you see yourself as a survivor or a refugee today?

Yeah. Yeah.

How would you describe yourself?

Yeah, I'm definitely a survivor [laughs].

Yes. As I said, you're – it certainly is – I think you are our oldest interviewee. We interviewed a lady who was born in 1906 but at the time of the interview she wasn't your age [both laugh]. Yeah. And in terms of other identity today, how would you see yourself?

Hmm?

In terms of other – of your other identities, how would you describe yourself today?

I would describe myself as a bloody obstinate old woman. **[01:50:04]**

[Both laugh] Okay. We can't finish on that one [both laugh]. Yeah, but British?

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

You said you see yourself as British. And where's your home? Where is your home?

What do you mean, where?

Where do you feel at home?

Here. Yeah. No, I love my home and I mean the thought of having to go into a care home or something like would absolutely scare me to – I just wouldn't. I just wouldn't.

Yeah. Yeah, you were talking about the sort of ups and downs in your life. So, what are the downs, maybe or – we have obviously discussed one of the major down- is your emigration and becoming a refugee but –

Well, I suppose the downs was when my first employer, where I was au pair girl, announced that she was leaving, so I was there trying to find something else to do. The second one also at that period, when the antique shop I worked at was closing down because of the war. And so that – both times I was sort of left trying to think of something else to do. Down during the war, when my husband was once again posted somewhere else after we finally found a very nice place to live. Down when my husband was diagnosed with cancer of the bladder, which was also horrible. But earlier on, well, I suppose when I was in Geneva doing this housekeeping course, though even before that I was doing some office work, you know, I was at Neuveville, I was doing some office work to practise, you know, to get a taste of office work. **[01:52:21]** I was in a place – I was in Switzerland away from anybody and although the people I worked for knew I was on my own, nobody ever invited me. I was there for about four weeks or something and I was entirely left to myself and my gramophone and Nat Gonella [laughs]. And during that period I think is the only period when I was really, really unhappy. And of course, when I was this maid in the attic, that was definitely down. Up? Husband got promotion, [laughs] were going to Australia. So, a few really good ups and a few not quite – not good downs.

But you said you're quite an optimistic person.

Yes, yes, yes.

You certainly come across as that.

Yes, yes. Well, as I say, well, this is what happens but tomorrow will be better, I hope.

And Annalise, what – do you sometimes think what would have happened if you hadn't been forced to emigrate?

Yes. Yes, yes.

What do you think? How would your life have turned out?

Well, I wouldn't have had a life. I would have perished in one of the camps. Or I would probably have been one of the ones giving birth to some Nazi babies, one of those. But whatever it is, it would have been not nice.

And I meant if Hitler hadn't come?

If what?

If Hitler hadn't come.

Oh, if Hitler hadn't come. Well, I think my parents had plans of sending me to university, I don't know, I – you know, as I said, at that age your plans weren't really very substantial, you could see yourself with a good-looking man with a nice – sitting in a nice open car, you see [laughs]. **[01:54:20]** I seem to remember talking to one of my friends and saying, yeah [laughs]. So, basically, I wasn't very ambitious [laughs]. I had no idea what I wanted to do but probably my parents would have been right sending me to university but what would I

have studied? I don't know. I – now I feel if I were at university now it prob – it would be politics [laughs].

Yeah?

Yeah. But then I didn't know anything about politics, I didn't know who was who. I mean we have to –

So, the expectation also was then to marry and to have a family and so on.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, obviously that was everybody's expectations [laughs] then, wasn't it, to marry and have babies. Now it's the other way around, isn't it? Have a baby and then get married [laughs].

And do you have any regrets? What – anything you...

Hmm, not really. No. What could I have done differently? Well, life would have been very different if I hadn't spilled this glass of sherry over my prospective husband. Very different no doubt. But no, I think things have worked out well for me.

And do you have a message for anyone who might watch this interview in the future?
[01:56:00]

Well, the only message is what I've said before. Keep a diary and be positive.

And how do you manage to stay positive now? You said your friends are not around, you experienced Covid and the lockdown and everything, difficult times. How have you managed it?

Well, I think maybe you should have some sort of a hobby. I mean, I like painting cards, I like- what else? I like writing, you see. I mean have some sort of a hobby to fill the time.

And of course I watch television like everybody else. But on the whole, if I feel – as I said, I feel – I very rarely feel bored but if I do, I start painting a card.

Okay, so find yourself a good hobby. Good.

[Laughs] Okay.

And do you feel – we're coming to the end now, I promise. Do you feel because you've written your memoirs and now, we've had this interview, I mean do you feel it's very different, writing down your own thoughts?

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean I write this purely for my – in – for the diary, it's purely for myself. I write exactly what I feel. If I write stories, it's usually nothing to do with me, it's – maybe bits of my life come into it, you know, just a little bit of what happened somewhere, someday, but it's nothing to do with me.

And you don't feel constrained by worrying about who might read it later or –

No. No.

It's not worrying you?

No, no. As I said, I would like to think that they are reading it and learn something from it [laughs]. And probably won't but [laughs] –

What should they learn? And that I promise you is my last question now. What would you like them to learn by reading your diary or maybe listening to the interview as well? ***[01:58:09]***

Well, they've complained bitterly if I write them emails complaining about something and I, for instance, I'm very old-fashioned. If I give them a present, I usually give nice presents, not just money or just things. I give them really interesting presents. And all I get in thanks is either a quick phone call or a quick email. And I said, 'I think you ought to make a bit of an

effort and send me a thank you card or thank you letter.' So, for a bit, yes, that worked, but no more. So, I'm going to – in fact, once I bought an envelope and a stamp and a piece of paper and sent it to them and said you can – this is for you to write me a thank-you-letter.

