

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Green
Forename:	Bea
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	14 March 1925
Interviewee POB:	Munich, Germany

Date of Interview:	12 June 2006
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Sharon Rapaport
Total Duration (HH:MM):	4 hours

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****INTERVIEW: 123****NAME: BEA GREEN****DATE: 12 JUNE 2006****LOCATION: BARNES, LONDON****INTERVIEWER: SHARON RAPPAPORT****TAPE 1**

SR: We are interviewing Bea Green on 12th June 2006 in her home in Barnes, London. My name is Sharon Rappaport.

SR: I would like to start by thanking you for being willing to take part in our project. Could you please state your name and your date of birth?

BG: I am Bea Green and I was born on 14th March 1925.

SR: Was Bea the name you were born with?

BG: Well, the name my parents gave me was Maria Beate. Very Catholic for a nice Jewish girl, but apparently I had had a grandmother— a great grandmother called Marie, but my mother didn't care for that so Marie became Maria and then I had a grandmother called Bertha and she didn't like that either, I'm glad to say, and she did toy with the idea of calling me Babette, which I thought would have been quite nice, but no, she decided on Beate, so I became Maria Beate.

Tape 1: 1 minute 41 seconds

SR: Could you please state your name and the date of your birth?

BG: I am Bea Green and I was born on 14th March 1925.

SR: Was Bea the name you were born with?

BG: Well, my parents called me Maria Beate because I had one great grandmother called Marie and my mum didn't fancy that name and another ancestress called Bertha and she didn't like that either which was good— oh they did consider the possibility of Babette, but they decided to call me Maria Beate which is very Catholic name for a nice Jewish girl.

SR: And when was it changed to Bea?

BG: Ah, well you can imagine when I came to England on the Kindertransport and I came to an English school the headmistress said: "What is your name?" and I said "Beate" and she said: "What!". And I said it over and over again. And then she said—asked me if I had another one and I said Maria and she didn't like that one either. So then I was called Beate, but the other people couldn't get their tongue round it, so it was BEA, so that just became Bea in due course. So I am quite used to it.

SR: And when were you born, when was your date of birth?

BG: 14th March 1925, makes me 81, stops you using your fingers.

SR: And where were you born?

BG: I was born in Munich, in Munich which was, still is, the capital of Bavaria, which right up until the end of the First World War was a kingdom. I say this simply because I actually find myself associating, or identifying rather, with Bavaria. I have a possible problem with Germany as such, I don't associate with Germany so much as I do with Bavaria. I am a Bavarian, I mean I'm a Bavarian Jewish Brit. Fits me. That was, I thought about that by the way when my youngest son once asked me: "Well, how do you feel Mum?" and I thought about it and I came out well with: "I am a Bavarian Jewish Brit." A Bavarian Jewish Briton if you like.

Tape 1: 4 minutes 26 seconds

SR: We will go on about that matter a bit later. Can you tell me a bit about your family?

BG: Well, my father was a lawyer who was in the Kanzlei Siegel, run by him and his cousin, it having been left to the two young lawyers by their uncle who had no children. My mother was an artist. She was a painter and she concentrated on designing book covers and she was a bookbinder as well. She was a very practical person, my father was not practical. We repeated that pattern in my marriage, but that came a bit later. And I have a brother who is four years older than me who— I think I put his nose out of joint when I was born. I love him because he is my brother.

SR: Could you tell me the name of your parents?

BG: My father was Michael, Michael, Dr. Michael Siegel. Surname Siegel and that is S-I-E-G-E-L. And my mother was Mathilde shortened to Tilde. So my father, the Bavarian for Michael was Michel, so my father was Michel Siegel and my mum was Tilde Siegel.

SR: Do you have any memories of your grandparents?

BG: Oh yes, interestingly enough, the first time I went back to Munich my mum asked to me to look at her father's grave, my grandfather, and this was in 1950 I think. And I went to the Jewish cemetery in Munich and the chap in charge said: "When did he die?" I couldn't remember, but I thought I must have been 5 or 6; it turns out that I was not four when he died. But I remember him when I was parked on them and I was lying in a little cot behind the tiled stove and their two beds were on the other side and

every morning he would throw a sweet into my little cot and I remember one morning I couldn't find the sweet and I felt responsible and he threw me another sweet and I thought that was the nicest thing a grandfather could do and I remember that although he died in 1928 when I wasn't four years old yet. My grandmother lived on and actually was at the station when I left and she died in Theresienstadt, so— and her— they had my mother and two sons. One of whom also died in a concentration camp or wherever, he was done in, he was a concert pianist. And my Onkel Ernst who wound up in Israel. So that is my mother's relations whom I knew. My father's family all came from Franconia, which is the northern part of Bavaria. And I remember my grandfather giving me— lifting me up on his knees when we were visiting them in Würzburg, where they lived, and giving me a cherry and I must have been three or four years old. And his wife also survived, my grandmother. I don't remember any details, but I remember my great grandmother. Also lived in Würzburg and she needed a trumpet to hear and she was born on the 1st April 1831 and she died on 1st April 1931, on her 100th birthday, so you know the story goes that she was told that Hindenburg had sent her a telegram. Ah, she said, do I care. Well, she said it in German of course. I don't care about telegrams I want a nice sermon at my funeral. And her granddaughter was looking after her my aunt **Scheni[?]**, and she said: "No, you mustn't say that: the whole family is coming to celebrate." "Oh" she said, "in that case I'd better have a little rest," and she went to lie down and never got up

Tape 1: 9 minutes 19 seconds

BG: I think the thought of the whole, well I don't know if it is true, but it makes you wonder whether the thought of the whole family coming was just a bit too much and she thought she would call it a day.

SR: Can you just tell us the name of the grandparents?

BG: That I can't remember. I think one of them was called Bertha. And I think my grandfather Siegel was Salomon Siegel, I do have the whole genetic past. My lovely brother plays with our ancestors and he got it all done, so I can show it to you later. But I haven't got it in my head.

SR: And did your parents tell you stories about their childhood?

BG: My father told me that, my father's parents had a farm, I think they bred horses among other things. And he was— his father had a brother and these two brothers had married two sisters and the two families lived in the same big house and each of them had seven children. And according to legend only the mothers knew who belonged to whom. Now, of these seven children, there was one in each family who was studious, who was academic. It was my father who was the oldest of the seven in his family, and it was a girl in the other family. And my father when he was ten had then to be moved from Arnstein, the little village, to the nearest town, it could have been Würzburg, I can't remember, so that he could go to a proper school. And that is how his career started and then he finally studied law. And one of the lovely stories that he actually told my son when he was doing a little bit of historical research: when he had got his qualifications as a lawyer and his mother had laid on a party and it was winter, he got to the station and there was no way of getting home except by a horse-drawn sledge through the snow. I love that story. So yes, I know

that story and my mum told me quite a few things, how she and the pianist brother, when they were little, were very good friends, because my brother and I were always fighting and she said why can't you be friends like we were. And they would look at a toyshop window and divide it in half and say. "Josef can have this half and Tilde can have that half." And that is how they got on very well.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 42 seconds

SR: Where did they meet, your mother and father, actually?

BG: Oh, that's a lovely story. My father had lost a thumb when he was a little boy of 5 by putting his hand into the animal feed cutting machine. So when the First World War came around, he couldn't of course— It was his right thumb, so he couldn't join the army, but he was a very great sportsman and skier, so he became the ski instructor of the Bavarian troops. Nice Jewish thing to do, in the course of which he was presented to the Bavarian king who said to him, "*Ja, was machen Sie nachher wohl im Sommer?*" What the hell will you do in summer? He said he is a lawyer and years and years later, long after when he stopped being king in 1918, he was one of my father's clients. So anyway he was a ski instructor and so everybody knew he was a good skier. He was invited to a party to which my mum was also invited. My mum was known to be an artist; the hostess asked my mum to write little place cards for each of the guests, for each of whom she was given some detail, and she was told that he was a skier, so she did this little drawing of the skier and much impressed my dad and there from followed the rest.

