

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Forename:	Liselotte
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	31 August 1914
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

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INTERVIEW: 29

NAME: LISELOTTE LESCHKE

DATE: 26 AUGUST 2003

LOCATION: BRISTOL

INTERVIEWER: ANTHONY GRENVILLE

TAPE 1

Tape 1: 0 minute 36 seconds

AG: I would first like to thank you for agreeing to do this interview with us, and perhaps I can begin by asking three formal questions.

First of all, can you tell me your full name at birth?

LL: Elisabeth Charlotte.

AG: And your family name?

LL: Leschke.

AG: And where were you born?

LL: In Berlin.

AG: And when were you born?

LL: On the 31st of August 1914. Just after the beginning of the First World War.

AG: Perhaps we can begin by my asking you to tell us something about your family background. Perhaps you would like to begin with your grandparents.

LL: Yes, well my grandfather was Alfred Sanger, and he was a professor of neurology and a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, who both became psychologists, so they were pioneers in that.

AG: And where was he a professor?

LL: In Hamburg. Because my parents got divorced in 1918, and so my mother with me and my little sister went back to her parents, and her brother, lived with us, he completely took the role of a father, and I also thought in retrospect that he was my father. My father became my

favourite uncle, he came once a year to visit us in Hamburg. And eventually when he married a third time, his wife had two daughters — she wanted us to come to Berlin, and once a year we visited them in Berlin. But sadly, my father died when he was only 44. And in 1933, the year when I came to England...

AG: We're jumping a long way ahead. You wanted to tell me about your grandparents.

Tape 1: 2 minutes 45 seconds

LL: Yes. Well, my grandfather as I said, was a professor of neurology.

AG: Did you know him?

LL: Oh yes, yes. Sadly, he died when I was only six years old. His father was called Sanger, he wanted to become a Christian, and he told his daughter, and my uncle, her brother, if they wanted to, you know, if they could be Christian. He wanted to, he would have liked to, but he felt he couldn't, with his father having been a rabbi. And his name was Sanger, which means a cantor. Very musical, the whole family. I could tell a lot about the family. My sister lives in Sweden now, she has become Swedish, I've become English, and a cousin, my uncle's daughter, is Swiss, and we have other relations all over the world you see, refugees. So having come as a paying guest, I'm now a refugee. But I got my English passport and I'm so proud of that. When the Germans offered to renew my German passport after the war, I said no thank you.

AG: So, your great-grandfather was actually a rabbi?

LL: Yes.

AG: Yes, well coming from a religious family, your family on your mother's side, your grandfather were they still religiously inclined?

LL: Well yes, but not Jewish you see. They were more interested in becoming Christians. In fact mother didn't even know that she was Jewish. And in Hamburg there were so many who had been there for centuries literally, and mother once came home from school from a scripture lesson when she was about six: 'Such an interesting lesson, it was all about Israel, the Israelites or the Jews, are there still any living?' She didn't know she was Jewish.

AG: What was your mother's name?

LL: Clara Julia.

AG: And when was she born?

LL: On the 17th of March 1892.

AG: And what sort of lady was she?

LL: Well, she studied economy, and she became a lecturer in the Institute of Sociology in Hamburg.

AG: That must have been unusual for a woman.

LL: No. It was founded by Gertrud Baumer, I think, a very famous woman, you know. They were all women lecturing there.

Tape 1: 5 minutes 18 seconds

As I said she studied economics, and this was sociology you see.

AG: Did she continue working and lecturing after she had a family?

LL: Oh yes. Yes. She finished her studies while she was with us, and grandparents looking after us, she could.

AG: What sort of woman was she as a person?

LL: Well, it's difficult to describe your mother, isn't it? She was very clever, because my little sister... my grandmother and I got on particularly well, because, the longer I think about it, we had such a lot in common. We were very similar, and she was always jealous that my grandmother was fonder of me than of her. My sister was very difficult, and also not very strong, because in the war, you know having two children so quickly after each other, only one year between us..., She was always jealous and she has no sense of humour, that was the worst thing I think, so she always took everything,... was offended if you made a joke, she couldn't see it, there are all sorts of funny stories. But mother made a fuss of her, and wanted her to feel she was mummy's darling and I was granny's darling but that wasn't good enough, she was always jealous. And also I suppose I was lucky and I had more friends, because she was such a difficult person, you see. I can tell you a lot about her. But now I'm afraid it sounds as if she's got Alzheimer's, she's only a year younger. And she rang, occasionally she rings me, and she asks the same question three times, which I had already answered. But she's at least in an old people's home where she's well looked after. In Uppsala.

AG: What's her name?

LL: Ursula. Ursula Leschke.

AG: Moving to your father's side of the family. Were they Jewish?

Tape 1: 7 minutes 28 seconds

LL: No, no. That's why I said I'm only half Jewish, and I'm very proud of it. Because I have a friend who doesn't like to admit it almost. She goes to church and everything. I go to church as well, you know, not anymore but I used to, not anymore, I can't go anymore but I listen to services.

AG: To church? Did you ever go to synagogue, either here or in Germany?

LL: Not in Germany ever. But in London. We had Jewish girls in school, and at Badminton School you get familiar with the families as well as the children, and I got invited to weddings, and so then I was in the synagogue.

AG: could you tell me something about your father's family? His background?

LL: Again, his father was a headmaster. You see, I always wanted to become an interpreter. And I thought it must be awful to be a teacher, although we had some very nice ones and we were very friendly but there were others, the children, treated them badly. As I say I wanted to be an interpreter. And when I was in Cardiff, I was invited to take some English lessons at the Grammar School, and asked to give some German conversation in exchange, and I found to my surprise, I liked teaching. And then I realised even at school my friend was the first, the top of the class, and I was the second. And in the interval, people would come to me and say 'Lilo, I didn't understand so and so, will you explain it to me'. And I did. So I even started then, you see. And I found to my surprise that I liked teaching, and that was lucky because that was easy comparatively to get a job as a teacher, as a student teacher first. And there is a famous house, a girl's school, and then Miss Baker from Badminton came to interview me, and she was offering me this. Because mother rang me up and said 'you must stay in England'. You know, I was only 18.

AG: Do you think this was influenced by the fact that your grandfather was a headmaster?

LL: The other one, yes. They were all in the family, they were all teaching.

AG: Your father as well?

Tape 1: 9 minutes 42 seconds

LL: Yes, he was a professor as well as a consultant.

AG: What was your father a professor of?

LL: Endocrinology was his particular field. In German it's called 'Innenarzt'. I've forgotten the word now again. Well doctors who were... I have a book of his, incredible. And I even found out that he must have been in England as a student for a year, because his English... he gave lectures in English, and I think in Spanish or French, you know, he was absolutely brilliant. So I've got a bit of cleverness from both parents, you know.

AG: What was your father's name?

LL: Erich Leschke.

AG: When was he born?

LL: Five years before mother. '87.

AG: How did they come to meet?

LL: Because he was working at the Eppendorfer Krankenhaus in Hamburg, and somehow he got to know my grandfather as well you see, and my grandfather was very impressed with this very clever young man, he really was incredible, and he got an obituary in *The Times* as long as that, and I think he would have got an honorary FRS, which people outside England sometimes get. And if the father was so impressed by him, she adored her father, you see, she

would marry anybody. But it wasn't a success, but as I say we didn't come off too badly. And as I say, he married three times.

AG: When did your parents get married?

LL: 1912. And I was born in 1914. I wondered why I was two years after, and my mother never told me that she lost the first baby. People often do apparently, but so in that case she had been... what's the word, expecting babies three years running, so no wonder my sister was a bit weak physically.

AG: Was there any opposition from either side to a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew?

LL: Not at all. They weren't even... you see mother didn't even know she was Jewish. And grandfather would have become Christian, so there was nothing like that.

AG: Do you think that particular to Hamburg?

LL: Yes, definitely. That's why I'm so glad because my parents were in Hamburg, all during, no, before the war, while I was at University and I could come home every holiday, vacation. And refilled my huge cabin trunk with everything I needed for the next term. I was terribly lucky. And I had a perfectly ordinary life as a student at Manor Hall. Again, where we had all three meals at the hall, nowadays they're only there for one year and they have to...

AG: This is Manor Hall in Bristol University.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 37 seconds

LL: Yes, the Hall of Residence and they have to shop and cook and everything, whereas I have got to know people from other faculties, which improved my English too, I think, so...

AG: You were born in the month the war broke out. Did the war affect your father, was he called up?

LL: Yes, luckily he was in the medical... my uncle, my mother's brother became a driver, so they both didn't have to fight, thank goodness.

AG: Where was your father, was he still working in Hamburg?

LL: No. We were in Berlin during the war.

AG: Ah, and you were born in Berlin?

LL: Yes. Mother quite often came and delivered us to the grandparents, so she could study, finish her study. And I have some wonderful letters from grandmother telling her about us. And she loved the children, and particularly after my grandfather died, he died in '21 and she died in '28 I think, before the war thank goodness, and she was very pleased to have the children, we cheered her up you see.

AG: Was your father attached to a hospital in Berlin?

LL: Yes it was a clinic, the Rupke(?) clinic.

Tape 1: 14 minutes 13 seconds

AG: I was asking you about your parents during the First World War in Berlin. Did they stay in Berlin throughout the war?

LL: Well mother did but father was, as I said, what is it called, a medical... he wasn't fighting, you know, I forget what they're called, doctors in the war, you know. So that was, wherever it was, you know, but not in Berlin.

AG: He was sent away from Berlin?

LL: Oh yes. And so she had time to go on with her studies, she didn't have to cook for him, or look after the children, you see.

AG: You were in Berlin for the whole of the First World War, or did they move back to Hamburg?

LL: We moved back in 1918, before the end, or during 1918.

AG: Your sister was born in 1915?

LL: Yes, the 6th of September, so, yes, for those few days, I was two years older and she hated that.

AG: Do you have any memories of Berlin at all?

LL: Yes, I remember having a lot of ear trouble, and standing in my sort of bed, for children, with the...

AG: Cot.

LL: Yes, cot, I can hear myself standing there and crying and I remember what the rooms were like. And we had a balcony, a balcony with a sand-pit for us to play in, the door leading to it was from father's room where he received the patients. I keep forgetting words... It's stupid.

AG: Consulting room.

LL: Consulting room yes. And we were playing there and a patient came, so he shut the doors. And I was worried you see, I had claustrophobia all my life, and so I had it already then. And I don't know if it was... because mother was already in Hamburg when she was expecting me, in August, I was due, I was born on the 31st of August, but I think she was already pregnant, coming from Berlin, and her brother, I think, travelled with her and it took about six hours and so I would think I was early and I was apparently late. And that is when you get claustrophobia. I mean... that's what I think. And so there we were on the balcony and I remember 'shall we call down to people?' We couldn't possibly ask father to open the doors when he had a patient. I mean, little as I was, I always knew how to behave. I always remember. The funny thing was that when I was at Manor Hall, I don't know if you've been

inside, if you know it. I was on the ground floor, and they all have things in front of the windows, those irons, what do you call them? Well, grills, they look quite nice. And I was on the ground floor quite a long way along the corridor stuck there, and it didn't worry me at all. But in cars for example, when I'm sitting at the back and somebody is sitting in front of me, I just can't, because I wouldn't be able to get out quickly you see.

AG: Do you know what part of Berlin you were born?

LL: Yes, Berlin Charlottenburg. 'Ich heie Elisabeth Charlotte.' Mommsenstrae 42, yes.

AG: It's a good area.

LL: When I was in Berlin, because I visited my stepmother regularly and she was very fond of me, and she said '*Ganz der Vater*', and I think I'm '*ganz* the other family', and we would still...

AG: And you looked quite like your father...?

LL: Yes.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 33 seconds

AG: Do you remember the end of the First World War, do you remember your father coming back?

LL: No. I don't think so. No. I remember the end of the Second World War. Well, that was mother, she just survived. No.

AG: And you went back to Hamburg in..., just before the end of the First World War?

LL: Yes, in 1918. Yes. And you saw the picture my grandmother painted where we had the top floor.

AG: Perhaps you could describe the house.

LL: Yes, it was really a terrace and I mean in an ordinary town a terrace is not very special. But in London of course terraced houses are very valuable aren't they? And that is like in Hamburg where we had four storeys and a basement, and the top was the children's room, and mother had her bedroom next to us, and then we had our bathroom and there was a bathroom on the second, the third, yes the second floor, and the kitchen was in the basement and we had a lift which goes up to the first floor and the second floor for the food, but in the basement there was also a cellar, one for the coal and one for fruit I think, and drinks, I think, bottles, and then there was a *Waschkche*, where the washing..., a sort of like a kettle, huge, not a machine of course, and then two or three rooms on the other side, which I think were for the maids.

AG: How many servants did you have?

LL: Well again, we had to have a cook, and we had a maid, but because you know, with patients, grandmother was very busy in a house where you had,... I said that my grandfather had his, on the ground floor he had his, what did we say it was called?

AG: Consulting rooms?

