

**IMPORTANT**

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**AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive**

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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

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<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Reich
<b>Forename:</b>	Sir Erich
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Male
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	30 April 1935
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Vienna, Austria

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<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
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## REFUGEE VOICES

**Interview No.** RV163  
**NAME:** Sir Erich Reich  
**DATE:** 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2015  
**LOCATION:** London, UK  
**INTERVIEWER:** Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

**[Part One]**

**[0:00:00]**

*Today is the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, 2015. We are conducting an interview with Sir Erich Reich, and we are in London.*

*Can you please tell me your name?*

Erich Reich.

*And when were you born?*

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 1935.

*And where were you born?*

In Vienna.

*Sir Erich Reich, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for Refugee Voices. Can you please tell me about your family background?*

**[0:00:42]**

Well, ...both my parents were actually born in Poland but they emigrated to Austria. I don't know exactly when. My father was born in a place called Ulanów, which I think is now in the Ukraine. And my mother was born in Oswiecim. My mother was the oldest of six, and my aunt was the youngest of six and there were four boys in between. But my aunt was already born in Vienna, because they moved quite early on. And my father was the youngest of nine. He was a salesman. I have...I don't think my mother had any... profession. And ...we were deported in 1938-39... '38, because the Polish government decided that any Polish Jew living outside Poland, had to come back to have their passports re-validated. The Germans thought it was a wonderful idea. They chucked out between 5-10,000 families to a place called Oswiecim, which was on the border of what was then Germany and Poland. And that's where we landed. I was three-and-a-half, going on for four. And amongst these people who were there – was, can't remember his name now, but I'll think of it - were his son [Herschel Grynszpan] was studying in Paris. He was so incensed that he shot the German Consul, which brought about Kristallnacht which would have happened anyway. Which also... made the British government decide to allow 10,000 children in, up to 10,000 children in, between the ages of three and seventeen. The motion was made by a guy called Mr [Philip] Noel-Baker whose father was a Quaker. And Quakers helped a lot. But there were a lot of obviously mainly Jewish communities who pressurised the then government to allow these children in. And so from December '38 to August '39, the Kindertransport transpired. I arrived - well let's put it this way. There was a ship called the 'Warszawa' that plied its way – a commercial ship – between the port of Gdynia ...If you remember Gdansk was then Danzig and did not belong to Poland. But this boat plied its way -a commercial boat - plied its way between Gdynia, Poland and went all the way to the docks of London. And every time it sailed they called out X number of children. My oldest brother Jacques, came June or July '39. My middle brother who was only ten then, and I was four, we arrived at the end of August '39. Very late. We were probably the last Kindertransport group that came before the start of the war. There were one or two afterwards, from Holland, who came because the Germans went into – into Holland. I'm not sure what happened to me, but both my brothers went to the Jewish Free School, which was then in the East End of London. They were immediately evacuated to Ely, in Cambridgeshire, cause the war broke out. And all children had to be evacuated. Actually what happened to me, I really don't know. I've tried to find out. But on one of the days, the music composer, Sir Ralph Vaughn Williams who brought out a lot of Jewish musicians – and non-Jewish musicians - from central Europe, came to Bloomsbury House. And he said, he said, "Is there anything I can help?" They said, "Well

we've got half a dozen children we don't know what to do with." I was among them. He said, "Don't worry, we have a refugee home in Dorking." That's where he lived, in Surrey. That's where, that's how I- that's where we went. Ralph Vaughn Williams was the Chairman of the Dorking Refugee Committee. Just as a by-pass, his great-uncle was Charles Darwin. And the story goes that when Ralph Vaughn Williams was about six or seven years old he asked his mother, "What's all this fuss with great-uncle Charles?" And she said to him, "Well, the Bible says the universe was made in six days. Your great-uncle Charles thinks it took a little bit longer. But either way, it's a miracle."

Anyway, amongst the committee - just to put it all into context how the British helped - was another guy, very famous, EM Forster, the composer [writer?] who lived not very far in a village, with his mother. Not far from Dorking, but he was a member of that committee. And they used to meet. Now, all the children somehow found relations. And... apart from me. And amongst the - I don't know how many families lived in this place; it was called Burchett House. It was owned by the Duke of Newcastle, who gave it to the Refugee Committee for the duration of the war. It was just one family - not Jewish - also refugees, who came from Sudetenland, the German-speaking Czechoslovakia. Where Hitler went in to save the German-speaking people. But they'd had to flee, and they fostered me. They were very strict, but wonderful. They looked after me. I went to church; I went to Sunday school. I played with their grandchildren. They were a bit older. They were in their mid- to late forties. And I grew up there! ...Do you want me to continue?

**[0:08:02]**

*Just... what's important now, is what are your own memories? So what are your earliest memories and what did you reconstruct later?*

Yeah. My earliest memories are actually Dorking. I don't remember how I got there. I've no idea. They- I, I remember a little bit when we were all together, all as children, but not very much. But after that when they took me, when they fostered me, they had their own room and there was another door into a small room, which was my bedroom. All the services and whatever you wanted - in the corridor. And those are my earliest memories. And I used to draw on the... wall, all kinds of peculiar things. And I went to St Martin's Primary School. And then, I did my Eleven Plus. How I passed is beyond me, because they only spoke German so I only spoke German to them. But somehow I, well, there were very few if any,

who passed their Eleven Plus. And I remember that very well, because just before that, and they asked me one day to take a parcel to some friends of theirs. Now Burchett House was on top of a hill. They said to me, "Whatever you do not ride in it." In this...whatever it was. And their oldest granddaughter said, "I want to come with you." She was about two or three years younger than me. So I said, "OK." She sat in the back, and the next thing I remember I was in hospital. Obviously I had gone in. I went down the hill and into the wall. And the hospital was at the end of the garden of Burchett House. So they used to come. I was there for four weeks. I mean I broke my nose; god only knows - it was very complicated. But one day she came with this little note. She was obviously quite proud of me because I'd passed my Eleven Plus. And I then went to Dorking Gramma School. I only went there for two years.

*Which year was that?*

**[0:10:25]**

1946. I was eleven. It was after the war. But just before that, I was playing on a scooter outside. I remember this very well. And a young man with his bicycle comes up, and says, "Where do Mr and Mrs Kreibich live?" My foster parents. I took him up. I went down to continue playing with my scooter. And my foster mother Emilie rushed down and said, "Come up! That was your brother." So he didn't recognise me, I didn't recognise him. And of course everything changed. There was no church; there was no Sunday school. And there was one rabbi living in Dorking. I mean it could have been a different world, as far as I was concerned. And I used to have to go and have some Hebrew lessons and God knows what.

*So your brother was older...*

Yes, my brother now would be eighty-eight. He was seventeen then. He was my oldest brother. I learned that I had another brother, also who also lived in London. But we never spoke about our parents. I don't remember them anyway. They do. And as far as I'm aware, my father was a stand-in Chazzan, in Vienna. Now to be a stand-in Chazzan in Vienna, for the High Holidays, A, you had to be religious, but B, you had to be musical. And I suspect my love of music and my brother's love of music, comes from him. But he was a salesman and went wandering around Austria.

*What was his name?*

**[0:12:08]**

Schapse ,Sigmund Schapse. And my mother's name was Mina. And... but he always came home for Shabbat, so my brother tells me. I mean I don't remember anything...from that period. And so, you know, the last communication we ever had from my, my real parents was a – I've got it somewhere, a telegram; you were only allowed twenty-two words or letters or whatever it was - to my, an uncle of mine in Israel, then Palestine, saying, "We are here." That's the Warsaw ghetto. "The boys are in England." And that's about as much as you were allowed to say. And that's where we were, in England. I only have that because it was with my middle brother, who could read and write. He was ten. And... well, we'll get on to that. Did you want to ask anything?

*Yes, I wanted to ask you, when you grew up in Dorking, what were you told? Did you think you were their child? Obviously they were older...so what...? Do you know what I mean?*

Well it's very complicated...

*Yeah.*

... because I don't remember ever being told that I was not their son. I mean I had a different name! And I knew my name, and I knew their name, but I never thought of it. I suppose that's because I wanted to have the security. I was very young. I knew they loved me. Wherever they went, I went. So all their, you know, their *chamulla* [?] their people...who, there were a lot of Sudetenland in that area. People who came from Sudetenland. They looked after me! As far as I was concerned, I was comfortable. And it was a big surprise to me – it wasn't a shock, it was a surprise - that suddenly I have a different family. But they were very good to me. I mean, quite strict.

*In what way strict? Tell me a little bit about them; their background.*

**[0:14:18]**

Well, they came both from Sudetenland...they, middle Europe. A child is seen but not heard. That's how it was in the thirties. And I had to be back on time from school. If I wasn't, I'll tell you about that in a minute. And everything they did I had to do. I had to wash my hands. You know. All the...Food. I mean, I had all kinds of things that are non-kosher of course, but I had to finish it. Chew and swallow. Those were their words. Christmas they had a little Christmas tree. I had one present always, a Meccano set, which my foster father made. I could never work it – that's not – I was never very good at it. But one day, I was in Grammar school already. And they asked me would I be a substitute for a football game. Now remember: no mobiles, no telephones, for that matter. So I said, "Of course." And this was in the middle of winter, it had got very dark. They never usually...they didn't need me. But I stayed anyway. When I got home, in the dark, two hours late, three hours late, and my foster mother said, "Go downstairs. Your foster father's very angry with you." So I went downstairs. He shouted at me and then said, "You're going to bed without any supper." So I went to bed. I woke up in the middle of the night and there was a big commotion going on next door. So I opened the door and my foster mother, she was crying. And she said, "Your foster father *ist tot* – is dead." He died of angina pectoris. He lay in his bed for five days. And every day in order to get out, I had to pass his bed. It was very difficult; but that's what I did. And... I was very upset because I got on very well with him. But they really... I think they treated me as their own son, and more than they treated their grandchildren. Because their grandchildren had parents! Their daughter and their son-in-law.