Tape 1: 14 minutes 12 seconds

SR: And what kind of people were they? tell me a little about them? What is your fondest memory of them?

BG: I am lucky with my parents. I am lucky with my parents because they were unconventional, you know. And I think in the 20s and 30s to be unconventional took a lot of courage and when they needed the courage for other things, I think they taught my brother and me not to cringe, not to cower. They both had a wonderful sense of humour, they could both write. My mother wrote poetry, chokky [sic] poetry, verse maybe if not poetry. They both loved music, my father was a good singer, my mum couldn't sing at all, but she loved music. They always— they belonged— they had season tickets for the opera. We ate— we were not kosher. So we ate all sorts of nice Bavarian food, and Jewish food and Hungarian food because of— my mother's father was Hungarian. I think they also were able to show affection. My father took me to school from the age of 6 when I started. First to primary school, and then to secondary school. We always walked together, half an hour or 45 minutes. And we talked and you know that develops a relationship that really lasts a lifetime.

SR: Did they socialise especially with Jewish people?

BG: Completely mixed.

SR: Mixed.

BG: Completely mixed. I would say the majority of their friends would have been Jewish, yes. My parents were observant in the sense that they went to synagogue every Shabbat in the morning. I went with my dad and so long as I was little I was always downstairs with the men. You know, he stood me up on the seats, and the desk came up to here on me [gestures at nose level]. We celebrated all the festivals.

SR: To what synagogue did you go in Munich, to the Great Synagogue?

BG: The one that was destroyed before Kristallnacht.

SR: Can you tell me a bit about the synagogue? Do you remember it physically?

BG: Of course, I remember it. The Rabbi was Dr. Baerwald who was actually a family friend. You know we had a little house in the country, a sort of little chalet, a wooden thing and he would come and visit us there and then of course we would respect his eating kosher. The synagogue was big, it had wooden pews, it had stairs going up to the bima and it had another, like another sort of— another chancel higher up and I remember, I can quote Dr. Baerwald, the Rabbi saying: “*Und an jenem Tag wird der Herr einzig sein und sein Name einzig.*” ‘And on that day his name will be holy’. You know, certain things make a deep impression. And everybody was friendly with everybody else and if somebody once asked me: “What was your childhood like under Hitler with being a member of a Jewish community? And I could only think of all these nice things, how nice it was to be a Jewish kid in that particular community. So, I have the fondest memories.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 55 seconds

SR: What kind of Rabbi was he? What kind of

BG: He was reform, but he himself was— I notice today in this country the reform synagogue that I belong to here, a number of people still eat kosher, we didn't. My father's family did, I think my mother's family did not. And I don't, but it doesn't bother me.

SR: And going back to your parents, what kind of household— you were reformed, how did you celebrate, let's say, the high holidays?

BG: With gusto! Shall we start with Pesach. I learnt my Manishtana. For seven days we only ate unleavened stuff. Everything was sung, when there was music, it was sung. Yom Kippur my parents fasted. Simhat Torah we went to the synagogue and waved flags and rattles and Sukkot we built, we built a Sukkah on our balcony in the flat in Munich, we had a balcony coming out of the kitchen which actually had— which was set back into the wall, so we only had to string— put string across and a cover and voilà, and we just hung some fruit on it. It was a very Jewish life, but it didn't— there was no discrepancy between being Jewish and being Bavarian. There seemed to be no problem: you could be a Bavarian Jew or a Jewish Bavarian and those two sat quite happily side by side. My best friend for a long time was Lissi, who was not Jewish, who found me again after the war. At least three of my erstwhile non-Jewish classmates of the Lyzeum that I went to right up until Kristallnacht, they also found me and each one of them said to me separately on different occasions, “Thank

God!”, “*Gott sei Dank, du lebst noch!*” “Thank God you are still alive!” That’s a very nice thing to hear. You know, it sort of gives you a completely different slant on history. I could tell you more about my non-Jewish school that I went to in due course.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 55 seconds

SR: Yes, we will. Could you tell me a bit about your brother, his name and what you could remember from him?

BG: My brother now lives in North London. His name is, his name was Hans Peter Siegel and he joined the British Army, the Pioneer Corps, then he wound up in the Tank Corps, wound up in India and he was advised to change his name to something not so German, possibly Jewish, so he is now Huw Peter Sinclair, only to be asked by the occasional Scot: “Ach, are you a highland Scot or a lowland Scot”. “No, I am a Jewish Scot.” He came out of the Army, he went— he came to England before me because he’s four years older than me, on an adult visa at the age of eighteen. He didn’t have an easy time, he was sent off to Liverpool to be an assistant cinema projectionist in some fleapit in Liverpool. Well, then he joined the army and with the army went to India where he fell ill which made him unfit for active work, which of course again was a blessing in disguise, because he stayed in Delhi and was working in the office of a Colonel. So he learnt about office routine and this is the sort of work he did when he came back to England, not immediately, he again had a difficult time, he caught polio. He recovered well enough, but of course now with old age weaknesses have recurred. But he started as an office boy with a South American import/export minerals company who were known to my father, he made the introduction, and he wound up as Managing Director, so I mean, I take my hat off to him.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 18 seconds

SR: And how was he as a child? What was your relationship with him?

BG: We fought, but when he was asked to look after me, if we were invited some place, he was very diligent, he wouldn’t let go of my hand. But I think it wasn’t easy for him, basically he was a very practical person, and not academic and I took to books. You know, when you are a kid that seems to be the only thing you’re judged by, which is kind of unfair for him. But I didn’t know it at the time, you know. Something that seemed easy to me, I couldn’t understand why it didn’t seem easy to anybody else. If I can do, they can do it, but it doesn’t work like that.

SR: So if you had to describe to your grandchildren about your childhood what would you say?

BG: Oh, I did, I mean, you may have noticed I like talking. I seriously believe to try and protect your children by not telling them everything is a terrible thing. Because it makes them imagine things that could be worse than reality. So I told them what it was like when they beat up my dad, which was the first intimation of serious anti-Semitism. I told them what it was like when I went to my secondary education. There were five Jewish girls in a class of 40. And somehow the five of us were in a

little bunch and the other 35 were in their rather larger circle. It didn't bother us, it kind of seemed normal and it didn't mean to say that I didn't talk to the others ever. But in a big class like that it is quite interesting, you make friends with the people who sit near you. I don't, I mean there were some, particularly one, no two girls who tended to turn up with their BDM— their Hitler Youth uniform and I sort of stayed clear of them. One of them found me; one of them was the one who found me. Shall I tell you the story?

SR: Yes, yes.

Tape 1: 27 minutes 10 seconds

BG: There was an article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a big paper in Bavaria, in Munich about the Kindertransport and my visit to Munich and she read this article and rang the editor who gave her the address of the woman who wrote the article who rang me up and said could she— and so on and so forth and yes, you can give her my address. So she didn't want to wait to write, she got onto directory enquiries and got my telephone number. The telephone rings: "Is that Mrs. Green?" This is in German. "Ja." I'll tell it in English. "Were you the Beate Siegel?" Yes. Ah, she said. I remember, you were sitting in the front row by the door and you used to go and look out for the teacher. And you used to— when he or she came, you used to dash back into the classroom and say: "*Er kommt, er kommt*" "He's coming, he's coming" But you were so quick that you were sitting down before he actually came to the door and I admired that because it was so courageous. And after all this I said to her, but who are you? She said that she had read the article. And I said, who are you? I am Johanna Schneider. Now, the next bit came straight out, without going through the filter of my head, came straight out from wherever my soul is, but why are you ringing me I thought you were a Nazi? Boom. Moment silence. Then she said, how can you say that, I was so shy. But you used to turn up in your BDM uniform. Ah, then she said that there was a good reason for that, I can explain it. And then she did, I can tell you afterwards. But you used to look down on me. That is because I was tall, I am still tall. After that the conversation...