LL: Yes, and a waiting room, a huge one, where he had a table where they could play billiards. And a library next to it, and one of the pictures out here was in the library in the panel. And a veranda, it was completely closed, with an electric stove, so we had; we could have meals there all the year you know. So... Oh yes, the first floor was the salon, und *Biedermeierzimmer*, no, *Biedermeierzimmer im zweiten Stock*... anyway, the salon, I think. And then a dining room with a table which could be pulled out to have 24 people, and it had a Steinway, and a harmonium, and the Steinway was one of the few things we saved when my parents came and brought here and it was standing there. It was the most beautiful... mother had got it for her birthday... no sorry, for her wedding in 1912, which was a particularly good vintage for pianos. It was wonderful. It played itself, it had a lovely touch. And I think I told you my family was very musical and I grew up with all that, and my uncle played the violin, he wanted to become a professional violinist, but his parents thought he'd better learn something and keep it as his... which was a good idea, because you don't earn much, and he did of course earn quite well until of course, he had to give up his job as he was in a concentration camp, I don't know if I talked about that.

Tape 1: 22 minutes 19 seconds

AG: We'll come to that later. You talked quite a lot about your uncle; I don't think I asked you what his actual name was.

LL: Max. Max Sanger. I think Max Julius, because my grandfather's brother was called Julius, but he was called Max.

AG: Who in the family played the wonderful Steinway?

LL: Well, grandmother. She was marvellous. And we had a lot of chamber music, and my uncle and her, her son, played the violin. And I got to know all the chamber music, because when they were rehearsing, and then later after my grandmother died, I was a baby then, during my grandmother's life, but... later, mother would say I listened to the rehearsals. So I got to know every note, you see. And she would say tell me 'when they get to the third movement, I'll put the kettle on for some tea'. And then we had house concerts and so I got to know all the chamber music, and I have the radio on, with music all day, and sometimes it's the first note and I know what it is. And Grandmother played the *Forellenquintett*, the Trout Quintet, that was the last thing in the autumn before she died in March, but she was wonderful, she could play, and she painted, and she knew languages. And mother kept a lot of her letters which I have found and I'm reading them before I send them to a cousin and, and she uses English like that, you see, she must have had a governess. Oh yes, there was an English governess, but that was for another part of the family, but because she quotes English like that. I think her father must have been very rich, he was a businessman, and because ... I don't think I'm wearing it, I've got a little pearl necklace which my grandfather bought, and I think that was the first time he got a thousand pounds a year, a thousand marks, and he got this to give it to her.

AG: Could you tell us where your family house was in Hamburg?

LL: Yes, on the Alsterchaussee

AG: Could you explain where that was?

LL: Sorry, on the river, the Alsterglaciis, you could see the Landungsbrücke across, and uncle bought us a canoe, it was practically on the doorstep, there was just a little boathouse. It was wonderful. It's now..., And then outside Glacin was, the next, all along the river, the next bit was called Klopstockstraße, and then it was called Alsterufer now the Germans have called the whole thing Alsterufer, because who knows what *Glaciis* means you know nowadays.

Tape 1: 25 minutes 7 seconds

And then again the school, the private school, later it was called the Klosterschule, but this one, was in the Klopstockstraße, round the corner, parallel to it more or less, and that is now called the 'Warburgstraße' and that's rather nice.

AG: After Warburg, another Hamburg family. So this was your first school? What was it called? Was it like a kindergarten or so?

LL: Yes I was trying to think... No it was a Lyceum or something, it was a *Schule*, and I was there till I was 11, and then I went to the *Klosterschule* and then it was the Real- Gymnasium, and we were the first class, we learned Greek as well, and so we became '*Ein humanistisches Gymnasium*' as they call it. I always wanted, I suppose I was encouraged, I always wanted to learn classical... Latin, I knew I wanted to study modern languages, but modern languages you could learn when you are grown up and you go to the country and pick them up, and I knew, I obviously was advised, but accepted and realised, that Latin and Greek were the best foundation for any language, aren't they, for any profession. I mean, think of doctors, how useful Greek is, Greek even, and Latin. And people still in this country learn French as a first language. What use is that? I mean German, they speak in Switzerland, Austria, Africa, you know, or Spanish nowadays, has become much more popular, which is much more useful, I think so, anyway.

Tape 1: 26 minutes 38 seconds

AG: What was the name of this gymnasium?

LL: It was the Klosterschule.

AG: It was a convent?

LL: Yes the Sankt Johannes Klosterschule.

AG: Did this have any religious...?

LL: Not any more, no, I think it had originally. No. We had all sorts of children, we had Jewish children. But we were all friends. Some of my friends became Nazis, but we were still friends you know, and we still had *Klassentag* every year, we celebrated, we were so proud.

AG: *Klassentag* is a school reunion.

LL: That's right, yes.

AG: You said you were so proud of being...

LL: The first ones in that school to learn Greek, and our headmaster at the time became, what are the people who come to test the teachers at the school...?

AG: Inspectors.

LL: An inspector. He became an inspector. But he also came to take our oral exam, because we were the first class to have this *humanistisch*, to make this, *humanistisch*, we all had to go into the oral, because normally if you had passed well into your first... we had four written exams, it was Latin, Greek, German and Mathematics, and if you passed in those you didn't have to go to the oral, but we did. And we had 13 subjects, we had all the other subjects. We had all the sciences, and history, and as I say sciences, you name it, we didn't know what we were going to be examined in. And my mathematics, which after all was one of the main subjects wasn't very good, although did I tell you that we were related to... you see I've written it down somewhere, our, a famous physicist...

AG: Einstein.

Tape 1: 28 minutes 40 seconds

LL: Yes, of course. He was a cousin of my grandfather. And there's a lovely... Lloyds Bank quoted it, he played the violin, but as an amateur. With Schnabel, and he didn't play very well, and Schnabel said '*Mensch, kannst du nicht zählen?*'. Man, can't you count? And Lloyds Bank used that.

AG: Did you ever meet him?

LL: No. Unfortunately not.

AG: Going back to your school, were you a good student?

LL: Well yes, because I think I said that at that school where I was the second, there was a friend who was the first, but I was the second, and girls would come to me, we had breaks between every lesson, every two lessons, they would come to me and say 'Lilo, can you explain, I didn't understand so and so'.. So I started teaching...

Tape 1: 29 minutes 44 seconds

AG: What were your memories of the school?

LL: Well it was wonderful because we were the first we were very proud of ourselves, we had a wonderful *Klassenlehrer*, special teacher for a class, 'form master', yes, and he was Jewish, and we went on *Klassenreisen*. For a week we once went to Trier, to visit, you know, being *humanistisch*, you know, having learned Latin and Greek, and there they found some Latin things, and this was not open to the public yet, but we were let in, and the chap, professor of

whatever, in that town, his name was Löschke, which was rather funny.... But our poor teacher of course, first he was stopped from doing whatever he was doing, finally he wasn't allowed to teach anymore and then he taught at a Jewish school in Hamburg, and eventually he died in a concentration camp. Walter Bacher.

AG: Was there a special Jewish school in Hamburg?

LL: Oh yes I suppose so. My uncle, mother's brother, he was at the Uranium(?), that was a Gymnasium, and I think he also did Latin and Greek. And as I said the class was so proud that we had *Klassentag* every year and met. And after the war they tried to find where I was and did and invited me, and when I retired they all paid for my coming over, for my flight.

AG: Was this after the war when they found you?

LL: Yes that was it, yes, every year you see, I went anyway to see what's left of the family and friends. I have family and friends there, I have a cousin in Bremen, the Aryan one, you know, so that was very nice, but now of course I can't travel any longer. We still ring each other up on these days and...

AG: You would have gone to this school you were 11, so that was 1925. In the later 1920s did you notice any difficulties between German non-Jewish and Jewish....

LL: No, not in our school in Hamburg altogether, that was the marvellous thing, we didn't even know, that didn't matter, until Kristallnacht.

AG: Can you say something about the atmosphere in Hamburg, the political atmosphere as you experienced it?

LL: I wasn't there during that. No, there wasn't, well I suppose there were, yes.... My sister she was still in school because I wasn't any more... I only came home on the holidays, and the other thing, my grandfather they had a bronze bust, Lederer, was it Lederer who made the Bismarck monument in the harbour in Hamburg? Yes, anyway, I think he was the one, a very famous man, a bronze bust was at the hospital, on a thing, I have a photograph, and of course the Nazis took it down. So my uncle, this was before the war, asked if he could have it. They did, and when he emigrated to Norway, he took it with him... Wait a minute, yes, I think so, and then brought it back to Germany and they put it up again.

AG: This was your uncle Max.

Tape 1: 33 minutes 23 seconds

LL: Yes that's right, who came back to Hamburg and then became a civil servant, high ranking and so on. But then later it was stolen. But they have a photograph of the bust, in the *Neurologische Abteilung*, hanging in the *Treppenhaus*, you know, over the stairs.

AG: I'm sure I've seen it.

LL: Sanger, if you would remember that or if you ever go there it might still be there, yes, the photograph would still be hanging there, of course there is nobody there to remember them, obviously.

AG: Were you happy at school?

LL: Yes.

AG: Did you have many friends?

LL: As I say we kept in touch, we met every year so we kept in touch.

AG: Any particular friend?

LL: Yes, one in Flottweg(?), Blanca, and then one who lives in Munich, so on my way sometimes when I was going south, I can't remember when and where, but I always made a point of it, and she came from Hamburg of course, and so I kept in touch with quite a few of them, yes. And as I say it didn't matter, even if they were... yes and we had *Klassentage* and one friend who was *Deutschnational* you see, but she wasn't *antisemitisch*, you see, one, she was in the *Partei* or something, she fled to South America or somewhere, but she did eventually come back to Hamburg, to die here.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 0 second

AG: What about your parents. You said they didn't stay together. When did they separate?

LL: Well, 1918. That's when we went to Hamburg.

AG: And your father stayed in Berlin?

LL: Yes. My sister went... and he died in 1933 when I was in Cardiff, and in those days you wouldn't just fly back for the funeral, and anyway, I was in the school and I suppose they wouldn't let me off, but my sister was taken to the funeral. Mother and sister were going. But she always didn't like him, from grandmother, if we got a letter from him, grandmother would throw it onto the table, 'a letter from your father' you see, and she took it from grandmother, to be annoyed with him. But she did tell me she went to the funeral and she said 'of course I didn't care whether my father had died' and that's the way she talked. But when she came back from the funeral, she said she and her half brother, they were in a taxi taken back, and, what is that first Autobahn from Berlin to Sans Souci, you know, where... a famous, where there was a Castle I think also, from Frederick the Great, and she said that was the first Autobahn, if you were going 100 kilometres or something, and she said she and the boy enjoyed it enormously. That is the best thing she remembers of the funeral.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 36 seconds

AG: Did you go to Berlin to see your father?

LL: Well yes as I said my stepmother, his third wife, insisted that we were invited, because she had her daughters from her first marriage, you see, so then we both went.

AG: What was the name of this stepmother?

LL: Freiin von Örtzen?

AG: She must have known that your mother was Jewish?

LL: Oh yes of course.

AG: Did she mind?

LL: Oh no, not at all. And her second husband was a famous ..., again I've forgotten, in Russia, and there was a film about the two eagles and he was in that as well, and I think it must have been that they had to get out to be safe, you see, I don't know what happened to him, so that's... and then, I don't remember how she met my father but anyway.

AG: You said had to be safe...

LL: From the Communists, yes.

AG: Because Freiin is like a Baroness.

LL: Yes I don't know she must have got to Berlin somehow and...

Tape 1: 37 minutes 44 seconds

AG: When did you finish your studies at the school?

LL: The Abitur? Well that was '33. I came straight from school you see, to improve my English.

AG: And how did you do in your Abitur?

LL: Oh very well as I say, I wouldn't have had to have the oral, because I did well in all four subjects.

AG: And in 1933, do you remember when Hitler was appointed chancellor?

LL: I'm trying to think whether it was while I was there or if it was... I have a feeling the 31st of January that was when there was the fire, isn't that when the Reichstag was set on fire?

AG: That's February. January 31st was when he was appointed.

LL: Was it? Well then I left a week or two later.

AG: I see. So you decided to go to Cardiff?

LL: Yes, but that was just to improve my English. I wasn't emigrating, you see.

AG: Had you decided whether you wanted to continue studying, or what you wanted to continue studying?

LL: No, as I said I wanted to improve my English, to go to, I forget, there were two famous German Universities in the South and I wanted to go to one of those and of course I couldn't

and my mother said well, try and stay and get a job, you see. And I was very lucky to get this job as a student teacher first and then getting my degree and teaching here, and then I found that I like teaching.

AG: If you had stayed in Germany do you know what you would have done?

LL: Well I thought I was going to be an interpreter.

Tape 1: 39 minutes 37 seconds

But I found that because I thought it must be awful to do teaching but then I found liked it, and I was quite good at it, actually modestly...

AG: When did you actually leave Germany, for England do you remember?

LL: Oh yes, as I say a week or two after Hitler came.

AG: Did you notice any change?

LL: Not in that week or so. I was actually getting ready to go to England.

AG: And how did you travel to England?

LL: Oh, by boat. Yes. Harwich, I think from Cuxhafen to Harwich, I suppose.

AG: Do you remember what you thought of England when you first arrived in Harwich?