*Tell me a little bit about... You said they had a son...they...*

**[0:16:45]**

Yes, they had a son who stayed in Germany in Sudetenland which then became Germany. And he actually –Hertl was his name – he actually fought in the German war. In the war for Germany. Whereas their other, daughter was in England, so it was a bit complicated for them. I think they saw him later on, but remember I left them in '49. So... I think they became friendly with him again, but it was quite complicated for them, as well. And... you know, half the children are in Germany, fighting for Germany. And the other, they, she didn't fight, she had children. She had four children. So, so in other words, my foster mother had four grand-children there.



*In the same place? They were also in Dorking?*

Well, they were in Dorking. They started off in the same house then they went off to a place called Shere, which is on the way to Guildford. And I remember I used to go and visit them very often. And my scooter I pretended I was a bus that went from Dorking to Guildford. So I passed their house every time.

*And they were socialists, you said; what that their...?*

They were socialists, yes.

*Is that why they had to leave?*

That's why they had to- They were socialists, and they realised that if they stayed in Sudetenland there would be problems. So they came maybe, probably it wasn't even a year before me. And I have some pictures somewhere; I can't remember where. But she was very motherly. She was. And she...I can't quite explain. She was more like a Yiddishe mother than a non-Yiddishe mother. That's what she was like! And I remember they were very proud of me A, when I got into grammar school and B, in the second year I won the cross-country. I had a cup! They took pictures of me, oh they were so proud. And then of course I went to London several times. I met my middle brother, who was- the one who I came with. Now, it was very interesting, because in, 25 years ago there was the first Kindertransport reunion in Harrow. So I went to one of the- I knew nobody would come from Dorking, but I went to Dorking. So I went to one of the people who went to Ely, and I said, "You don't know me, but you might know my brothers." So this guy piped up, "But why? I know you too!" I said, "How do you know me? Why? I never went to Ely." "I remember you on the ship." So I said, "Well what were you doing?" "You were a real pest. You were running after your brother..." this is Ossie, my middle brother, "... and shouting out to him, Ossie, *Papier! Schnell!*" "I need paper, quick!" Whether I made it to the loo or not, I've no idea. But that's how I sort of got involved back into the Jewish community.

*So you could reconstruct this journey that you can't remember?*

**[0:20:03]**

I can't remember a thing about it.

*What happened to your brother? You came together. Was he fostered or...?*

Well- No, he went, he went to school; you see they were school age. So they went to the Jewish Free School.

*But where were they- Were they in a hostel? Who took care of them?*

I think- I have no idea.

*Because it wasn't a boarding school...*

No, it wasn't a boarding school. Although later on, I'll come back to that. When I was persuaded to go to London, for three months I was at the Hasmonean School, which did have a boarding house, in the Vale of Health. And but it was too religious for me. I couldn't cope. So I went to Israel... to my aunt. I knew she wasn't religious. I just hoped for the best. Anyway. Coming back... I'm not quite sure how they were, where they were. I don't think they were fostered. And also in Ely, they were, they were sort of- the children were taken all over the place.

*Yeah. So they were in a group?*

Yeah. In a group – yep - all the time. But I went to visit my- remember, when my brothers found me they were eighteen and nineteen. So they were already on their own. And my middle brother got married very early. So I went to his wedding. And I remember meeting his – who was then his girlfriend, in London. And I had an uncle, my mother's brother, who also came over. But he was sent to the Isle of Man, cause he was too old. And then, one day he said to me, "Would you like to see, there's a new film?" I said, "Well, what is it?" I was about eleven then- I was just going to eleven or twelve. He said, "It's called '*The Third Man*'." I said, "Yes." "It's all about Vienna", he said. OK. So I went with him. And then he said to me afterwards, he said, "Did you like the film?" I said, "Fantastic!" He said, "Do you remember the scene in the doorway where the cat goes over the shoes?" I said "Yes." He

said, "Well those shoes didn't belong to Orson Welles, they belonged to me." He was a stand-in – so he says – he was a stand-in for Orson Welles. Whether it's true or not I haven't a clue. I do know though, I read a book, *'In Search of the Third Man'*, about ten years ago, and apparently in order to get the cat to go across the shoes, they had to smear fish - dead fish - across the shoes. And I suspect that Orson Welles didn't agree to that. So maybe it was true.

**[0:22:58]**

*So how did your uncle find you? I mean how did both your brothers and your uncle...?*

Well my brother, my oldest brother always knew where I was, but he was only, when he came, he was only eleven, so obviously for a period of time they didn't do anything. He couldn't do anything; he was too young. But when he was seventeen he decided to find me. So he knew where I was. Once he knew, everybody else knew. And that's how I have pictures of me staying in my uncle's in Maida Vale, in London. And my brother. My middle brother.

*And was there, your foster parents - how did they react? Were they in a way disappointed that...? Were they open...?*

No. No, no, no. They always cared about me. So it was very important to them that I found some relations. We knew nothing about our, our parents then. Nothing at all. And my brother maintains that my father had got visas... to America. But he gave it to his brother who said to him, "I've got more children than you." Now whether that's true or not, I don't know. I've never gone into it. You know. The past is the past and there's nothing I can do about it anyway.

*And you also don't know about their experience, after their expulsion, because you can't remember it.*

No.

*And did your brothers remember it?*

Well, my older, yes, he does. He thinks it wasn't too bad. He says we were in some summer school and you know, we played around. So I don't think that that part of it was too bad. Just on the border, going from Germany into Poland, was complicated.

*Yeah.*

**[0:24:53]**

So, what then happened after my foster father died... The Jewish community found out- that this is no good. I'm with a non-Jewish family. He doesn't learn Jewish values. I was already going to the rabbi. And only later found, much, much later found out, that the Reverend Reverend Bernd – yeah? - was in a hostel in High Wickham. And apparently the people in High Wickham wrote to Dorking and said, "We gather you've got a boy. He's with a non-Jewish family. We want him here." But that was an orphanage. So the people in England, social workers or whatever they were, went to High Wickham and they said "Look, this boy's very happy where he is. He's got into Grammar School. I don't think we should move him again." And they were right. In fact, I should never have moved to London at all. But that's - that's life. And so I am- it's very interesting, it took many, many years, because Bernd Koschland is my Deputy, at the AJR.

*Yes...*

You know. So he suddenly found my name... when I was a little boy. Anyway, I was persuaded, because my, my foster mother had issues, lumbago. She couldn't walk a lot. She found it difficult to look after me. So I said "OK. I'll go to London." But of course in London, I- I, I couldn't pray all day there... That just wasn't for me. They sent me to the Hasmonian School, and the Hasmonian School then had a boarding house, in the Vale of Health which was a very nice place! But everybody else was praying all day with kippah and God knows what.

**[0:26:52]**

*And where did the other children come from?*

I don't know. I don't know. I was only in there for three months.

*So basically you went from a Grammar school in Dorking to...*

Yes.

*Which must have been quite different.*

Very different to put it mildly. But then the Youth Aliyah got hold of me, and said, "Would you like to go...? I said, "I'd rather to go to Israel." It was already then Israel. So I went to the Bnei Akiva camp, the Akiva Hakhshara in... somewhere near, near Cambridge. And... I thought, well why am I in the middle of winter, getting out sugar beets? Because there are none in Israel. That's for sure. So I went, went with a group of Youth Aliya – still one of the youngest - we went by train to Marseilles. And in Marseilles I had a good time. Cigarettes and you know, all kinds of things. And we went by a ship called the Eilat, which I then found out was a pretty old ship. And after we left Marseille, the following week there was a storm, and the following day I was the only one in the – in the dining room. Cause I'd already – I was used to it cause I'd gone by ship ten years earlier... from Gdynia to London which was also pretty difficult.

**[0:28:18]**

*Which year was that? So when?*

That was in 1949. I arrived in Israel in February '49. My uncle, my aunt's husband, took me and we went to his house in French Carmel. He was quite wealthy. But they couldn't have children. But you know, a young teenager – I was thirteen then. I used to go to the fridge; I was hungry. I took all the food out, which he liked. So they decided – this is no good. And anyway, the, the school, which I should have gone to, said, "Look, if he learns Hebrew he can come, but without the Hebrew, it's no good." That was the Reali School in Haifa. So I had a-one day, I went to a wedding in Nesher, which is very near Haifa. And a brother - my nearest brother to my father, his daughter got married. And I walked in, they all looked at me and said, "Ah! That's Schapse's son." But I couldn't speak Hebrew. But Yiddish is a bit like German, so I could understand words. And there was a cousin of mine there, who was on the