SR: And what was her explanation?

BG: And her explanation was that her father was a civil servant accused of anti-Hitler sentiments, and so she was making up for it. And I believe her, she's decent. She said, but "*Ich hab' die Treffen immer geschwänzt*", I always played truant when it came to the meetings of the Hitler Youth by saying I have to practise my piano. She is now a professional pianist. You know, it rang true, I believe her, and we are in touch even now. You know, to hear stories like that, you get a view of history where you really have to distinguish between the real bastards and those that kept quiet when they shouldn't, and those who kept quiet when they perhaps had no choice. I heard a good story also about the Director of my school who had been at university with my father. Apparently in the schools whenever Hitler made a speech, all the children had to listen to the speech, so they were all taken into the assembly hall, big hall, and we had a meeting with the three girls, now women, who found me, we all had lunch together and they said, oh yes, do you remember when 'the Rex' - the director was called '*der Rex*' - got us all into the assembly hall and he had this pact with the janitor who fiddled with the radio and it crackled and crackled. And the janitor would say

every time “Sorry, but the radio’s broken” and they all clapped and went back to the classroom, never listening to Hitler’s speech. So you see you had little anti-Nazi tricks and you had to have a director who was courageous enough to do it and a janitor who worked with him. And the girls who didn’t object or didn’t go home and denounce the director. And so this went throughout the war...

Tape 1: 31 minutes 52 seconds

SR: You said three girls had found you. You were telling me about one. What about the other two?

BG: The other one was through the first one, this one was separate. The very first one who found me was because I was going back to Munich for a meeting, I can’t remember exactly, the city laid on a memorial day, and I was invited and I decided I wanted to visit my old school, and I wrote to the then director, woman, and said can I come and visit you and she was very nice and she got sixth formers to show me around and she then said, would I mind if they interviewed me, the sixth formers, for their history project or whatever, and I said not at all. And this interview appeared in the annual report, which one of the biology teachers showed to her mother who had not only been a pupil at that school in my class, but married to her then late husband who became a director of the school. So there’s this sort of constant link. And she found me because of this article, she is now very ill, and through her I was found by Ursula von Thyssen, if von Thyssen means something to you. Von Thyssen was only an old pal of Hitler’s and made armaments and then fell out with him and wound up in a concentration camp. There’s a very interesting connection.

SR: How was it to live in Munich in the thirties?

BG: How well?

SR: How was it?

BG: How was it! Normal, to a kid, whatever happens is normal. Alright, well, up until the age of eight when Hitler came to power, up until my school life, people had a maid, and I had a nanny until I went to school and then when I went to school, I no longer had a nanny and then I went to school and I mixed with the children like anywhere else.

SR: Did you live in a Jewish area?

BG: No. I don’t think so.

SR: Where did you live in Munich?

Tape 1: 34 minutes 51 seconds

BG: In Bogenhausen, it was a residential area. I wouldn’t call it Jewish because in American terms a couple of blocks down was the Prinzregentenplatz which had blocks of flats around it, in one of which lived Hitler. So hardly Jewish, in fact my youngest son Jeremy once asked me. Mum, did you ever actually see Hitler? Yes,

well, he did live down the road from us. But I saw him even closer up: I said I was walking to school and you get to this roundabout with this central pedestrian part and I was about to cross to that when this black car swept round the corner and in the near side front passenger seat sat Hitler, it was his car.

SR: What year was it about? How old were you?

BG: I must have been— hang on, '35, '36. And there I was with my plaits and my dirndl and he looked at me and he smiled at the nice little Bavarian girl and Jeremy said to me, Mum are you telling me that Hitler smiled at you. And I said yes. And there was this long pause while he took this in, and he said, did you smile back, and I was quite indignant, and I said: Of course not. So you are asking me, I knew who was who. The fact that he smiled at me was of absolutely no interest to me. It was shitty Hitler, excuse me, but I mean, I can say things— you can things in Bavarian which are not nearly as rude in English, well they are when you translate them, but they are not— are accepted so badly. Anyway, so yes, life seemed quite normal, we did, I did define things with the encouragement of my parents.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 56 seconds

I mean, there was a point at which Jews were not supposed to go to, let's say, the opera and a cousin had come down from Köln I think, Cologne, to stay with us and my mum said: "You should take her to the opera." And I did, so my parents didn't go at that point, didn't go any longer, but she thought it would be all right for us to go. I must have been 12 or 13 then.

SR: Do you, let's say, remember anything of the attacks in May 1933?

BG: March '33

SR: March

BG: 10th March '33, I remember everything. Because I was at home with a cold and my mum had gone out shopping and you know in a block of flats you have laundry facilities in the basement so our maid must have been down there because I must have been alone in the flat, but that didn't bother me, but I heard the key of the door, this was at the end of the corridor. And I was at the other end, in my bedroom, and I expected whoever it was who had come back to see if I was all right. Nobody came, funny, and I got up, I waited quite a while, and then I got up and I walked out through my brother's bedroom to the corridor that led down to the front door, and my brother's bedroom door was opposite the bathroom and outside the bathroom door I saw my father's— he used to hang his suit there, and there was his suit and his shirt all blood-drenched. And what does a little girl of 8 feel? I was scared you know. It was as if I had been winded; I mean, I now think in retrospect that's how I would describe it. And I walked down the corridor and my parents' bedroom was closed and I did something I had never done before and I knocked. And then I opened the door and I saw my father pull up his sheet so that I shouldn't see his face. And he said: "*Warte, bis deine Mutter heim kommt.*" wait until your mother comes home. And the word Mutter was never used, it was always Mutti. And the use of that language and seeing him pull up the sheet, the feather bed, to cover up his face, so I don't remember walking back to bed, but I remember lying on my back on my bed feeling nothing,

you know, nothing. It is hard to explain and it's hard for me to recreate, even in myself. And then my mother came back and the maid came back and my brother came back from school and at that point I knew they were protecting me from knowing what had happened, they didn't want to tell me. And somehow this idea must have formed in my head, if I ever have children I'll never do that, I'll tell them.

Tape 1: 40 minutes 39 seconds

SR: So they didn't tell you anything about the— what is happening, the way a girl eight years old can be told?

BG: No, I don't think they told me, I don't think they told me, I must have found out something, but certainly no detail. What happened next was, almost immediately as soon as— if not that day then the following day, we were driven down by friends in their car to our little house in Walchensee with our doctor. I mean, and my father was obviously very brave about it, so I knew he was all right. The fact that they protected me from the details didn't seem to matter so much at the time. So I was eight. When I was ten there was a polio epidemic in Munich and my parents sent me to an aunt in Luxembourg. And it was that aunt who showed me the famous picture* which had appeared by that time in the world press, right, you know the extraordinary thing happened, the extraordinary thing went on in my head, I thought that she should not have shown it to me, that it should have been my parents. So I learnt from it, you learn. [*see p.55 below and first photo after interview]

SR: So what was the crisis, when did your life change totally, your family life?