LL: No I don't really remember. I found a diary, these little ones, you know, the pocket diaries, and I then, I don't know if I stopped in London where we had friends, I seem to have gone pretty well straight to Cardiff.

AG: Why Cardiff? Any particular reason?

LL: Well yes, I only discovered..., well my stepfather knew a school inspector in Cardiff, but I didn't realise then that he had been a war prisoner, a prisoner of war, and this chap must have been in charge of the prisoners, and they became friends, and that also helped my stepfather to get a job here you see.

AG: Where did you go in Cardiff? Where did you stay?

LL: No I didn't study I stayed with him, he taught me. He taught me, yes.

AG: Privately.

LL: Yes, obviously. Because I say he was an inspector but he had been a teacher. And then he put me in touch with the Grammar school, a girl's grammar school, as I say, a high school, I think they called it, to have some more English lessons, and to give German lessons in exchange. But he taught me every day.

AG: What was his name?

LL: Jenkins, I think. Yes, I found a diary that, in this little diary how we went out a lot and I met a lot of friends, and then I went to so and so with that girl, and then we played tennis with another one, and it was wonderful, and then one day I stayed home all day to work, and do my translations or whatever, and then I had this course in Cambridge you see.

AG: I was just going to ask how you felt you were received in Cardiff by the local people.

LL: Extremely well, I made friends wherever I went, it was absolutely marvellous.

AG: Nobody objected to you because you were German?

LL: No. And this of course was before the war, but even so I think they would make a difference between the Jewish refugees and the Germans, you know.

AG: One would hope so. How long were you there before you went to Cambridge?

LL: Well I was there for two months I paid for, and then I got a job at a house in Llandaff for the summer term. And then Cambridge for the summer vacation.

AG: And what was your job at that house?

LL: Well that was as a student, teaching German conversation.

AG: And you were 18?

LL: Yes, and there was father having died. And I found a diary I kept at that school, and I went to church, I went to a different church every Sunday, and I think that was in Cambridge as well probably. And on the day when I heard from my father dying and so on, I just went for a walk, and I said I want to go out to... and I got the word wrong which was quite funny, to... distract myself, and I got a word which means to commit suicide, or to kill myself or some similar word; I realised that they were a bit worried you see. I think that was where I went to a different church every Sunday. Or it might have been in Bristol.

AG: And then you went to study in Cambridge?

LL: No, in Cambridge it was a summer course for foreigners. And I passed with distinction and I never needed it because of course I learned to speak better every day.

AG: And where did you stay in Cambridge?

LL: Yes, it was Newnham.

AG: Newnham College?

LL: Yes.

AG: And what did you think of that?

Tape 1: 44 minutes 28 seconds

LL: Oh it was very exciting, I felt. I was meeting lots of other students from other countries.

AG: Did you have any problems in Cambridge?

LL: What was it? I think we did something. We were swimming in the evening when we weren't supposed to, I think, and also with a bicycle without a lamp.... Then we couldn't speak any English suddenly, so they had to forgive us, we spoke in very broken English you see.

AG: And after this summer course ended?

LL: That was Badminton.

AG: Oh you got a job...

LL: Yes they offered me, because they came to Cambridge when I was there, in the spring, offering me a job, for the summer; altogether take me on, in the summer as a student teacher. But I had already got a job as a student teacher, and then they said come with us in the autumn. And there I was, and for two years I was a student teacher at Badminton, with all sorts of famous people at the school and learning more English you know, and then University.

AG: Who appointed you?

LL: Miss Baker was the headmistress then, and Miss Randall who was the treasurer, and they both came to see me. And while I was at Badminton, I think we had five headmistresses and one headmaster.

AG: It seems to me quite remarkable, because you were an 18 year-old and Badminton is one of the best girls' schools in the country.

LL: I know, wasn't I lucky? Yes because I was at St James' in West Malvern and that was another public school, and that was where the girl-guides, you know the man who started them... you know the one

AG: Baden Powell

LL: Yes, his daughters were there, and of course we all had to become girl-guides, and there I was having never been a girl-guide in my life, and I became a lieutenant straight away, so what I did was I learnt Morse, the alphabet in a few days, because for dash dot-dot-dot, 'beautifully', I made words for everyone, so that I learnt it quite quickly. And but then we also had a meeting in the summer, and my parents got evacuated, my stepfather got a job at a school, in the East, and they were evacuated to Ross-on-Wye, and so I usually came home for weekends, or for holidays or something, but that holiday of course I had to stay at school. And then we had to run through the garden or something, and I slipped and did something wrong to my ankle, and so I couldn't be there anymore, and I think I could go home then or something, I don't know.

AG: You were appointed at Badminton still in 1933, when you started teaching at Badminton, or 1934?

LL: No. I was appointed as a student teacher. But once I got my degree I got jobs everywhere else, yes, so that was good, because it confirmed me that it was the school for me, because it had, well, everything, and it had girls from all religions, you know that sort of thing, and it was very progressive, that's the word. And all the things that they did well, nowadays no school can afford not to be, as we were then you see, so, it was hard work, but a boarding school is not a nine-to-five-job.

AG: Can you tell me about your work at Badminton?

LL: Well yes, I made a list. I was teaching German and French, I was running both libraries, Mother had a library at her institute and I helped her writing cards and things like that you see. So I trained some of the girls to be librarians with me, and I checked the library every term, at the end of term we closed the library for one day, and checked the whole thing, I don't think they ever check it now. I still think they have the cards that I've written.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 58 seconds

AG: How many years did you work at Badminton?

LL: Oh well only 32, as well as two as a student teacher!

AG: So you were there for two years as a student teacher and...

LL: Yes and then I came in '42 to '74, so there you are. And I played in the school orchestra, and then at the University also I played in the orchestra and sang in the choir with our beloved professor Stanton.... So...

AG: Which instruments did you play?

LL: Well, I was brought up on the piano, but while we were in Lynmouth evacuated they needed a cellist for the orchestra and so I offered, I suppose I was asked but I agreed, and learned to play the cello well, in a few years. I didn't play as well as I played the piano but well enough so that Professor Stanton would let me play in the orchestra and I played in the school orchestra, and he let me play, and he put me with the leader of the cellos. And he always did, put the less good ones... it's like in a tennis play, if you put a woman with a man, he plays much better. Like that, so that was marvellous, so because having already been brought up in music, I knew in an oratorio I had some soprano... you wouldn't think that ... my voice stopped a lot, but a soprano in a choir, and cello in the orchestra. And when you sing there is a piano accompanying, and so you get to know the whole thing, when you're playing in the orchestra, they don't know what the chorus was doing, the choir I mean, so that was wonderful. And the professor was so funny, and he teased us a lot, and I kept putting notes in my score, but because I couldn't do it when I played the cello, and people always thought I was going to write his biography. Well I didn't do that, but I was editing the Alumni Gazette, of the University...

AG: Of Bristol University?

LL: Yes, and when people retired, ... I'm hopping too fast am I?

AG: No, no, you go ahead.

LL: And so when they retired I put you know, there were some speeches about them which I always put in the magazine, the, Alumni Gazette, as it's called, and didn't wait till they died, and when they died I put some again, but I thought it was nice to put, while they were alive, put all the funny things, and they themselves, being praised, you see, I was able to quote some of his funny things.

AG: You said you were two years at Badminton as a student. Did you then do your degree? What did you do then?

LL: No, from school I went to University and there I got my degree. And then I had jobs at two other schools, which helped me to know that Badminton was THE school, you see.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 58 seconds

AG: Yes, so at which University did you do your degree?

LL: Here.

AG: At Bristol?

LL: Yes.

AG: And you went to Bristol in '35?

LL: Yes. And I was at Manor Hall all three years.

AG: Manor Hall. Just tell us where Manor Hall is.

LL: Oh it's in Clifton, and it's only a few minutes walk from there to the University. We got all our meals, so we would go home for lunch, back to the University, for either meetings, or whatever else you have, you know, what is it when you have only three or four, you know with a lecturer,

AG: Seminars.

LL: Something like that. And you got to know people from every faculty, and some other foreigners and some other Jews, it was marvellous. We didn't have to shop and cook, wash and everything...

AG: Did you have some sort of exam or some sort of test or admission procedure, anything like that to get into University?

LL: I don't think so.

AG: You had your Abitur.

LL: Well yes I suppose they knew that was quite good.

AG: And the fact that you were half Jewish, that effectively did mean that you probably couldn't go back to Germany. Did this make any difference?

LL: No, I don't think so. And we were able to exchange the fee. I think I told you that an English student going to Germany, we paid his fee, and he paid mine you see.

AG: Ah, because I was going to ask you, had you got any money?

LL: Yes, that was hard. That was lucky.

AG: Because as I understand it the German authorities wouldn't let money go out.

LL: No. Well I think I could take a little with me, but...

AG: So you got an English student, and so they paid for you in Bristol.

LL: Yes.

AG: That's clever. And during this time when you were a student in Bristol and you were studying, what was happening to your family, to your mother and your sister?

LL: Well my sister was in Sweden studying. And there she could study because grandfather had done something, I suppose he had done something for a Swede, I don't know, because he got some distinction, that any of us could study, because he had got that we could study without having to pay. So she didn't want to come to England anyway, because she didn't want to come where I was you see. And she regretted it later, because the climate doesn't suit her. She is very sensitive to thunderstorms, or particularly thunderstorms, or bad weather anyway, but thunderstorms you see she really would like to be in one of those glass cages or something, and so she wasn't happy at all.

AG: How did your mother get on in Hamburg? How did you communicate with her?

LL: During the war you mean?

AG: No.

LL: While I was a student?

AG: Did she encounter any difficulties? Was life becoming difficult for your mother?

LL: Oh no. During the war of course there were the...

AG: I meant say between 1933 and...

LL: You mean when she lost her job... No. I'm trying to think. Oh yes, we sold the house. That's one. I don't know whether we had to, or if we didn't need it, it was too big anyway, and I remember helping her, because we had yes, I forgot all those stories you know, we also had *ein Dachgarten*, a garden on the roof, because we had a garden on the roof, because it

was a flat roof, and grandmother had, you call it green fingers, I forgot the German word for it, I mean look at all my plants here, doing beautifully... So she had made that beautiful. And there was *der Boden* the sort of attic, a huge one, where we had enormous cabin trunks and boxes, and I'm afraid that I'm a hamster, and mother was, and I was helping her to clear it before we were selling it, and keeping some of the things and throwing some away, and when she kept, put some to be kept, and when she was turning away I did this you see, and I should do it to myself, and because I have kept in my study which I can't show you, the very, the many committees I'm on and I've kept all these folders, it's ridiculous. I should have thrown away every year, and now I try to ask some people to help me to throw things away. I don't think I shall live long enough to clear it. But once I've died, people can throw, get a company, there are people who clear a place for you and pay a little bit for what they take and they could clear it all without looking. And I've told my executors, and he's a friend of mine and he's a lawyer, where I keep a little bit of jewellery I keep it hidden, where I keep it, where he can find it and send it to my sister, no not my sister, my cousin, in Switzerland. That's all, otherwise they can throw it all away and they can help themselves, if there are any books they like, and look at all those books. They're lovely music, they're beautifully bound and everything, they should be quite valuable, but most of the books I mean in German, you know up there I had the whole set of Goethe, that was leather all that and I gave that to the University and kept some. But who is going to read them in German print these days. If you know anybody I would be glad to give them, I don't want to sell them.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 58 seconds

AG: I think we'll give you a break now and change the tape.

TAPE 2

AG: Liselotte Leschke, Tape two. When we stopped I was beginning to ask you about you time as a student at Bristol University. What were you actually studying?

LL: Well German as the main subject and subsidiary French for two years and German for three years.

LL: Could you tell me something about what it was like to be a student at Bristol University in the 1930s?

LL: Oh it was wonderful. And at the Hall I was running the library and that was fun. And I think I said earlier we had all our meals at the hall, so we didn't waste time or money shopping, washing, or cooking and also, I met people from all the other faculties; whereas nowadays students who, they may have two or three others, up to six perhaps, but that's all. And so I made some great friends and we kept in touch for years later, you know.

Tape 2: 1 minute 16 seconds

AG: Were these mainly English, your friends?

LL: Yes. Oh, I had some Indian ones, I seem to remember, but otherwise I think they were all English.

AG: Did you ever encounter any problems because you come from Germany?

LL: No.

AG: How many people were studying German with you?

LL: As a main language there were only five of us. And one also was a refugee.

AG: And what was her name?

LL: Oh. I think she was connected with the Peters, you know the people who print music.

AG: The music publishers.

LL: Yes, something like that. There was another, there was another woman from Germany as well, I can't remember her name, she was teaching here also.

AG: A refugee also?

LL: I suppose so, yes. But she wasn't Jewish. I think this was more an army, or something, there were quite a lot of people then who didn't approve of Hitler, weren't there?

AG: Do you remember any of the members of staff?

LL: Yes there was Professor Closs, August Closs. You knew him?

AG: I did. Did you say you didn't have any happy memories of the staff?

LL: Well I wasn't all that impressed actually. No, whoever taught us language... No that was funny, yes, no that was about French, one of the lecturers who taught us French, who had a very strong English accent. And we had to write 'une explication de text'. Which he called 'une explication'. So we said to each other 'have you written out your 'explication?'