You think it's important to write thank you letters?

Yes. Yes, I do. I do. Do you?

It's interesting [laughs]. I tell you what I think. My husband certainly thinks it's very important.

Yeah. Well, I think it's important because it's too easy – and I mean I spent a lot of time thinking of something nice and appropriate for them– you know, to have. For instance, the grandchildren this year for Christmas got a weekend at Champneys, which I thought was a very nice present. Phone call, thank you very much, lovely present, thank you. That's it. So, I said next time I don't think I'm going to bother. And the time before, it was a night at a zoo, the one in Kent, you know, for the whole family. **[02:00:02]** It – okay, it was in a pod because they couldn't make up their mind on a date. And once again, oh, they – no, I got one thank you letter from one of the great-grandchildren, presumably told by the parents. One. One thank you letter. So, things like that will appear in my diary, that they should have done that and they should have done and they shouldn't have done this and so on. And you told me lies that time and I knew very well you were telling me lies [laughs].

So, you think it's important to show one's gratitude- to thank you?

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Maybe it's wrong. Maybe I should just accept that they've said it. Because I'm a stickler for writing thank you letters because I know that people enjoy it. And in fact, the older generation, my sons and my daughters-in-law, they all write me letters, maybe because I insisted on it or maybe because they want to, but they do. It's just the grandchildren.

But also it links to what you said earlier, that you feel sometimes you couldn't appreciate what your parents did when they did it.

That's right. That's right. Yeah. But that was difference because those were big things and it was a real sacrifice. In this case, it's not a sacrifice, except I was thinking carefully about things that suited the person, not just any old thing but what suited them.

Hmm, yeah. No, it makes sense. Okay, Annalis, I – is there anything else from your side? Because I can think of one very last question [both laugh] and then I'll stop.

Okay.

Is there anything from your side you would like to add, which I haven't asked you?

No.

I wanted to ask you something about your name because you said you had two grandmas called Anna. You're called Annalis. Why did your parents give you that name? Do you know anything about it?

[Laughs] I have no idea. They liked it. **[02:02:00]** Well, I mean why do you give – anybody give anybody's name? I mean I gave – Tony was a name – yes, at the time I think Anthony Eden was very much in the news and I quite liked him. He was a good-looking man. So, we called him Anthony. Stephen, we had a bit of a problem with because I was in the maternity – well, I had my child and somebody came round and said, 'Well, what did you call him?' I said Steven, with a V. Steven Leslie. I don't know where the Leslie came from. Meanwhile, my husband went to somewhere else, where we were to register the birth, and he spelled Stephen with a PH. So, he came back [laughs]. So, in the end the poor boy is called Stephen Steven. One with a V and one with a PH. So [laughs] –

But did you ever try – did you ever change your name, Annalis, when you came to England?

No. No, I just – I just called myself Ann. Most people call me Ann. And for sort of legal documents, I just split it, Ann, Lis separate [laughs]. Because I mean people always said, what sort of a name is that? I said what is a proper name? [Laughs] But yeah.

Okay. Okay, Ann, Annalis, thank you so much for doing this interview and sharing your story with Refugee Voices.

Okay.

[Pause] Yes, please? ***[02:04:00]***

This is my grandfather, Zacharias Kassel who lived in Darmstadt and he's born in about 192 – no, he died in about 1925.

Yes, please.

This is my grandmother, Anna Kassel who also lived in Darmstadt.

And when it was taken, roughly?

It must have been taken around about 1925.

Thank you. Yes.

This is my mother, Alice Kassel born Erlenbach. She was – this was taken about 1916. And she died in 1973.

Yes, please.

Does it say when this was taken? It doesn't.

Who do we see, please?

Yeah.

Who is on the picture?

Er...

Well, it's Oskar and Anna. They must have been quite young. When was this taken? Let's have a look.

My mother was born in '91. Let's say about '85, something like that.

When?

1885.

And where, sorry?

Probably Strasbourg.

Thank you.

This is my father, Friedrich or Fred, Kassel, taken in 1915 when he was about twenty-seven years old, and in the army, where he was an officer and wounded twice. **[02:06:03]** He even got the Iron Cross.

Yes, please.

These are my parents, Friedrich Kassel and Alice Kassel in about, um, in 1919. My mother then was pregnant with me.

Thank you.

This is my family, my father, Friedrich Kassel and my mother, Anna Kassel and my sister, Brigitte Kassel. And it was – my sister was about seven years old, taken in the 1930s. My sister unfortunately died of kidney cancer when she was just over forty.

This is me, Annalis, or Ann, Callender, taken in Berlin when I was about four years old.

This is me, Annalise, or Ann, Callender, taken in Berlin in 1927. Thank you.

Yes, please.

This is me, Annalis Kassel taken in Berlin in 1934.

This is me, Annalis Kassel taken in Geneva, near the lake of Geneva, in 1938.

This was taken in 1941 in London. It's about my mother, Alice Kassel, my sister, Brigitte Kassel and me. I was married by then, Annalis Callender.

This was taken in Shrewsbury in 1941 on the 1st of November when my husband – when my husband, Maurice Callender and me, Ann Kassel got married. **[02:08:11]**

This was taken in 2004 of my husband Maurice and myself, Ann Callender, in a restaurant in Hatch End.

This was taken on my ninety-ninth birthday with all the family at that time in a – well, converted mill house in Surrey.

Ann, thank you so much for sharing your story and showing us your photographs. It has been immense privilege.

[Laughs] Okay, well, thank you for thinking it was all worthwhile coming and spending the day with me.

It certainly was worthwhile. Thank you so much.

[02:09:13]

[End of transcript]