BG: I don't think it ever did in Munich. Well, yes, that's maybe not quite true. In as much as you realise that you have to cope with whatever situation presents itself, that is no different from anybody else's life. I think in 2006, let's say, if you live in Africa or in any of the war-torn areas, children also have to learn to cope with whatever their situation is. I think the scariest part of course was Kristallnacht, 9-10th November, but again we were lucky in that the family name begins with S, Siegel and the thorough Germans do everything according to alphabetical order, so our lovely Dr. Spanier telephoned us and said get out of Munich, they are arresting Jewish men. Now it happened to be my father's mother's Jahrzeit and he had already left the house. Our big synagogue had already been destroyed because Hitler wanted to make a car park in its place.

Tape 1: 44 minutes 0 second

But there was a prayer hall that we went to, or at least my father went to for that occasion and we had a car by then and we had bought an Opel Olympia in 1936, Olympia, I can still remember the number plate 2A51252 [said in German], why I should remember the car number, I don't know. So my mum said, don't go to school and my brother was then at a college to study brewery, he had had a year of apprenticeship in a brewery owned by a Jew, Schloss Kaltenberg, and he was doing the academic side of things, but my mum said don't go, we'll find father, so we get into the car and we drive to this prayer hall only to see a black SS chap outside. So my mother stops well short of the place, gets out, walks across and my brother and I stay in the car. We see her talking to this guy, and then leaving him and going diagonally across the road in the opposite— away from us. So my brother then aged 17 thought

he'd better follow her, gets into the driver's seat, never having had a driving lesson, but being a very practical chap, gets into the driving seat and slowly goes along and when we get parallel with her she turns and calls into the window, drive round the corner. And so my brother drives round the corner and she gets in and says: "He wouldn't let me in, the SS chap". Are they all in there when they burn the place over them. She didn't know. Well, let's go to the chambers; let's go to the Kanzlei - in those days there were no problems parking in town. So we go to Weinstrasse number 11 and park the car right outside and by this time you see glass everywhere and my mum goes up and leaves my brother and me in the car and says: "if anybody asks you anything simply say, *Ich weiss nicht*, I don't know. So she goes up and doesn't come down for ages and ages. And then my brother says: "I'd better see what's going on." And gets out of the car and says to me:" If anybody asks me anything, say '*Ich weiss nicht*'" That was scary. I don't remember how long I was alone in that car, but I really didn't like it. You know, but I could have got out and have gone upstairs, but I didn't, I stayed. And in due course all three of them came down, why had it taken so long? Because my father, not being able to get into the prayer hall, had gone to his office, had put through a long distance call, in those days you had to book it, and he was waiting for it and that was my dad.

Tape 1: 47 minutes 31 seconds

So then my mum said. Well, Dr. Spanier says perhaps we had better get out of town. My brother at that point said nobody at my college knows I am Jewish, I am going to my college; well that is a long story. And we decide to go to the same Schloss Kaltenberg, to the brewery where my brother had trained, it was outside Munich. My mum's driving, my dad's sitting in the back, I am sitting next to my mum in front, we get to the outskirts of Munich and we see the road block and I am still with my plaits and my mother grimly said to me:" Smile!" and we get to this road block and I am grinning at these guys, and I would like to spit in their faces, I suppose, but I am grinning at these guys and they wave us through. My father just sits in the back, I didn't look, I don't know what he did, and out we were. We get to the Schloss Kaltenberg and tell them what has been going on in Munich and my mother says: "I feel very uncomfortable, I want to leave here." We leave, my father discovers a valid passport, my father had been in England in '37, apparently on business, I can't remember why, but he had been able to get a visa, go to England and come back to Germany in 1937. He could have stayed here and what they nowadays call to seek asylum, but he didn't, he came back. But it meant he had a valid passport with the same- he went to his sister in Luxembourg, which was another dramatic story because he nearly didn't make it, but he did. And my mother and I went back to Munich, but we thought we'd better not to go back to our flat but to my mother's mother who had an Hungarian passport or rather a Yugoslav passport by then. That was another horrible night because they came- some Nazis came, I can't remember how often, two, three times during the night looking for my mother's brothers. And then for my dad. I remember just one chap who funnily enough was not in uniform and he had the decency to be embarrassed. And my mother sort of thought, I will wow them and she spread her beautiful black hair all over the pillow and this guy said: "*Wo ist Ihr Mann?*", Where is your husband? [She pretends to sob] He is not here. Implying that he had already been arrested. And so this guy left, and after that nobody else came.

Tape 1: 50 minutes 36 seconds

It was awful, because it was more personal and by then I was already 13 and it really wasn't very nice and then in due course the Gestapo rang my mother and said either your husband comes back or we take you and your children, arrest you and your children. So my father came back. Nothing happened. In fact, after, I should have said to you, after he was taken round Munich in '33 my mother said: "*Das ist ein Wink Gottes!*" It's a hint from the Almighty, let's get out, but my father said, "They are never going to touch me again." And of course both of them were right. They should have got out, en famille, the family life was lost after '39. But they didn't touch him again; they did get out, but not until 1940. That's another story.

SR: I want to go back for a second to your school. Could you tell me, what was the name of your primary school and what kind of school was it?

BG: My primary school was a state primary school called Gebeleschule to which I went from the age of 6 to the age of 8. After which, and I think was because after they beat up my dad my parents thought I should perhaps really be better off in a Jewish school, so from '33 to '35 I went to the Gebeleschule and from '35, no beg your pardon, no from '31 to '33 I went to the Gebeleschule and from '33 to '35 I went to the St. Anna Lyzeum which was a non-Jewish, *lycée*, Lyzeum, a secondary school.

SR: So when you went to your primary school do you remember your friends, do you remember getting friends with other Jewish children or—

BG: Yes, in my non-Jewish school my friend was Butzi Balin and Lotte Schwarzschild, but particularly Lotte Schwarzschild because she left that school also when I left in '33 and came to the Jewish school with me and subsequently to the Lyzeum, the St. Anna Lyzeum with me. I tried to find out what happened to her and the same woman who did the interview in the newspaper was actually a professor of history and she said would you like me to find out about her and I said: "yes, please." And she did all the research for me and she said that in— after the war broke out she was obliged to do forced labour, just outside Munich in a hemp [?] factory and then in 1942 she was put on a train. And I said yes, and she said the next word next to her name is "*verschollen*" and to me that is the coldest word in the German language. It is almost untranslatable. The nearest thing is 'disappeared without trace'. But it has something— to me something bitter, something cold about it. *Verschollen* and I said to this lovely Dr. Häntzschel: "What does it mean? What does it mean? I can translate it, but what does it mean?" Well, she said they were either shot as they got out of the train and into prepared trenches— but she said some of them ran away into the forest, but that is where, of course, they starved to death.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 3 seconds

Verschollen, I wrote a story about her, but that's another story.

SR: So when you are eight years old you go to another school?

BG: I go to the Jewish school.

SR: How was it going to the Jewish school? Did you feel— you were relieved, did you feel that you were—

BG: Weird. It was weird because they were all Orthodox and I wasn't. And I got used to it and I was taught how to read Hebrew. I didn't find it difficult to study and I took to it and so now I am in a Jewish school that's what we do here. I had two teachers "der dicke Kissinger" und "der andere Kissinger" and they were both uncles of Henry and that's my claim to fame. And the tall one used to hit boys and the fat one wasn't very nice either. I don't think I liked them very much, but I did what I was told. I think they quite liked me, I was obedient. I didn't find it interesting to be disobedient like my brother.

SR: Did you feel that the academic--- in your new school was less good than in your old school?

BG: I was no judge of that. No, I was no judge of that. I was quite happy because I was learning things I didn't know so that was alright with me. I could rattle off the Benching prayer like any of them. But I've lost it a bit now, I am afraid, but I just took to it. No, I had no problem with that, I could have stayed on at that school to be there after the age of ten, but I was also entitled to go to a different school at that point. I had to take a test to get into the next school. It was like the 11+, but at ten.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 25 seconds

SR: What was the name of your secondary school?