Tape 2: 3 minutes 23 seconds

AG: When did you graduate?

LL: '38.

AG: How you did in your studies?

LL: Oh I did very well, for one thing in German. The funny thing was that in German we had ... in the written, I get premonitions I think, because we went out, maybe that was for the French, but we went to the restaurant opposite the university for lunch, and sort of more or less revising, and talking, and I said 'we haven't had so and so for a long time' and we got him, so we were prepared for that. No. What was it? In French, we had a wonderful professor. And he had also a name for writing books under another name. You must have heard of him. Ah, I wish I had, I should have prepared to look him up. He was marvellous.

AG: Did you find it difficult to study languages through the medium of English?

LL: Well this was it you see, people thought: 'fancy a German studying German you see'. Well I said I have to translate German into English and so on, but no, I didn't find it... Once yes, we had to write this 'explication de text' and it was about a poem by Baudelaire, and when we had an essay like that we got seventy percent, seventy was the highest, we were allowed to use dictionaries for some reason, well mine was so good that he gave me seventy-five. I always remember that. 'Crépuscule du soir', by Baudelaire. Oh, you haven't done French?

AG: Yes I did.

LL: Oh you did, so you know it perhaps?

AG: I do.

AG: One thing I ought to ask you is whether you were going back to Germany at all during the period when you were a student-teacher or student at University? Could you go back?

LL: Yes luckily, because that night I could go home and get my clothes and everything I needed for the next term you see, I had enormous cabin trunks... That was a great help

AG: Does that mean you went home?

LL: Every vacation, every vacation.

AG: Every vacation in Germany?

LL: Yes.

AG: What was that like?

LL: Wonderful, because I was home with the family, and oh yes, there I also helped a friend who was in the church, and there was a movement of people who belonged to the church, and I helped her to distribute the monthly paper you know from the church. And some people were afraid that we were caught to do that, but it was alright and that was the thing... Oh my sister came home from school very angry one day, I think I told you when grandfather's bust was taken down. And she suffered a bit more in her school I think. You know, being Jewish in the school you see.

AG: That was in Sweden?

LL: No, we're talking about Hamburg now.

AG: Oh she was still in Hamburg?

LL: Yes.

AG: Do you have any detailed memories of what she suffered from?

LL: Well she managed to get her Abitur, I can't remember if there was, something else, that the teachers weren't very good to her. But anyway she got through and then went to Sweden and then got a place at the University there.

AG: Did your mother remarry?

LL: Yes she married a great friend of my uncle's, he was the one who played the viola in our quartet. And there is the famous, there is the Beethoven, I think it's Opus 41 or 42, number three, tatatatata, in the last movement, 'Lassally kann es nicht, Lassally kann nicht'... Lassally was my stepfather's name yes. Karl. Just teasing him, yes.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 47 seconds

AG: What sort of man was he, your stepfather?

LL: Wonderful. Very clever, amusing, and I had a lovely book, I wish I had it ready for you. When he and my uncle went on holiday, I can get it afterwards and show you, and they wrote a poem to write to my mother, and my mother wrote a poem to them you see. Wonderful. And on one of those journeys they went to Austria to some Wörthersee or something, and there he met his wife.

AG: When did they actually marry, your mother and your stepfather?

LL: It must have been the year before I was heading,... I was going to Paris, no, I'd been to Paris, to improve my French, in April. And that was when she was going to get married. But she said 'it is more important for you to go to that'. Maybe it was a holiday course. Something like that. So I didn't tell her, but somehow I had the ticket to go back to Germany, so I did. And they always came, the American Liners, from Southampton to Hamburg. But this one went from Southampton to Le Havre and then to Hamburg. So in Le Havre, I posted my usual, I always sent a Sunday letter. Then of course in Germany they usually had Sunday letters, a letter or a postcard from Le Havre, and then Sunday morning I arrived, and there she was in bed, having breakfast and reading my postcard.... Of course I was there for the wedding.

AG: What year was this?

LL: It must have been '34, '35, 1935, I suppose.

AG: In these years did you notice that your mother and stepfather suffered any difficulties?

LL: No. That was why they could stay in Hamburg, you see. Because they had their pensions, they could afford to live. But eventually... they... no, they must have decided before not to leave Germany. But they had to leave the house, which was much too large, as you can see, and they had a flat off Rotenbaum *In der Gegend*.

AG: So when you came back, for vacations..

LL: I always stayed with them, yes. Or sometimes I stayed with a friend, near them, and also, to have a maid, they could only have the ones over fifty... And I remember one of them was

very annoyed, because, we got up late or something, because .. *vorne liegt der und hinten liegt der* and she couldn't clean the rooms.

AG: Did you notice any change in Hamburg connected with the Nazi regime?

LL: Well yes I suppose there obviously were some people who were Nazis, and some shops and places and tried to avoid them, you see but on the whole we didn't suffer personally.

AG: Did most of your non-Jewish friends maintain contact?

LL: There was one friend who joined the party and felt that couldn't keep in touch with us. Only one. And I don't know... I think she might have been a school friend of my mothers' and that was really appalling, because... I'm trying to think, because some people had to join, to keep their jobs, and there was a famous headmistress of a school in Hamburg, where a friend of mine, I met this friend only in Bristol, and we found that we both came from Hamburg, we both had the same friends, the Gerson family, there the famous architects, Gallinghouse and all that, and we had both been at a New Year's Eve party at that time, we didn't know each other we only met in Bristol. Yes, and they came to Bristol to study architecture, their fathers were architects. And we always travelled together back to Hamburg for holidays. And I don't know if it was Christmas holiday or another one, but when we arrived they wouldn't let them in, because they were Jewish, they sent them back. That was very horrible.

AG: So would this have been later on?

Tape 2: 12 minutes 41 seconds

LL: Well yes, between '35 and '38, because they were studying here when I was here you see. But they both went to America and they're both professors and they've both done very well.

AG: What about the British? Did you ever have any trouble getting back from Germany into this country?

LL: Well no. Except, yes, I think there was somebody who was a bit suspicious of, yes, because yes, when I had this job at this private school in Seaton, there was a parent who didn't approve of the Germans, it didn't matter, perhaps they didn't even know that I was Jewish, teaching their daughters, and the headmaster, I think they wanted him to dismiss me, or something like that, I think he was not the headmaster, he was the owner of the school, he was a retired doctor but he had a woman who was the headmistress. And he said if they didn't like it they could take the child away and I thought that was very nice, that.... And you see the police had to..., I had to report to the police...

Tape 2: 13 minutes 54 seconds

AG: And that was during the war.

LL: Yes, yes.

AG: What I was getting at though was the period before the war. You were going to and fro, and well, as a German though of Jewish origin, did the British always let you in without any problems?

LL: Oh yes, you know, I was a student here, and I had a permit it was called, wasn't it, here before I was naturalised, and I got a permit, which was renewed automatically for students, you see. No, but there was on the boat, was it, I suppose either when we left Germany or when we arrived, that they would play the *Horst Wessel-Lied* I always stood with the English people you see, so I didn't have to do this (gesture) you see. And then there was a dance on the boat, and there were some Germans, and I'm not sure, I think he wore a uniform, but he danced with me, and, and he thought I was Spanish. Well I had two aunts and they, their mother was my grandmother's sister.... So they were, I think they were cousins of my grandmother or something like that, and their name was Belmonte, it was Schöenberg, wasn't it? That only occurred to me quite recently, when I think about some, is it a composer or musician, and I thought: Belmonte! It had never occurred to me, I wondered why they had this sort of slightly Spanish or Italian name... And again, musical, you see.

AG: I seem to remember you mentioned to me, there was one incident aboard ship, where you had a near-encounter with...

LL: Let me tell.

AG: I was going to prompt you.

LL: Yes, I know, because I already, I've written it down.

Tape 2: 16 minutes 9 seconds

LL: The ship always stopped in Cuxshafen, which was like Hamburg or Harwich to London, and we got there at six o'clock in the evening, and we had to get home quite near Christmas, but they wouldn't let us leave the ship, and we didn't know why, but the next morning, we were woken, I had an Indian girl with me from Badminton school to spend the holiday with us. And I heard school children shouting from the quay '*Wir wollen unseren Führer sehen*'. I said 'Hitler is coming', and I knew she wanted to see him of course. So up we went, and hanging over the railing, there was the gangway, I was hanging over and on my left there was the gangway, with SS both sides, and I could not have missed him if I'd had a brick in my pocket, never mind about a revolver...

AG: And he walked straight up past you.

LL: Well yes and I couldn't do anything about it. He was to congratulate the, what do you call the people who work on the ship, because they had rescued a Norwegian ship in the Atlantic, to congratulate them. And of course I have dined out on that story and I call it a chance in a lifetime. And there was the old mother, of a former pupil of mine, here in Henley's, and her father was a professor at University, and when I told them the story, not very long ago, several years now, and the mother said: 'And would you have done it?' How do I know? I felt it so strongly, I could hit him. But I couldn't. And if I had, I would have been shot on the spot. But a few million would not have... would have survived him, you see. So, it's quite a story isn't it?

AG: What did he look like?

LL: Oh, I didn't look at him particularly. But then again, yes, on that ship I think I told you that somebody danced with me. And in Hamburg when he came along a road, I quickly went into the side-streets so I didn't have to salute.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 18 seconds

AG: So he was a Nazi party man.

LL: No, I was talking about Hitler himself. Who did you...?

AG: No I was thought you meant the man you danced with.

LL: Oh that, might have been a soldier, I don't know. No I wouldn't have danced with a... definitely not. Maybe he wasn't in the... Something made me think that he was in the... I don't know.

AG: So you already obviously you had a strong feeling of hatred.

LL: Well I told you, I would have killed him if I could. I felt at the time I wish I could. And that was quite early. When some Germans they say they didn't know there were concentration camps. Well of course we knew.

AG: Did you know about the sufferings of other Jews in other parts of Germany?

LL: Well yes, and my stepfather's brother, one of them, went to Holland, and then I think died there somehow, and another one, he was high-ranking in the police, and he was trying to marry an Aryan, and they wouldn't let him. But he managed to emigrate, and then after the war he actually came back. So...

AG: When did your mother and stepfather decide to leave?

Tape 2: 19 minutes 41 seconds

LL: Well, after the Kristallnacht. Straight away. And then it took a long time, and I've now found the things mother had to sign, she always had to sign down every handkerchief she was going to take with her... It must have been awful, I had no idea, and... to prepare for emigration.

AG: Were they actually victims of any violence?

LL: No, no. Well yes, they came to their house at nine o'clock in the evening, and as I told you my father had been a soldier in the First World War, a German soldier, so he told them that, and they were tired by then, and they said well we let you home this time, this time. So then mother rang up and said 'now you have to let us out'. And they had this ghastly... and I had no idea now much trouble it was. And then when they got here, the warden of Manor Hall, offered to lend them... She had a house in Somerset, Cheddar, just outside Cheddar, where they could recover a bit and that was marvellous, and I got three people in Bristol to vouch for mother and three for stepfather.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 51 seconds

AG: Is that what you had to do mainly?

LL: I suppose so, I suppose so. And I was so lucky I had been here so long, that it wasn't difficult, there were people from the University, and from Badminton, and they paid I think, ten, ten shillings a month, or something, to help, ten pounds maybe, and then they arranged for my stepfather to take a course to become a teacher, at the University. He went for that, and he had one term as people who want to become teachers, in a school, and that was near Bristol, again, a famous boys' school. I have written it down somewhere, but they wouldn't have married people, so poor mother was alone there a term, but it was good because he got this marvellous job at the school I mentioned just now, you know, and very happy as a teacher and he was surprised, he preferred it to what he had done before. He had chosen to study law, and he found he loved teaching.

AG: Had he worked as a lawyer?

LL: Oh yes, he was a... either a judge or *Anwalt* or something anyway.

AG: I was also interested in the paperwork from the English, British side. Did you have to get them visas?

LL: I suppose so, and getting people to vouch for them, that was it, and you see these three people I mentioned, yes, I've lost to word what they were, but...

AG: Guarantors.

LL: Yes.

AG: Did you have dealings with any of the committees, like the Jewish committee, and

LL: Yes, I did, and the point was, as I said, three people vouched for my stepfather and three women for mother. And of course the women, they were two sisters from the Robertson, you know the Robertson Marmalade, and they lived in, just near the Downs, Ivy Well Road, and the other family they lived in the road that leads that way, on the Downs, and the two sisters who... what were their names I said...? Robertson, didn't want to have a man, because they were two old women, never married, but the other family was so sorry for them being separated, that they asked their children, who were more or less grown up by then, and they had the children's nursery on the third floor, that they could make a sort of kitchen on the floor outside, and they moved, I suppose they were only home for holidays and they had lots of rooms you see, so they could have both of them. And that was wonderful. And here in Bristol, they were exactly the same... as I had been here so long in Bristol, being a smaller town, in London all the refugees lived together and never met the inhabitants, you don't in a big town. So it was just the sort of town they had come from, and there was a university, and there was a music club, and my stepfather played the viola and mother sang.

