

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	19

Interviewee Surname:	Hyman
Forename:	Richard
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	25 June 1918
Interviewee POB:	Blumenau, Germany

Date of Interview:	12 June 2003
Location of Interview:	Knaresborough
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	3 hours 12 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 19

NAME: RICHARD HYMAN

DATE: THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2003

LOCATION: KNARESBOROUGH

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: I am conducting an interview with Richard Hyman in Knaresborough, England on Thursday 12 June 2003 and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

If you can tell me first your name?

RH: Richard Hyman

RL: Do you have any nicknames?

RH: Well I am known as "Dick the Milk".

RL: Do you have a Hebrew name?

RH: Reuven Ben Reuven

RL: Where were you born?

RH: I was born in a little village called Blumenau, which means flower meadow, in the Silesian Mountains in Silesia, in Germany in 1918.

RL: Whereabouts is this little village?

RH: It is not too far from a town called Breslau which is now called Wroclaw since it was transferred to Poland just after the last war.

RL: What is your date of birth?

RH: 25th June 1918.

RL: What were your parents' names and where were they born?

RH: My father's name was Richard Heymann, the same as me, since he died before I was born, and my mother was Recha Heymann, which is the German equivalent to

Tape 1: 2 minutes 16 seconds

Rachel. She was née Alexander before she married and they were both born in Breslau.

RL: Staying with your father's family for the moment, can you tell me something about what you know about his family background?

RH: I know that my great grandfather, he was, I think, naturalised in 1812 and he had various siblings and I don't know much else, I know from the family tree but I don't know much about their background really. He seems to have changed his name in 1812 to Hyman. Why to Hyman I don't know but there is another name on the family tree and it is possibly with emancipation it came into force in the beginning of the nineteenth century that people were encouraged to change their names. So that is possibly how it came about. My father was one of three, one sister and one brother. I knew them both. My uncle died in 1927, and my aunt in 1932 but that is about it really.

RL: Do you know what your grandfather did for a living?

RH: He was a merchant of some sort. I don't know exactly what he did. All I know, my father was in the Balkans on the way home and he got a telegram telling him that my grandfather died in 1901, very suddenly.

RL: So your grandfather died in 1901 and then you said your father died before you were born?

RH: Yes he died in 1918, 3 months before I was born.

RL: What was the cause?

RH: Well he had a stroke or a heart attack. He was actually in Breslau. He was a director of a textile company and he went in the morning to a meeting in Breslau at a bank and collapsed there and died three months before I was born.

RL: How old was he?

RH: 46

RL: Do you know what kind of education he had?

RH: My father went to a grammar school but I don't think he went into a university. He went into a textile company called Meyer Kaufman and he stayed there for the rest of his life. He worked his way up from being an office boy to Managing Director.

RL: Where was that company?

RH: In Breslau.

Tape 1: 5 minutes 48 seconds

RL: When did he marry your mother?

RH: 1909. They both married rather late. He was 37 and my mother was 32 so they were only married for a very short time really.

RL: What happened with your father during the First World War?

RH: He could not go because he must have had some medical problem and he wasn't fit for war service. He was a rather patriotic German at the time and it rather upset him, so I was told.

RL: You say he had a brother and a sister, what did they do?

RH: My uncle worked in the bank and he was not married and my aunt married a professor. I don't know what his field was. His grandchildren live in the United States and they came to see me a couple of years ago.

RL: And your father's mother, your grandmother, was she alive when you were born?

RH: None of my grandparents were.

RL: Going on to your mother's family, what can you tell me about her family background?

RH: My mother had 3 siblings, 2 sisters and a brother. My uncle was a dermatologist, my other uncle was a GP and my other uncle was a landowner and farmer.

RL: And her parents. Your mother's parents?

RH: I don't know anything about them really. They were in banking and were connected with a private bank but I never knew any of them, so I don't know much about them really.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing would you say your parents had?

RH: Jewish.

RL: So what level of observance?

RH: Liberal Jews, typical sort of emancipated. We had a very large congregation in Breslau and the majority were Liberal Jews but there was an Orthodox synagogue as well. Actually I got married in the Orthodox one because ours got burn down you see.

RL: Where did your parents live after marriage?

RH: They lived in Blumenau? My father had by that time had become a Director

Tape 1: 8 minutes 53 seconds

and they lived in the Director's villa. I have got a picture of it somewhere. All three of us, us two and my sister, were born in this villa, there

RL: Can you describe it?

RH: Yes its quite substantial, lovely gardens. It is sort of L shaped. I have got a picture, I thought I've got a picture amongst those pictures there, which I gave you, I thought there was a little picture of the house that I was born in.

RL: We can look for that afterwards. If you can describe how many rooms and what you can remember of it?

RH: Oh I don't know much. I have never been in it since it was a tied house. My father died in March 1918 and the company allowed my mother to live there until the October. They knew she was pregnant and they were a very good company to work for, so they paid my mother her pension of course and even after my mother died they continued paying us the pension until we reached a certain age so they were a wonderful company to work for and they allowed my mother to stay until October 1918 she moved to Breslau. I grew up in Breslau as well.

RL: So where did you live in Breslau?

RH: In a little square called the Tauentzienplatz which is very central really and a fairly large proper square actually cut into four quarters and it is named after a German General. I don't know what the Polish call it now I have no idea.

RL: Can you describe that place, your home there?

RH: Yes you have tramlines north and south around the Tauentzien monument. Each quarter was cut into two by footpaths, coming through there. Our quarter had the Spanish consulate, practically next to us. There was a bank on the other side. Some friends and our family doctor lived across the road on the other quarter. We had the cinema in another quarter and this side they built the first department store in Breslau with an escalator so we had horse drawn vehicles, horse drawn taxis, taxis that were horse drawn, what was called a droshke outside our house.

RL: Can you describe your house?

RH: Oh it was a large flat and we lived on the top floor, on the third storey and we had a lift and we had 3 large rooms facing towards the square and then we had a huge dining room and next to the kitchen there were other rooms where our maid slept and I slept and one of my sisters probably slept. I haven't been back there since 1931 when we left.

RL: How did your mother manage, was the pension enough to manage on? Or did she have to work as well after your father died?

Tape 1: 13 minutes 39 seconds

RH: No she didn't work. She lost most of her money in the inflation in 1923 as did a lot of people did in the 1920's because there was a pension from Meyer Kaufman and my uncle who was the Landlord, he came to the rescue so I was told. I only found out literally in 1991, from my sister who is unfortunately dead now but she lived in Australia.

RL: What is your earliest memory as a child?

RH: Memory of what?

RL: Of anything, your earliest memory.

RH: I don't know, plenty of memories really. I was taken to school by my mother when I was 6. You didn't go to school until you were six. The first time on the tram to my Primary school once, and I just had to go by myself. So I had a reasonably happy childhood actually with no father being there, you know. We spent most of our holidays in a little village called Petersdorf where my uncle lived. I have very happy memories there, I had to work on the farm and play with the village children and my uncle usually went out into the fields. He had a groom and horses and different vehicles, and a landau. So he used to go out to the field and so I could drive the horses, and such like you see and I helped with the harvest. Yes, I had quite a happy childhood, as I say, as happy as I could possibly make it.

RL: You say you had 2 older sisters – what were their names and when were they born?

RH: My eldest sister was called Sabina. She studied music and my father was very musical and she eventually ended up in New York teaching voice training at a University outside New York. My other sister trained as a children's nurse, which she only pursued in Germany and in 1937 she came to London and stayed there until 1950 and then emigrated to Australia.

RL: What was her name?

RH: Her name was Theresa.

RL: What school did you go to, as a child, what school?

RH: Well I went to a, to a, my junior school was called Gaudigschule. Have you by any chance met Peter Goddard? He lives in Harrogate and he went to the same school as me. We found out although it was not the same time as me. Then I went to a grammar school called König Wilhelm Gymnasium and I was not a very good scholar. Definitely not academic material. I stayed there until I was 16 and then I was apprenticed to a cabinet maker and I was there until, well one went bankrupt and I transferred to another one and I was there until 1st October 1938 when of course it all stopped and Jews weren't allowed to and then I

Tape 1: 17 minutes 49 seconds

RL: We will come onto that in a minute. At school how did you get on with the other pupils?

RH: Quite well actually, even in the Nazi era I didn't encounter a lot of anti-Semitism. I believe there was one other Jew in the school when I first started and then I was the only one and I must say I did not encounter in school any particular problems.

RL: Who were your closest friends?

RH: I can't remember any of my school mates and I didn't have any particular close friend at school. I think from 1933 that obviously became rather impossible.

RL: Had you had close friends before that time?

RH: I had other friends. A couple of good friends of mine, one of them died unfortunately earlier this year and the other one is still alive. From Breslau you see. We are still in touch.

RL: Were they Jewish?

RH: Oh yes Jewish. After 1933 you had to end non-Jewish friendships.

RL: Did you have any non-Jewish friends before 1933?

RH: Not really, I do not think so. Not that I am aware really.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs or organisations?

RH: For a while I was a member of Habonim in Breslau and then I joined a Rowing Club. I had some very happy times. We rowed up and down the River Oder and I can show you plenty of pictures of myself at that experience, yes.

RL: Was that a Jewish Club, the rowing club?

RH: Yes a Jewish club.

RL: What did you do in Habonim? What kind of activities?

RH: We went to camps and such like you see.

RL: How old were you when you were a member of Habonim?

RH: 14, 15, 16, 17, middle teens.

RL: You say you went to camps, was that all it was? Or did you have weekly activities?

Tape 1: 20 minutes 39 seconds

RH: It was really camps mostly.... Social gatherings you know.

RL: Did your mother belong to any societies or organisations?

RH: Well in Germany? Well it was difficult you could not really. You had the Kulturbund which was an organisation which catered for cultural activities for Jews and I was connected with that. But there were not many organisations that you could join because of the Nazi doctrine.

RL: And Jewish organisations?

RH: I didn't belong; if there were any I didn't belong to any. As I say I belonged to the rowing club until 1939 or 38.

RL: I was referring to your mother?

RH: My Mother? No not that I know of. I don't think so...

RL: Were your family interested in politics?

RH: No – I should imagine they were very conservative in their outlook. Contrary to my parent's siblings. None of us were. Definitely not.

RL: What about Zionism, were they interested in Zionism?

RH: No that never appeared on the scene at all. In fact, one of my uncles who became my guardian after my mother died, he thought they would disappear. Until I left school said you would have to learn something practical in case you have to emigrate. They did not do anything from immigration. They did not think it would somehow disintegrate and go back to normal.

RL: When did your mother die?

RH: 10th October 1930. I was only 12.

RL: So what happened to you at that point?

RH: Well we kept the flat on. We had a maid. A very faithful servant and she stayed with us until 1931 when we had to give the flat up. She went to work for one of my father's former colleagues. He was a director of Meyer Kaufman and then I was with foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard May. They were very kind to me. They were paid from my estate. I stayed with them until I got married.

RL: Did they have children of their own?

RH: They had 2 children, yes.

RL: Were they a similar age? What age were they?

Tape 1: 24 minutes 12 seconds

RH: No Harry was older and Lena was only a couple of years older than me but she got married. Harry I think became a Rabbi and I think Lena married a Rabbi actually. They all went to America.

RL: What did your foster father do for a living?

RH: He was a traveller in linings for suits and garments. A very hard occupation I think.

RL: What kind of religious observance were they?

RH: Jewish.

RL: Were they Liberal also, or Orthodox? Where did they come in the spectrum?

RH: They were also Liberal but they kept Jewish rites and such like.

RL: What happened to your sisters?

RH: My sister in America unfortunately died of cancer in 1977 and the other sister died of old age in 1987 just before her 85th birthday. Since I will be 85 in a couple of weeks time I am the oldest one in the family – EVER.

RL: At the time your mother died where did your sisters go, what happened to them when your mother died?

RH: Well my elder sister was in Berlin already. She continued her studies in Berlin and my other sister was in Breslau. She worked in Breslau at a children's home.

RL: Where did she live?