BG: The St. Anna Lyzeum, St Anne's Lycée, like the French *lycée*. 'The Rex' of which-- the director had been at university with my dad - I think I mentioned before - and they knew each other. And I was very happy to get in. I must tell you that at my primary school in the first year I had a lovely teacher, in the second year I had a teacher, Fräulein Fellner, who was anti-Semitic, so I did-- I didn't perceive it until I saw my mother's reaction. We were given-- we had little slates, we were given the little things we wrote on it, or paper, and I can't remember, but I was entitled to ask the teacher, can I have a new slate pencil. And she said: "Can't you Jew kids get your own!" And I knew I was Jewish, I knew I was a kid and I knew I could and I said, yes, I thought I could. So when I came home I said to my mum, Fräulein Fellner said, couldn't we Jew kids get our own, and she was furious, how dare she say such a thing. And I thought, Oh, maybe she shouldn't have said it. You know, it didn't occur to me to see it as an insult. I cannot even today see if anybody wanted to insult me, it is completely lost on me. I don't perceive it.

SR: I think we will stop here for this tape and go on to the next tape.

TAPE 2

SR: I am conducting an interview with Bea Green, it is 12th June 2006 and this is the second tape. We stopped when you were telling me, telling us how it was to learn in St. Anna Lyzeum.

BG: Yes, and so I got to the St. Anna Lyzeum and Lotte Schwarzschild was there as well, so that was nice, but there I made a very good friend. I made a friend, a new friend, Gabi Regensteiner, who also managed to escape, unlike poor Lotte Schwarzschild who didn't. Gabi managed to get out, probably late 1939, to the

Dominican Republic. You know, the Germans were perfectly happy, or the German authorities, let's put it like that, were perfectly happy for Jews to leave right up until 1942. So if you could get out, and if you could get to the Dominican Republic, I think you could buy visas, you could get to Shanghai for 15 shillings or something like that, but America had closed its doors, Britain had allowed in nearly 10,000 children without their parents; when the Americans were asked to do the same they said, we don't do that, it was immoral to separate children and parents, ha ha, better they should die together, brrr. However, that was the situation. So she got out. Years later our lovely Rabbi Dr Baerwald, who also managed to get out and lived in New York, wrote to my parents, who also managed to get out in 1940 to Peru, by the way Gabi Regensteiner, now Gabi Roth lives in New York and the conversation came round and I told her that you were now at the moment living with your parents in Peru because I ran away from my first husband, married him by mistake. And I was living for two years with my parents in Peru when we had this letter from lovely Dr. Baerwald and on my way back from Peru to London I went via New York and we met up again. She died 2 years ago, unfortunately.

SR: How did the children treat you actually? Did they—

BG: The other girls in my class? Cordially enough. I had no personal experience of anti-Semitism. I perceived Johanna Schneider to be anti-Semitic only because she seemed to be turning up with this Hitler Youth uniform.

SR: She was the only one?

BG: No, there was another Schneider whose first name I can't remember, who, I think - I know this may be a funny thing to say - I think if you belong to the Hitler Youth and you were fed with all this propaganda as a kid of 10,11, 12, 13, you didn't have a good time adjusting to talking to Jewish girls, so they just didn't. I never had any personal insults. There was one girl who, presumably together with her parents, refused: Traudl, her name was, still is. Traudl refused to join the Hitler Youth and I take my hat off to her

Tape 2: 4 minutes 25 seconds

BG: and her parents, she was the one who had married the director of the school and whose daughter was the biology teacher and she said to me I feel very badly, because she was very friendly, she was friendly with two, Ruth Wilmersdörfer and Lucie Mandelbaum she was friendly with, and she said that she felt absolutely awful at not keeping in touch with them after we could no longer go to school after Kristallnacht. Because after Kristallnacht no Jewish children were allowed to go to non-Jewish school and most Jewish schools were burnt down. Now it so happened that the Munich Jewish School was in between other houses, so it wasn't burnt down, but I think my parents were reluctant to send me back there. As I say I wasn't consulted at that time, so I don't know what their reasoning was. I said - to come back to Traudl - she said "My father died at that time." And I said that you should not chide yourself for not keeping in touch. You know, one of the most decent people I know, and she has some nervous disease now and she is not well; you know my heart goes out to her. And I don't know what happened to Ruth Wilmersdörfer and Lucie Mandelbaum, I have a feeling that Lucie Mandelbaum may have got to Israel and

Ruth Wilmersdörfer probably not. There was a Wilmersdörfer, a Hans Wilmerdörfer I don't think it was her brother, it could have been a cousin and called himself John Wilmers, became a lawyer, became a judge, was made a knight, so he became Sir John Wilmers, never, never told his children what his origin was and they didn't discover until after he had died. Too late to ask questions, unforgivable in my book.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 40 seconds

SR: So did your, let's say, your brother come back and tell, say, about anti-Semitic experience he had at his school? What school was your brother [at]?

BG: He was in various schools, a Realschule, but then, I don't think school ever came up very seriously in my brother's vocabulary, so I didn't know what actually happened. I think it could have been more difficult for him, generally for boys it was harder. But he never came home with any particular stories that I know of. At the college they did not know he was Jewish, but in fact he did— when he got to the college, all the lads said, look what we got last night. All the jewellery they had stolen. And they said to my brother, and where's your loot? and he sheepishly said, oh, I left it at home and then decided that perhaps he'd better not stay. He knew that we had gone to Schloss Kaltenberg, so he went there to find that an hour after we left, the Nazis came and arrested Herr Schülein, the owner, and his wife was distraught and my brother caught the train back to Munich and finally turned up at my grandmother's flat. So that was his experience of non-anti-Semitism impinging on him.

Tape 2: 8 minutes 25 seconds

SR: So when did your parents start talking? Did your parents have any plans for the future for you? Did they talk--- what they were thinking of doing?

BG: It is very curious, when I left on the Kindertransport train in Munich and I guess when my brother left a couple of months earlier the feeling was we'll all be together again. We never thought we wouldn't be together again as a family. That was somehow inconceivable, so it wasn't expressed. You forget that, as time passes, you grow older, you don't stay a child forever, so I grew from what I was then, a little girl of 14 going on 10 by today's standards. I was a woman of 21, I may have been a late developer, which I think I probably am, seeing as I am 81 now and feel roughly 18, well, no, it is exaggerated, I feel 48, I got stuck at 48 in my head. But you know, suddenly— I married my first husband who was not Jewish, because I wanted to establish myself here, and [it] wasn't really a good idea: but he wasn't a bad chap, he was an architect, he was tuned into things rather than people. When I left him I went to Peru and I was then 27 and I had met my parents before, I can tell you about that, but I was able to spend two years with them between the ages of 27 and 29 and in a curious way, almost caught up with the childhood that I had missed out on. My brother, I think I mentioned earlier, caught polio in 1947 and he was at University College Hospital where they told him in December '47 that he would probably never walk again. And he was rather angry about that, and again, a bit like my father, 'I'll show them who is going to walk'. And of course at that point the other thing that you don't realise is that in order to travel and get together you need money and nobody had any money. And what does a German lawyer do in Peru. They managed, they got

by, I'll tell you what they did afterwards. My mother borrowed money and came on this rickety cargo ship in January 1948 to visit my brother in hospital. So I went to Liverpool to meet her off this boat and here I was aged 20– 1948 I was 23, wasn't I, yes, a married woman. She saw me off [on] the train as a kid and here I was, a married woman. It was much harder for her than for me. She was still my mum and the nine years of not seeing each other, it was difficult for both of us.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 29 seconds

SR: You mentioned before that your brother left Munich a couple of months before you.