AG: He played the viola as well?

LL: Yes, yes, he was I think he was in the University orchestra, and anyway we had quartets, and mother sang. And it was marvellous. They made friends as soon as they came, and it must have been, well not easy, I would say not easier, but less difficult, when people offer me something, they say 'it's cheaper', and I say 'no, it's less expensive'... It's something you can only do in English you know...

Tape 2: 24 minutes 39 seconds

AG: Did they have difficulties adapting to living in England?

LL: Not really I don't think, well no more than I did. Well the difficulties started in the war, when they were evacuated to Ross-On-Wye, to the Lodge of one of the Estates the school had taken over. Sorry, I lost my thread.

AG: I was very interested in what you were saying about the settlement of your parents in Bristol. You said the warden of Manor Hall helped them?

LL: Well she let them use her holiday house near Cheddar.

AG: What was her name?

LL: Oh Mrs Skemp and her husband was Professor Skemp, who died just before the end of the war, and so she was the warden, and she was very kind. I think they also reduced my fee at Manor Hall, because I thought I could live cheaper outside, which of course was ridiculous, and so I was able to stay in my third year as well, so...

AG: They reduced your fees because of your parents' situation?

LL: Yes, or mine, yes, and I was quite useful, I ran the Library... And yes, anyway and she helped my parents, and I think she was one of the vouchers for mother, because I had to get three for each of them you see and that was no difficulty with the University...

AG: When did your parents actually arrive, do you remember?

LL: I think it was in March.

AG: And that would be nineteen thirty....

LL: I think it was eight, 1938, no '39 of course, just in time before the war, yes.

AG: Did they come straight to Bristol, or did you..?

LL: Yes, yes.

AG: Did they come by ship?

LL: I suppose so, yes, and then by train from London.

Tape 2: 26 minutes 51 seconds

AG: Were they allowed to bring much with them?

LL: Some, yes, and the most valuable... I think I said they brought the piano, they had a beautiful Steinway. And we had some beautiful pictures because my grandfather collected pictures. And then my sister and I inherited half and half the ones they brought over, but gradually over the years I had to sell them to get the house repaired you see, on my salary, when I retired in '74 was £3000 before tax, and the house, this flat, which is a very big one, I've got another... it's a maisonette really, I bought that for £3500, it is now worth £1.18 million, can you imagine?

AG: Yes. When you graduated in the summer of 1938, what did you then do?

LL: Then I got a job at a private school.

AG: Which one was this?

LL: That was in Seaton.

AG: Where's that?

LL: Seaton is on the South Coast, near the famous spa, port, the seaside; it's got a long... everything that goes in...

AG: Brighton?

LL: No it's in Devon.

AG: Oh I see Torquay or Paignton or...

LL: No, oh, it's stupid... there was a famous film made there...

AG: Lyme Regis.

LL: Yes, it's near Lyme Regis. And that was a private school where my University friend was, and she recommended, or her parents recommended me, because I don't know if I told you I was offered a job in, was it Burton on the Avon or was it, ... when we come out of Bristol, what is the Avon there, Weston-Super-Mare right? And then the next place begins with a 'B' I think, that's also on the Severn, anyway that place, and there was a private school. And, I don't know, I had applied, and that was I think before I got my degree, but anyway, and so when you apply you tell them all the things you can do, and so there is nothing I can't do actually, I play the piano, etc, etc, so when I got there, they also wanted me to play the piano for dancing on a Saturday. Well, I couldn't possibly, I'm not good at reading music, you know, I'm better playing from memory and so on, and then they showed me my room, which was a tiny little attic, and then they were offering me £90 a year. (She laughs). So then I said, so sorry no, I couldn't... I think it was, I think it was only £70 and I said no I couldn't afford it, to accept so little, because I had to get my parents out of Germany, so then they increased it from £70 to £90, and I still said no thank you. And then this friend from University, my best friend at the University, her parents are, were in Frome, and the school she went to, well that was the school in Seaton, where she went to, and there I got £120. And there was nothing to spend it on, you know, we couldn't travel anymore, we walked miles and

miles in our free time, or at the weekend or something. So it was quite good training. But there was one child, I think somehow they had found out, I had told them, I think I had told them I came from Germany. And her father was a Nazi, and didn't want the child to be taught by a Nazi [sic – she means 'Jew'] and he wanted to send me away, and it was very nice because the owner of the school, he wasn't the headmaster he had a woman who was headmistress, but he said that 'if she doesn't like it, then you can put her somewhere else', or words to that effect, he said he wouldn't dream of letting me go, and I had to report to the police quite regularly, but I didn't have to go to one of those camps, because I had been here so long, and again, these sisters, the Robinson sisters, one of them was... whatever you call one of these judges,

AG: Magistrates.

LL: Yes, I think in Exeter, or somewhere, so she vouched for me as well and mother and I weren't interned, but stepfather was, poor dear, but only for a few months.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 48 seconds

AG: What was the school called in Seaton, do you remember?

LL: Riles Court(?).

AG: And were you there when the war broke out?

LL: Yes, I suppose so.

AG: And do you remember the outbreak of war?

LL: Yes, because then it became, again, there was the plots that people like me, that all the aliens, enemy aliens, I had to leave... And so then I got a job in West Malvern, another private school, quite well-known, that's where the boy scouts chap, his daughters were there, you see, so I had to be a girl -guide captain or something, and they wanted, or then Miss Baker wanted me at Badminton, and I said I can't leave, because I had to stay another year, I was there for a term, because their German teacher, an Austrian girl, was in internment, for a term, so they only had me for a term, but then they found that I was a trained teacher you know, I mean an experienced teacher, so they wanted me to stay and get her a job somewhere else, so I said as they had made it possible for me to stay, I must stay another year, and Miss Baker completely agreed and helped me for the following year and for the next 32.

AG: Did you have to go to a tribunal?

LL: No, because this Miss Robinson, who was a judge at the tribunal, could...

AG: Did your mother or stepfather?

LL: No. Stepfather was interned, and mother didn't have to. Perhaps this woman also, yes, perhaps the same woman said she was alright, I don't remember, but I know that he, poor dear, did have...

AG: Do you remember, did he tell you anything?

LL: Oh yes, he was with the famous... Amadeus Quartet were there. First they were, it was in the summer, and it was a bit north of Gloucestershire, the next county, I can't think of the name now, and they were in tents, but it was a wonderful...

Tape 2: 34 minutes 10 seconds

AG: Is that Prees Heath?

LL: It could be, yes, it sounds familiar,... very nice, the same sort of people, and in the summer, the tents, and it was quite nice. And then they were taken to the Isle of Wight, no sorry, I mean the Isle of Man. And he hated that, because he always hated the sea, and although they were in..., what do you call those houses, for holidays,

AG: Boarding houses.

LL: Yes. But with the Amadeus Quartet, and another friend of ours, an Austrian pianist from London, so from that point of view it was not too bad. And he came home for Christmas, I think it was almost on Christmas Eve, and we were up all night, and I kept on feeding him, more and more and more, because he'd been starving all these weeks, and then he got this job.

AG: Which job?

LL: Oh you know, in the East... this is so annoying... in Essex, in Essex yes, and loved it.

AG: What did he teach?

LL: Oh German. German. But he played in their orchestra, and I can't remember what mother did, anyway, they were completely part of it, and everybody loved them, and they had a house, a beautiful house, and so I spent holidays there.

AG: What about, we talked about the internment in the summer of 1940, what did you feel about the war situation in the summer of 1940 when France fell?

LL: Well, where was I then? In Malvern I suppose.

AG: Were you afraid the Germans would invade?

LL: Oh yes, of course in Lynmouth, oh yes of course in Malvern, I wasn't allowed out at night. But I don't know, perhaps that was later, because at one point I was... There I met... wait a minute, I was at a dance... oh yes, that's it, we had a girl from Luxembourg who would teach conversation, French, and she took me to a dance, and there was a Belgian, because the Free Belgians, they were in Malvern, and he danced with me, and a typical conversation in a dance, I said '*J'adore la valse*', and he said '*Ah, vous la dansez à merveille*'... And we became very close friends, and what's more, I became his secretary, because he wrote, he was, no he is, I hope he is still alive, we have eventually lost touch, only fairly recently, anyway. That's a very long story, I don't think that should all go on there, do you?

Tape 2: 37 minutes 24 seconds

AG: Well, it's up to you.

LL: Well as I say I became his secretary, and... No. I think... Well. We kept in touch, but we couldn't get married because I was German Jewish, well he was Jewish as well, Kirschen, a professor, later he became a professor, but we still met, in Paris, where I went there for conferences, and he was there, I don't know, for all sorts of things, and so we kept in touch, and he got divorced, oh yes, and then his daughter, he had a daughter, I met his daughter and a cousin, in Bristol, and we always kept in touch with the whole family, and when he married again, they both invited me to come and stay with them, so there's a very long friendship, very nice.

AG: And apart from meeting Free Belgians, did the war have any impact on your life? Were there any air raids for example?

LL: Oh yes, and that's right, we had this sort of, watching.

AG: Fire-watching?

LL: Yes. And then I was allowed to be up at night, you see, that was in Malvern. And the other thing is before this happened, when he took me out to supper or dinner or something and took me home on his motorbike, and of course I wasn't supposed to be out as late as that because you know, but he thought with him as an officer, it would probably be alright and luckily we were never stopped.

AG: And from the school in West Malvern, you went back to Badminton?

Tape 2: 39 minutes 8 seconds

LL: Yes, it must have been from then. And that's right, because I asked to stay another year, or rather, I didn't ask them, it was the other way round, I asked Miss Baker if she would wait another year and she did, and then I went from there I went to Badminton and stayed there till I was seventy. Sixty, I mean.

AG: Could you tell us what Badminton was like during the war?

LL: Well yes, we were evacuated to Lynmouth, and trust Miss Baker to have an international conference in the summer, all sorts of famous people, and that's where I learned the cello because the school was short on the cello so they suggested I should learn, and so that was quite useful.

AG: What were your duties teaching in those first years at Badminton?

LL: Well I was teaching German and French, I was running both libraries, played in the orchestra, isn't that enough? And of course weekend duties, putting children to bed, and but that's the sort of thing, you get to know children, you sit on their bed and talk to them, and of course they didn't have television, that's why they had all these clubs, you see. And so we really had very close contact with them, and it was more than you know, giving a lesson and walking out again, and I got to know the parents, and some of them we became very close friends. And there is one old girl in London, she runs the Doll's Exhibition, I don't know if you've ever heard of that, it's famous, and her husband was half French, and every year I had

to spend the weekend with them, and I felt as though I'd had a week away. You know, when you live alone, and you have to do everything, I would find having breakfast made by them... I have nothing much, but I still have to wash it up and put it away, and there, I always think a holiday is having... is to read a thriller after breakfast, I wouldn't dream of it, but the idea. I never read..., however interesting the book, I read in bed, but then I read for two hours. And so that was marvellous.

AG: How many girls were there at Badminton? Was it much smaller then?

LL: I once worked out that we had as many boarders as we had days in the year. 365 I think. But we had some day girls as well. Nowadays I think it's a quarter, or even a third day-girls, more day-girls than they used to have before, I think. So I think the boarders can also go home for weekends, more often than they used to, probably.

AG: How did you get on with your colleagues at Badminton?

Tape 2: 42 minutes 2 seconds

LL: On the whole quite well, but there's always one, one particularly not so good, but it was the last headmistress. After her we had the headmaster. But after the one there was absolutely awful, but we needn't talk about that much.

AG: I meant during the war, if you had any difficulties?

LL: Oh no, during the war I was in Lynmouth you see.

AG: But you didn't have any difficulties?

LL: No not at all.

AG: Did you encounter...

LL: No, because we also had a lot of Jewish children as well you see, there was never anything like that in Badminton. That was so marvellous, we had Indian girls as well, and Chinese, but particularly the Jewish ones.

AG: Were you affected by rationing, and hardship, and...

LL: Well that was funny too, because there was a sweet-shop. And of course they got their big rations for selling, in the summer that was fine, with all the people who come to the seaside. In the winter they had it all, and so not all those people... so we could get as much as we wanted, not just our little rations. That was quite funny.

AG: Were you able to travel around during these years?

LL: During the war? Oh no. I had to get permission to get to Bristol because that was a... that was a protected area, that's right, so I always had to get permission, and once I think I had to get there in a hurry and I hadn't got it, and so I was in a little bit of trouble with the police, and I, went as a good girl, straight to the police to ... 'Sich melden', what is that?

AG: Register. Register.

LL: And as I was a good girl they have forgiven me, but I should not have done it I think. But no, I just managed to get to Bristol, no... to see,... no my parents can't still be here...

AG: So you managed to get to see your parents, because they were quite a long way away, if they were in Essex.

LL: Oh no, they went there during the war. No, they were somewhere in North Devon. There was a former fellow-student and her parents had offered to help them.

Tape 2: 44 minutes 29 seconds

AG: Just as guests?

LL: Yes.

AG: Were either of them able to work during the war?

LL: Well, he was taken to this internment. And I suppose mother could stay there.

AG: I was just wondering what they lived on. What money they had.