Kibbutz – Kibbutz Maccabia. And I said to him, “I’ll come there. You’re a cousin...”, you know. So I remember going in my aunt’s- with her lovely Ford Escort or whatever it was. And all the children looked around and said, “Oooh, look at this lovely car.” You know? But the first year I couldn’t speak! Because I didn’t speak a word of Hebrew. And let me tell you, Israeli children, whether they’re kibbutzniks or not, they’re not easy. They laughed at me non-stop. And, and it took me a while, to actually learn to speak to them. So there I was, I’d gone from German to English, from English to Hebrew, all in ten years. But I did manage. And I, I was there, well almost- you know I was there until I was eighteen, after which I had to go into the Army. But the teachers ...I mean, it’s quite extraordinary. Because there were no exams, no tests. But they were very good teachers. They were all professors who’d come from Germany, from Austria, from Poland. And I’ll always remember – he’s still alive - my literature teacher came from Germany, from Berlin. And he taught Faust. Every word I know, you know? And he took us to the Habima in Tel Aviv to see the...we went to see something, I don’t know what it was. And my music teacher loved Berlioz, and every music lesson we would learn a few more octaves of ‘*The Fantastique*’. I then went to the Army, in 1953. We were the first group of ...pupil? who had finished school, to go. And I remember... I went into a...a division called Givati near Holot. And I walked- we walked in, and there’s a young Yemeni – *Temani*. He was a Sergeant, probably half my size, and he took a stick and stuck into my stomach and he said, “Now look here, Reich. You will either go out of here in an ambulance, or after three years.” That was my first sort of, you know, experience of Israeli life. Because all the people in the- in the military were actually from Morocco, Algeria, from Yemen. We were the first group to go as sort of, Ashkenazi. Anyway. So off I went. And one day they said to me, go run around here, around there. And I noticed that my captain was an old Palmachnik, from Palmach. And he said, “Run around the Tabor...”, which is very near [Lahavia] where I lived. So I said to my friend, “Why don’t we go and tell him where we’d like to run.” He said OK, we can run. Well, when we got to [Lahavia] this friend of mine Saul - he was a much better runner than I am – he said, “Should we run?” I said, “We’d better, just in case.” So we did. He came sixth and I came ninth or something, I don’t know. We got back to base and were called to the Captain. He said, “I watched both of you, and if I let you go again, you’d better do better.” [laughs] I remember his name: Kanjagin . But I had quite a few experiences in the Army. I remember after the first course I went on I was sent out to the desert. What they didn’t tell me these were old timers. In other words, in Israel, if, you could be anywhere, but if you were in prison, the prison sentence didn’t count towards your Army service. All the battalion there were old-timers. They’d done their time in prison and in the

Army. And one day, the guy says to me, my Officer says, “The hairdresser’s coming. The Barber. Make sure they all have their hair cut.” So I went... The third person said, “I don’t want my hair cut.” I said, “Look... Please.” He said, “No.” I said, “Well I’ll have to- I’m going to the office and tell him.” And as I turned around they all told me, “Drop!” And he came with a bayonet right over me. He went to prison, obviously again, but I went to visit him. And they all said, “Why did you do that?” And he said, “Well, I’m not going to have a little Ashkenazi telling me what to do.” It transpired he was from Morocco. And then, in the same sort of... battalion, I heard a shot one morning. I ran to the tent. He was a Romanian. The only Ashkenazi there. He killed himself. He died in my arms. So it was a lot of experiences you know, you have, when you’re in the Army. Ashkenazi, Sephardi...

**[0:35:17]**

*But for you not a good experience, I mean- difficult experiences.*

No, no. I mean, I didn’t mind the Army, but it wasn’t easy. You know you had all kinds of peculiar... And then I remember I was on the Sergeants’ Course in a place called Beit Jibril which wasn’t very far from Ashkelon. And one day the - the guy called me in, well, called two friends of mine. One from Yagur and one from Ein Harot and said, “Look, we want you to... stay another course.” So we said, “Well hold on, we want to go on the Officer’s course, and the Officer’s course says that if you go there, you’ve got to give another nine months or whatever it is. And we don’t want to. And this guy’s name was Balmer [?] he became a Minister afterwards. So he said, “You know what? I’ll sign you on for another course, and you won’t have to do the extra.” Which is what we did. You can’t do that today, which is what we did. So I went on the Officer’s course, and the Officer’s course, I wasn’t, I wasn’t bad, but I’ll always remember, one day... I had to go to the loo badly. So I went, but I didn’t do my bed, and you know, six in the morning you have to go out on parade. I went out on parade. And the Captain said, “OK. I want to show you something.” So he took the whole company past my bed which was undone. And he said, “You see, I never want to see that again.” And because of that, my marks went down. But there you go. So. And then... I’d done my first reserves; I was on my way home. And in a petrol station they said, “We’ve got a message for you to go back.” So I went back to [inaudible] it was the base, and I said, “Why are we going back?” Well the Sinai campaign had just started. And some guy said when we got there, he said, “OK, you see that Piper? You go in there. You are now the

communications officer for Bar Lev - not for Bar Lev - sorry – for Arik Sharon].” And so I said, “Does the pilot know where we’re going?” He said, “Oh,” – you know, typical Israeli – “Of course he knows where he’s going!” So off we went. Arik Sharon started shouting at me. And then I said to the guy, “You know, I don’t think you know where you’re going, because we’ve just passed the Suez Canal. It’s a bit too far. We’d better go back.” We did, and we found them. And we landed; lot of people were injured, and all this kind of stuff. And... meanwhile Arik was shouting at me through this, whatever it was. We ran through towards the Piper plane and I said, “Well hold on, there’s a – there’s a Mystere coming across. We better go back.” We did. That was the end of my Piper plane. They just fired it. So we were lucky we weren’t in it, otherwise we’d have been caught. And then we went back, and backwards and forwards. And then my aunt one day says- We pinched a jeep, and drove all the way back to the kibbutz. And my aunt said, “Look, would you like to go visit your brother? He’s quite ill.” I said, “Of course.”

*In London?*

In London. So... I went on one. They had ships, they had hired ships. So I went with them to Marseille, and then to Lyon. I didn’t hurry. They didn’t tell me how ill he was. And when I arrived back, there was a note on his door, which said “Go to the next hall.” And they were already sitting Shiva. He had died. And they were sitting Shiva in Golders Green. So I went there, and my sister-in-law with her three little boys. Oh, I just remember it like yesterday. And he had cancer. Basically, he was born with diphtheria and osteomyelitis and in those days they used to do a lot of X-rays and I think that’s how he caught his cancer. He knew I was coming, but I wasn’t there on time. He kept telling me, “My little brother is coming.” He kept saying to the doctors, but I was too late.

**[0:39:47]**

*When was that?*

That was in ’57. He was only 27.

*Died very young.*



He was very young. He married very young, he had three little boys. Nine, six and three. Only his nine-year-old sort of remembers him. Even remembers going to the hospital to see him. The six and three-year-old don't remember him at all. They're now in their sixties, of course. I'll tell you about that in a minute.

*And was that your first time back to England?*

That was my first time. So I said to the kibbutz "I've got to stay. I've got to look after my sister-in-law. She's got three children." So they allowed me to be a *Shaliach* [emissary] for Hashomer Hatzair.

*At that point, were you a Chaver kibbutz? Were you...a full member of the kibbutz?*

Yes, I was a full member of the kibbutz. I was – when I got back from the Army, I taught English. I didn't actually give them tests, but I sort of gave them tests.

*In the kibbutz?*

In the kibbutz. I was told off; no tests here.

*And were you happy- after the Army you wanted to stay in the kibbutz?*

Oh, yes, I've always wanted to stay in the kibbutz.

*You liked the kibbutz.*

I liked the idea. For me it was it was OK. There was nothing wrong with it. Whatever I had to do, I did! But when I got back to England, the movement - had a house in Hackney. And I became a *Shaliach* and they had a *Hakhshara* near Bishop Stortford. So I then went backwards and forwards the whole time.

*For Hashomer Hatzair?*

For Hashomer Hatzair, where I met my first wife...

*Yeah.*

...which was a disaster, but there we go. She became pregnant, so we went back to Israel. She didn't like the kibbutz, although my - my kibbutz parents, Eliezer and Elsie, which is why I went in the first place, they really... looked after her. But she didn't want to stay. So from there she went to a kibbutz in Zikim which is near the...the border, the Gaza border. I had no option, but she found somebody else. And... so I went to Nazareth for the elections, and then I came back to Manchester, as a Shaliach again. It's a long story.

*Again with the Hashomer Hatzair?*

Oh, always with Hashomer Hatzair because that's... where I grew up.

**[0:42:25]**

*And tell us about- You haven't mentioned the kibbutz parents, so...*

No I didn't mention them, quite right. In the kibbutz I had two different cousins. One's Eliezer who also spoke English; he was one of the only people to speak English. And another called Jacov. And they - they were my kibbutz parents. And I'll always remember when I first went there, Eliezer said- showed me where I was going to sleep. Didn't tell me who with or anything. Just showed me. And he said, "Look, at the end of the house there's a shower. Why don't you have a shower and come back?" I said, "All right." I went to have a shower and while I was having a shower - remember I'm thirteen, fourteen already then - three girls walked in, undressed, had a shower next to me. And I ran for my life. And I heard them laughing. Well, you know, I mean I'm not used to this thing. And then I found out that in the room there were two boys and two girls. So I - I knew how to turn around and not watch. [laughs]

*So it was a communal- the children were living in a children's house.*

Yeah...yeah. They were living all the time- The children were- When they were born in the kibbutz they went to a children's home, baby home. And they would only have quality time

in the afternoon with their parents, when their parents finished work. Which in some ways, that quality time was very good. Whether it was so good not to be with their parents in the day, was a different story.

*But it must have been good in a way for you, because everyone was in the same situation.*

Yes. Oh, yes, as far as I was concerned, it was great. So I, you know, I knew what I had to do...

*You were not different from anyone.*

I was no different, apart from the language, and my culture, which took me two years at least to get over. But after two years I became a kibbutznik – you know, a proper kibbutznik. And...we- It is interesting, because of the kibbutz children, you know that a high percentage became officers, because we learnt to be self-sufficient, very young. And I think that was quite a good thing. But you know, I liked the kibbutz. In Zikim it was a different story; it was also a kibbutz, but they didn't treat you in the same way. And I had, you know, so many other problems I mean, having my ex- she was still my wife then - living three doors away with somebody else wasn't easy. But I tried to stay as long as possible, because of my daughter, Amit. And I suggested maybe I go back to Nachavia with her. Her mother wouldn't hear of it. So I had to stay, but then after a while I just couldn't cope with it any longer. And that's why I went back- Became a Shaliach in Manchester. Where my sister-in-law was living. That's the wife of my brother in Australia - his first wife – with her two children. Which, when I met her again, I also met my second wife...