RH: Well my sister at first she lived, we lived in Tauentzienplatz. Then my sister came to live with me at Meyers for a considerable time. Then she left Breslau and went to work in a Jewish Children's Home in the Black Forest and she emigrated from there.

RL: How did you find it with your foster parents, how did you find that, how was it for you in a foster home?

RH: Well the people were kind. You just grew up and from 1931 to 1933 there was just an ordinary life and when the Nazis came to power you were very conscious of the situation.

RL: When did you first become aware of the Nazis?

RH: On the 13th January 1933 – thank you.

RL: What happened on that day?

Tape 1: 27 minutes 13 seconds

RH: We knew Hitler came to power and was the Chancellor.

RL: Did something happen in the locality, was there something specific?

RH: Not that I can remember but you were very conscious of it. Since we knew what his main point was, anti-Semitic agenda, so we knew exactly what was in store. We possibly didn't expect it to be so brutal at the end as it did become, but it was there.

RL: How did life change for you after that date, how did things begin to change?

RH: Not too much actually. We used to go to theatre, to concerts. You could walk about it wasn't all that tangible from the word go. Eventually of course you found there were places barred to you and you could not go here and you couldn't go there, but on the whole, you know. One of the things I do remember, I can't remember the lad's name, one of my class-mates in the Gymnasium. He was in the Hitler Youth and his father was a Lutheran pastor and for some reason I don't know what he did but one of his sermons didn't agree but he was taken away by the Gestapo and the drastic change and the attitude of the left was quite remarkable. That is one of the things I remember from school.

RL: What kind of support was there for the Nazis in your locality and what kind of support. How strong a support was there?

RH: You could not really measure that because the Nazi's organised rallies and marches so you did not know who was and who wasn't. Eventually practically everyone had to become a party member and you had to be in order to survive, so there were plenty of people who weren't really Nazis but who became members of the Nazi party. I think the de-nazification had a large part to play after the war. No, things in Breslau were possibly not quite as bad as other places. The last time I was in Australia, I read a book about Silesia and that was always...values and very left wing on the whole. As I say, I was too young to participate and to take notice of elections and so on. If you ask me what the results were in 1932 and 2 elections took place, I am afraid I can't tell you.

RL: Did you witness any rallies or marches?

RH: You saw them marching along the street. I saw Hitler once in Breslau. I happened to see him but that is not something I am particularly proud of.

RL: Did they have rallies in Breslau?

RH: I can't remember. I don't know. I was not interested.

RL: How were you treated on the street? Did you come across any anti-Semitic incidents in Breslau?

Tape 1: 31 minutes 22 seconds

RH: You did not see much. No not really compared to for instance people who I talked to, Berliners or other places. We fared fairly well until Kristallnacht.

RL: Were you allowed to go into the parks and into cinemas?

RH: Yes. We still went to cinemas up till possibly 1937. We were allowed in parks, there was no. They didn't say, not. I can't remember if there was anything on benches to say no Jews to sit here or something, I really cannot remember.

RL: Did you see any boycotting of any Jewish shops, you know daubed or boycotted in Breslau that you remember?

RH: Not really, until Kristallnacht. That was really the catalyst of all this but that was state organised and they had to do it. The department store was near where I grew up in Tauentzienplatz and not very far from where I actually eventually lived. It was a Jewish company and as far as I know [inaudible]. Probably in 1938 it was taken over by the Nazis. From the 1st October 1938 no Jews were allowed to own any businesses but until that time I did not really encounter any ... You don't really look for it unless you see somebody standing at the door and saying don't go in to that shop because it is a Jewish shop, you are not aware of it.

RL: Would you say that life changed at all for you during that period?

RH: Oh of course it did, because eventually you were confined to your family and friends and your social activities were confined to Jewish ones, to purely religious, co-religionists. That became a gradual thing, you see, in a way it is the way we cope with traffic as it grew over the years, you grow into it so realise what is happening and you gradually adjust yourself to it.

RL: So what happened on Kristallnacht, what was your experience of it?

RH: Well, we lived right in the middle of the shops and a lot of glass broken and it was on November 9th on the Wednesday and on the 10th in the morning, the Gestapo came for my foster father and I happened to be at home and I went after him to see where he was taken to and I went to police headquarters. It was opposite our synagogue and unfortunately I saw the synagogue burn. If you want to, I can show you pictures of the synagogue. I didn't get it out but in between I can find you it. And then they took me the day after.

RL: Can you describe what happened?

RH: Well after the firm was taken over where I worked as a cabinet maker, I worked as a driver in my ex-bosses car and they stopped me in the street and asked "are you Jewish?" "Yes". "Out". I said "well it is not my car" and they said

“never mind it not your car, out”. So that was it. So they took me to police headquarters and eventually we were taken to Buchenwald.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 25 seconds

RL: What happened to you?

RH: In Buchenwald? Not a lot. I was one of the lucky ones. When we came into the camp and you see the inscription over Auschwitz ‘Arbeit macht Frei’. Well that inscription was over every concentration camp and so I said I was lucky. We were taken out in cattle trucks and delivered somewhere to a tunnel under the railway you know and they did not treat us very gently there and I was there but I did not suffer anything and then we went into the camp and we had to sit down and got our heads shaved by some of the inmates and the fellow who shaved me said ‘well three tips for you, just keep your eyes open, keep your mouth shut and keep you legs moving.’ And yes you saw other atrocities being committed but fortunately I escaped them.

RL: What did you see?

RH: Well people being whipped and some committed suicide and we saw an execution and we were forced to witness. So – not very pleasant.

RL: How many people were there with you?

RH: In Buchenwald, at the time there were about 20000. There were 10,000 in our compound which were people taken after Kristallnacht and 10,000 in the other compound. They were working. We never got uniforms. The others were in prison uniform. Possibly they might have transferred some of us over but not that I was aware of. And they were compiled of all sorts of different people. Jews. Social Democrats, Communists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Homosexuals, Gypsies, criminals, all with different triangles sewn onto their uniforms, you knew exactly who they were. There were a lot of Germans in there besides Jews.

RL: Can you describe to me a day in the camp, what happened on a typical day?

RH: Well, we did not do any work, you see so our day was really just spent idling about and talking to each other, you see.

RL: Did you have roll calls?

RH: Not that I remember. We were allowed post and we could write a letter. It was cold in December and I was allowed to write, could I get some warm underwear and it was sent to me and I got it. I shared it with some of my inmates. It was not regular and it was possibly a one off. At least our relatives knew where we were and our camp number.

RL: How were you treated on a daily basis?

RH: We were not treated at all, we were just left to our own devices in that compound because we did not do any work and in that respect we were very fortunate although some people took it very badly and I must leave it at that.

RL: What about food, what were you given to eat?

Tape 1: 40 minutes 47 seconds

RH: It wasn't cordon bleu!

RL: Can you describe what you got?

RH: You just ate what you got and you didn't have to bother whether it was kosher or not either!

RL: What were you given?

RH: Extraordinary – I cannot really remember. It was just local food, whatever there was. Potatoes and vegetables and I cannot remember. It was just a matter of eating what you got and that was it.

RL: How was the food given out?

RH: Plates and dished out. They brought the food in and then it was dished out you see.

RL: Was that inside a building or was it outside?

RH: Inside a big hut, four bunk beds one on top of the other and the food was brought in and dished out, you see.

RL: How big were the huts that you slept in?

RH: Oh I can't remember but fairly large. I don't know how many people were in that particular hut. I don't really know.

RL: Was there a certain time that you had to be in bed? Was there a routine to the day?

RH: Quite possibly – I don't remember. When you were tired you went up to sleep and you talked to each other.

RL: You say you don't remember any roll calls where you had to stand and be counted?

RH: Not that I can remember. They knew full well that we could not get away so...

RL: How was the camp divided up –physically, what did it look like?

RH: One large area we were in there was a fence and where the other inmates worked, we were not allowed to work, you see. So that is as much as I really saw of the

camp since we didn't really go into the camp. Otherwise we just stayed within the compound. We could walk out of the hut. We had to walk out because the latrines were there outside so we were a large compound. That's as much as I knew of the camp. I did not know the other side at all.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 54 seconds

RL: So were none of you chosen for work?

RH: We weren't chosen for work, no.

RL: You didn't wear any of these badges?

RH: No we did not have any prison clothes you see. So actually at that time, we didn't have to wear anything even on the outside we didn't have to wear anything on our clothes. The yellow star was only introduced after the war started. I don't know, I believe in Austria they were treated worse than in Germany so that the Austrians considered themselves victims of the Nazis is rather a fallacy.

RL: You say you actually witnessed an execution.

RH: Yes.

RL: Do you know why this person was executed?

RH: Yes there were 2 of them. In June 1938 some of them were in a working party and 2 of them escaped and they killed the guard and when one was, I forget the name, I am terrible with names, one was captured straight away and he was hanged there and then and the other one managed to get to Czechoslovakia and after 1938 after the Nazis took over and this puppet regime was installed there, and a prime minister called Hacha and he was extradited to Germany and he was executed and we all had to witness the execution on the 21st December 1938. We knew what was happening. We knew on the Saturday he came back to the camp and I remember that very well and on the Monday and Tuesday they erected the gallows and he was hanged on the Wednesday and before he was hanged the proclamation read out that he was found guilty on the 21st December and the Fuhrer made no use of his right of reprieve. The gallows were up 2 days before the wording was passed and of course as soon as that, up he goes and that was the end of it. And strangely enough exactly a year after I joined the British Army to the day.

RL: You say that some people committed suicide whilst they were there. Is that people in your compound who committed suicide?

RH: Yes. One actually came from Breslau.

RL: Is there anything else you remember about your stay in Buchenwald?

RH: Well what I did remember was that the winter and Buchenwald means beech wood so we were inside a large forest. There was a snow covered landscape and what I did was, I don't know what other prisoners did, but what I did was that I looked at

nature, and forgot about the fence,..... the snow covered trees and such like were a sight to behold, you see. We just tried to sort of, there's a bit of hope and it can't be all that bad.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 0 second

RL: Were there guard towers around the fence?

RH: Yes guard towers all the way round, yes. They didn't let you out of their sight.

RL: How long were you in the camp?

RH: 7 weeks.

RL: How did you get out?

RH: Through my wife actually. We were courting, we were very young but we courting and we said we would get married eventually. My father-in-law's sister was married to a Rabbi in Strasbourg and they were in touch with him, and he wrote a letter. Actually I have never seen the letter or even a copy of the letter. I think the Gestapo must have kept it, saying that they would take me into France if I could get out of Buchenwald. In those days they had not introduced the final solution. So if you had a chance of emigrating they would let you out. So under that pretext, which was a lie, under that pretext they let me out you see. Then I had to go to the Gestapo every so often to show that I was pursuing my emigration and then we got married and my sister was in London at the time. She later went to Australia but she was in London at the time and she managed to persuade a couple of friends, an English couple to apply for a domestic servant's couple of permits for us and that permit came through on the day I arrived in England. In the meantime the German Jewish Refugee Committee in connection with the government after Kristallnacht they had to do something, so they instituted a scheme whereby through Kitchener Camp. Have you heard of Kitchener Camp? It was for ex-concentration camp inmates only and they allowed us to come on a 9 month permit if we further emigrated. So I had to pursue both. I could not rely on one or the other because you had to prove what you were doing, so I applied for Kitchener Camp and as it happened Kitchener Camp came up first. So I had to accept it, because if the Gestapo found out that I did not accept it I would have been sent back to Buchenwald. So I had to accept it. So I had to leave my wife after 3 months in Breslau, you see or 4 months, whilst I went to Kitchener Camp.

RL: About your wife, she suddenly appeared in the picture. We do not know anything about her, how had you met her and where was she from?

RH: I met her at a dance actually She came from Breslau. Anyway to finish that point, as luck would have it, on the day I arrived here on the 1st August 1939, our joint permits came through, so she was able to join me three weeks after, just before the war started. She cut it rather fine.

RL: What was her name?

RH: Hollander – Dutchman.

RL: And what was her first name?

RH: Inge Margot.

Tape 1: 52 minute 20 seconds

RL: Please tell me a little bit about her background.