LL: Oh, I don't remember. Sorry. Well, they were being supported by these people who had paid so much a month or something, I don't know. And this place where they stayed that was with friends, so they would feed them you see.

AG: Do you have any other wartime memories that you would like to tell me about?

LL: Can't think.

AG: You never had any, I suppose in Lynmouth you would have never had any bombing, or... Did you have any American troops near there, or British

LL: Oh now yes, there's a famous boy's school, which was taken, by maybe Americans. And the boys had moved further, and again, had to... Had probably gone to ... as well. No, I can't really....

AG: What about the end of the war, do you remember the end of the war?

LL: Well, that's when we came back. Yes, April, it must have been, yes that's right. It was round about Easter. And then Miss Baker asked the whole staff to clean the school, because it had been taken by American soldiers. Now where have I got all those photographs, I wish I had sorted all that, because there is a photograph of all the staff in overalls and things round their heads you see, to clean the school.

AG: The whole of it?

LL: And I asked whether we get paid for it. And Miss Baker was horrified. And I said 'Oh for God's sake, and we're giving up our holiday, and she's trying to save spending money on

charwomen. And so as I say it was Easter, and the school started sort of in April, at some point, and the day the school started we had charwomen, didn't we? And then of course there was this day, the end of the war, and there was a holiday, that was a Saturday, was it, or maybe it was a Thursday, maybe it was a Thursday. Anyway. And I felt... I had been to London to visit mother when she was in hospital, and there was, her doctor was a school friend of hers, I don't know if I told you, from Hamburg, a doctor, and she was a refugee, and she always, she was wonderful in the hospital, she worked there day and night, she lived, her parents lived in London.

AG: What was her name?

LL: Samson. Gertrud Samson.

AG: And which hospital was this?

LL: In London you mean?

AG: Yes.

LL: Well, it was a German hospital. It was called the German hospital I think. And...

AG: And what was wrong with your mother?

LL: Oh, heart. I think I told you didn't I that she was in Gloucester hospital two years before with heart trouble, and then she had it when they... and when they were moving to Felstead and then of course it's hard work moving in and so on, she had another attack and she was then taken to London, and Gertrud Samson, her school friend looked after her, and, and every day, and mother was also quite helpful, while she was there... Well there was one Sunday when Gertrud thought 'All my patients are alright I'll take an hour off and go and see my parents'.

Tape 2: 48 minutes 50 seconds

And a friend of mine visited mother and mother said I think you have Liselotte's address, I suppose I had moved somewhere and she sat up in her bed, and got her handbag and looked at her address book and fell back and was dead. And of course it was marvellous for her not to be an invalid because the doctor said she would not be able to, not even to use a typewriter, and mother was writing a lot and so on, and just needing help and being looked after, it wouldn't suit her at all. I mean it wouldn't suit me either, I'm very much hoping I'm inheriting that and just go out like that, you see.

AG: What year was this?

LL: Well just after the war. But she had just got the news that her brother had been..., had survived the concentration camp, yes because my sister you see, from Sweden could tell us. I don't know if she rang up or wrote, but she got that news.

AG: Which camp had he been in, your uncle?

LL: In Norway. Yes, outside Oslo. What is the next town again, where he was staying with friends of ours. Drammen, if you know where that is.

AG: You started getting news from Germany and what had happened. Did you get news about family and friends?

LL: Well yes, two of them murdered in a concentration camp, an aunt who was a cousin of my grandmother's, her mother was a sister of hers, or niece or something like that. And her husband, he had died before the war luckily, and he was a brother of my grandfather, so she was related to us in two generations, but she didn't have children. And there was a painter, there is a painting of his in there, and he lived with them, and he and she went, in this camp and were murdered. And then my stepfather's father, in Hamburg, he walked into the Alster to avoid, and the other, oh yes a cousin of mine, in Aumühle, outside Hamburg, his father committed suicide. No sorry, his mother. His father was not Jewish, but his mother committed suicide, and her daughter, actually helped her, and put a pillow into the gas oven and said goodbye to Mummy, and they didn't tell her father, until the next morning you see, when she was dead. And she probably would have survived because this was '44 you see.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 51 seconds

AG: Did you have surviving members of the Jewish family in Hamburg? Do you have family left?

LL: Well no. No, they all left.

AG: Did you go back? And when did you first go back?

LL: I think it was 1950. I first went to Paris, I had three months there. I had a sabbatical leave. And the first time we get it, we got it after five years. And we got our salary, which was quite useful, and of course we couldn't take much cash with us, in those days. If you went before the 1st of April I think, I think you could take your £50 or whatever, and so I had a friend, who visited me from Bristol, at Whitsun, because then you get your next £50, and she didn't need it so she brought it for me and I paid it back to her, and... so what was the question?

AG: The question was when you first went back to Hamburg,..?

LL: Ah yes. Yes, and then I went... Oh yes we had the school, we had a meeting in Switzerland, because this was the internationally-minded school that Miss Sanderson, the headmistress and I we were founder-members, we had our first conference there, and from there I went to Hamburg, and I think that must have been the first time I went, and from there I went to see my sister, and I also, my mother had saved her *Tafelsilber*, you know, forks and spoons, because we were only half Jewish, she was allowed to take them for us, or send or bring, or send us, I don't remember quite how, and she brought them back and I brought my sister half of them you see. So...

AG: What was it like for you going back to Hamburg?

Tape 2: 54 minutes 6 seconds

LL: I suppose I stayed with them, and well yes, it was upsetting to see, all, you know, the Nikolaikirche where I used to go because we had a woman, one of the first women preachers or whatever, where I used to go a lot, so that was... And our house was also bombed a lot, so the front was destroyed, because you saw that all the balconies had gone, and it was sort of slightly rebuilt but rather ugly. And all the other houses, it was a terrace with all those houses, and next to us was a professor, of E.N.T, also Jewish, and the next was a professor of you know, bones, you know, a surgeon or whatever. So they were all professors and that was all taken down, and they now just have one whole building, it was an insurance company or something. And they hadn't really paid us enough for buying the house, so after the war we got a little on that. But they, my parents then had this flat off Rotenbaumchaussee, when we left the house.

AG: When you went back to Hamburg in 1950 did you see any of your former friends and acquaintances?

LL: Oh yes. Yes. And school friends particularly. That was nice.

AG: And how did they receive you?

LL: Well they had been looking for me, they wanted to be in touch with me. We were all on such good terms, and as I said, at school, some of them were Deutschnational and one was Nazi, and there was another Jewish girl, she was wholly Jewish, and but we were all good friends. You see that was such a good school.

AG: What did you feel about the general run of the population in Hamburg? What was it like for you to go back to Germany after the war?

LL: Well I suppose it was alright, but then again there was this conference of schoolteachers, and in Frankfurt I was offered a job at a school. Again, we met at conferences every year and I became a friend of them you see, and a very nice school, the Anna Schmidt Schule in Frankfurt. But I couldn't possibly live in Germany or work there. And I would have been paid far more in that school, but it was quite out of the question, no, I couldn't live there any more than I wanted my German passport. It was impossible. But it was nice to go back and visit friends, and a lot of friends who remained friends. But as for living there, no thank you.

Tape 2: 57 minutes 0 second

AG: Perhaps you could tell me a little more about something you mentioned earlier in the interview, that was becoming a British citizen. When did you decide to do that?

LL: Well, decide, when I had been here for a while, I wanted it so I could stay and work here and do anything, you know. So, but unfortunately I didn't apply just before the war, although that was, you had to have been here for five years and that was my fifth year, and I thought in the fifth year you had to stay put and not go abroad at all. But in retrospect I found that going home for the holiday would have been alright, so I stayed as an enemy alien, but as soon as the war was over, I applied and of course I easily got people to vouch, as I said, three professors in Bristol, two professors and the chap who had a shoe firm, I don't remember his connection, anyway, three men and three women. And so as soon as I got my passport... There was a young physicist from Holland, and I had a lot of friends in the Physics Department, and so I got, was it a plane or a boat? I can't remember, no it was a boat, and the

boat-train from London to Harwich, the Policemen came and looked at your passports, and he said: 'British, Madam? Thank you.' And I could have kissed him! I shall never forget. It was fantastic. (She laughs)

AG: What was it like when you received the passport? Was it through the post? Do you remember?

LL: I don't remember that so much. I mean I was very pleased and I had to have a photograph and I may still have it, but this... And as I said the Germans offered to give me my German passport back and I said 'No thank you'.

AG: I think we have to stop because the tape is coming to an end.

TAPE 3

AG: Liselotte Leschke tape 3. We just talked a little bit about your first trip back to Hamburg, and your feelings about Germany. Did you visit Germany on other occasions?

LL: *Yes I'd been there for the Klassentag.*

AG: Oh yes of course.

LL: And eventually they paid for it as well, which was nice. Now there are only three or four of us left. And the others are already 90. I was the youngest, the *Klassenbaby*.

AG: Did you go to other cities in other parts of Germany as well?

LL: I've been to Munich. Cologne, Berlin, of course. That's about it. I think. Oh Lübeck, yes and Sulz, that island where my uncle and aunt had a holiday house.

AG: Do you have any feelings about going to other parts of Germany different from Hamburg?

LL: At the time I enjoyed them but now I can't travel anymore.

AG: One thing I didn't ask you is what became of your stepfather after your mother's death?

LL: At the school? At Felstead? Well he was walking up... First of all, when he played in the orchestra, they had to carry his viola. And he was walking up for lunch, and I think a staff, a colleague always went with him, and he fell into his arms and just died like that,. And it happened to be half-term, and I always, we wrote to each other regularly, and I had a letter from him and I also wrote to him and said 'half term I'm going to so and so', and when I came back I also found his letter, and then I suppose they rang me up, something like that and so then I went to the funeral.

AG: Was this long after your mother died?

LL: Oh yes, it was about five years or something. Yes.

AG: And he continued teaching at Felstead. And did he live in the school?

LL: Well yes, they had a staff house. And he was very well looked after. He was very popular. And the funeral, that was very touching too, we ‘Über Allen Gipfeln liegt Ruh’?’ you know that, I don’t know if it was a pupil or if it was in the school magazine perhaps. Anyway, very touching. Yes, I was very friendly with the music teacher and his wife, and I think I went back, or when I stayed over, or I think I went back after he had died, I think somehow, I kept in touch with them as well.

AG: And your own career at Badminton, it was a very long career at Badminton, how did that develop, could you tell us the story of how things developed when you were at Badminton?

LL: Well I did a lot of things right from the start. I couldn’t have done very much more, but...

AG: Were you Head of Modern Languages?

LL: No. Well now, that was a pity, because when Miss Baker asked me, she wanted me to head..., that was funny actually because we had a woman, I think she was half French, but I don’t know whether it was father or mother, but she had a very strong accent, and she was older than I, I think she was early forties and I was only in my twenties, but she didn’t want to be head of the department. So I became the head of the department. OK, fine, but then later, there was another one appointed after her who was absolutely hopeless, and we had a young woman, very intelligent and everything, and she was made head of the department. And I have just found this letter, Miss Baker’s letter, I’m not sure even if I will find it again now, who made me head of department, and so I never got the extra, you know, salary, that I should have had.

AG: So you were head of...?

LL: I was head of Modern Languages, but when the, this older French woman came, she became head. You see. And so,... I don’t mind so much for reputation or anything, and in fact we had this French woman, who was very clever, but not very good... she could only teach clever children, and I got the..., we had always class A and B, and I had the B ones, but they also passed their exams quite well, and they got more than three, or whatever they got. And she was quite surprised you see, but there we are.

AG: What did you particularly enjoy about your work in Badminton?

Tape 3: 4 minutes 55 seconds

LL: I don’t know, I enjoyed teaching. And I think I also learnt such a lot myself, I mean about sound shifts, for instance, which even now, some friends of mine at University, I ask them and they say they haven’t time. I mean in one lesson you increase their vocabulary by a hundred. It’s incredible that they don’t see what help it is, you see that’s one of the things I learnt and I find some of the books, the questions I ask for exams and things that I have gone on learning, as one does by teaching and in any job, don’t you learn getting better at your own job, more experienced. I can’t put more details, that’s the most important one, and being a librarian, because we had a big Library, my grandfather had a whole room called *Bibliothek*, and mother I helped her, I think I may have told you, at the school where she was working, writing the cards for the library and things like that, and that was a development I suppose.

Tape 3: 6 minutes 7 seconds

AG: Did you prepare the girls at Badminton for the A-level exams?

LL: Yes of course, but when you talk about prepare, the funny thing is that I never prepared my lessons. And I have friends who prepared them in writing even when it was the beginners in French, she still wrote what she was going to teach them in every lesson. And I never, and when we had an inspector coming, I still didn't. I thought well I must do this and that, but I always ran off at a tangent. And that I think made my lessons more interesting, actually (modestly!)

AG: And what were your results like?

LL: Very good, and again we had a very interesting competition at the University, for reciting poetry, or reading, or I suppose, the prose they would read rather than recite, I can't remember, and we always won, which was nice, and a girl..., and we read a lot of poetry, and I read the poetry with the whole class, and apart from their set books, where I prepared them for this-that, it meant the whole class got to know some German poetry. And one of the girls came to a Cambridge, an Oxford college, where they were beginning to learn some German poetry which she all knew by heart already. And she realised how ahead she was of them, so that was rather nice.