BG: Yes.

SR: Can you tell me about it?

BG: Well, my dad got this visa for him, I don't know how. I think he got it either as a student or an apprentice or something like that. We saw him off on the train. You didn't fly, I mean some people flew but you know, one went by train. So that's how he came to London. My father had a good friend who had the good sense to come to London in 1933. A dentist called Hannes Schindler, so my brother was able to stay with them. So he had somewhere to go, and he worked at Woburn House for the CBF. And then they sent him to this job in Liverpool, to be a film projectionist in this fleapit. And he lived with an English family and, I think, promptly fell in love with the daughter. I don't know whether it was reciprocated, I don't know.

SR: And how were you able to get onto the list for the Kindertransport? Did you have any relatives or connections except in London?

BG: What happened was that somebody from Munich, a very distant relative called Ulrich, family Ulrich, came to London, no, came to England and came in fact to a town called Sevenoaks, where they were greeted by the refugee committee. The head of which was a woman called [1st name not recorded] Waley Cohen whose dad I think was the mayor of London at some point. And, as with anybody who came to England, my parents asked if they could find somebody who could guarantee for me because there was a point at which you could only get on the Kindertransport and that was not only from Czechoslovakia it was just easier to get on the Kindertransport if you have a guarantor. And they mentioned this to an old lady, called Mrs. Williams who already had a girl from Hamburg and thought maybe she could take another girl, but she did not want to pay the £50 deposit. Now £50 in 1939 is times 31 according to the Bank of England today, a hell of a lot of money and she just didn't want to pay that, and my father was able to find the money and it was paid in by the rather unpleasant mistress of an uncle of mine and she said and can she pay it in two parts of 25 and never paid the second 25 pounds. I found this out because when I was 18 I was entitled to have the money. And they said you only get 25 because that is all she paid, the silly cow.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 46 seconds

SR: And what did you know about England at that time?

BG: Well, I had started learning English at school with our teacher, Herr Bassermann, who was very elegant and had taught us French before, and he wore grey spats and black shoes and was very dandy [sic] and all the girls liked him. And I took to English in a much bigger way than I ever took to French, I mean I am alright with French now, but I just took to English. And then when we could no longer go to school, and by the way I have seen my school report when I visited the school, at the bottom of which was written in red ink "*Ausgewiesen als Jüdin, 10. November*", expelled as a Jewess, 10th November 1938. Anyhow, school term started in April, not as here in October, so I had from April until November at school. And then one of the reasons why I wasn't sent to the Jewish school after November '38 was because my mum found a woman in Munich who had qualifications to teach English, a Jewish woman, so that is where I went with half a dozen other Jewish kids. Edgar Feuchtwanger was one of them, and he had been a childhood friend, I mean, our nannies pushed our prams side by side. And then we both wound up in or near Winchester. And he is very nice; we are going back to Munich next year to celebrate something.

Tape 2: 17 minutes 30 seconds

SR: So, can you describe the days before the departure? Did you—?

BG: What were the days like before the departure? Well, I was looking forward to it. To me, coming to England was an adventure. The fact that the train left at midnight was another kind of adventure, because the German authorities still thought it wasn't a good idea for the general populace to see all these kids getting on a train without their parents. So to be— remain awake to that time at night was an adventure. My mum had laid on not just her brother with a camera, but a few other friends to come to the station and it was— we were not harassed or anything like that, it was just getting on a late train. It wasn't until the train pulled out of the station and I was leaning out of the window waving and there were two other girls, one little one from the Jewish orphanage and they asked me if I would look after her. She was about 7. I don't remember her name and a big girl, bigger than me, who was nearly 17, she seemed quite grown up, whose father was an opera singer called Sterneck, but I don't remember her first name either. And we were all three of us standing at the window and I was leaning out and that's when I saw my mum step behind my father and pull out her handkerchief, so that I shouldn't see her cry. And it wasn't until then that it hit me. But—

SR: But how did your parents describe the fact that you are going to leave without them actually? What did they...?

BG: Other children had done it. I guess I never marvel at— I marvel at nature, I marvel at the decency of human beings, but actual events, they happen, and you deal with them.

SR: Did your parents equip you with something? Did you take something special from your house or room to go with you on your journey?

BG: No

SR: Did they bless you or tell you to act in a ---

BG: Yes, that in retrospect made me feel, even now makes me feel the impact of it. The— you know if your parents put their hands on your head, and that was the last time that they did this as a child it is— that is the break. That is the break and that you cannot recapture at the age of 27. So, yes, I think losing the normality of childhood like that is, if you like, an irredeemable loss and while I don't recommend it to anybody it does help you to understand things in life which you might otherwise not understand, that is to say, other people's losses, your own subsequent loss, like the loss of my husband. And it is a form of enrichment, in the case of my childhood, I could have done without, but it isn't entirely negative.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 48 seconds

SR: Were you told that in England you act differently, you should speak differently; you should— were you given a kind of introduction about England about how life in England is?

BG: I thought of it of having grey roofs. I have no idea, I read an English novel, it was about Ireland actually mainly, which must have given me that idea. No, I knew nothing, I had learnt enough English to misunderstand nearly everything. You know, you have an idea that you think you know, but you don't actually. So when— if you like I can describe the arrival. I don't know if you want me to describe it.

SR: I just want to know before you describe the arrival to England a bit about the journey. Did you know anybody else except the two girls you were ---

BG: And I didn't know them. I mean we got to know each other. I knew nobody. And that was the first lesson in learning to be alone again. Something I don't recommend. If you came without sponsor, like a lot of kids, you usually came in a group either with other family members or with other kids from the same school and you stayed with them even on arrival in England. That didn't happen to me. I was whoomp, like being thrown in at the deep end. I think the most remarkable thing about the journey was crossing into Holland. I think you can ask any Kindertransport child almost any age, even if they were very small, they will remember very little. I would say nearly all of them will remember these fabulous Dutch women. And— they all seemed to be very big and they were clearly not Jewish, why clearly not Jewish, and they didn't say anything that made them seem Jewish, but they came onto our train with orange juice and white bread and butter. I can taste it to this day. It was just fantastic. Why were these women so nice, they don't know us. And you know it was quite stressful to get out of Germany, because these German guys came and my mother had hidden 10 marks in a sandwich wrapped in what had been guttapercha, which was sort of the equivalent of plastic today so that I could still eat the sandwich. And I thought they are going to find it, you know, whatever, they didn't bother me at all, but it was not so much scary as very tense, so when the train finally got to Holland and it was like— everything went like this. And you don't know that you are tense until you are relieved. It was amazing, it was just amazing and then there were these lovely Dutch women, this lovely orange juice, the white bread and butter, phew, you know I can still remember how it felt.

Tape 2: 25 minutes 48 seconds

BG: And then from then--- well, I must explain, having started in Munich at midnight we only went as far as Frankfurt and then we were bedded down and then we were all-- it must have been a collecting point. I mean nobody explained anything; we were just put onto straw things on the floor, woken next morning and got onto the train. I still had the little girl with me, but I don't know what happened to the Sternecke, all I remember is a conversation on the Munich bit and she was boasting that the family she was going to-- had already said-- she could call them Mummy and Daddy. But I said you have got a Mummy and Daddy why would you call somebody else Mummy and Daddy, it didn't appeal to me at all. So I didn't-- I don't think we took to each other, and the little girl went very quiet and didn't want to talk. I was alone.

SR: You didn't make any other special friend or communicate?