RH: Well her father, he was a traveller of some sort but he was rather an ill man. He was fairly old and got married rather late in life. She lost her mother, I don't know much about her and they lived in a little flat and they still had to let rooms to make enough to eat and she went to a Jewish school to hone her domestic capabilities, cooking and do other things and then she worked for a short while as a dental assistant. I met her at a dance at the school there and it developed from there.

RL: How old were you when you married?

RH: I was 18, she was 16, no she was still 15 and I was 17.

RL: You were born in 1918?

RH: She was born in 1921.

RL: What date did you marry?

RH: On the 26th February 1939. She was still 17 and I was 20 but within 3 months, of being married on the 5th June, she was 18. On the 25th June I was 21. The strange thing was that we were still minors, both of us, you see and although I was married at 21, I was married at 20, I was never told anything about my financial situation ever because I was a minor. To this day I do not know how much money my mother left me or what happened. I have not got a clue – not that I particularly want to. I knew there was not a lot of money left possibly anyway.

RL: Where did you marry?

RH: In Breslau.

RL: Which synagogue?

RH: In the orthodox synagogue because as I said our synagogue was burnt down. It wasn't completely burnt but they started to demolish it, no they had not actually. It was still intact apart from the beautiful copper dome with a Magen Dovid on top and that collapsed in the fire and they just about started to demolish it about April time. They had to demolish it brick by brick, it was so strongly built and all of a sudden it stopped, the demolition stopped and the rumour got round, how true it is, I don't know, that the workmen wouldn't go up there because somebody died during the demolition and they were superstitious. Whether that is true or not. I have no idea.

RL: Was it demolished eventually?

RH: I should imagine so; they could not leave it as it was.

EL: The orthodox Shul had not been set alight?

Tape 1: 56 minutes 04 seconds

RH: No because it was right in the old part of Breslau and if they had set it alight it would have destroyed the whole part. It was so close you see. The only time I went there was when I went to get married. I went to the other synagogue.

RL: What happened to your foster father in Buchenwald, did you come across him, did you see him there?

RH: No. I don't think he was there very long, a few days. I know they managed to get to America eventually.

RL: Did you go back to their home after you came out of Buchenwald?

RH: Oh yes, I went back until I got married but it was only a matter of 7 weeks. I came out on the 2nd January 1939 and we got married on the 26th February and stayed in a room with my in-laws until we emigrated.

RL: What did you do from that point until emigrating? What were you doing?

RH: I helped with the Kulturbund doing stage work and such like. Not performing but helping with production.

RL: What were they producing?

RH: We managed to put on little show and concerts and I put my time there, filled in time.

RL: Were you paid for that?

RH: I don't think so. I cannot remember. It might have given me a bit of pocket money.

RL: Was it putting on plays and shows?

RH: Since people could not perform on the ordinary stage any more we got quite a few established artists. Probably our standard compared very favourably with amongst the goyim.

RL: Did you have a particular show or production?

RH: Yes I've still got programmes from the Kulturbund. Since I emigrated, I got a lot of stuff which was put in storage, from my parents, so that was very fortunate and

that came to this country and it was in storage in London and I never got it until 1948 in our first house here. We rented a little house here.

RL: So when you emigrated, how much were you able to bring. How many suitcases or what were you allowed to take with you, when you did emigrate?

RH: What I could carry in my suitcase and 10 marks.

Tape 1: 59 minutes 35 seconds

RL: Just one suitcase?

RH: You would not get much in Kitchener Camp.

RL: But how did you ship everything else over, you say you were able to bring quite a lot with you. How was that?

RH: Well that was kept in a couple of boxes and shipped. The custom people came to my in-laws house and they were there and was sealed there by the customs, so it went straight through.

RL: Were you not allowed to take certain things.

RH: They made sure; you were only allowed only 2 sets of silver cutlery, which was German silver and not sterling silver, so it is not recognised as silver here. I don't know if you realise it. 5 items not exceeding 20 grams in silver, one gold ring and that was your lot.

Now this tape is just about to finish.

TAPE 2

Cameraman: A bit before my time.

RH: A little bit before your time, a bit before my time actually but ... I love that type of music.

RL: Right ... you know, we will not get them out now, but you have mentioned a few photographs and documents as we have been talking which I would quite like to see ... a quick look at this and we will start again.

So, you were just telling me about packing the boxes and somebody supervising, I mean what were they like, how did they treat you as they were watching?

RH: Politely. Actually we managed to put in some items which we should not have put in, anyway, yes ... no hassle there, they just did their job and, yes, there was no harassment at all.

RL: So what silver items were you able to bring, you mentioned the cutlery, what else were you able ...?

RH: Well, we had some pots and pans, I still have some pots that I brought from Breslau, believe it or not ... bed linen, table linen, you know, and of course clothes and things you would need to set up a household you see, practical goods.

RL: And that was sealed

RH: Sealed, yes, yes ...

Tape 2: 1 minute 49 seconds

RL: On the day and then sent separately?

RH: It went separately and my sister arranged a place in London where it could be stored, you see

RL: Where did it go to?

RH: In London, I am afraid I couldn't tell you the address ... I have no idea.

RL: And did you have to pay for that storage?

RH: Yes I had to pay for storage, yes, yes.

RL: Then do you remember the day that you departed. Could you just describe your day of departure?

RH: Well, we left Breslau on the 27th of July and went to stay with my sister, and my sister lived in Berlin and her then husband, and we stayed with them for four days until, and that was on the Thursday, we went to Berlin and stayed with them until the Monday. Now, my wife had to go back to Breslau and on the 31st I joined the transport that took us out of ... and then took us to the Kitchener Camp.

RL: Can you describe the journey?

RH: Not really. I know we went to, we had to stop at Cologne, it was at night, we didn't see much of Cologne, we never got off the station you see. And then we went to, we went over the border at Arnhem in a van, and then hurray, you know and then we went over to Dover and from Dover to Sandwich.

RL: How many people were travelling with you?

RH: I can't really remember. It wasn't a full train, there were one or two compartments that were reserved for us you see, but we ... because we came at different times, at different stations we were picked up, so I can't really remember how many people there were.

RL: Were all of the people going with you, going to Kitchener Camp?

RH: Pardon?

RL: On this journey ...

RH: Yes.

RL: Were you all going to Kitchener Camp?

RH: Yes, on that particular transport we were all going to Kitchener Camp. I don't know, but the people who came off the boat I don't know, but we in a group and we

Tape 2: 4 minute 20 seconds

boarded the train together and we went to Sandwich and of course then we were taken to Kitchener Camp, which is outside Sandwich.

RL: How many were in your group?

RH: I cannot remember, I really can't remember, whether there was just one hut, or two huts, I don't know, thirty or forty, something like this, you know.

RL: Did you know anybody else?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Did you know anybody else?

RH: No, not until I got there, no ... we made friends, you know.

RL: How were you received?

RH: How were we received? Well, they didn't put the red carpet out (laughs), they didn't realise Big Dick was coming you see! Well, nice, you know, we were allocated our quarters and told what to do and given little tickets for the dining room, and stuff like that, different sessions, yes somewhere I have, yes we had little tickets for our dining session, we had session one and session two you see, and I was in hut 31, 30, or 30a, and then you had 30b on the other side, and we were allowed out of the camp, we could go out, you see Richborough, Kitchener Camp was actually in Richborough, which is outside Sandwich. What do you know about Kitchener Camp?

RL: Whatever you are going to tell me.

RH: Oh, you just know that it existed. The Kitchener Camp is an old army camp from the First World War, or it was, it doesn't exist any more, it is on the road between Sandwich and Ramsgate. You have heard of Sandwich?

RL: Yes.

RH: You go over a toll bridge, there was a toll bridge there, and there was Kitchener Camp and Haigh Camp, Haigh camp was empty and Kitchener Camp was developed for or renovated or restored or whatever was necessary for our purpose, and

Richborough itself was an old harbour, which silted up over the years and played a considerable part in the invasion in Roman times and even later, it was used until fairly recently. In fact there were, you could see some old wooden harbour workings, and I don't know what they have done to it now. There was an interesting documentary on Richborough, on television not so long ago, and it was on the road to Ramsgate. Have you heard of Ramsgate?

RL: Yes.

Tape 2: 7 minute 35 seconds

RH: On the Kent Road, and there we are ... and ... a nice little place, so, not much else to tell you really.

RL: What were you doing there?

RH: Not a lot. We went out, I, we were taken to help out possibly to a farm and I did some hop picking, I did some hop picking, we got paid for that. We only got, apart from that, we got 6d to buy our food, that was our pocket money 6d week for our food and we had reasonable lives there.

RL: What was the purpose of the camp?

RH: It was just as a, in a way a transit station, for people who had come out of concentration camps who had a chance of further emigrating. I don't know what would have happened to us had not the war broke out. I was in the lucky position because I had, we had a joint permit, I could have stayed because we had a joint domestic service couple permit, so I would have been able to stay but a lot of other people that came on a nine month permit, they would have to re-emigrate, you see. So the war broke out and they came to classify us, and, A, B and C aliens, so anybody A alien status were straight into the camp. B you were, if you were a bit iffy, but you were tolerated and C you were a friendly alien. Then we got our alien registration book you see, so if we went anywhere or wanted to stay overnight you had to go to a police station to ask for, but that did not apply to us, you see. And ... ugh, and, then a bit later they came and gave us a transfer into the army.

RL: First of all what were you classified as?

RH: I was classified as a friendly alien. I could not be anything else but surely!

RL: You were C?

RH: Yes, oh yes, definitely C – do I look like an enemy alien? (laughs)

RL: On a day to day basis, can you describe the conditions of the camp?

RH: Alright, well you could move about, we socialised, there were some English lessons or some other activities taking place, you know. We entertain ourselves somehow or another. If you get a group of people together, you know, whatever, they find some social activities to make life a bit more tolerable.

RL: What were you doing?

RH: Oh, I don't know what we did, actually my wife soon came over and she stayed in Sandwich and then there were other wives, so they made room for, in the camp for wives. My wife stayed in the camp for a while, so although I had to sleep, you know we were, we had to find our marital pleasures elsewhere and some other things and eventually she went to London when I joined the army and was sent abroad.

Tape 2: 11 minute 8 seconds

RL: How did you manage with English – could you speak English?

RH: I learned English at school so my English was proper school English, but I picked it up, you know, although my vocabulary is possibly still a little bit flawed and my accent is still very flawed but when I joined the army I still picked it up, you see.

RL: What did you think of England when you arrived here – what kind of, what were your first impressions of the place?

RH: My first impressions. I can remember that, we came off the boat we were put on the train. Southern railway train in those days. It was green painted. I think it was green and black chimneys and what I noticed was that contrary to our trains in Germany which always started and stopped and started with a jerk, you either moved forward or you moved backwards, the train moved off completely smoothly, you did not even notice you were going. So that was my first impression of England. Actually, if you go on a train now it goes very smoothly doesn't it, there is no jerking, unless it stops suddenly but when you start off it goes very smoothly. So ...

RL: Were there any other differences that you noticed, you know in your first few months here, to your way of life or the way things were ...?

RH: Well, beer was different here you see. Over there beer is much lighter, you have stout here, mild and stout in those days, there was no lager over here in those days, in 1939, mild beer and stout, stout was a much stronger brew than mild you see. Apart from this, err, more or less we lived the same, we managed to go about and saw a bit of the countryside. And it was a beautiful summer, a lovely summer in 39. And then as I say I joined the army and ...

RL: Can I just ask you about, in the summer of 39 were you free to go anywhere you wanted? Could you leave the camp? Could you ...?

RH: You could leave the camp, oh yes, you could leave the camp. You could walk about. You could go into Sandwich. Any means, if you had any financial means you could go to a café and get a cup of tea or somewhere. Oh yes, we had no restrictions.

RL: No restrictions?

RH: Unless you wanted to go somewhere to stay elsewhere and then you had to take your Registration Book with you and you had to report. It did not apply because, it really never applied to me you see, because ...

RL: How long were you in the camp for?