Tape 3: 7 minutes 30 seconds

AG: Did you have pupils who had famous parents? Or children of famous parents?

LL: Yes I suppose so and also children themselves became famous themselves. Now who was it...? Was he a writer, I don't know, yes, and there were also some refugees, they were famous people. Mendelssohn that was one of them I don't know if you heard of him. And his wife she was I think a writer and used her other name. So they were both... Oh yes, Schlesinger, you know, John Schlesinger, yes, there were two daughters there, they were there, two or three even, yes, and there was again one who played the cello, who was she? This was a conductor, and she's a cellist. A famous conductor. But he drank a lot and I think he lost his job, but she still plays. So yes, we had some quite famous people but and of course Iris Murdoch. I think I have mentioned her didn't I?

AG: No.

LL: Oh because we were there at the same time, and she became...

AG: She was a pupil?

LL: Yes she was a pupil.

AG: She was a pupil of yours?

LL: No, that was the awful thing, and she didn't learn, and she later, I think we met at the theatre, because one of Priestley's books became a play, and she came for the first night, and I always went on the first night because I had also been on the committee, at the theatre, that was one committee outside the University, and so we met there and we became friends. And

she was so delighted, I think we may have met at the school, she also visited the school somehow, and she was delighted, because she was quite shy, and her husband never came with her. Deliberately. He wanted her to have her glory, you see. And so when she came... when she got an honorary degree, I went to see her afterwards, you know when she disrobed, and the Vice-Chancellor had invited her to tea, and we were walking along, arm in arm, and so she said 'Liselotte is an old friend of mine' and he said 'So I see' and invited me to come with them, to have tea with them, but anyway I was on all those committees, you see, so he knew me, and so that was rather nice, and I have some of her letters still.

AG: Have you encountered any other celebrated people?

LL: Well yes I'm trying to think, there were probably some musicians.... And ... no, I'm sorry I can't remember now.

AG: What about, you mentioned your committee work. Can we start with the University. What sort of work did you do?...

Tape 3: 10 minutes 31 seconds

LL: Yes well, there's the convocation of... we are all members of a convocation, isn't it, and there's a convocation committee, and then there was the CUC, the something, something, and I was the representative of Bristol, and that had a conference every year in April, at a different town, so I got to know different university towns, that was quite nice, and then what's the others.... The CUC, and then there was a sub-committee for Chamber concerts, and so then I brought the tea and sandwiches for the interval, which they sometimes had before, and then I invited them back here. They all lived in that hotel, opposite the University, which wasn't very nice, especially in the winter you know, and after a concert we are all, you know, what's the word, when you are all worked up and excited and you are not ready to go to bed. And so I'd have them here or at another friend's and we would entertain them. So I had some famous quartets here, they are also in one of my guest books. And then there is a committee to decide who gets those ashtrays, the students, we give to students who have done well, not academically, but in other ways. And we used to give them that and then £50 or £100. And now and then we had somebody, a director for Development, I don't know if you know of that... they had that at University, and he helped to raise a lot of money, and he wanted them to have £500. Well, no, we wanted to have... I think we had four students who had the paper-weight, or was it the ashtray and a cheque for £50 or £100, four students, and now we get two, and £500 each. And one girl said that she was really pleased, with the paper-weight, more than the money, which you can take with you, wherever you go, and it can remind you of the school. Whereas if you have one of those things that people have on the wall, you don't want to travel with that, but this you can put that in your pocket or in your suitcase, and it can remind you of your University. If you are so proud and fond of it as we were, that was a good thing, and now it's only two of them who get it. Anyway, and I got it for my Honorary degree... No, when I retired now. Yes, it was when I retired, it wasn't for my Honorary Degree.

AG: How did you come to get into such close relations with the University?

Tape 3: 13 minutes 44 seconds

LL: Well, I'd been a student, I suppose.

AG: Well, there were hundreds of others.

LL: I see what you mean. I suppose somebody must have suggested me. That I can't remember. Yes, I had been quite useful, at Manor Hall, as I say, in the Library, and yes on Sundays, somebody had given us 700 records, so I offered to play some on Sunday evenings and make a concert. You know, it was little things like that...

AG: Were you somebody who was concerned with Manor House or any of the other Halls?

LL: I don't think so. It was in the Hall where I did what I could. Yes, I mean there were the balls, and I got in touch with the international students deliberately to help them, so just generally.

AG: You mentioned that you were on a committee that managed the Theatre, the Bristol Old Theatre.

LL: Yes. And I'm still a member, although sadly it isn't as good as it used to be, but that's for instance where I met Paul Eddington, because on the first night we had a party on the stage. Nowadays they have it outside you know, above the restaurant and so on, and yes, we met and we became friends ever since. And I met Jane Wenham. I think she was the wife of.. Allan, yes, a very famous one. And they were divorced, but... and she stayed here. And yes, Russell Hunter I don't know if you've ever seen him. He was marvellous and he had already stayed with me and then one year Jane was here and he was coming after her you see, she was leaving on one Saturday or on Monday he was coming at that time she wanted to stay another week. And poor Russell, and he didn't want to go to you know that woman I mentioned before, to this woman in Park Street, who had actors and actresses from nine to ten, and she had a hat shop, and they had to be there for breakfast, and he didn't want to go there. Would you believe it, this makes a wonderful bed, you can put that down, I got it from Germany sent here, and he slept here, and there I have a box room, and I'll show you where I have a wardrobe and another part and he kept his clothes in there. It's almost as bad as... it's slightly better than a tent. Well, slightly better. And to have the week until she went. I thought that was really very charming...

Tape 3: 16 minutes 27 seconds

LL: And I've just seen, he's 78 and they're doing a play of his in Edinburgh, so I must try and get in touch with him and congratulate him.

AG: Did you come across other well-known people in the theatre?

LL: Well yes when I had parties here, when he was staying here, Paul particularly, I invited other people. Yes Richard Briars is another one. And Richard... What is it called? There is a funny name for people like that and I rehearsed it before you came... A rogue's gallery, isn't it? If you look you will see Richard Briars and yes... another Richard, with a P, and his wife is... She's always... a short name. Barbara Leigh-Hunt. Richard Pascoe, Pascoe. You see I do slightly remember. So, ...

AG: Are there any other committees or good causes you worked for?

Tape 3: 17 minutes 41 seconds

LL: 'Save the Children'. Did I mention it? Professor Macinnes. Did you hear of him? A historian. Blind. I think he learnt to write. Either to write or drive a car. Just... And he was, and so I was a member from the start, of Save the Children. And I still support them. And so I was on that committee, and Music Club, I was the secretary. Did I say that?

AG: Yes.

That was very hard work but I liked it. But I was asked because, it's a very, it's quite an old music club, a very nice one, and the secretary, he was a teacher, outside Bristol, again, it's a famous girls' school. And do you know about that tree-park outside Bristol? Well, yes that's the School. Westonbirt.

AG: This music club. Was it a University Committee?

LL: No, no. It was started with Joachim. In 1905 I think, and a friend of mine, a German professor, asked me to become secretary, because the secretary, I suppose he was the Chairman, and his wife plays the violin, viola and so because this chap from Westonbirt only came in on Tuesday and got the programme printed and left it on the table for people to pick up, and I don't know if he ever posted it, I doubt it if he did. And when I was asked to take over, you know, I'm quite good at organising, but that was my last year at school, and so then I said.... Oh yes, and then, 'can't you wait till next year' you see. But then the committee wanted to interview me, and so I went and they asked me all sorts of questions, and then I told them I was a full-time teacher in all sorts of things at Badminton, and one of them said... 'Will you have time to do it?' And I said 'no'. But they insisted on having me, so...

Tape 3: 20 minutes 7 seconds

AG: And how long did you... act as secretary there?

LL: About eight years or so. And another thing was that when I retired I thought at last I can travel in the autumn, I haven't told you this, have I? Because you could never travel in the summer, and it would be so nice. And then I was asked to help at the school South of Bath, again it's a well-known boys' Public School where they do a lot of regatta, you might have heard of them for that, because they're on the Avon you see down there. For a fortnight, because their German teacher wasn't well, and I think I told them then that I have to have Tuesday off because of being at the Music Club, because I had to be their secretary, and so I had to come home on Tuesday, and go back again on Wednesday, something like that. But then, the Headmaster..., oh yes, I had to teach French as well, but that was later. But anyway, because the young... I think it was first the German teacher who hadn't recovered, and they asked me to stay till Christmas, and then the Head of the Language Department, he did German and French, a young chap, he was only 28 and he was famous in football, and he got cancer and he was incurable. And so I had to stay the whole of the next year and teach French and German and that's when I had to come here on Tuesday and come back. But I slept in the Matron's wing, there was a room for travellers, for you know, people... teachers who only come... I've lost the word again. And then the Headmaster at Prayers told the children that Miss Leschke is staying with us and isn't it kind of her when she's just retired you see, so then one of the French lessons, or it may have been German, the children, I teach them answering questions, 'how old are you' and so on. And they always say 'How old are you?'

you see, in whatever language. And I said ‘What do you think?’ And the boy, a little boy of eleven, says: ‘Well the Headmaster said you’ve just retired. So you must be sixty, but I must say you don’t look it!’ (She laughs) I could have kissed him, wasn’t it sweet?

Tape 3: 22 minutes 53 seconds

AG: Did you have any celebrations to mark your retirement?

LL: Oh yes, yes, this was rather like, “This Is Your life”. A colleague of mine had invited me, and another colleague was going to give me a lift. I’m not sure if they were taking me out to a restaurant or something, I think she gave, or they hadn’t told... anyway she picked me up and then she went that way down to town, and I thought we were going that way and then we went another way. I can’t remember whether she let the dog out of the bag, the cat out of the bag, isn’t it? Anyway I realised that we were going to her house, but what I didn’t realise that when we got there, there were nearly, between thirty or forty people. Former colleagues, perhaps between twenty and thirty, but anyway, a huge party which was absolutely charming. Oh yes and the school also, I suppose they did something. I don’t know if I could ask for something, but I got a wonderful book about... is it Haydn? Or was it Beethoven? Oh no, records about Beethoven that was when I retired I think I could ask whatever I wanted, and I got this chamber concerts. Unfortunately the gramophone doesn’t work anymore and that’s rather sad, yes and I think I also got.. and that book was signed by the author, so they celebrated as well.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 41 seconds

AG: What about your Honorary Degree? Can you tell me about that?

LL: Well that was for editing the Gazette. And also working on so many committees.

AG: When was it and what degree were you actually awarded?

LL: The Honorary MA.

AG: When was it awarded?

LL: 1966. 1966.

AG: It can’t be.

LL: ’96, ’96 yes.

AG: How do you remember it?

LL: Oh well, you can see the albums....

LL: Well all week they have degree ceremonies, morning and afternoon. Mine was on Friday morning. But on Wednesday afternoon, when the Chancellor comes, he usually came just to do them on Wednesday, sometimes he did it on Thursday as well. So all of us get invited to dinner at the Merchant Venturers. And there was the Chancellor and so you can bring your parents, well not having any relations in this country, well I have a lovely cousin, had a lovely

cousin, a man, who, he had also been to England when he was younger actually. And I had also been to see them when I was young and so on, and he came over specially.

AG: From Hamburg?

LL: From Hamburg, outside, in Aumühle, you may have heard of it. Aumühle and Friedrichsruh. Friedrichsruh was where Bismarck lived and so on. And so he came on Thursday... well he was coming... this was Wednesday... and he was coming on Wednesday you see to... no sorry, it was for the degree ceremony. I'm trying to think if... No. I think husbands came to the dinner as well, but not... if you had a partner not a husband, he couldn't come, but if it was your only relative and not... you are alone in this country, no. That was really very annoying. But on the fly, he came on the Thursday so that on the Friday he could come to the degree ceremony and there was lunch afterwards and then friends invited me to supper afterwards, and he would have come to that as well. So he came on Thursday, and I think he was a bit late, because his wife hadn't been well and had to go to hospital or something but anyway he was a bit late and then he came and then in the morning his son rang at seven o'clock... no, that's when she had to go to hospital, that's right, they had to take her to hospital. So he stayed for the degree ceremony and for the lunch and then got the next plane home, and that was quite sad. And she was in a coma for a very long time and then did wake up and then died that autumn. But at least I did have a member of the family there, and he did say that at least he did enjoy the ceremony. It stopped him from thinking about her because he was intrigued, and he found that the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor speaks very well, but he found that particularly the Vice-Chancellor, he could understand every word; he could, his English was quite good, he was very impressed not just by what he said but how he said it. So it was nice to have a member of the family there as well.

Tape 3: 28 minutes 38 seconds

AG: Were you in contact with other important people who got an honorary degree as well?

LL: Yes, John Avery. Was he? Yes. You know. No you don't know, it's the famous sherry place in Bristol. John Avery is one, and the other one, whatever... you know there are the two famous firms you know that make the sherry.

AG: Were there other people who were awarded honorary doctorates?

LL: Not on my day, but during that week there were... and then in Bristol there is Beryl Connor? Who is a very famous doctor. Oh yes of course, there was another. Why didn't you look, I think I showed you...