**[0:45:52]**

*In Manchester?*

In Manchester, oh, yeah. Yes, she was at university. And she was a- she was Hashomer Hatzair. And... I tried to wait a bit longer. I tried to think well it must be OK, if I wait. And I thought about it; it lasted for twenty years so it was not bad. But at the end of the day she found somebody else from her... Her name was Diana. We went on the kibbutz. She didn't like it, because she didn't like her son being in the baby house. So we moved to Ashdod.

And... and then, we were in- on holiday in England when she was pregnant, but she already had Alon, my oldest son. And I went back to Israel because the '67 war broke out. I was too late; they didn't need me. Not like in '56, '67, I'm already an old-timer. They didn't need me. But she wouldn't come back to Israel. So I had to come back to England, which I did. And then I had to find work. It was quite difficult, you know, but I did. But I did; I found work. And eventually I worked for the Thompson organisation. I learned all about computers. I worked for Thomas Cook. And... I used to go visit – she was still alive then – my foster mother.

*Yes, I was going to ask you, what about the contact to your family?*

Well, I...I, I, I went to visit her in Dorking, and I took my two children. And the deal was always we went to Chessington Zoo on the way. They were only, only young children.

*Did she stay in Dorking?*

No, no I didn't stay in Dorking.

*Did she, your foster mother?*

Oh yeah, my foster mother stayed. She moved from ...from Burchett House cause they sold it. And she moved in with her youngest granddaughter, Ida.

**[0:47:57]**

*She was not- She didn't want to back to Germany?*

No, no. No, no. She never wanted to go back.

*The Sudeten- I guess there was no place to go back to?*

No, nothing to go- Nowhere to go. Sudetenland didn't, didn't...wasn't there anymore. And anyway I think she became, although she didn't speak English very well, she became

English. You know. And she couldn't move already. The- Lumbago is a horrible disease. She could hardly walk from one end of the room to the other end of the room.

*And was she supportive when you decided, just after you'd come back, you decided to leave to London?*

Oh, yes, she was always supportive.

*She didn't try to get you to stay or...?*

No, never, never, never. She was very supportive. She was a real mother. And that's why I went to visit her every couple of weeks. I went down to Dorking with the children. One of the things that my son particularly liked, she had a colour television. So we went down on a Saturday so he could watch the football. [laughs]

*And while you were in Israel, did you keep in touch with her?*

Yes, I wrote cards, but that was more difficult. You know, a young boy has different experiences. But I did keep various postcards which I sent to her. It was a tenuous sort of... You know. I had so many experiences.

*Yeah.*

You know. Hasmonian School, The *Hakhshara*, my aunt, the kibbutz, the Army. It all sort of... And as a young person you, you ...you just live day to day.

*So you said basically that the Jewish Community found you. So was it because of your brother and your uncle? So before then...?*

Well, I don't know.

*Which is interesting, how come...that before...?*

**[0:49:48]**

The truth is, I've no idea why they sort of- they already knew I was there when I was nine or ten. They tried to get me out, but as I explained before, the social workers or whoever they were didn't like the idea that I would go to another place, to an orphanage. So, they were right! I stayed with this family. He hadn't died yet, you see. And I was happy there. I used to walk to primary school...

*So maybe if he hadn't died, you would have stayed there?*

It could very well be. It could very well be. I wasn't doing badly at grammar school. I wasn't at the top; I was in the middle somewhere, but... cause I didn't like doing my homework. [half laughs] But you know, you never know what it is.

*Did you ever find your files in the...? Did you look at your files, because it would be interesting to...?*

Yes, I've got my files from the Jewish Agency.

*Yeah.*

But they're very...And I've also got the minutes of the Dorking Refugee Committee.

*And are you in it?*

Oh, yes. Cause I was the only child left. They used to say, "Erich needs some pocket money. He's just going into Grammar school. We'll give him a shilling a week."

*So it's really interesting; you can reconstruct your...*

Yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes.

*And the World Jewish Relief are you in there as well...in their central...?*

Well, yes. I think so, yes, cause they were the CBF – the Central British Fund. They helped bring us across.

*Yes. Have you ever looked for you file?*

**[0:51:33]**

I can't remember. I probably did but... You know, I suppose part of me, I don't want to know the past any more. What's the point? I mean, you can't do anything about it. And I always tend to look forward. That's the way I've always been. And that's why probably I blocked out everything, before coming to England. Anything bad, I mean. All kinds of things happened to me while I was in Dorking, but, you know, you just, you tend to block it out.

*But you are the Chair of the Kindertransport Committee, so...*

I know, because at some point I suppose, I felt I ought to do something. And I got involved with the Kindertransport. Not that I know them, not that I'm- I don't think I have the same attitudes to life as they do. I mean most of them are much older than me; they're in their early 90s. But I still organise, you know, every month a speaker, a lunch at the Alyth Gardens Synagogue, and I'm a Trustee of the AJR. So honestly I've gone back a bit.

*Yeah.*

But not on the religious content. I could never cope with that.

*From the beginning? From the Hasmonian, it wasn't for you?*

It wasn't for me. But you know my parents died because they were Jewish! So it is my background, and I'm not ashamed of it, or I'm not... I don't throw it away like a lot of *Kinder* had to. They came here, and they didn't want to speak German. They didn't want to be known as German. I remember trying to get hold of somebody in York; I was trying to get hold of all the *Kinder* who came on the boat, the 'Warszawa'. And this woman did answer. And she pointed out she was married to a priest. So I just let it go. It's very difficult, I mean... They were very difficult times.

*Yeah. That boat trip, that boat trip. You have no memory of it?*

No, none at all.

*No, but what have you found out later. So how long was the boat trip?*

**[0:53:55]**

Well it must have been about ten, eleven days. But I remember absolutely nothing! As I said, I don't even remember how I got from London, to Dorking!

*And how many children were on that boat? Do you know?*

Well, there were about twenty or thirty. I mean I do have the Pathe news, which says, this is the last ship that has come, and it sees the children, but whether I'm in it or not, I've no idea. That ship, by the way, just for interest's sake, was also an old ship. And I did a bit of research, and I found it was torpedoed in Egypt during the war. That same ship.

*So whose was it, was it a British ship?*

No, it was a Polish ship, the 'Warszawa'. Yeah.

*It was a Polish ship.*

Yeah, yeah. But then I think the last time it came, it probably didn't go back.

*Maybe then some- the British.*

Yeah, it became British.

*Because how many children, I mean, most children on the Kindertransport came by train and...boat.*



Well most came by train and by ship.

*Yes, but for the last bit. For the, I don't know how many...do you see what I mean, how many...?*

No, no. Well, most children came via Hook of Holland.

*Exactly.*

Where there's also one of Frank Meisler's ...monuments.

*Yeah.*

And they came across by ship. But some of them came to Southampton.

*Yeah.*

**[0:55:26]**

And- But as I said, I came in a different way totally. We were about... each time we were about thirty, forty children. So they went three times, so we were about hundred, hundred and fifty children. They just called out names.

*And they always came by ship?*

Yeah, yeah. Came all the way by ship.

*And was it the same? The same ship went back and forth?*

Yes, the same ship.

*The same ship.*

It was a commercial ship. And it- It could take up to sixty children. And all the rest were commercial. So it docked in the London docks. So we were sent to... some restaurant in the East End, I don't know which one. It doesn't exist anymore probably. And I have no idea – I really don't. I've tried to sort out all the local councils and no idea what happened until I got to Dorking.

*There's no record?*

There's no record – nothing.

*Which unusual in a sense, because...I guess as a...*

Well there is a record of my arriving. Because I've got the picture in *Lederhosen* and everything. Of me arriving at London Docks.

*But nothing in between?*

Nothing. Well, I couldn't find anything.

*So tell us a bit- You said you kind of were not that interested in your background. At what point did you start looking back?*

Well, I suppose I could have done more; I should have done. But you know... I start, then I stop, and then I think to myself, "Well, I can't remember them anyway, so what's the point?" But...I suppose being born in Vienna, you're attracted back to Austria, although I don't like the people there at all. It's a beautiful city. And I know that in the Jewish cemetery my grandfather's buried. He died of natural causes. He was thirty-nine; he was quite young.

**[0:57:37]**

*What was his name?*

Don't know.

*But he is there.*

But he's there. And- can't remember his name. But on this tombstone my aunt put the names of my parents. Because we don't really know when and where they died. As I said, I'm pretty sure my father died in Auschwitz. My mother, either she died in the Warsaw ghetto, or in Treblinka. One of the two. We don't know.

*How do you know that she was in the Warsaw ghetto?*

Because the... the telegram that came, it says, "We're in Warsaw."

*OK.*

So when we were deported, they must have gone to Warsaw. We never went to Warsaw, we went straight... Or maybe we did, I don't know. But we went to Gdynia.

*And at what point- do you remember being told that your parents didn't survive? Or I guess...whether your parents at the time, you didn't think of them as parents...?*

No. We didn't think of them. And - well I don't know what my brothers thought... But I don't know. We didn't have parents full stop. So I- all the things I did were without thinking about them.

*Yeah. Which might have made it easier. Maybe.*

Yeah... Yeah. It probably did.

*Because...*

You know and I, I was too young to, I mean I was, when we separated, this picture here - yeah? - was taken in Zbaszyn, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 1939. And it must have been especially for my birthday, because it says in German...

*We'll look at it later, yeah.*

It's the only picture I have, but I don't remember it. I don't remember that picture being taken; I don't remember anything! Now as I said before, I might have blocked it out.

*Yes.*

Who knows. But...I just think, well, I've got to live. I'm lucky. I'm eighty. I'm still alive. I've got children and grandchildren. On my eightieth birthday I took them all down to Dorking. We stayed in a hotel on, near Box Hill. And we took a bus and went all round Dorking and I showed them the places where I grew up. Where I went to school. Where I went, I was in hospital. It doesn't exist anymore the hospital. And...but that was very nice, you know.