RH: Well from the 1st August 1939 until, I can't tell you the date because I joined the 69 Company. We were given the chance to join the army in a non combatant capacity. We remained aliens but were treated as British soldiers to all other intents and purposes and our army numbers unfortunately indicated that we were aliens pioneers, 13800490 was the first number. And, so in January 1940 we were sent to

Tape 2: 15 minute 16 seconds

France, and I can't tell you the date. What amazed me, Kent was knee deep in snow and when we came to Southampton and there wasn't a bit of snow, completely green fields. Because we embarked at Southampton and went past the Isle of Wight in the middle of the night and all I remember of, the Isle of Wight was, the hulk of land, you know that mass of land there we passed by, then we went to Cherbourg and disembarked there and we were taken to Reines, the capital of Brittany. Now you know what happened at Reines?

RL: Had you had any training before this?

RH: No weapon training, we were completely non-combatant and like most pioneer companies, we were attached to either Ordnance Corps or Royal Engineers. We were attached to the Royal Engineers, they were our company, the Royal Engineers and we did the donkey work, shift the stock here and there and back again. We went to Reines. You have heard of Reines? Do you know what happened in Reines? What happened in Reines?

RL: You tell me.

RH: Well you tell me.

RL: You're the one that is being interviewed. They want to hear you not me.

RH: In the 1890's. What happened in the 1890s? Do you know what happened in the 1890s? Pardon. Any idea?

RL: Go on ...

RH: Dreyfus.

RL: Yes.

RH: Did you know that?

RL: Of course.

RH: A lot of people don't, a lot of Jewish people don't, so, hence me asking, you see.

RL: Right.

RH: Yes, although we did not see anything of that at all. Anyway, we stayed there until the 14th June and then

RL: What were you doing?

Tape 2: 17 minute 22 seconds

RH: Just labour work, you know. Stuff that came and had to be shifted and unloaded. And then we were taken to ... I mean, Dunkirk had finished you see, we came out of the bunkers and we were taken to St Malo and we stayed the night at St Malo Racecourse and we were commandeered in Dutch..... and we were sent home on a wing and a prayer and came back to Weymouth. By which time the pioneer headquarters had moved from Richborough to Ilfracombe.

RL: Whilst you were in France, did you witness the fighting?

RH: No we didn't do any fighting.

RL: Did you witness any?

RH: No, we didn't witness any at all. We just got out before hand.

RL: And on the journey back to England. Were you attacked in any way?

RH: As I said we came on a wing and a prayer, we never saw anything at all. Not a plane not a ship, nothing. Sailed through the night and arrived in Weymouth the next morning. The Archangel must have held a hand over us or something.

RL: How big was your group?

RH: Oh, there were plenty of other soldiers there. Not only our company. There were other people there. There were other British soldiers there in the vicinity. You know some others, I can't tell you ...

RL: How were the French? How did you get on with the French? Did you have much contact?

RH: Not a lot really.

RL: Where were you staying? Where were you staying at that time?

RH: We were staying in the billets or barracks, I can't remember, but we went around. I did not have particular contact with the French. The only thing that I used to do was to go and have a shave, I used to love being shaved. Yes, we did our work

and then came back again. We went to Ilfracombe and got re-equipped there and then we went, I will tell you where we went on to, to Oakhampton, Devon Moor, on Dartmoor and eventually we were given weapon training. We weren't given any rifles, we were given weapon training. From Oakhampton, we went to a little place called Ilminster in Somerset, not very far from Taunton, we were there three months and then we came

RL: What were you doing there?

RH: Pardon?

Tape 2: 20 minute 30 seconds

RL: What were you doing there?

RH: I can't remember what we did there really, or who we were attached to, as I say some British company, Ordnance or Engineering or something, I can't remember,

I honestly confess I can't remember. And from there we went to Bexley in London during the Blitz and stayed there for about four months and then we went up to Darlington.

RL: In Bexley, again what were you doing? Do you remember what you were doing in Bexley?

RH: We helped to clear the Blitz up.

RL: Do you remember the raids? How did you ... what did you have to do during the raids?

RH: Like everything else, we never went into any underground shelter, we stayed in our village. I remember, I remember, one morning I woke up and there had been a bomb there and I never heard it, I slept right through it, so we, then again we didn't encounter too much, we were lucky. Unfortunately four of my company colleagues, they went on a bus into London, you know a social thing, they organised buses into ... and they were caught in aand four of my mates got killed in an air raid.

RL: Were these all refugee boys?

RH: They were all refugees.

RL: All refugees.

RH: They were all refugees.

RL: Yes.

RH: That was the whole idea you see. They found a way of dealing, they didn't know what to do with us. We came on a 9 months permit, so what could they do with us so you see, so they recruited us in to the army you see, and the majority of us

stayed after the war although we came on a 9 month permit the majority stayed after the war, and some went, you know ...

RL: What part of London were you helping to clear during the blitz?

RH: Bexley, Bexley Heath, Dartford, the east. Then we came up to Darlington. Then again we were attached to a railway company in Darlington, Darlington was a railway town you see. So, we stayed there for ... until March 1944.

RL: And again what were you doing?

Tape 2: 23 minute 14 seconds

RH: March 1944 we went first to Sledmere, which is in Yorkshire, towards, not so far from Duffield?

RL: What were you doing in Darlington?

RH: Railway work – whatever the engineers wanted us to do.

RL: Did you manage to see your wife?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Did you manage to see your wife during all this time?

RH: Oh yes, yes. My wife, after we left Sandwich Hill, Richborough in 1940, she went to London and she worked in London somehow, and then she came to see me in Iminster and when we went up to Darlington by which time my wife was pregnant. Then we realised we were staying in Darlington for a while, a lot of our people that got married here or had brought a wife over, some of them, most of them got married here. Mostly other refugee women and such like, they brought their wives out of London and up to Darlington, so a lot of us lived in Darlington. My son was born in Darlington. We managed to get a little flat there and, so I saw my wife quite often. Although I obviously had to sleep in the billet. I could sleep out now and again but obviously I had to sleep in the billet. Yes I saw my wife quite often until 1944.

RL: So she had a flat in Darlington? And you were billeted in Darlington?

RH: Pardon?

RL: You were billeted there?

RH: I was billeted in Darlington, yes, yes.

RL: And then, from there?

RH: From there we went to Sledmere, and from Sledmere we went to a little place called Bolton-on-Deerne, which is near, it is not so far from Doncaster, in the South

Yorkshire mining district and actually we were in the camp and that became the first squatters camp after the war. Have you heard of squatters?

RL: Yes.

RH: Well, the first army camp was taken over by the squatters after the war. Whilst we were there we, one section came up to Harrogate, to Otley, we helped to build a Prisoner of War Camp, build a Prisoner of War Camp in Otley, and whilst we were there some of us came to Harrogate to do some work at what is now Pennypot Camp. And we were billeted in Harrogate and you won't believe it, we were billeted in two houses in the centre of Harrogate that had been requisitioned by the army and by the time I got in the milk trade in 1949.

Tape 2: 26 minute 30 seconds

they had been de-requisitioned and I delivered milk to those two houses where we had been billeted in 1944.

RL: What was the address?

RH: Pardon?

RL: What was the address?

RH: Well one was, I was billeted to 33 Victoria Avenue and our dining room and some others were in 15 Queens Parade. I remember that very well. We lived in both houses. And, then we went down to Bexhill, prior to going back to France in 1944. Then again, I cannot remember the exact date when we went back to France, but we went, we disembarked on Mulberry harbour up, I walked up, on that artificial harbour there, and we went up to Caen and we helped to clear Caen a little bit and we stayed there for some months and then the army came and, by which time we had become combatant. In 1943 we were completely combatant, and we were allowed to change our names and allowed join other units apart from the pioneer corps.

RL: Did you change your name?

RH: I changed my name, yes. I Anglified my name, I didn't change it actually. My name was spelled H-E-Y-M-A-N-N. Now it is still, it was Heymann, it is still Hyman you see. So I haven't changed it, I just Anglified it a bit.

RL: You changed the spelling?

RH: I changed the spelling, yes. And actually, number ten, when we were allowed to join other units the number ten commando which were, you won't know much about the war, but number ten commando compiled mostly of aliens, of refugees like myself, I didn't....., we had to go around making music you see.

RL: You used to what?

RH: We made music. We formed a company band early on actually, we broadcast from France 1940 and then on one of those service things and then we played to dances and concerts and all through the war.

RL: What did you play?

RH: I played the accordion.

RL: Where had you learned that?

RH: I taught myself. I had had piano lessons originally you see.

RL: Did you call yourselves a name?

Tape 2: 29 minute 14 seconds

RH: No we were just 69 Company Band. I think you have got a picture there.

RL: How often would you play?

RH: Oh, we played, in Darlington we played once a week for a dance, every Friday night we played for the dance. And in the billet where we slept, we slept on palliasses and we had to shift them into a cupboard by the side of the hall so that when people left we swept it out and put out palliasses and it became a billet again, in the corporation hall in Darlington. It doesn't exist anymore. I hope it got a good sleep there (laughter). And, yes, it might have been responsible for one or two romances when we were there.

RL: How many were in the band?

RH: About eight or nine of us, yes, and we played for concerts and all those.... weeks and what have you. We played wherever we went, we played in Bexley, and we played in Ilminster and then in Darlington and we played in Brussels, we played in Brussels, yes.

RL: You got us back to France.

RH: Yes.

RL: Did you witness any fighting there?

RH: No, we were just behind the enemy lines; we were actually never in combat. They were fighting in what was called the Falaise Gap, then we went to Caen. And then the allies advanced and we stayed in Caen until October/November time, by which time we had set up camp and seen, we looked for German speaking or other multi lingual personnel, I had to go to Germany because they needed somebody to be there and interpret. If we passed our tests then we were eventually called up to become members of Interpreters Pool. So we had to pass the tests written and oral in the language we were claiming to be proficient in you see. My German was a lot better than it is now you see and so I passed and so nothing happened until after

VE day. From Caen we went to Bruges and we spend Christmas in Bruges and in January 1945 we went to Brussels, and I forget what we did in Brussels really, we must have been doing some work. Brussels, very, very quickly returned to more or less normality. I believe Brussels, I don't exactly know the date, but I believe that Brussels was only liberated about September/October time but life was very much ordinary life. And the Jewish community had developed there so how they survived or – I met a friend there who, through the Jewish Club there, there was a Jewish Club there where we played and their family, they survived in the South of France somehow, but they came back to Brussels, they belonged really to Antwerp. Anyway, and then VE day arrived and then they said the company became interpreters, most of passed you see and we became interpreters. The ones who didn't pass the test, there were quite a few of us who didn't pass, they were then attached to other ordinary English pioneer companies to act as an interpreter for a Sergeant Major or someone like this, for his personal needs whatever there was, you know. Anyway, we became

Tape 2: 33 minute 32 seconds

members of the Interpreters Corps and went through a little course, we were given one stripe or two stripes whatever it was. I was an honorary private for five and a half years and I became a lance corporal and "Can you ride a motor bike?" I said "yes" so they said well get on there and ride up the road. So they gave me a 350 Triumph you see, and they gave me an army licence, you see, which I could have driven a tank, but anyway, and then we were sent, and then we were detached. This unit the interpreter consisted of all types of different military regiments, it was an ad hoc unit, but they were attached to other units, we retained our original regiments, I was in the Pioneer all the way through you see, but I belonged to the Interpreters Corps. And they sent me too ... funnily enough I was given the chance, and I don't know why, I was given a chance, to go up to Pleurn, which is Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig Holstein is a beautiful part of the world and you have the chance of going to H Corps HQ or you can go to the Provo Marshall, which is the Military Police, so I said I would go to the Provo Marshall. I had no intention of all this B U L L and the Regimental Sergeant Major, so I went to the Provo Marshall, and I went there and I had a lovely fellow, he was called Major Evans, he was my boss and I was there for about three months, maybe two months, and I did very little interpreting. And eventually he said you had better do something now, we need you just outside Hamburg to the 51st Highland Division, you know, Military Police Company. So I went and before I went I said "Well, Major Evans, excuse me sir," I couldn't call him Major Evans, I called him sir "Would you do me a favour." I was a lance corporal. He said "What do you want?" So I said "Could you make sure I get promoted I want a bit more money you see." So he said "no problem." So, by the time I got out there, I became a full corporal you see and, and after three months, you had to be, it must have been the 1st September because I was there and around about Christmas time I was called into the Captain's office, the Agitant of the Company and he said Corporal Hyman, he said "Good Morning Sergeant Hyman" and I nearly dropped you see, so I had been promoted again. So they, obviously, what they did do they assessed you and then sent a report back and they said well, so I got another stripe three months afterwards so I was a corporal and then I became a sergeant. I reached the dazzling rank of Sergeant by 1st December 1945. Unfortunately I still got demobbed as a corporal because you had to be six months war substantiate before you get your demob, I was paid as a sergeant,

but when it came to demob pay I was sort of a fortnight before my demob leave ran out, so I got my demob pay as a Corporal but I didn't mind particularly much.