BG: Yes, I communicated when we got off the train onto the ship, on the Hook von Holland, there was a girl about my size who was crying for her mum and I put my arm round her and I said you'll see her again soon. And you know years later when we had our first Kindertransport reunion in '89 there was a woman who cried her eyes out waiting to go into the hall where we were all to meet: she was standing in the queue crying and I put my arm round her and said it's alright now. I mean, you know, there are moments when something hits you and it makes me want to cry thinking of her. And you never know what the trigger is, you don't know what the trigger is. For her it was waiting in a queue and it must have reminded her of another queue waiting with her mother.

SR: Are you today in any personal contact with anybody who went with you on the train?

BG: No. No, it was--- I was my own little unit, you know, I have to survive. I couldn't cling to anybody. Maybe it's not my temperament I don't know, except from that one girl that I comforted who then stuck around for a bit, but I never got her name. And when we got-- when, no I tell you what disappointed me, was coming from Munich which is bang in the middle of Central Europe, well, more or less Southern Central Europe I wanted to see the sea, so when we arrived at the Hook by train it was dark and all I could see was the boat that we went on and a little bit of water lapping. I wanted to see the sea, but we were in a harbour. And then we were all put into cabins and by the time we came up from the cabins we were in the harbour in Harwich and I had never seen the sea and I was disappointed. That's all I could think of.

Tape 2: 29 minutes 19 seconds

SR: And what was your first impression when you arrived to England, you went out and you saw England?

BG: In Harwich we had to collect our luggage Now, my mum-- Officially we were allowed one little suitcase: now my mum said two things, nobody mentions a sack, nobody mentions luggage in advance. So here I was with all these kids with one suitcase, I had three suitcases, a sack, my hand luggage and my accordion. And adults

seemed to have no inhibitions stealing from children and I couldn't see three of my suitcases, the ones 'luggage in advance' with the other suitcases and I went up to a very tall man, I was a bit short, I still am short, and I said: "I have some more suitcases. Where are they?" 'Well, there are some over there.' And I went into a separate hall and there all by themselves stood my three suitcases, so I retrieved those. And so that's how I arrived in London.

SR: And who met you in the station?

BG: Well, we were all herded into a sort of— it looked like a gym, you know with sort of gym benches that we were sitting on and we were called in alphabetical order and S again is rather far down and everybody seemed to have gone. And I thought there is nobody here for me. And finally they called my name 'Maria Beet Siegel', of course I didn't respond at first, 'Maria Beet', 'Maria Beet Siegel', 'Maria Beate Siegel', of course that is me, so I leapt to my feet and here was this— I guess she wasn't all that old, middle-aged lady in a lilac suit who was in fact, the daughter of the old lady. The maiden lady daughter of old Mrs Williams, Estelle Williams. I leapt up and I went up to her and she said: "How do you do." And I said yes. What did I know about How-do-you-do? They didn't teach us about how do you do. She had come in the chauffeur- driven car. I mean I landed up in this sort of lap of luxury. So they got my luggage together and put this in this big car, chauffeur cap and all and we drove to some posh flat in central London and stayed there a couple of night; I think it was because the woman, Miss Williams, worked at some charitable work at a clinic in the East End of London. And she took me there the next day. And there was her sister-in-law who claimed to speak some German, which of course I couldn't understand at all because she didn't really speak German. But it was an interesting experience. And then we went back the next day, oh yes, another marvellous misunderstanding and we sat in this huge living room and Miss Williams asked me if I needed the loo and I thought she asked me to shut the door. And I said yes, yes, and leapt to my feet and she thought it was too late and she thought it was too late and she leapt to her feet, so we sorted that one out.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 33 seconds

BG: The first meal I had I remember was Irish stew, which I thought was disgusting.

SR: Disgusting.

BG: Wet meat, you know liquid stuff, so I didn't like that. And then we drove down to Mrs Williams who lived in Brasted Hall, near Sevenoaks, Kent and this was a drive-in [sic] with a fountain in the middle. And one of those drive-ins and then steps up and pillars and I was taken in and there she was, no taller than me which was rather nice and she kissed me on one cheek and said how are you dear or something, I can't remember the details. She was nice and friendly, but there was no hugging. No hugging, I mean for years no hugging, verboten, you don't hug. And then the other girl from Hamburg who'd been there for a couple of weeks came down. Now the German in Hamburg is not the same as the German in Munich. Among friends in Munich you use the Latin greeting *Servus*. *Servus*, so I said *Servus* to her and she didn't know what the hell I was talking about. Dear little M. Her name is Margot

Alsberg [Alsperg?] and she lives in the United States of America, in Illinois, I think, I can't remember. And I guess it was nice for us to have each other. Her approach to learning English wasn't quite the same as mine. I realised after day two or three that I needed to speak the language. And the German sentence, which is still in my head "*Ich werde diese Sprache bemeistern.*" I shall master this language. Well, I think I haven't done badly. And I desperately wanted to go to school. I think all children should be forbidden to go to school for a year and then I think you would've eager pupils. I was dying to go to school now. And talking about 1st day of July, I arrived on 29th June and I had a couple of nights in London. So it must have been 1st or 2nd July that the question of school came up. And old Mrs. Williams said it is nearly the end of term, we won't bother. And I don't know whether I actually went down on my knees, but I must have done the nearest, please, please let me go to school. And so they arranged it.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 34 seconds

SR: So, where did they arrange it?

BG: So we were day girls.

SR: You and the other girl.

BG: Margot.

SR: Margot.

BG: and I were day girls at the school in Sevenoaks. And we were driven by the same chauffeur-driven car, same driver, and picked up in the afternoon.

SR: What year were you then? What year were you in the school?

BG: I don't remember, but they thought they would put me with the year younger than I should have been, with the 13 year olds and then found that that was useless. So they put me up one. But little old Margot, we called Margot little M because she was even shorter than me, older but shorter, but little M stayed in the class below and I in the class up. And I realised if I'd worked - I don't think I ever really worked very hard in Munich - but I realised if I actually worked very hard, it wasn't all that difficult. So it was supposed to be a school for girls, but there were boys as well. So this boy and I - and we had fortnightly marks. So he and I were top every other fortnight and you know for me that was quite fun. It was alright. I can't take any credit for it because you know either you are given whatever [sic] and I just made use of it.

SR: Well, you did master the language very, very quickly because you were able to -

BG: Yes. They read out my essays. You know I thought, I didn't believe because it was good. I thought they wanted to humour me. You know, give her a chance, poor girl.

SR: And did you feel different being German in a very English school?

BG: Yes. Well, I was, you know, I mean, even now— I was brought up to be English. What happened was, how I came to be as English as I am, is because old Mrs Williams died in January after we got here. So her oldest son, a retired colonel, and his sort of aristocratic Scottish wife took over little M and me and they lived in Itchen Abbas House near Winchester. And that was at a time when we could still write although war had started, wait a minute, yes war had started, war had started, yes, by 1940, we were able to write 25-word messages I think through Switzerland and I remember my mum writing to say why are you only ever ‘near’ somewhere, why are you not in a place first Brasted, near Sevenoaks, and then Itchen Abbas, near Winchester. And there— I was terrified of dogs, but there they had six dogs, four in the stable and two in the house. So I got used to dogs. Then in— I was— we then became boarders, little M and I and spent our holidays in Itchen Abbas and there I was taught how to train gun dogs and how to drive fly fish on the river Itchen, not awfully useful I can tell you. But at the time it was alright.

Tape 2: 40 minutes 20 seconds

SR: What sort of children studied with you? What kind of backgrounds did they come from?

BG: From school?

SR: Yes.

BG: My school in Munich?

SR: No. Your school now in England.