**[1:00:18]**

*That's a reference point for you. I mean, important...yeah.*

Yeah. Yeah.

*Tell us a little bit later, so you came back...*

Well, I came back in...when [Gehanna] wouldn't come back. I settled everything in Israel. I came back and I'll always remember Alon was about four years old, so he was three and a half years old, and he looked at me and he couldn't remember me of course. And suddenly he remembered and came rushing into my arms. And then I started looking for work. And Leah, my daughter, was born in '67, in November. And...That's right, there's a difference of three and a half years between them.

*And were you in Manchester or were you...?*

No, no, no. I was in London.

*So you moved to...?*

Yeah, I mean I was never, I was only in Manchester right at the beginning in '57. But this is ten years later.

*OK.*

And her parents lived in Neasden, my ex-in-laws. They're not alive any more. They were also refugees of course. And her uncle came with the Kindertransport, which I didn't realise. He died not very long ago, in America. So ...you know, I looked for work. And the funny thing is, I found work. I went to an agency. "You know, you don't know much about computers, but..." and this is a South African Jew, he said, "but you were an officer in the Israeli Army so here's a job for you." So I took it. And from there- I didn't stay long. I went to Thompson Holidays. That was a job offer. And then they sent me to Greater London House, near Mornington Crescent, because they had a lot of problems. Thompson Holidays had started the holiday business, and they had thousands of enquiries to go to Majorca for eighteen pounds. It's a long time ago. And they said, "They've got problems. Could you sort it out?" So I went to sort it out. And before I knew what was happening to me I became a Director. Cause I did sort it out. And all kinds of stories. One man rang me up and he said, "I'm want to sue you." I said, "Why?" He said, "My wife went on holiday..." I remember this was the Turkish Airlines. If you remember Turkish Airlines went from Paris, sorry from Istanbul to London. And it crashed, and about thirty or forty Thompson Holidays were on it and they all died of course. And this person's wife went with her boyfriend to Istanbul. So I said, "What's going on? I didn't know. How would we know?" "She booked." Anyway, he left it. He didn't sue. And I remember at Thompson Holidays, we were the first people to do the... weekends in Moscow. So the Russian Ambassador came and I had to show him round. So I showed him around, and one of the girls said, "Is there any citizen in the world that is not allowed in?" So he said, "Yes, there are two." "Which ones?" "South African and Israel." We were in my office, and the Ambassador says to me, "Have you ever been to Russia? To the Soviet Union?" I said, "No." He said, "Why not?" "I've got one of those passports." "Really, which one?" "Israeli." "Oh, that's no problem. I'll get you there." So I did. So I went, but there were all kinds of incidents like that, you know?

**[1:04:26]**

*Speaking of- so which passports did you have, actually, and when...?*

To begin with I had an Israeli only, and now I've got British - and Israeli.

*So when, did you never get a British passport?*

Yes, I did.

*No, before you went to Israel. Were you British?*

No, I was Israeli. I had a...a transit visa.

*A Stateless...*

Yes, I was Stateless.

*And then Israeli.*

And then became Israeli. And then when I came back after a few years, I got a British passport. So I'm now fully British. [laughs]

*So it's interesting that you ended up in travel, because in a way you moved around quite a lot.*

Yes, yes I did.

*So had the languages. You had...*

I had German, English, and Hebrew.

*Did you keep your German?*

Well, I understand it fully or more or less. I speak it so-so.

*But did you speak German to your foster parents?*

Yes, yes.

*So that's why you had some German?*

Yeah. Hebrew I speak hundred percent, no problem.

*Because your main schooling...*

Well, I went to school. I went to the Army...you know, so I had Hebrew all the time.

*And then what happened in your business from the travel, what...how it developed?*

**[1:05:42]**

Well then I became... Well, what happened then was very interesting because I, we decided to go to do long winter holidays in Israel. And I wanted seventy seats a week from El Al. So they came, sat down, and we talked a bit. And then they said to me, "But you know, we've got a lot of Jewish passengers who will just take that and won't take the accommodation." I said, "No, no, no. we'll..." And then they started speaking Hebrew to each other. So I let them speak for a few minutes. And then I said, "Can we start again, because I speak Hebrew." [laughs] It was a very awkward situation. Anyway, that's what we did; we had flights to Israel. And then somebody got hold of me, from Baltus, had heard about me and said, "We'd like you to become the Managing Director of Baltus." So I thought about it and I went to Baltus. What he didn't tell me is that he was staying on; I can't remember his name. And I didn't last there very long. He went to South Africa on holiday, literally the day I arrived, and then came back and asked everybody about me apart from talking to me. I didn't like that. So I just left, and then I went to Thomas Cook where I became the Managing Director of their Holiday business. They were doing, when I arrived they were doing holidays to Oberammergau. I don't know if you know about Oberammergau, but every ten years...

*In Bavaria.*

Yes, that's right. Every ten years, they go and thank the Lord God.

*It's a pilgrimage.*

That's right; it's a pilgrimage. But at that time Thomas Cook had it sole rights and they managed to make a loss. But I got there too late. Because I got there in March or something or April and it started in May, and it was a disaster. Made a loss. But I stayed there for quite a while. And... what then happened; I was with Thomas Cook for quite a while. Very difficult Thomas Cook; I was in Peterborough. I was living in London. So every day I had to go up to Peterborough. That was ok, except Thomas Cook was an old-fashioned, then an old-fashioned place. And I went through their archives and found out, that they had organised the relief of Khartoum - General Gordon. And at the time Gladstone had given the rights to Thomas Cook, but he'd taken all their boats. But he'd given them a lot of money. And as we know we didn't get General Gordon, it was too late. So I organised a hundredth anniversary, to go...we didn't get to Khartoum but at least to go down the Nile. And we had people from the University of Cambridge, you know, we had quite - quite a lot of people. And it was a - Max Hastings did a program on it. And a guy I met there was Piers Brendan. He's a- He's still at Cambridge. He wrote a few books and things like that. And... I'll always remember, that it was Thomas Cook who'd had arranged this. And suddenly I get a phone call from a guy called Tim Renton, he was then a Conservative something-or-the-other. And he said, "Would you come to lunch, because I've got my counterpart from Egypt and he wants to say hello to you." And I said, "Well why would he want to do that?" He said, "Well, I don't know. Ask him." So I went to Lancaster House. But I also had a letter from my boss who said, I'd like to see you at four o'clock in the afternoon. Same day. They had offices down in Green Park at the time. So I went to this lunch and the guy said to me, "You know, the fact that you did, Aidain Luxor..." which is what I did, "you saved the tourism." I mean in Egypt every few years, it goes round and round. And everybody's very happy. Michael Heseltine came and...with his own aeroplane and so on. So he thanked me for doing that. And by the way it was Boutros Ghali-Ghali, they guy who then became the... or I don't know if it is Boutros-Boutros Ghali or whatever his name was, he became the President of the United Nations. Anyway from there I went to ...Thompson, sorry Thomas Cook and the guy said to me, "We don't get on together, you're sacked." So one minute I'm there, and the other... Because I organised the...The Aida in Luxor. Which was quite an event, I mean, you know, we had, I mean the local people were there. The proper Egyptian soldiers. It was a great success. And we actually made money, but the guy didn't like me so I couldn't- Not much I



could do about it. So that's when I, when I went to... from there I went to Thompson, and from there I went to Thomas Cook. It was a long - long story. I set up my own company in the end.

**[1:11:41]**

*Yes, so tell us about that.*

I set up my own company about fourteen years ago, called Classic Tours. And what we did- In the beginning it was so-so. But I was asked to do a charity event, by...it was then... Ravenswood. And I gave them an idea. I said, "Why don't we do a bicycle ride...in Israel from Dan to Be'er Sheva because it's mentioned in the Bible. Because King David collected taxes from Dan to Be'er Sheva. It says so in the Bible. And I toured with forty cyclists and they all cycled down and we raised 600,000 pounds. But part of the deal was that I would also include the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society because I always did things for them. And my background is Christian, Jewish, God knows what. So they had in total 230 riders, of which sixty were the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, and all the others were Jews. And I remember- we, I, I took them both. First of all, I took them together and then Ravenswood wanted to go on their own. Fine. So I took first the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. But there was a flood going down from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and it took all the road away. So we had to stay for a day or two until I changed everything. And EMMS the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society said, "Is there any difference between us and your Jewish...? And I said, "Well apart from they're bigger. Yes, to sum it up, I see you all take cameras, and take pictures of holy sites. My other lot all take cameras and take pictures of each other. That's the difference." And...they all thought that was funny. But anyway...

*And you went cycling with them as well?*

Oh yes, oh, yes. I went with them and then I went with the Ravenswood. And then... British Heart Foundation. They came to me once and said, "Would you give us any funds?" I said, "Well I've got a better idea, what about doing a bike ride?" So they did! That was British Heart Foundation.

*So it started then.*

And that's how, you know, we sort of, I built it was called 'Classic Tours'. And since we started, we've raised 90 million. Well, we didn't raise it; the charities raised it. And we were- it's still there but I've sold the company...last year. And...you know, it sort of grew, but now there are so many of these, all over the place. It wasn't just for the Jewish charities; it was for all charities. I'm a great believer, given my past, that all charities should try and raise funds. And...I suppose it's grown so much that now it's going the other way. So I just, when I thought, I'm eighty; I don't need this anymore. So I sold the company. The company's OK, but I took a lot of cyclists and trekkers, and, you know, all over the place. I mean, my second crew, my third year, I had a- it was walking in the Sinai Desert. I had One to One. One to One raised a lot of funds and I had to go there. And that's where I met Linda, by the way. And they raised funds for the Glaswegians and for the One to One down in...in England. So it's grown. But we started it.