RL: What was the work that you were doing?

RH: Oh well we interrogated people, you see, I had the pleasure of interrogating some German people, an SS major, well he wasn't there but was in prison camp, soyou see. And they very much objected, but I said look "When I was in Buchenwald you were the..., you know. Now I am there in the town so you do as you are bloody well told", so they didn't like it, whatever it was. I could have had a little bit of revenge you see.

And then I had an unpleasant task for a long time of collecting women that had given our soldiers VD, so, a very necessary job. And, so you got your, the MO who

Tape 2: 39 minute 28 seconds

sent a form to the Military Police Company that trooper so and so or whatever, he is ill and can you find out the lady concerned where he got it from and get her off the street you see, so we had to put our deer stalker hat on and our pipe in our mouth and look for the girl you see. We found quite a few.

RL: How many did you find?

RH: Oh, about a dozen or so you see. So, we took her to hospital, and they, I should imagine, you know funnily enough I never asked but I would imagine that the British army of the British soldier must have provided the penicillin to treat them. We can't, "yes you are, get in that jeep you see" Yes, I had quite a few interesting experiences there as well.

RL: Can you describe some?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Can you describe some?

RH: Well, we had one gentleman who slept with two women in a very short time you see, and as luck, or as misfortune she had it, he got the illness from one lady and passed it on to the other one you see. And, they were both in the same clinic and they had a fight once "You are responsible that I got it." "Well you should not have slept with him in the first place for God's sake." What was quite funny was that actually we picked up, I was the first with a couple of men, she is in the picture there with a couple of men and we picked her and her father was there. Her husband was in the war and her father was disgusted, because we said, because apparently she had an affair with a British sergeant you see, the first bloke you see, and then she went off the rails with another fellow you see and the poor fellow got little kraut he was absolutely beside himself, that was quite funny, you see, anyway, must have took her away, yes.

RL: Can you tell me about your interrogation experiences?

RH: Well, not really, I mean, we knew at that particular time we just went through the house to find that they didn't have any weapons there you see, we didn't find anything actually, but ...

I had one funny experience. I went to Hamburg on public transport for some reason, and there were some youngsters there shouting their heads off and making anti-British remarks you see, so, against the soldiers you see, so I had to shout to them in German "You keep your bloody mouths shut because I can understand what you are saying" and they didn't half shut up you see, so we had our funny moments.

RL: Is there any one else that you interrogated that was of interest?

RH: Well, there was, I can't remember the case but I translated once during court proceedings but I can't remember the case, I just did my job and full stop.

Tape 2: 43 minutes 12 seconds

Another unpleasant experience I had was I, on the way home, I had a motor accident in Hamburg, I skidded, I had to put my brakes on very sharp because a woman ran right across the road you see and I fell and I knocked my head. It wasn't very pleasant. Anyway the woman got a shock when the British soldier in fluent German told her what he thought of her you see. She got a bigger shock when he told her than when he ran over her you see.

One day, yes actually we had some funny experiences on this job. We once came to a fellow, to a woman's house who was supposed to have syphilis and we opened the door and the son came out and he said "Oh, I know what you guys have come for." We said "What?" He said "I know my mother had got syphilis and has gone into hospital." [laughter]. She had beaten us to it.

There is a more current one; it was just before I retired, just before I came out. I had been looking for girl who had given syphilis; she had given syphilis to one of our blokes. Oh, it took me three months to find her. She lived in a little hamlet of three or four houses in no man's land. You had little areas where the, between the Russian zone and our zone. The Russian zone was quite close to Hamburg actually, and anyway I located her. And so the poor girl, she was about 18 or 19 by the looks of her and she was in a terrible state when she came out, and she was ill, she was really bad. So I said "You know what you have got don't you?" And she said "Well, no". And I said, "Well that is what you have got." You were with one of our blokes and she said "yes". "When was that?" "Last week." I said "Last week?" I said "I am looking for someone from three months ago." And she said "Oh yes." "So where is the fellow you had last week?" "Oh, he has gone home to his wife." "Do you know his name?" So she mentioned it, that she happened to know the name of someone, a Cameroon Highlander and he came from Blandford, I remember that one, so I had the pleasant task of going to the company concerned and asked for the Agitant and said "Well you have got trooper so and so, he has just given a lovely dose of syphilis to his wife. You had better do something about it." "No it's your problem sergeant.....", "no it's your trooper captain", so the poor fellow had the duty of telling the, of informing the people, his wife, you have got a lovely dose of syphilis from your husband. So it wasn't all, you know ...

RL: Did you come across any Jews while you were in Germany? Any Jews returning back from anywhere or who had been in hiding and were resurfacing?

RH: No, we don't really know much about the people that came to Jewish clubs, they must have somehow survived without having been in the camps. But they couldn't have done, because the camps were only opened in, well some were opened on the way, but Belsen, some may have been ... no none of the people that came to the

Tape 2: 47 minutes 30 seconds

clubs there, they were usually young people, we didn't meet many of the parents at all, they were all young people that had somehow survived. But I don't think that any, I don't remember anybody that survived the camps you see. Apart from a lot of them either underground or in the South of France. My own cousin, or my wife's cousin, he survived in the South of France.

RL: How long were you in Germany for?

RH: From June or end of May 1945 to February 1946.

They offered me a job in control commission but I said no. I had done six years and a half years or so, or six years and three months, and I wanted to get back home you see

RL: How did you feel being back in Germany?

RH: Oh, strange in a way, but on the other hand as I say, you couldn't resist having a bit of Schadenfreude, but I would never go back to live there. The one experience I had in Germany and I regret to this day that I didn't do anything at the time – I had a most wonderful teacher at the Gaudig schul, and when I was in Hamburg one day I looked across the road and there was this fellow and he just looked like him. I had not seen the man since 1930 and I had heard through the grapevine that he had actually fought with the International Brigade in Spain, but anyway we looked at each other and I didn't call him across and I regret to this day that I never found out whether it was him or not. He was the most wonderful man. It will always be one of my regrets that he did not do that.

RL: Whilst you were in Germany did you go back to any of the, any of your places?

RH: I never went back to anywhere where I came from, oh no, no no. Well, no it was still Germany then, but I didn't want to go back to Breslau. Breslau for me was Tauentzien Platz and the place that I lived afterwards. I had no desire to go back, any at all. How shall I put it, sentimentality..... I still cannot forget the synagogue burning so that puts me off.

RL: What happened to your mother?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Not your mother sorry, your step, your foster family?

RH: They went to America, yes, actually I lost touch with them and I feel guilty about that. I lost touch with a lot of people and we didn't, we had quite a struggle for many years here and I didn't, I didn't keep in touch with a lot of people. I didn't write a lot of letters you know. My sister, the one in Australia, she kept in touch with them. I remember as I say, they wrote once they don't know why Richard never kept in touch with us but it was just one of those things. No disrespect or anything it was just the circumstances. I worked quite hard to make a living.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 42 seconds

RL: Were any of your family left in Germany when the war broke out?

RH: Oh yes, yes, my sister for a start, my sister went to America, but she was in Germany still when the war broke out. And there was my in-laws, my father-in-law died in October 1939, he died a natural death, he died of cancer actually, but my mother-in-law and her relations and later on my father-in-law. On my side there was only my sister. On my mother's side, on my father's side, on my mother's side there were my uncles and aunts and all that. My uncle who was the farmer, he was a landowner, he died but his widow and the other two aunts were still alive. One of my cousins emigrated to America and became an eye surgeon. His brother, I don't know when he was killed, he died in Mathausen but I don't know when he was killed. Another cousin, he was still in Germany and he died in Auschwitz.

Yes, so my sister, she managed to get away in 1940. Two cousins of my mother actually, you see they were still there, or one of them, and he died in 1940 and he left some money, I never got my share, and my other sister got her share but we were not there any more but my sister was in Germany, she managed to get her share, less what she had to pay to the Nazis and so it enabled her to survive and she left Germany in October 1940 through Russia because Russia wasn't in Germany, they weren't at war then you see. And she had to wait for her quota number to come from the United States, but it didn't come through until 1948. They were very, very strict the Yanks with their quota numbers, so she stayed in Shanghai until 1948 and then she went to New York.

RL: Did you manage to see her?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Did you see her at all?

RH: Oh yes, actually, she, well my sister and her husband were divorced when they were in Shanghai so she only had herself and she came over in 1953 and then she came over every four years or so and we saw her quite often, until 1977 I went over, my wife unfortunately would not fly, then, she flew afterwards but she wouldn't fly then so she missed a trip to New York. So I went to see her in 1977 and unfortunately she died the same year, but, yes I saw her reasonably often really, you know.

RL: You were in touch with her during the war?

RH: No, no, not at all. Well, yes, after she had gone to Shanghai, now then, we didn't manage to keep a lot of touch, we knew she was in Shangai and we had an occasional letter, but of course don't forget the Japanese were at war so it became difficult after 1941 you see, but from 1945 onwards we were in regular contact.

RL: You were in Germany until 46?

RH: Pardon?

Tape 2: 56 minutes 22 seconds

RL: You were in Germany until 1946?

RH: Yes.

RL: Yes, and then what happened?

RH: Well I came back here. So, when I was in Kitchener Camp one of my inmates, in the same hut, we became friends and we decided to do something after the war. And we set up a little business in French woodwork and he hadn't passed his interpreters tests because his English wasn't good enough, he was six years older than me, and him and his wife, he was demobbed before me. So, but we kept in touch, and said we would do something together, so we had to make some arrangements of what to do. And, so he came to live in Harrogate and I had to find rooms near Harrogate so we came round here and we were, we were told of some rooms in Knaresborough so we came to Knaresborough and we germinated here you see. We opened a little business which eventually went flop because we didn't know anything about purchase tax and anything about business at all. We were completely green. So after I used my demob money, my wife went working, so we said we have to give it up. He carried on for a bit but then he gave it up as well and I went to work in the building trade. I had to find some work somehow because I had a young son to feed. And then I went to hospital. Actually, then I went to work for the railway company in Knaresborough for nine months until they went bust, after I left him, it wasn't a big success.

Then I went into hospital, actually as a result of a motor bike accident I had in 1946 and then there was a job advertised in the paper for a milk roundsman in the paper, the wife had seen it, so I went for it. And, my ex-boss he realised of course that I was foreign and he wanted to know all about my education, he went over my whole CV you see and in the end he said, "I am sorry you cannot have the job because it's gone, but we need somebody in the dairy to do some ordinary dairy work." So I said I would take it, but if the occasion arises you can have a round, and within three days I was out on a round because the woman who took my job, she departed you see. So I worked for Northern Dairies, and eventually through amalgamation, eventually we went into Associated Dairies. And Associated Dairies, the reason we went to there, we believed that they were in wholesaling and in retailing. He was actually a refugee, he was also a refugee who came over, but he was baptised. I don't know if he was Jewish. He was obviously Jewish by race you see.

RL: What was his name?

RH: They called him Rankin but his name was Rankenhover which is a very Austrian name actually.

And, so in in1964 they came to us and said “Well, we are coming out of Retail next Saturday”, that was the Monday, “Next Saturday we are coming out of retail, so you either buy your milk round or you are out of a job.” Well I had no money to buy a milk round, you see. We were like church mice we were you see, so ... “but we want you to buy the round and we will lend you the money to do it, interest free.” So I said “Go on.” They were in a cleft stick, they said they were coming out of retail but

Tape 2: 61 minutes 1 second

they had nobody to teach the round so really they had to teach somebody, so they wanted us to take over. So they gave us the chance to buy the round, so I bought my own round you see. We bought the round and we do it for the dairy. So I became my own boss you see.