AG: Yes, but for the film...

LL: Sorry.

AG: For the film, can you tell me about it.

LL: Yes, the African. You looked at it right now, didn't you?

AG: It's Nelson Mandela.

LL: Yes that's right. But he wasn't in Bristol you see. That's it, the Vice-Chancellor... had to go to give it to him at Buckingham Palace and then get back to give us ours you see, but he managed it.

AG: And when there was the *Bristol Evening Post*, the local paper, the photographs, that you showed me...

LL: No that wasn't the *Evening Post*. That.. Oh yes it was, of course it was.

AG: With you and Nelson Mandela.

LL: No, that was the University one, wasn't it? Yes, that's right.

AG: I was very impressed. Your picture of Nelson Mandela ...

Tape 3: 30 minutes 30 seconds

LL: Yes, because when there was another list where all the people who got their honorary degrees, during the week you see. And they must have had photographs of them there, you see, but because they hadn't answered in time and I had, you see, I thought it was charming, but I also think the editor of the Gazette was quite fond of me too.

AG: Do you remember any of the remarks that any of the gentlemen who were introduced to you... you had a public honour didn't you?

LL: Yes.

AG: Who was that?

LL That's a German professor. Peter Skrine wasn't it?

AG: Yes. Do you remember what he said?

LL: I can't quote it all, but he told the things that I have told you, you know the things that I have done. But he said it so nicely. If you like we could quote things, the text is there, but perhaps it takes too long.

AG: The other thing I was going to ask you about was this trip you took, this trip around the world.

LL: Yes. Well when I visited so many schools in America, I've already mentioned it. That's a long story.

AG: What year was that?

LL: '62 and '63.

AG: How was it possible for you to spend so much time away from work?

LL: Well we get Sabbatical terms, at Badminton. I don't know if they still do, but we did. Miss Sanderson started it. In 1950 was my first one, when I went to Switzerland and Sweden... Germany and Sweden. And then my next one I wasn't well enough, and also I had children in exams and I didn't want to leave them. You know, for their oral, they're used to me... and I wasn't well physically either. So, and the next seven years, five or seven years, I had two terms off. So that was enough time to go round the world you see. Oh yes and got some I have to admit I got some restitution from Germany, from among the money they had taken, enough to make a trip like that. So that helped, and so, Badminton I think I told you had started, had founded this international schools thing, and I visited schools in America, and in three and half months I visited 30 schools in 15 states, and I kept a diary, I woke up at six o'clock in the morning to go here there and everywhere; incredible. How I ever did it I don't know. And then I had, there was a lovely couple, I think I might have met them, I don't know if I met them here, maybe they have a son that came to England, and I got to know them, and then they arranged for me to visit schools in America. But you see in those days it wasn't so easy from Americans to come over. People from an ordinary school hadn't perhaps the money. They were all people from private schools or whatever they call them. But there was one lovely couple, and that was north of New York, I forgot what that state was called. And a clergyman and his wife and lovely children and that was my centre, if you like, so all my letters from England always came there, and wherever I went I went back to them every two or three days. Then they arranged for me, they rang up other schools, and they arranged for me to visit other schools, and sometimes I had to stop them you see. And once we went, I got up at six in the morning we'd go to New York to a meeting or a conference and then back to them and sometimes I stayed at another school. I got to know a lot of schools by staying in them you see. It was a fascinating experience. And finally, when I got to California, I remember, what is the next, that place, or whatever state, and it's a... It's a big town begins with C-H. People pronounce as 'ch' instead of 'k'. It doesn't matter. Anyway, flying from there, I visited three schools, from that town. To get to California. Oh no. Before that. There was another one, where people go for skiing in the winter.

AG: Colorado?

Tape 3: 35 minutes 0 second

LL: That's right, it was near Colorado that school. But anyway. All over the place. Exhausting, but fascinating.

AG: Did you have other interesting worthwhile things that you did during your world trip?

LL: Well while I was in America, going to different schools, I went three times to New York, and then back to my friends and back to New York, and then the three times in New York I stayed in a hotel, so I was free to do a bit of sightseeing but I also visited a school, but I didn't stay at a school you see, I also had friends from Bristol, or England that I wanted to visit. And then I met, in one town I met a cousin of my stepfather's whom I had never met, and then I came to New Zealand, and there I had friends from Bristol, and I'd always wanted to see New Zealand, it was the land of my dreams, and when I got there I wondered why. Because the scenery is beautiful, for a holiday, but to live there, and what... They call it 'God's own country' don't they? And they were so behind England in everything. And that was 1962... but then I came to Australia, and I felt it was 100 years' difference. And I always think, you see, the impression of one country, depends on what country you come from. If I had come to Australia from England it would have been alright. But coming from New Zealand, as I say it

was 100 years ahead. And then I went to India, which was fascinating but awful. It was so dirty and terrible. But interesting. And in... oh yes, was it? No before I went to Japan at one point. No, Hong Kong. And it was interesting, it was wonderful how the Chinese, they worked, and they were clean and they worked and they were fantastic. I could spend hours talking about how impressed I was with Hong Kong. And Japan was marvellous too, and I had interesting things there but I suppose it gets too long... But India. Terrible. And it was so dirty and everything. But there I went to a school because I felt they deserved somebody coming, because they had joined us. It was either that or the Taj Mahal, which I can see on a postcard you see. And the journey and the train was awful, but it was interesting. And from there I went to Persia and then to Israel. And that was fantastic. Although I'm only half Jewish I felt overwhelmed.

Tape 3: 37 minutes 53 seconds

AG: In what way?

LL: In every way. I was so impressed. They were so marvellous. And there I met a cousin of my stepfather's, and then... in Jerusalem there was a cousin of my grandfather's and it was just marvellous. And I would have liked to come back to a conference in Israel, this CUC had one there, and they would have paid for me to get there, but I couldn't go there in the summer, because that awful heat, I couldn't have worked...

AG: When you were in Israel you said it was wonderful, because it made you aware of your Jewish side?

LL: Yes it did. The way how they worked and what they had done and how they had things grow in the desert, and it was incredible, it was most impressive.

AG: You said you felt more Jewish?

LL: Yes, in a way. I couldn't have lived there, but I would have liked to visit them again.

AG: Did you go back?

LL: No, I couldn't because then when I was invited to this conference it was in the summer, so... it was a great experience.

AG: Well, just a word or two which I should ask you about this flat of yours. How long have you lived here?

LL: In this place? Nearly 40 years. I had another one in Westbury Road, just opposite the school. I would say just from my front room I could watch the tennis, the playing the tennis and so on. And I had an old landlady and she had some nieces there, and she was terribly old-fashioned. She was quite nice in a way and I could hang my washing in her garden, on a Sunday you see. And she had a terribly noisy dog that barked all the time, and she had a clock, one of these old ones, grandfather clocks, aren't they, which ring, I don't know if it's every quarter of an hour, but certainly every hour, and probably others, and I'm very sensitive. And right up in the attic I could still hear them but she wouldn't stop them. I wanted her to stop them overnight but she wouldn't. And as soon as she left, very rarely, one Easter she went to see her brother, she rarely travelled you see. And she took her dog to her brother,

so then I stopped the... And I also, I had a boyfriend, a Dutch boyfriend, so he came to stay, we stopped it. And I think she knew that he came to stay and she was glad that there was a man in the house, that made it safe for me....

AG: And then you moved here.

Tape 3: 40 minutes 32 seconds

LL: I think in the end she wanted me to leave. She didn't like..., she didn't want... when I had visitors, my bedroom was over her bedroom and she went to bed at ten. My dining room where I had my friends was on the other side, and that's where I had my piano and my music sometimes but I never ever had people playing after ten o'clock. And when I came up the stairs and so on we never talked on the stairs, I practically made them to take their shoes off you know. She couldn't have heard us. Because I was silly enough to have some friends in, I might have said 'I hope we didn't disturb you.' She said 'Oh no, I never heard you'. And I thought 'There you are'. It was hopeless. So then I decided I couldn't stand it anymore, and also I had enough money then, because of the restitution, to buy. Because I think at the beginning there I paid four pounds a month, or a week, I don't know, but so... that was wonderful that I got this place and at last a place of my own.

Tape 3: 41 minutes 43 seconds

AG: One other thing I was going to ask you. You've now been living in this country for, since 1933. What feelings do you have about this country as someone who came here and is half Jewish?

LL: Well never mind about half Jewish, this is home from home, it's my second home. I really feel at home here.

AG: Do you consider yourself to be British?

LL: Well perhaps not exactly, but I feel at home here you see. This is near as British as one can feel isn't it?

AG: What do you like about the British?

LL: Well I think the best thing is the sense of humour, which I share with them because the Jews do as well, don't we? So. Yes, and I find a lot of Germans.... Yes. And they are also more polite, not as well as they used to be, but even now some Germans coming over are impressed how polite the English people are. And how, if you ask for something they walk all the way with you and things like that. And the younger people aren't anymore. It's still, you see it's interesting, in my car, I always stop. And when they pass me, and now if there's a mother with a pram, and if there is a child in the front the child says thank you and I make the baby smile and the mother thanks me, and then elderly men, or well, slightly elderly, I always stop. And we do this you see, and we smile at each other. And some people thank me when they pass me, or they say thank you or we smile at each other, but some youngsters they rush past on their bicycles, and one boy rushed past me, I always do this, I always do this and then I stop for the bicycle. And this boy rushed past me and said 'fuck you'. That's a bit much isn't it? An eleven year-old, ten year-old. And whether you can blame the parents, or whether he only uses it at school, I don't know. And some of them don't get... and this is also interesting,

that boys go past, cycle past, and girls get off their bikes. Most, I think, I think all girls, they certainly stop, and some of them actually get off their bikes. And one or two boys do.

Tape 3: 44 minutes 12 seconds

AG: Would you say that the country has changed very much?

LL: Well in that way, yes. Don't ask me if the country has changed because there is such a lot. I haven't read about the... what is this man, the prophet, he has written a book about it, about the Millenium, he's an astrologist, astronomist, no, not that, but people who prophesise. And he said with the Millenium everything was going.... and I think everything is getting worse. I don't like complaining, because I always say I can't be sorry for people who are sorry for themselves. Well I'm not so sorry for myself, but generally, for instance the Bank, in Henley's, where I've been for fifty years, the other one is in Westbury on Trym. Now I would ring up and ask how much is on my account, I can't ring that bank anymore, I have to ring Westbury, so, I ring them, it rings and rings and rings, and nobody answers, sometimes It's engaged for ages, alright, then I wait, till they're not engaged, but they weren't engaged. So then I rang in the afternoon and I finally got through, 'why didn't you answer this morning?' And they say well, we have seven telephones and only two telephonists. Marvellous, isn't it? And shops the same thing. And just interesting story. Waitrose, no the other one, what is it? Southfield?

AG: Somerfield.

LL: Somerfield yes, where I go almost every day, when you live alone and you have very little appetite, you get small things rather than get a big one for weeks. So I go there regularly, they know me very well, with my car and everything. And one day I only needed bread and butter, I mean literally the staple food, wouldn't you say? And the cash register wasn't working so they sent me home again. No, alright if I had given them cash they would have put it in their pocket. If I had given them a cheque they could have put it in the drawer and the next day taken it to the bank, or I give them cash. No, I had to go home without my bread and butter. Would you believe it? Now that wouldn't have happened a few years ago, would it? There we are. But don't let's end on such a story, because I don't believe in complaining.

AG: I also would like to ask you if you have any message, anything to say to anybody who might watch the film, someone who would watch the film if you would have anything else to say?

LL: Well it's difficult. I mean I've had a very interesting life, and I'm very grateful for all the people who have helped me, and made it interesting for me, but I also think that perhaps I've overdone it a little bit, and that's why I'm such a cripple now. But I still have nice friends, and they always think I'm quite cheerful, so they don't believe quite how unwell I am, you know, but I'm glad if I can hide it because as I say I don't feel sorry for people who feel sorry for themselves. So I hope I haven't made that impression on you either.

AG: Not at all.

Tape 3: 47 minutes 49 seconds

LL: Thank you for being interested enough.

AG: Thank you very much indeed for doing the interview with us.

PHOTOS.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: That is my Grandfather, my mother's father, Professor Dr M. Alfred Sanger. In 1912 in Hamburg.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: My Grandmother, Amelie Sanger, in Hamburg. After 1921 because she is in mourning, my grandfather died in 1921.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: My father. Wilhelm Erich Leschke but he never used the Wilhelm. In Berlin in the 1920s

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: My mother, Clara Julia Sanger. Then Leschke then Lassally. In England in Ross-on-Wye during war.

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: My uncle, my mother's brother, Max Sanger. In South Germany near Stuttgart when he was in an old people's home in 1985

AG: Who are the people in this photograph and where and when was it taken?

LL: When I was given the honorary MA by Vice-Chancellor Sir John Kingman in 1996 at Bristol University.

AG: What is this photograph of and where and when was it taken?

LL: This is a drawing of the house in Hamburg on the Alster. It was drawn by my grandmother. It is of the Alsterglacin in 1910.

Tape 3: 51 minutes 7 seconds

End.