**[1:16:00]**

*Yes, you had a very good idea.*

Yes, it was an idea. We started with bikes and went on to trekking see, and you know, we did all kinds of things. We did a car rally to Moscow. You know, the thing grew. And we also had a run at night, 'Night Rider' we called it, around London. That we started around five, six years ago. It's still going, every year, in June, we have about 3-4,000 people cycling around London.

*So when did you start it? Around fourteen, fifteen years ago?*

No, no. I started that nearly twenty years ago.

*And at what point did you get involved with the AJR and the Kindertransport?*

Well I suppose... after the first get-together, which was nothing to do with me. But I just was there and I met what's her name?

*Berta.*

Berta. I met Berta. She was looking for office space. So I gave her some office space in my office. And then... I can't remember how it actually happened, but she said would I come on to the Committee. So I did! And I very slowly became involved, you know. But the first one which she did the reunion, which was... in North London. And I remember going to one of the - the tables. And that was where people went to. So I went- I found Ely, and I said to them, "Look, you don't know me", OK? "...but you might know my brothers." So the guy stood up and said, "Why? I know you too!" I said, "How do you know me?" "I was on the same boat as you." I said, "Really? What was I doing?" "Oh, you were terrible! You were running around, shouting, "*Ossie! Papier, schnell!*" [Ossie, toilet paper, quickly!] Whether I made it to the loo or not, I have no idea. So my past sort of has come back, if you like.

*From then on?*

From then onwards, yeah. Yeah. I mean, now I'm the Chairman of the Kindertransport. We have a lunch every month, once a month. You know, I'm- I'm heavily involved. I'm a- I'm with the AJR.

*And is it on your part do you feel, for you is it a reconnection with the past or did you feel that you want to help the other people who are maybe older?*

It's a bit of- It's a bit of both. I don't think of my past too much. It's not worth it; it's passed. It's gone. And I think that if I can help those people that need help now, it's much, much better. And that's why also I went to- At JW3 they had an, an evening to do with what's happening now.

**[1:19:17]**

*With the refugees?*

Yeah. And I, they asked me to give a talk, which I did. I just feel you know, these are also refugees... and they need to be helped. They wouldn't run away from their home if they didn't have problems.

*We'll come back to that at the end. I just wanted to ask about your other brother. You didn't mention- what happened to him?*

Well, he - he volunteered – this is my oldest brother, yeah? – he volunteered to go to what was then Palestine, still. OK? And brought all his things. Didn't like it, so he sold everything he had, and I helped him, cause that's- I arrived in Israel a little bit after him. OK?

*So he was already there, and you were joining him...*

No I wasn't joining him, I was joining my aunt, or his aunt as well!

*And the aunt, this was from your mother's or father's side?*

My mother's side. She was the youngest, the youngest of six. The oldest was my mother, and in between there were four boys.

*And she'd emigrated to Palestine?*

Yes, with her husband. Well she had to; she had to flee.

*At what point?*

She was already married, and... she probably went in '38, and her father- her husband was Romanian.

*And what was their name?*

Löwensohn.

*Lowen...?*

Löwen-sohn.

*Lowensohn.*

Yeah. But she never had any children. And he - he was an entrepreneur; he made money. Quite a lot.

*Yes, so your brother, so he...?*

Now my brother went to Israel. He volunteered. Machal. And then he brought all this stuff over, you know, duty-free and all this kind of stuff. Decided he didn't like it. He was married then, to a lady called Jean, who was from Manchester. And he then went back to England but he sold all his things. I helped him sell all his stuff. I had to record all his records and God knows what. And then, he went back to England. And then... he decided he wanted to go to Australia. Now, at that time you could go either by ten pounds, or, you could go a class above. But he'd just won some money on something, the pools or something, decided to go the class above, because he wanted to meet the right people! Which he did! And... he divorced, he remarried, a bit like me, you know, divorced, remarried. But he now, he only did it three times; I did it more. No, he did it twice, and I did it three times, sorry. And he... He became very wealthy. I mean very wealthy.

**[1:22:22]**

*Doing what?*

Well, he, he worked in the...what's it called? ...Selling zinc and selling God only knows what. I can't remember what industry it is. But and...he sold raw materials, but he didn't have them, he just sold them from one country to another. OK? Which obviously worked very well, and then he bought himself a farm in Australia where he had a few hundred sheep and a few hundred cows. And you know, he made money. But like myself, he was never educated properly. We went to school, we went to a year or two to grammar school and that's it. He has three children from his ...third wife. He has a - a house in Switzerland, just to show you, you know. A house in, house in Melbourne, that's right, just outside. And all together he has seven children. That's two more than me. [laughs]

*And he's still in Australia? I mean he travels...*

Yes, yes, he's still in Australia, but he comes every year to Europe. He's very European; he needs Europe. And he was here last, this year. And we said he should come. He came to visit me here, which he always likes to do. He met my children and you know so and so forth. He's getting on. He's eighty-seven, he will be eighty-eight. No, he's eighty-eight and he will be eighty-nine in March. But he's... He's done very well, financially. And I think... his wife is about fourteen, fifteen years younger than him. Looks after him very well. And they have this lovely house outside Melbourne. I've been there you know, I've visited him. There's a wonderful flat in...in Switzerland. So he's done very well.

*This leads me to my next question. How do you think your experience has affected you, and how differently were your brothers affected? Because you were obviously a different age.*

Yes, well... My, you see my memory tends to be more, my foster parents. His memories – he didn't have foster parents. He had parents. I think we both tried to shut it out, because he feels. And my middle brother I'll never know, because he died when he was very young. I think well, I think all of us needed to have a partner when we were young. We had no parents. So, Ossie, my middle brother, married when he was nineteen. I married two or three years later. And Jacques also was about nineteen when he married his first wife. But I think he felt, that is my oldest brother, that having a lot of money, that's it, that's all you needed, to be safe. My middle brother I wouldn't know, but he- I think he had to have a family. I myself never thought about it. But probably also having a partner was very important. That's why several marriages. Although the first two, they found somebody else, not me. The third one as well, I just moved out, I'd had enough. I don't think being Jewish meant a lot to any of the three of us. I think we tried - not to forget it, but not to be too involved in it. Although my oldest brother likes Hanukkah; that's his favourite. Me, I light the candles, yeah? Linda's parents were religious, so she's a bit more involved than I am.

**[1:26:52]**

*Your children? How did you raise your children?*

Well that's very interesting, because... my oldest three children, their mothers were Jewish. And my - both my oldest children didn't marry into the faith, they married out. However, Alon, this is my son, he, his children all had Bar Mitzvahs. There were two boys, and the girl says she wants one as well. And she's thirteen now. She'll have one. But of course because the mother's not Jewish, they have to have it at the liberal shul, in Finchley. I had a Bar Mitzvah sort of.

*Where?*

In London. The synagogue isn't there anymore. I'm just trying to think... Jacques's- none of his children had Bar Mitzvahs. In fact, because the mother is not Jewish, they don't regard themselves as Jewish. My children, it's very interesting how these things change. My children - I've always reminded them that they're Jewish. And they've always come to these things that I've organised. I mean obviously later in life, but I had organised them, you know for the Kindertransport they've gone to the various events. So their memory is much more Jewish in that sense. My oldest daughter lights the candles at the Hanukkah.

*What about your younger two children?*

Well- their mother's not Jewish. And I don't know - one of them is more Jewish than the other. He's darker...

*A bit more connected.*

Yes, but I just don't know. I mean, when I'm not here, I've no idea what they'll do. I really don't know. I've certainly never forced it on them.

*Yes, but was it important for you, to...?*

For me? Personally? Well, I feel I'm very Jewish, but I don't feel I'm religious. And I find the two things to be totally different. So, whilst Linda may occasionally go to synagogue, I don't. I only go if there's a, you know, a festival or something, you know, a wedding or something I know I have to go. But other than that, I don't believe in it. But I know I'm Jewish. There's no question about that whatsoever.

*So that's another question: How would you describe yourself in terms of your identity?*

**[1:29:56]**

I'm Jewish, Oh, yeah. There's no question about that; I'm Jewish. But being religious, has never helped any Jew. [half-laughs]

*And do you see yourself as British or Israeli? Do you still see yourself as Israeli?*

Well I have an Israeli passport which has run out. So in that sense, I'm not Israeli any more. But I really need to renew it. But... I don't know, I feel myself British, I suppose. ...I mean the thing is, I'm quite involved with the Kindertransport. I'm involved with all these things.

*And tell us. You were-yYou got a Knighthood.*

Sorry? Yes, I did.

*Yes, so we haven't talked about that.*

I don't talk about it very much.

*OK. Talk about it in however way, but it's worthwhile mentioning.*

Yes. It was quite a surprise to me. I mean I never, I never even thought about it. But I remember one day, about five years ago it was, I went home and I told Linda that I'm going up to Muswell Hill for something. And she said, "Why don't you come home on the way?" I said, "Well why should I do that?" And she said, "Come home." So I did, and there she was, crying, an envelope in her hands. And in it, it says that the Prime Minister "wonders whether you would be amenable" – I remember these words - to become a Knighthood. The reason I got it, was for two different reasons. One, for the charity work that I do which was Classic Tours. And the other one, the fact that I do- I'm the Chairman of The Kindertransport. And for those two reasons - I've still got the letter, obviously. And for two or three days I thought of saying 'no'.



*Did you?*

Yeah! Well, it's not me! I'm a Kibbutznik. You know. But as my wife reminded me, it's nice for the people who are mentioned: The Kindertransport, and my company. So I said 'yes', and they were very proud, I must say. I've got pictures all 'over the place, getting it, you know. But it's, it's not me...