RL: Now the film is about to finish, so ...

[Background voices until the video was switched off]

TAPE 3

RL: Did you become naturalised?

RH: Yes, in 1946.

RL: Was that when you returned from Germany?

RH: Well, what happened is, originally you had to be here for five years and you had to have some sponsors to guarantee that you are a person of quality and such like. What they did, they instituted the Inter Services Naturalisation Board and you had to appear before them, so that you could tell them that you have been in the army for such a long time and you eventually got your naturalisation papers. I, er, around about May/June 1946 I had to go to Leeds and my naturalisation came through at the beginning of December. We had to go through just as to appear so..... and we had to swear an allegiance to his majesty the King as he still was, this was for the second time, as I had done it on the 21st December 1939. You see, I swore allegiance twice you see. Once when I joined the army and once when I became naturalised you see. And then, that cost me ten quid and then I spent another five quid on the wife, so she got her naturalisation papers.

RL: You were telling me about your job as milkman. How you worked for the company and eventually bought your own round.

RH: Yes, yes ...

RL: When you first started working, did the job change at all over the years?

RH: When I first started I pushed a barrow. A pushbarror, we had one, two ... about 11 crates of milk on it and then they gave me a van and then they gave me what is called a Manu electric which is one of those things you walk with. You have seen them possibly at stations, you know it is an electric vehicle but you work them with a handle. Have you ever seen them?

RL: Yes I think so, yes ...

RH: Possibly I don't know if they still have them but stations use them quite a lot you see, or possibly a big market or so. You use your hand to operate it. And then

Tape 3: 3 minutes 19 seconds

they gave me that milk float that you see there and I bought it when I bought my milk round you see, but I only became Dick the Milk in 1969.

RL: And how did that come about, that nickname?

RH: Well the whole world revolves around sex, as you know, else we wouldn't be here. It's no good you grinning there. I had a gentleman called Brian lived on my milk round and in October 1968 or somewhere about then, there was a lady called Joan, we'll call her Joan White for the purpose of this, who arrived with a little lad called Mark Green. So mother and father, mother and son had different names. In those days, it has changed recently; if you were in certain circumstances you got a milk token book. Have you heard of milk token books? Right, now then, so, and although the milk token book belonged to the customer in most instances we held them to make sure we got our money back. So, and Joan was one of those people, no way would I let her have the milk token book, so I kept the milk token book. Now, when it came to April 1969 she got itchy feet, I don't know whether she tired of Brian or what. Anyway, she went to Glasgow with little Mark and became Joan Black, in body if not in name you see. But she didn't want Brian to know where she was you see. So, if you look in that book just by my picture there, there is an envelope "Milkman Dick", Centre round, Harrogate. Because she only knew me as Dick you see, she did not know my second name, on Wednesday I got a letter you see, so I went to the gossip column, who happened to be one of my customers and said "Now look, post office knew what to do, you see. "No problem I get the letter, so she wrote in the paper that not only in Wales they associate names with occupations but they also do in Harrogate and she named me "Dick the Milk" and Dick the Milk I still am. I still have Christmas cards addressed to Dick the Milk believe it or not, from former customers, yes. Yes, Dick the Milk.

RL: What was your working day like?

RH: Quite pleasant, sometimes not so when it rained or snowed, but quite pleasant otherwise. You see, I did a lot of town work and a lot of catering work so I didn't start work all that early, but I finished rather late. I had to go to my catering customers to see if there was anything else that they wanted. I supplied the corporation, looked after..... halls and took my time. So I worked quite hard and money per hour, I possibly didn't do all that well on an hourly rate, but the amount of milk I sold gave me a very good living.

RL: What time did you start in the morning?

RH: Actually it doesn't exist anymore now. I sold it in 1983 and the fellow who bought it made a bit of a mess of it but he kept it somehow and after five years I think his wife put her foot down. She did not want him to have it in the first place. So he just sold it then. And no doubt with all the changes and supermarkets, the catering work became very competitive and it doesn't exist any more.

RL: What time would you start in the Morning?

Tape 3: 7 minutes 37 seconds

RL: I left here about a quarter to six, and then I went to the dairy, and I went for my milk float up which I parked in Harrogate obviously and then I went to the dairy to pick my up milk so and did my round and took it back again.

RL: Where was your round?

RH: In the centre of Harrogate.

RL: How many days a week did you work?

RH: Seven.

RL: Did you ... ?

RH: Seven days a week.

RL: Seven days a week.

RH: Including Christmas Day. The only thing I had a holiday every year. Well, not every year, I had, the first year I didn't have one, for two years I didn't have one because I didn't have anybody to do my round. You had to have somebody who was reliable who you could trust and so out of my 20 years I managed 17 holidays which is, not many managed that, somehow or other.

RL: Who did you have that could do it for you?

RH: Well, first of all my son did it for me and then when he moved away I managed to get a former colleague of mine who worked for the dairy, he did it for a year. He worked in the office with me and then another milk rounds man who left the dairy and started up on his own, not in milk but in something else. He did it for me for five years. Then his business, he had a removal business and then he got a contract so he could not do it any more. So I went to one of my customers and said "I want a holiday"

And he said "I will do it for you." Because both his children were working for me at one time in the mornings, I will do it for you if you want, even though he was a teacher, so I said "You're on." "Don't worry, I'm not very friendly but you will do it and he did it for me for five years. The only snag was I had to go during peak times

because obviously he wanted his holiday with his children so I had to do it in August when he could do it for a week or two. We are good friends actually and he is coming to my birthday party in a fortnight's time.

RL: Did your wife work?

RH: Yes, she worked in shops. Yes, she enjoyed shop work.

RL: And you have the one son?

Tape 3: 10 minutes 25 seconds

RH: Yes one son, yes.

RL: What is his name?

RH: Peter.

RL: What education did he have?

RH: Just ordinary education. He did not pass his 11 plus, so unfortunately he is one them, he can do it orally but not sitting down at a given time, so, but he started gardening because he had trouble with his lungs and he had to have an outside job, so he went gardening.

RL: What trouble did he have with his lungs?

RH: He developed water on his lungs and water had TB in it. It happened round the corner in those days, they don't do it like this anymore. That is how we got our council house you see. So he was in a sanatorium for five months and, but, he is healthy enough now, he is 62, or he will be 62 shortly. And, so he went into gardening and he went to night school and there he met Geoffrey Smith, I don't know if you know Geoffrey Smith? A broadcaster, and gardener and such like. He was the curator of Harlow Carr Gardens. Have you heard of Harlow Carr Gardens? They now belong to the Royal Horticultural Society actually. The famous garden in the north of England. And yes, anyway, he went to ask him about horticultural college and he said "When you come back you can work for me Peter." So he worked for him for a while, for many years actually, and he left, there was no chance of him getting any higher so he went to the local police training college and then he got a job up in the north at a sports centre and he is still there. He came out of gardening but he still lives up there.

RL: Whereabouts does he live?

RH: A little place called Prudhoe – it won't mean a thing to you, just west of Newcastle.

RL: Is he married?

RH: Yes. There is his wedding picture.

RL: Who did he marry?

RH: A girl from Seaham, Seaham Harbour on the east coast. Unfortunately she died two years ago of cancer.

RL: What was her name?

RH: Dorothy. And there is my grandson. He has got quite a few pictures of him up there and he is expecting his third child ... his wife is expecting a third child.

Tape 3: 13 minutes 25 seconds

RL: So Peter and Dorothy had how many children?

RH: Just one.

RL: Just one.

RH: Yes.

RL: And he is called?

RH: Paul.

RL: Paul.

RH: Peter and Paul.

RL: Was Peter named after anybody?

RH: No. His second name is Joe, after my father-in-law. There was no Peter in the family, we just decided on Peter, we never, I don't know how we knew, there were no scanning around in those days but we never decided on another name, we just saidPeter, we never thought of a girl's name, so ...

RL: So he still lives in the North?

RH: He lives in the north, yes. He won't come down.

RL: Your grandson, what does he do? What does your grandson do?

RH: Well I don't know if you ever, well you know the company that owns Brighton Pier? Well he is operations manager for the whole of that company.

RL: Where does he live?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Where does he live?

RH: He lives in a little place called Deddington Village just north of Newcastle airport.

RL: And what children ... who did he marry?

RH: The first time he married a girl called Joanne and his second wife was also called Joanne also, but she unfortunately walked out and he had a child from that one, and he married to this lady and they are expecting a second child now.

RL: So far are they boys or girls? His children?

Tape 3: 15 minutes 12 seconds

RH: Two boys.

RL: Yes.

RH: And she has got 2 girls from her first marriage so, but they are very happy, they are very, very pleased with them, very pleased with them. Yes he's at..... Paul. He has been with them for ... about thirteen years now and he started off as an electronic engineer because that is what he studied at college and now he is at er for all over the country.

RL: Going back you mentioned the house that you lived in, we have just got to go through the houses that you lived in over the years, where you have been.

RH: Yes, well, we first had the flat above the pub and then we went into a place called Wintingham Hall.

RL: Where was the flat above the pub? Where was that?

RH: It was in town. Just off the high street here. And then we went to a place called Wintingham. A refugee couple called Roberts had it. It was a hotel, it was owned by the Earl of Wintingham who lived there..... Unfortunately it has been pulled down in all that demolition craze in the 1950s and 60s it was pulled down. It was a lovely building and then we got our little house where the lilac tree comes from. We lived there for three years until the owner wanted it back and then we rented a little cottage when Peter got ill. And through that we got our council house and we lived in that council house for 20 years until I decided it was time to buy my own and here I am.

RL: When did you move here?

RH: 1970s ... We bought it in early June 1972 and then we moved in March 1973 and they will carry me out from here.

RL: Do you belong to any clubs or organisations?

RL: Well, I am a member of the Chamber of Trade, I was a member of the Civic Society and I go to the Men's Forum. It is a discussion group during the winter. Tomorrow I shall go to the national forum on GM foods which is held in Harrogate. I managed to get tickets. I was..... of GM foods, I don't like it at all.

RL: Are there any other Jewish people in Knaresborough?

RH: Yes there are one or two. Who do I know about, I know that they are there but I don't know them. I think there is a lady who goes to Leeds I knew of her existence but I never knew her, I forget her name.

RL: Do you have much contact at all with Jewish people?

Tape 3: 18 minutes 35 seconds

RH: How much contact do I have with Jewish people?

RL: Yes ... yes ...

RH: Well, the people in the community. I go to the synagogue quite regularly although I am not a fanatic but I think you ought to have some sort of ..., and it's very social, it's very nice. Yes I like going you see and so obviously I could not go very often when I was working. I will tell you quite an interesting story. There is a family here, a Jewish family, when I first came on the milk job in 1949 and they seemed like nice people and one day the lady said "Will you do us a favour?"

And I said "yes." She said "Well, we are Jews and it is our Sabbath. Will you light the fire for us?" I will tell you the name in a minute because you will know the name. I said "Now, look Mrs so and so, I have got a good Jewish name." And she said "Why what is it?" And I said "Well they call me Hyman." "Oh my G-d!" she said. And it became a standing joke afterwards. I will tell you who it was. It was the mother-in-law of Judge Black! Have you heard of Judge Black?

RL: Yes, yes.

So, did you become a member of the Harrogate Synagogue?

RH: Actually I used to go to Shul now and again. I could not go on the Yom Tovim. And then I had another Jewish customer later on, he had a bespoke tailor shop and I used to deliver his milk, I remember his name, Lionel Wolf, you wouldn't know ... you possibly mentioned him in the book. The other people are called Mr and Mrs Heller and whenever I see Diane, she still talks about when her mother asked me, when it was Michael's Bar Mitzvah and she asked me to light the fire. So, it was very funny. It became a standing joke and all the years after, whenever she met me she mentioned it you see. They actually have a daughter in Australia, in Melbourne and when I went in 1994, I went to see Sacha. Yes, so, and Lionel Wolf and I said to him once "I will see you on Shavuot at Shul" on whatever it was, it was round about Shavuot time. And he said "What do you mean?" And I said "I will see you in Shul." And he said "What do you mean?" "Haven't you guessed it yet? "Well I am Jewish." "You are not", he said "a Jewish Milkman?" "Yes I am a Jewish milkman. So ..." So he said "Now then, have you joined the community yet." I said "No I haven't

actually.” “Well it’s about time you do” So it was Lionel Wolf got me to join the Kehillah.