**[1:32:20]**

*For you it wasn't important?*

Sorry? Me personally, I went to Buckingham Palace; so what.

*You met the Queen?*

No, it was Prince Charles.

*Prince Charles?*

And I made a faux pas.

*Why?*

There were two of us who got Knighthoods that day – that particular day. One was... what's his name? ...Very well known. He's the- he was the Chairman of the National Theatre. Come on; I'll think of it in a minute. Sorry?

*Trevor Nunn?*

No, no, no, no, no. The one after him. He's gay, he comes from Manchester; he's Jewish.

*Miller? No.*

He's very well known.

*Ian McKellen?*

No, Ian McKellen's an actor. He [Nicholas Hytner] was the, he was the Director of the National Theatre up until six months ago. God. I'll think of it in a minute.

*Anyway. Don't worry about it.*

I'm not going to worry about it. It was very interesting, because I'll tell you why. First of all, I knelt on the wrong knee. So Prince Charles says, "That's not the way you do it; it's the other knee." Fine. And then, he did what he did. And I just, normally you have to step back, and bow. And I just turned around and went. That didn't— Didn't make any difference. And we had a party. And... and you know, to me life has not changed. Every now and again, Linda says, "You really should mention that you're 'Sir'." So now and again I mention it, but not very often. It's... it's very difficult to explain, but I suppose it's unusual for somebody like me, who came here as an orphan, which I already was then, to become a Knight. But I did. I think Linda wants to change my passport next year. [laughs] I haven't changed it yet; it still says 'Mr.'.

*Yeah.*

But you know, it's just one of those things and... I suppose it is important, because the fact is that somebody somewhere – I don't know who it was - decided that I'd done a lot of good. Classic Tours is the company that I ran. It's raised 90 million pounds, which is a lot of money.

*In terms of your work for the Kindertransport Committee and the AJR, how do you see your – first of all - contribution for yourself? And also how do you see the future? Which is an inevitable question, sorry about that.*

Well, OK, the future isn't there. I mean, in another five or ten years there won't be many of the people around. Most of them are on average twelve years older than I am. And I'm

eighty. So they're in their nineties. The average age. Some of them are ninety-five, ninety-six. So what was the question?

**[1:35:35]**

*How- What do you think is your contribution?*

Well I think the contribution is that, it's still there. And I make sure that we have lunch once a month. Only thirty people come, on average. But every now and again, I try and get somebody more further up, and then I get a hundred people. OK? It's important for them, although it's very interesting. They're more Jewish than I am, if you understand what I mean.

*Yes. I do.*

I've never felt of myself to be in that sense Jewish. But I suppose because I went to the first reunion, things have changed a bit, OK? And I've lived in Israel, of course. And things have changed, I mean, I regard of myself as very Jewish. And particularly since my parents died in the Holocaust. You know, you do. How long will it go on for? I don't know. I really don't know. I mean most of them are in their early nineties, late eighties. So you, you wonder. How long will they still be there? But, I always feel that they enjoy it; they come with their walking sticks. They come with their God only knows what. We have a speaker every, every month and I said yesterday - have you heard of Tom Bower?

*Yes.*

Yeah. Well he's a close friend of mine. And we went to see him yesterday. I didn't realise, it's funny isn't it? I mean I know him very well. He went to the same school as my son, William Ellis. That his mother came on the Kindertransport, but she was, well she didn't because she was too old, so they nearly sent her back, but they didn't, luckily for him. And she comes from Vienna. So I said to him, "Well why don't you give a talk?" I'm not sure he wants to, but I'll - I'll sort of push it. [coughs] Because the *Kinder* have made a great contribution to this country. More than people realise. Three of the Amadeus Quartet were *Kinder*, three. One is still alive, but he's not a '*Kind*'. You have various people... Brent for example, Leslie Brent.

*Yeah.*

Professor. He was a professor. You have people in - in the movie business. They all were *Kinder*. And if they hadn't come, you know, who knows? And what is very interesting, that about thirty percent of the *Kinder* who came, went to University. It's very high.

*Yeah.*

That's because when they were in Germany or Austria or wherever they were, their parents, of course, were the intelligentsia.

**[1:38:42]**

*Sure. But first of all the Kindertransport Committee was not part of the AJR; they were separate.*

No they weren't the AJR at all. That became, was the WJR, the World Jewish Relief.

*Yes, so when did that happen? Tell us a little bit about...*

Well, I don't- This is something I don't know.

*Ah.*

I have no idea. I suppose the reason of course is quite simple. WJR work abroad; AJR work here. And the *Kindertransport* actually, was here. Not all of them of course. There are some in Israel, some in America; they're all over the place. But initially of course they were all here. All during the war. So I think that's where the breaking point came and they changed it. When exactly it moved from WJR to AJR, I haven't a clue. Ever since I've known them, and ever since I've become part of them...

*It's part of the AJR.*

...It's been part of the AJR, and I've become a member of, I don't know, a Trustee or whatever it is, of the AJR.

*Yeah. How do you see in terms of the future of the AJR? Because this is a topic which came up. Do you see it more- is it for the second or third generation, or is it in a different direction? How would you...?*

Well it's very difficult because- we have some people from the second generation who are all over the place. Personally, I think it will die out, because you don't have the- I mean, take my children. They have very little connection- they have no connection, in fact. And I suspect as you go from generation to generation there are less and less. There are one or two people who are first generation, who are trying very hard to keep it going, and I understand that. Because they were affected by it.

**[1:40:36]**

My children, they weren't really affected by it, funnily enough. Because by the time I'd come, and I had children, I was so young when I first came, that I was more Israeli than the *Kindertransport* if you understand what I mean.

*Yeah.*

I mean I fought in the war; I did all kinds of things. So I suspect that in a hundred years, were we sitting here in a hundred years it wouldn't be there anymore. That's what I suspect; I may be wrong.

*Mnn. Well, time- Time will show.*

Time will show. But I won't be here. [laughs]

*But in the meantime, it's important?*

Oh yes- No, It's very important that people remember that there was a *Kindertransport*. That the British, British saved... so many children. There were a lot. And that these children

contributed to the country. Whether it's here, or in America. Two Nobel Prize winners. I mean in America. I don't know if they're still alive. In Israel...

*Yeah.*

There was a contribution.

*And do you think the memory of it is important? You talked about the...*

I think it is because, people need to remember, The Kindertransport is something quite unique. It didn't happen before. There were Spanish, 3,000, but they went back most of them. But...remember what the British- They saved nearly 10,000 children. They, in my view, yeah? Contributed an enormous amount to making sure that some of the children got out. On the other hand, you've always got to remember that the children contributed back. And in particular the older children. You know?

*The question I wanted to ask you, because- that might be controversial. I mean some people who had let's say quite a difficult- and some of the Kinder that had difficult experiences...*

Of course...

*...would say, would it not have been better to take 5,000 children and their parents than 10,000 children?*

Well, but there was a problem at the time, I think. That means that 5,000 children wouldn't have come. Number two: I don't think the Germans allowed older people to go out, as far as I remember. I can't remember all that well. It's a difficult one. I suspect that all those who made their way here, the *Kinder*, they don't think like that. All those who didn't make it, who were older, and missed their parents, they're the ones, probably – I'm not sure – probably who feel that parents should have come. Whichever way it is, the fact remains, they didn't. And the fact remains that we lost them. Not, not. It wasn't a hundred percent, it was eighty percent, or seventy or eighty percent, the parents never made it.

*That's right. And that brings me to the question of applications for today. You know, looking at your own experience but also, of other Kinder you know, and stories you hear, how you think it should be translated.*

Today?

*Yeah. Whether ...yeah.*

Well I feel, we all feel differently. I certainly feel that Britain should have taken more people. No question about it. I mean, a clean 4,000 – whatever it is, over three years, that doesn't help. Most out those coming out of Syria, have a problem. I mean, I'll give you just one example. A friend of my son was in one of the Greek islands. And there was a family there from Syria. And they were talking and this family explained to them that he was living – I don't know where, somewhere - in one of the big cities, a doctor. And one day there was a knock on the door and somebody came in, well dressed, with a parcel. And said to him, "Here's a parcel. You are to go into a little town and it will explode there. It will explode you, but a lot of people will die. And if you don't, we'll kill your family." The guy walked out. And he – I don't know if he was a doctor or not - he said, "We're going." That's the kind of thing they were aware of. So you ask the question, OK, probably there are one or two people who have come through the net, who are not refugees properly. I'm, I'm the first to admit it. But on the other hand, we've got to do everything we can to help. And I don't think Britain is doing enough. I think they should do more, they should have more, you know, people come in. Because usually immigrants help. Not always, I agree. Nothing's a hundred percent in this world. But usually they– They, they, they help.

**[1:46:06]**

*But do you think Britain should take the children or families or...?*

Families, families, yeah. It... It isn't a nice thing, not to remember your parents. And we're talking about younger families as well. And that's how- OK, my family, father was religious, and he was a salesman, but we're talking about Syria where a lot of them are actually doctors and chemists and God knows what. Probably they were as well, then. But less. They're highly educated people. So... they should take more. Not just children, the whole family. I

mean it's not a good thing in my view, to feel you just don't remember your parents. I mean I don't remember anything.

*Yeah.*

You know? Every now and then I think about it a bit but - there's nothing there.

*That's a – yeah – that's a consequence of- of this.*

*Yeah.*

*Do you sometimes imagine how different your life would have been?*

Totally. I mean for a start I would have been religious. On the other hand, you don't know, because Vienna is a beautiful city; it's a cultural city. It has— then, it had a lot of educated people. So you're just, you're not a hundred percent sure how it would have worked out. But I suspect that we would all have been religious. And we would have still done whatever we needed to do. But, it's very difficult to say. I mean me as a baby, my life wasn't there yet, was it? It wasn't sort of- Whereas my two brothers were slightly older and they would have remembered their parents. Well they did. One was eleven, one was ten. ...Who knows. It's very difficult.