RL: How often do you go over there?

Tape 3: 21 minutes 53 seconds

RH: Oh quite regularly actually, quite regularly. To a Kiddush and everything and we have a natter afterwards. I am no fanatic you see and possibly the very strong rabbinat of very orthodox would now not consider me a Jew coming from a Liberal background, you see. Well, they do make a difference, don’t they. They don’t consider Reform Jews as Jews do they? Anyway we will just leave that one alone.

RL: Did Peter have any Hebrew lessons?

RH: He had originally, but he grew completely away from it. He didn’t want to know, so he had his Bar Mitzvah.

RL: Where was he Bar Mitzvah?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Where was he Bar Mitzvah?

RH: In Harrogate.

RL: In Harrogate.

RH: Yes.

RL: Yes, yes ... What did he do?

RL: I only found out recently that he had a couple of anti-semitic experiences at school which he never told us about, he never told us about it. He did once when he was in Junior school and I nipped it in the bud straight away. I went to the Headmaster and he had no more trouble. He had a couple of incidents when he was in secondary modern, and it was something I never knew about and I think that might have...I don’t know.

RL: What had happened at the Junior school?

RH: Pardon?

RL: What had happened at the Junior school? You know you said you nipped it in the bud, what had happened.

RH: I don’t know, it must have been, somebody must have said something and I went to the Headmaster and now I can’t remember now, it was going back such a long time and I said look this isn’t on you see and we never had any more trouble there, not in the Junior School.

RL: Did you ever come across any anti-Semitism?

Tape 3: 24 minutes 4 seconds

RH: No I never had any problems here. I never had any problems here, no. They would soon get a mouthful if I did.

RL: So who would you say ...

RH: Everybody around here knows who I am.

RL: Who would you say are your closest friends? Are they Jewish or Non-Jewish?

RH: Non Jewish really. The lady you can see there and her family, this is the lady, you can see her in the picture with the straw hat just over there.

RL: Right.

RH: That is me with the homburg hat. It was an Edwardian Sunday. Every year we have an Edwardian Sunday here, we wear Edwardian clothes and have loads of stalls and such like on the first Sunday in December. All the shops are open. It is a big event. People come from all over. Yes, we became friends during a campaign against building of a supermarket in Knaresborough, which I started actually and I am pleased to say, I can't say we won the battle but it went out way. We became friends through that. We have some good friends in the community, you know, but I have got some very good friends, you know, in that picture up there he is a very good friend, another milkman, a wonderful fellow, a wonderful family. That was at his house where we had our Golden wedding party. They invited me, so I have got some very good friends. Yes.

RL: Was that the surprise party?

RH: Yes, it was a surprise party, yes, yes ...

We will have a do in a fortnight's time, there will be 25 of us.

RL: Are they all your milk colleagues?

RH: Yes. They are my milk colleagues there. We do have lunches.

RL: Do you still get together?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Do you still get together?

RH: Yes I organise them. I still organise them, we will have one on the 2nd July. They will be different ones to them but yes we get together and it is very sociable.

RL: Are they all retired?

RH: No some of them are still working, there will be, seven or eight of them are

Tape 3: 26 minutes 24 seconds

still working milkmen but some of the others are retired now you see. But they were in the milk trade and there are a couple of people from, it is not Associated Dairies now, it is a different company now, but they belong to the company and they come and join us you see. Yes it's, actually I am still a member of the National Dairyman's Association. I became a member in 1966 or 67 and am still, although I am retired I am still a member.

RL: How much part of the local community do you feel?

RH: Oh very much so. I got involved with a community centre in 1957 and I was invited to join. That was already being built for council house tenants and I did not want to push it, on account of being, I didn't want to make people feel I pushed my nose in too much, anyway I was invited to join the committee and I became its chairman for, I was the chairman 13 years, so I was very much involved. We did a lot of children and youth work, youngsters, teenage dances, shows, pantomimes and we had some lovely, lovely memories. In 1965 I have got a couple of my little showgirls and they still sell raffle tickets for me. They are in their 50's now but they still sell raffle tickets for me.

RL: Are you still involved in playing music?

RH: Yes I played music, yes. I can't play now really. I have forgotten it all. My fingers are stiff and I can't, I can't even play a proper scale any more because my fingers are rheumatic ...

RL: Do you still belong to a band of any sort?

RH: No, no ... not now.

RL: That finished with the war?

RH: That finished with the war, yes .. yes ...

RL: Right ...

RH: Although as I say when I played in shows down there I played piano so now I just go to concerts to listen to music. I am a keen concert goer, most of my money goes on concerts and on petrol, yes.

RL: Do you feel different to the English in any way?

RH: Oh you are bound to, there is a difference there, which ... Yes possibly a little bit conscious. First of all your accent gives you away and secondly, yes, possibly ... but I don't know, but if you look at the differences between catholic and protestants

possibly in Ireland or even catholic and protestants here, until, it might have eased off a bit, I don't know what it is like now, but there was a very definite difference until relatively recently, and I should imagine there is some antagonism now you see. I am just a part of the community. Everybody accepts me as such.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 40 seconds

RL: How would you describe yourself in terms of Nationality?

RH: Oh very British, definitely British.

RL: Do you think you have got any continental identity?

RH: When I go to France I try to speak a bit of French and I cannot do it and I revert back to English ha ha. No, no ... Politically I would like to see a stronger European affinity. Not as a United States of Europe but as you know, I would like to see a greater affinity, between them as a Greater Europe particularly for the wrong reasons. Tony Blair wants it as, that we have to work with the Americans. I would like to see it as a counter weight to the Americans. I am very worried about what they do to the World, very worried, economically and to the environment like ...

RL: Do you think you brought any different cultural values over here with you? That is different to the English. Do you think you have sort of brought anything over from your childhood that you find different?

RH: Well I think mostly culturally, possibly the music. It's a sense of music from continental Europe you see, music wise, Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, that sort of thing you see. Yes I think, that is possibly cultural I think. You adapt yourself to where you are.

RL: What does your Jewishness mean to you?

RH: You can't really define it. I feel very Jewish although as I say I am not very religious although I go regularly to synagogue, but I feel solidarity there. I think the Jewish identity is probably carved out very strongly due to the Nazi era in Germany you see. You were made aware that you were Jewish and first and foremost, so yes I think there is, there are so many nice things about Judaism that you want to carry it on as much as possible. I don't know if that is a good definition but ..

RL: It is how you feel isn't it?

RH: Yes, I wouldn't feel anything else. I had a set of four ladies, four sisters, none of them got married, they were wonderful, they were the kindest people you could imagine. But they were hell bent on converting me to Christianity, and the main one had a nursing home and whenever I said well you know, if you am proud to be Jewish, you ought to be proud to be Jewish but in the end I says you are wasting your time, you know with the greatest of respect and we became good friends, and we stayed in touch right up until our.....you see, but so, no-one was going to shift me from that position.

RL: Do you think, being Jewish, what do you think that means to your son?

RH: It's a cause of regret that he has grown away from it. On the other hand I am liberally minded enough to accept that and don't in any way let it, how shall I put it, alter or influence my assessment. The same with other people, you know what I

Tape 3: 36 minutes 12 seconds

mean. I mean, my grandson has no religion at all. He has not been baptised and he is not Jewish, he has a Christian mother. Now he has continued that with his own children, so if they want to do anything, they can make up their minds. But I think religion should be secondary in how you assess a person.

RL: Did you ever speak to your son about your experiences?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Did you ever speak to your son about your experiences?

RH: Some of them like many other people you don't talk about it really. Then you find, I don't know if you found in all the other interviews you have come across people, particularly those in the camps, they came out of the camps, they never talk to the children about it. Have you come across that?

RL: Yes.

RH: So, yes, my wife found out how her mother died, which we never knew, we knew she was deported but her cousin who lives in France, he somehow found out and she never told me. I had to find out from my cousin. She told a friend of hers, a Christian friend of hers from work, which I only found out after Margaret died and when she said she had told her, she said she had never seen my wife in such a condition as on that day and she never mentioned it to me.

RL: Why do you think that was?

RH: I don't know why she didn't, I don't know why, because she suffered all her life from a guilt complex that she didn't die with her mother. That she left her mother in Breslau and came with me, and it affected her all her life. She had a nervous breakdown in 1968. She heard anti-Semitic voices; she went to a retreat for six weeks. She would scream out all of a sudden for no reason at all she would scream and after many, many years it subsided then it came back again for no reason whatsoever. It affected her all her life. She never got over it.

RL: Had she personally had bad experiences in Germany?

RH: Not really, the same as me. She never talked about any particular thing. In Breslau as I said we were reasonably sheltered from it. And it was only after April 1942 that she knew, she knew that Peter was born, but that was it and she suffered all her life. She died in the hospice here and she talked to the nurses about her mother on her deathbed so it never left her, never. So in a way, much as I missed my parents, I

had no parents since I was 12, at least I was spared the trauma of either leaving them or they were spared the trauma of the Nazi era you see, it was a sort of two way affair. My good friend in Breslau he had to leave his parents you see, although he never talked it, but it affected him very badly. There was another fellow here, Bobby Kaye, you wrote about him in the book, he wouldn't do another, he did one interview with

Tape 3: 41 minutes 09 seconds

Alan Cassell, he wouldn't do another interview, he didn't want to talk about it all actually ...

RL: I had asked you if you ever spoke to your son about your experiences. Did your son ever show any interest? Did he ask any questions?

RH: Who?

RL: Your son, about your background?

RH: Not really, I mean, sort of, he knew most things about it, he knew how his grandmother died, she was killed by the Nazis and somehow, although he doesn't admit it I think that the trauma is still there. When I came out of the army where we lived at first, the local policeman lived across the road from us and his son was a lot older, and he and our Peter played together, but of course they knew about our alien registration book, they knew all about me, and we began to teach our son German because we wanted him to grow up bi-lingual you see. Anyway, one day Peter came back and said "You are German" because little George had asked him, "Can you speak German like your parents" so all of a sudden he knew he came from German that we came from Germany, so he just blanked it out and didn't want to know any more. After the war there was so much anti German feeling he shut up and did not want to know any more. I think that had a very definite affect and he just shut it out of his mind. I don't think, oh, he has mellowed all that much in later life. I get on very well with him so we don't talk very much about it. I could talk to him again about it actually.

RL: How about feelings about Israel?

RH: I have never been to Israel. What are my feelings? Well, the sooner they get rid of Sharon the better. I think the man is a menace to Israel. I hold him responsible for a lot of the trouble that happens now because if he had not walked up the Temple Mount the Intifada would not have happened. He has such a monstrous ego that he has to upset Arafat. He has everything against Arafat you see, Arafat helped to give the Israelis a bloody nose in the Lebanon and he wanted his revenge and he won't be satisfied until Arafat goes you see. He won't, I think that is fundamentally the trouble. He doesn't want to lose face you see, irrespective of the consequences, because somebody has to make a move somehow or other, the idea of having a greater Israel is Utopia.

RL: Have you ever wanted to visit the country?

RH: Pardon?

RL: Have you ever wanted to visit the country?

RH: Yes, I would have loved to have gone actually but somehow it never materialised that we went. Possibly due to my work, at first I could only have a week you see, so, then my wife became ill and it was difficult for her to go around walking,

Tape 3: 45 minutes 15 seconds

somewhere you see, although we did manage to go to Yugoslavia a couple of times. But to go to Israel and go round and see the country and so on, it would be very difficult and after she died I would not go anywhere by myself any more. So, I went on one holiday by myself after my wife died and I felt miserable, so I, I don't have somebody to go with, or somebody I could go to or who I could share the holiday with I 'm afraid I won't go anywhere, so I'll have to make do with this country possibly or even North Yorkshire. So it is a pity I have never been. All my sisters have been, but I have never been, you just have to accept what you have.

RL: How do you feel towards the Germans?

RH: Er, well, I wouldn't hold it against any of the younger generation, they were not responsible. I mean, I am worried about the far right wing and we have to be worried about them in this country as well as anywhere else in the world. But, you can't hold it against ... I know full well that there were so many Germans who were prosecuted the same as we were, just for their political opinion. There was a German fellow who lived here in Knaresborough. He was a social democrat and he had to leave in 1933 and he fought in the war with Britain so he was as Aryan as Hitler wanted, you know, so there were quite a few Germans living here who were active in the war and they settled down here. The younger Germans you cannot hold responsible. Although I would not go back to Germany to live there, I also never wanted to go back to visit Breslau, but that is, I accepted then for what they are you know ...

RL: Did you keep in touch with any other refugees over the years?

RH: Well, just my friends from Breslau, through AJR I met one or two of them you see. There is a fellow from Breslau who lives in Harrogate and there are two or three who belong to the Shul here who are refugees and I am in constant touch with them. Strangely enough there is, a little booklet came out about the experiences of some of the people who came over in the Kinder Transport and we had the booklets given to us at our last meeting. And, I looked at the picture there, and I said "Good L-rd it is him" So I rang Suzanne Green up as there was no indication of who it was. Did you meet Fay Shaw by any chance from Otley? She came over on the Kinder Transport and she is in the book and I wanted to know more about it, because I wanted to know about this picture, so you had the picture from the fellow there. So Suzanne said "Oh, I can't give you her number, I can't give you anybody's telephone number." So I said "Well, ask her to give me a ring and give her my telephone number." So, the same night Fay rung me, and it was funny, you will laugh now. So Fay rang me and I said "Dick here". She said "What do you mean Dick?" I said "Yesterday I sat opposite you." She said "Oh Dick the Milk!" So Dick the milk followed me into there. So

anyway she gave me a contact number and I rung and I said to that lady, "Now look you, I have got this booklet and there was somebody there I want to find out a bit more about, so can you give me the telephone number?" She said "yes with pleasure". So I rang up and it happened to be the widow, the gentleman's second wife, happened

Tape 3: 50 minutes 11 seconds

to be the second wife of this gentleman, a former ex-army fellow who unfortunately left his wife in Germany and of course she perished and so he married her and they were married for about 20 years before he died. Now she is married to this fellow so I spoke to her. So when Fay Shaw said Dick The Milk, I said : "Yes..... " it was really funny.

RL: Did you ever have any contact with any of the refugee organisations here?

RH: No not really. You are out on a limb here in Knaresborough, in Yorkshire you see, and although we have a very vibrant community here in Harrogate, you are not living in Leeds you see. I mean there are one or two people who are ex army fellows of mine. But you are a bit away from it and as I say, due to my work I didn't have that much time to socialise and had to socialise locally you see, and I didn't know about AJRs existence until quite recently and I am not a member of, what is it – Association of Jewish ex army ... AJAX is it?

RL: AJEX.

RH: They all of a sudden made me a member. It took a long time for them to get hold of me. So, but, now I go, since my wife died I became a more active member of the community and I go to represent the community at the memorial service on the 11th November, so I dig my medals out and stick them on you see.

RL: How did you hear of AJR and how did you become involved with AJR?

RH: Well someone rang me up, Inge Little, now Inge Little is a lady who married out, to a very nice gentleman actually, an engineer and I don't know what he did in his life, but he became a model engineer. She is Jewish and she came over on the Kindertransport and she went completely away from it, and she got involved with the AJR and we had the meetings there you see, and it is very nice, and we have a natter and we meet some other people there and it is interesting to see what other people got up to and how they managed in their life. Charles somebody, he became a judge in Leeds, I don't know what they call him, his second name. It is interesting actually, he joined the army, he is younger than me and he joined the army when we were allowed to join other units. So he was you know, it was realised, he ran the Pioneer Corps but they said well he was officer material so they sent him to Officers' Training Course, then he became commissioned into a regiment and he did about quite a few years there.

RL: When did Suzanne Green contact you? How long ago did AJR get involved here?

RH: Oh, not more than 12 months.

RL: When you first came you were in Kitchener Camp so I suppose you were all refugees at that point.

RH: Yes, yes.

Tape 3: 54 minutes 26 seconds

RL: After you left the army did you come across any refugees at that point?

RH: No, only the ones that were in Harrogate here, but I kept in touch with those friends from Breslau. As I said, we lost touch for a while but I managed to contact some of them, because they did not know what had happened to me anyway. One of them unfortunately died only this year. He and I, we went to piano lessons together.

RL: You went to what lessons?

RH: Piano.

RL: Piano lessons.

RH: Yes.

RL: Did you have a Jewish education as a child? When you said that I thought you said Cheder lessons? Did you have a Hebrew education as a child?

RH: Oh good Lord yes, yes, yes, yes. We had Jewish history and Jewish grammar and such like, yes, yes.

RL: Where was that taught?

RH: In Breslau.

RL: Where was it?

RH: It was attached to the synagogue.

RL: Do you remember who the rabbi was?

RH: We had different Rabbis there. Actually, we had the rabbi who taught us was a Rabbi Halpern and Mr Schonfeld. Everybody made fun of him, but I liked him, I thought he was a lovely fellow. Then there was Mr Halpern, he was a clever man but he was, he couldn't put it over, he couldn't instil any discipline into us at all. We got up to the most terrible pranks you see, and I wasn't at fault but it was very often that I was sent out, usually before the holidays we used to have a discussion you see, and I participated at a reasonable level you see, and he said "Well I don't know, you are such a so and so and when it comes to this, you are quite reasonable you see". I don't know what happened to him. And then we had a Dr Folkenstein, he managed to get to America I think, and then we had a Dr Sanger and his son became a big noise as a Rabbi in Melbourne. I don't know whether his father went there, but his friends, I

don't know his name but he is the Rabbi of the Sinai Synagogue in Leeds and he comes from Melbourne and I have met him on a couple of social occasions and we got, so I heard he was from Melbourne, so I started talking. I have been to Melbourne twice. My sister lived in Melbourne, you see, so I said so and so, I says well, Dr Sanger I says "Good L-rd, Dr Sanger, he taught me my Bar Mitzvah."

Tape 3: 57 minutes 30 seconds

RL: Oh right. Where were you Bar Mitzvah?

RH: Where?

RL: Where?

RH: When?

RL: Where?

RH: In Breslau.

RL: In Breslau. In the synagogue ...

RH: In the synagogue that you just saw there, yes, yes. And we had what you call Jugendgottesdienst, youth services, every other Saturday afternoon on the Shabbos, the service there for the youngsters.

RL: What did you have to do for your Bar Mitzvah?

RH: Pardon?

RL: What did you have to do for your Bar Mitzvah?

RH: I can't tell you that. I only remember the Sidra, we had to read the Sidra and that's what you had to do.

RL: Do you think that ...What would you have liked to have done in your life if you had not to leave Germany and start again?

RH: It is something that often goes round in my mind. I would have liked to have done something possibly with music like my sister, yet I don't know whether I was gifted sufficiently enough. I know, I mean, I was a terrible scholar at school. Now whether that is something to do with my genes, my intellect or whether it is simply due to lack of interest due to the fact that I was never able to achieve anything, I could never achieve due to the Nazi situation. I was terrible in my last test, I was a terrible, terrible. I was always good at music, but I wondered whether I might have drifted into something commercial office or a shop or something like my father did.

TAPE 4

RL: You were saying that you thought you might have drifted into something commercial you think?

RH: Pardon?

RL: You were saying you might have drifted into something commercial?

Tape 4: 1 minute 12 seconds

RH: Yes, something like that, but you don't really know you see, so that is why I had a rather sort of, not a very firm background and that is why I drifted into the milk trade it was something I could do well and I enjoyed a tremendous rapport with my customers and I liked it. Most of the customers knew I liked music and I used to take some of the customers kids to concerts you see, and I had a wonderful relationship.

RL: You say your sister? Did your sister go into music?

RH: My other sister, yes, she became a professor of music. She was teacher of voice training out of New York. My other sister she also started playing violin but I don't know whether she made a success or not, but she finished up playing the recorder with a little group in Australia in Melbourne.

RL: Is there anything that you want to add or want to say in conclusion?

RH: No, you just ask the questions, I don't know what you ...

RL: Anything you feel you would have liked to have spoken about and haven't?

RH: Not really, you have asked me most of the things that happened in my life and I have told you what I did occupation wise. I have somehow I got involved in Knaresborough. I am still here. I like it here. I don't like big towns. Although I grew up in a big town. I would feel uncomfortable in a big town. Yes, I have got a reasonable life. I miss my wife but in that respect whenever anybody comes into that situation it is a bit sad but on the other hand I can't complain. I live a good life really within my moderate means, you see. The only thing I can say is that the similarity between a millionaire and a milkman finishes in the first hour you see so, Yes I think I have been reasonably accepted into the community so full stop. Is there anything else you want to know really?

RL: That is lovely, thank you very much.

This is a picture of my parents Richard and Recha Heymann, I should imagine it is taken in Blumenau. Which is a little village in the Silesian Mountains and I gather, but it is a pure guess, roughly about 1917.

That is a picture of myself and my two sisters. The one on the left is my sister Teresa, that is me in the middle and on the right hand side is my sister Sabina. They are six and eight years older than me. That was taken in Breslau and I gather roughly 1923.

That is a Siddur that was given to me at my Bar Mitzvah on the 9th April 1932 in Breslau and it shows a picture of our synagogue which was unfortunately torched on the 9th November 1938.

That is the house where my parents lived and where all my 2 sisters and myself were born. It is the Director's Villa from the company Meyer Kauffman, situated in a little place called Blumenau in the Silesian Mountains where my parents lived until after my father's death, and I took that picture in 1939.

Tape 4: 5 minutes 41 seconds

That is me Richard Hyman in uniform as an honourable private in the Pioneer Corps, possibly taken around 1941/42 in Darlington.

Now when I was in the army we formed a company band of 69 Company and within that band we formed a little swing trio which consisted of Billy Franklin on piano, John Franks on drums and myself on piano accordion and we brought a bit of more lively music to the audience rather than the staid music of the band. That was taken in Darlington in 1942/43.

On the top left of the picture is the Toll bridge that goes from Sandwich on the road to Ramsgate and Kitchener Camp was situated in a little village called Richborough which is an old harbour and on the left hand side is Kitchener Camp. The bottom picture is the picture of the ticket we had to have to get our meals. You had different sittings during lunchtime or mealtimes etc and that was our ticket. On the right is a picture of the huts of Kitchener Camp in 1939.

This is a Red Cross letter which we were able to send to relatives or friends in hostile countries or countries in the war. It was a letter informing my mother-in-law that our son Peter was born, in 1941.

(Voices in background)

This is a picture of myself and my two mates who first accompanied me on my journeys around Gross Arnsdorf, near Hamburg. It was the unit I was attached to as an interpreter and one of our main raison d'être became picking women up who had given our soldiers venereal diseases. Which had its funny moments but also had its traumatic moments and that would have been taken in 1945/6.

That is my wife, well I will give her her full name, Ingemar Margot Hyman, this was taken outside our little flat in Darlington, around about 1942/43.

That is a wedding picture of my son Peter George Hyman to Dorothy Ann Davidson and would have been taken at the Harrogate Register Office on the 16th March 1968.

That is my grandson Paul David Hyman with his wife Joanne Hyman and my two great grandchildren Matthew and Thomas. That would be taken last year, in 2002. Where? Oh, in a little village called Deddington Village near Newcastle, in Northumberland.

That is a programme of the Jewish Kulturebund. Obviously Jews in Germany had to find their own entertainment and cultural activities due to the prescriptions instituted by the Nazis so we had regular concerts and that was the season 1936/37.

That is a picture of my own milk float which I bought off the company who I used to work for and I became Dick the Milk in 1969 through a funny incident and it became my trade mark and I should imagine it will follow me into the grave and it was taken in Harrogate near my garage in Grove Road in Harrogate around about 1969.