*Yeah.*

Very difficult. I mean, you think about it and you think, how could he have killed so many Jews? How could he have put them in a concentration camp and gassed them? It just...It beggars belief, doesn't it?

*Yeah, which brings me to my next question. How do you feel- Have you been to Vienna and how do you feel about Austria and Germany today?*

Well I don't feel. I go, I've been- in fact, for my eightieth birthday, my two youngest sons bought me tickets, for them and me, to go for a weekend in Vienna. They feel that's – that's where I was born. And whilst the people, I didn't talk to them very much. But we went to the



cemetery, we went to Riesenrad [Ferris Wheel] you know, we went all over the place. I didn't think about it. If you think about it too much, you don't progress, in my view. And I, I – I strongly believe you need to progress. You're seventy years, eighty years later; you've got to remember, always remember, so it shouldn't happen again. But you've also got to progress. That's the view I have anyway.

**[1:49:32]**

*Did you find out where your parents lived? Could you see that?*

Yes.

*What was the address?*

Blumauergasse or something, I don't know. It was very near the Prater. And we went there; it was one of the few houses that was actually bombed. So it was a new house there, and then the Prater wasn't very far away, so we went there. And then we went on the Riesenrad, because with the 'Third Man'. And we went on the Riesenrad and you know... I don't know. Then, then you know, we walked in the cemetery. Went into town, and they - they know my background a bit.

*Yes, and you said in the cemetery the names of your parents are on...*

Yeah. But they didn't see it, unfortunately. Because... I don't know if you know the Vienna cemetery, the middle part, which is enormous, is non-Jewish. And there's one on the right and one on the left, which are Jewish.

*Yeah.*

I thought for some reason, my memory is not as good as it used to be, it was the one on the right. But it wasn't.

*You couldn't find it?*

No. We knew where it was in the end, but by the time we got there, it was closed. It was Erev Sukkot. It was closed. I've been there – I'd been there. The boys would have liked to have been there but we didn't. So I said, "You know what? Let's go back in, we'll have a nice coffee, we'll have a good cake." And that's what it is. But we wandered around the bloody cemetery for hours. Yeah, but it had a big Jewish population, Vienna.

*Yeah.*

Ten percent.

*When was the first time you went to Vienna?*

Oh, I went to Vienna...oh, at least twenty, thirty years ago. At least. And then my aunt also put the names of my parents... on the tombstone of her father. She gave me and I went to have a look. And they are there. But... you know, nothing you can do.

*No...no. Is there anything else we haven't touched on, that you feel is important?*

**[1:52:04]**

Well, I think we've touched on most of it... on most of it. I mean, I suppose I'm glad that I'm helping people you know, by organising the Kindertransport...you know, the AJR. It's sort of, cause the AJR they give money now...

*Yeah.*

...To all kinds of causes. And I'm one of the committee's you know, the members. So I have to help make these decisions of trying to remember the past and also look forward.

*You think that's both equally important?*

Oh, yes, I think it's very important. You can't just live in the past; that's just not possible.

*No, because I mean the AJR, at some point someone said that it shouldn't be called that, because they're not refugees any more.*

No, no. Correct. Well, that may happen. That may happen.

*Do you see yourself as a refugee? How do you see yourself?*

No, no. I see myself as British. Well, partly I see myself as Israeli as well because you know, I was a paratrooper and I was an Officer, and... I fought in the war. You know. All that.

*But you don't see yourself as a refugee?*

No. No, definitely not. Definitely not. And my children certainly don't. They- I mean, they married out, and they have. Leah's got one son in the Jewish Free School, JFS. You know, it just varies a lot. I, I suspect that my oldest and my son, married out, although his boys were Bar Mitzvah-d. And my daughter is the only one who has actually married in. The other two are not married yet. It's up to them when they get married. But their girlfriends are not Jewish. That I know. [laughs]

*Do you find that the grandchildren are interested in your story?*

I think so, because my granddaughter - one of my granddaughters - has just moved to Camden School for Girls. She was the last year in Primary school and wanted and they all had to do something and she did something on me. So she was interested. And it was quite good, you know, what she did. And the fact that I – I, you know I was born in Vienna and all this kind of stuff.

*Yeah.*

So, yes.

*It's there.*

Well, yes, it's there, it's there. And she wants to be Bat Mitzvah-d. So... Which was a surprise to her parents. [laughs]

*Yeah. Is there a message you have, based on your experience, for anyone who might watch this interview in years to come?*

**[1:54:58]**

Well I think, part of me says, you've got to get over the past. You've got to remember it, so that it doesn't happen again. But you've got to get on with your life; you've got to do things that help, yourself, your family, and society. That's what I've always felt. It's not something I've thought about rigidly. I don't think about the fact that my parents died in the Holocaust, I think about what I can do...

*Yeah.*

...to help. And I believe I have, I mean, not always in the best way but as good as I could. And the fact that we've raised so much money for all kinds of causes – not just Jewish ones – all kinds of causes is very positive in my view. And that's the only message that I have, to be honest.

*OK. So, Sir Erich Reich, thank you very much for this interview.*

**[1:55:59]**

**[End of interview]**

**[Start of photographs]**

**[1:56:18]**

*Yes please.*

Oh, my whole family, my father, my mother, my two brothers and myself. I'm the youngest. It was taken... in May, 1939. In Zbaszyn.

*And what does it say there on the right?*

“To our little one for his fifth birthday?” Or his fourth birthday, rather.

That’s my foster mother, and myself, on my sixth birthday in Dorking. 1941.

My foster parents. Myself and their granddaughters Sonia and Silvia on my sixth birthday, in 1941.

Yeah. That’s me. My sixth birthday, standing outside Burchett House. Burchett House, which was owned by the Duke of Newcastle who gave to, it as a refugee home. It’s where I lived from 1939-40 to 1949.

And my foster parents and three of their grandchildren. I’m eleven years old then, and we’re out in the garden, of Burchett House.

Ok, it’s my foster parents and myself. My foster parents’ names are Josef and Emilia Kreibich, and I was eleven years old.

*And what does it say on the back of the photo?*

“In memory of your foster parents, Josef and Emilia Kreibich.”

*And in German?*

*“In Erinnerung an Deine Pflegeeltern, Josef und Emilia Kreibich”*

This is my grandmother, after she arrived in the United States, from Vienna.

*And when did she send you the picture?*

I can’t remember.

*And can you tell us briefly what happened to her?*

Oh, well she died a normal death. She went from Vienna to America to one of her sons. And my aunt and my uncle helped with the finances to get her there.

*And what was her name?*

I'm trying to think; Christ, I can't remember.

**[2:00:00]**

In the middle is my aunt's brother. My mother's brother, i.e., my uncle. And then going from left to right is my oldest brother Jacques. Then myself, and then my deceased brother Ossie. In 1948.

This picture is of us, plus Jean, Jacques' first wife. So Jacques is on the left, next to him, his wife Jean, then Ossie my little brother, and myself. In London, in 1947.

This picture was taken in my uncle's flat in Maida Vale. Going from left to right is Jean, who was my brother's wife, my brother, myself, Aunt Rosie, my uncle's wife who's in the middle there, Ossie and then my Aunt Irene from Haifa, Israel.

Myself with a cup for the Cross Country, the Junior Cross Country at the Dorking Grammar School, which I happened to win. And lots of pictures were taken of me then. I went there in '46 – that's in 1947. In fact it's in that book somewhere.

This is the Bnei Akiva camp which I was sent to in 1948. And we had a good time!

My brother Ossie fourth from the left, and... this was in Ely, where the Jewish Free School was sent to, before the war.

This is my Israeli passport, of many years ago. Which I still have somewhere, although this one says, 'annulled'.

[noise]

This is a picture of a bike-ride we did from the Brandenburg Gate to the gates of Auschwitz, to raise funds for World Jewish Relief. It's quite a long ride; believe you me. About six years ago. This picture was taken about six years ago.

From Warsaw to ...*Krakow and then on down*. This is myself and Frank Meisler who organised the various statues for the *Kindertransport* in and around stations from where they went, to come to the United Kingdom. This was taken about 3 years ago. I think this one was taken in Gdansk.

Prince Charles and myself when he invited the *Kinder* to come in 2014... to the Palace. And I met him when he came in, and then he went to say hello to all the *Kinder*, the children.

This is after the investiture in 2010. From left to right, Jonathan, Amit, the oldest, Alon, myself and Linda, and behind Linda is Joel the youngest, and my daughter Leora. We're all standing outside Buckingham Palace.

**[2:04:42]**

This is my entry visa, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1939, when I first arrived in the UK at the age of four-and-a-half, 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 1939.

This is the only communication we ever had from our parents, from my parents. And they were already in the Warsaw ghetto. And they do say here that we, the three boys, are now in England. We've never heard from them again. It's the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, 1942.

This is a document of the Minutes from the Dorking Refugee Committee. And they looked after a number of people in Burchett House, which is the house where I lived. And amongst these is myself as well, as they looked after a number of children.

[long pause]

**[2:07:48]**

The members of the Dorking Refugee Committee, included some very important people, not least of which was Ralph Vaughn Williams the composer. And they looked after the Burchett House, which is where all the refugees were. There seemed to have been a long discussion as to whether I should move, or be moved, to a Jewish home - an orphanage, or I should stay where I was with the Kreibich-s. It was understood that I was happy where I was, I was doing well at school, and so they kept me there.

This document shows the permission I was given by the British authorities to leave the country, and settle in what was then already Israel, or previously known as Palestine.

*Sir Erich thank you very much again for this interview, and for sharing your life story with us.*

It's a pleasure.

**[2:09:26]**

**[End of photographs]**