BG: Oh in England! I thought school was very strange. I had a sneaking feeling that Germans were more cultivated than the Brits. That at school we had a thing called General Knowledge, which I thought was the sort of thing you did at home not at school. I learnt my history, the period 1932– no 1832 - 1914. So I learnt about Queen Victoria and that sort of stuff, and what was actually interesting was come September of— I mean war started in '39 and come 1940 I was a boarder and we had a bomb drop next to the school and blow the roof off and all the windows in. Injuries were only superficial because we were all sitting there knitting and the headmaster shouted: “Get on the ground!” and the girl next to me decided the same spot. And I thought: “Oh good, if the house comes down it will come down on her first and I’ll live.” I was ashamed subsequently of thinking that, but it was amazing if you are honest with yourself, you know, the need to live, survival instinct. Well, the house didn’t come down and we remained good friends. And then the headmaster shouted, get into the cellar, where the younger children were already in bed and there was one who had hysterics and again I went over to her and said: “It’s alright Jo, It’s alright Jo, we’re alright,” little realising that I was streaming with blood because as we walked across the corridor to go down the stairs another bomb fell outside the glass front door and whoosh glass came all over it and you don’t feel it, you are busy going downstairs. So I was sort of— I must have looked quite awful and looking as awful as I did, and saying to this poor girl who was actually green in the face: “We’re alright. Everything is alright,” when I clearly wasn’t alright must have been difficult for her. So then we

were evacuated to Wales to a farmhouse called Nathravel [?] and there again the actual train journey to Wales was frightening because we had to— it was an all-day journey, the blinds were drawn and the light was dim, but through every town that we went there was an air raid. And having been bombed that then became scary. So anyway we arrived and we got to this house, which was very very old and we had this very sensible headmistress with us and a matron who wasn't very useful. And everybody decided this house was haunted. I don't believe in it, but it was a bit weird. It was weird. It didn't have nice vibes, so the headmistress found a very modern house in another village, where we had to sleep three to a double bed. And we didn't have the sense to sleep end on, so if you slept on the outside you always had the thing— the blanket pulled away from you and if you slept in the middle you never had a proper cover, 'cos it— you know, it wasn't very good.

Tape 2: 44 minutes 45 seconds.

BG: So then she found another place called Bryn Gwalia [?] Hall which was a big, very nice building, completely empty and by this time it was winter and it was very cold and we had to sleep on the floor. It was tough, but in due course a local carpenter made beds and we got some bedding, all the time I was a member of the Girl Guides and I did what I was told.

SR: What is a Girl Guide?

BG: It's like the girl equivalent of the Boy Scouts.

SR: Like the Scouts.

BG: And I had my blue uniform, and they made me company leader of the three girls and they said that it would be a good idea skip 100 times backwards before breakfast every morning. So every morning I skipped backward 100 times and if we could contribute something to the war funds that would also be welcome. So I thought how can I do that and I walked into the woods, we had no teachers, I'll come back to that, except the headmistress who could only teach us French and Geometry and everything else we did by books which is how I learnt to study, which was fine, but it also meant I had free time. So I went into the woods and collected bluebells and took them down, in my school uniform. The headmistress agreed for me to do this and stood at the roadside, hoping to sell bunches of bluebells to passing traffic - passing traffic consisted of a car an hour. There wasn't any traffic, but I still managed over a month probably to collect 2 shillings and 6 pence. Not a lot of money now, but [it was] then. And I got a postal order and sent it off to them. And the other thing I learnt was, again it was a lesson in independence, everything in my life somehow had something to do with independence. I was walking along maybe on the way to pick bluebells because I was on that road when I heard a little lamb bleat, this is all spring time. And I looked over the fence and there was this little wet lamb all by itself, no ewe, no mum, so I climbed over the fence and picked it up and the farmhouse was way over across two fields, so I carried this little lamb across two fields to the farmer and I said I have found this little lamb without its mother. And they thanked me and I walked back to school and it seemed quite normal. And thinking back now I thought it wasn't bad, I was quite pleased with myself in retrospect. At the time it seemed the

most normal thing to do. So, you know, I did my things under my own initiative I suppose.

Tape 2: 47 minutes 45 seconds

SR: And who did you socialise with especially? Who were your best friends there?

BG: What is interesting is that I think what I have just said about myself is not unique. I think that we were all little islands. There was a girl called Deli Preminger with her brother Erwin and I think their uncle was the famous Otto. So they probably wound up there, I have not been able to trace them. And then there was Ursula who fell on top of me, and I know that she went to the United States and then there was another girl whose name I don't remember from Austria whose mother actually came and became our matron so there were the two of them, mother and daughter. And then there was girl called Eva Pinthus and she and I were put together by the headmistress to cycle here or there in Wales, where we were to go to a Reverend's house, a vicar who had a cow anyhow, who got extra butter for us, extra butter for the school. And he once said our cat is going to have kittens and we will keep one of them and call it after one of you. At that point I was still Beate, so it was either going to be Eva or Beate, and fortunately Eva won. I couldn't see a Welsh vicar's cat, kitten, being called Beate as it is a bit too much, it is called Eva instead. I did trace Eva. I have traced Eva. Eva said to me one day back then I am going to convert to Protestantism. And I remember I was shocked and I said, why, and she said something like because of the headmistress. Well, what I discovered when I met up with her years later, we are in sporadic contact now, she - her father had died before she had left, not due to Hitler as far as I could see - but before she left Germany from Berlin her mother and her grandmother had stuck together, it seemed to her, against her. And she was so angry that she converted to Catholicism with a school friend in Berlin. And you know the English snobbery about Catholics, and so the Protestant headmistress [said], you can't possibly be a Catholic, Eva, its not --- you can't do that, so she became Church of England. Some years later she fell out with the Church of England and she is now a Quaker. And she is the Quaker counsellor to Leeds University. Now.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 13 seconds.

SR: So let's go back, how did Wales look to you? Did you like it?

BG: I loved Wales.

SR: You loved it.

BG: Now, since you asked me how I felt with my English friends: in Wales I was in Wales longer than in my school because my university was evacuated to Wales. I found that Welsh people, discovering that I wasn't English, were immediately friends. You see, they were happy, you know there is again snobbery between the two. I was very happy in Wales, for I felt comfortable, I was in the country, I was comfortable in the country. I- again I was trusted by the headmistress because once a week we had to go to Oswestry to do ordering of foodstuffs to be delivered and it was always me that was allowed to go by bus. And I was given one shilling and sixpence to buy myself some lunch with and then come back by bus. And it seemed to me quite normal that it

should be me, I never asked why me and why not the others. I don't know. And then I was comfortable too because there was no war. I mean the war was nowhere, so it was again really a normal life. Part of the job of the big girls, of which I was one, was to teach the little ones. As I said there were 12 of us, so I don't know how or what I taught, but I certainly was put in charge of some lessons for the younger children and then all household duties were shared. But since everybody liked my cooking, I was nearly always the cook and the reason I was good at cooking—

SR: Did you cook any German food?

BG: No, no, English, the reason I was good at cooking was because instead of sending me to the Jewish school and to these English lessons there was a Jewish restaurant that had not been destroyed during Kristallnacht which was also a cookery school, minimum age 16, my mum put me into long overalls said I was 16 and I learnt to cook for a restaurant and I was put in charge of the desserts. It was lovely and I learnt how to cook for a lot of people and it didn't bother me.

SR: But did you feel different from the other children, let's say, when you had—

BG: Once we were evacuated, do you mean? No, in a way no. Not then because we were in the same evacuation boat because they were away from their home ground.

SR: Was there any war chauvinism of any kind?

BG: Any what?

SR: War chauvinism. Did they say anything about you being German?

BG: No

Tape 2: 54 minutes 12 seconds

BG: No, I think we probably --- you see the bigger children were all German Jewish girls. So they were the little ones, there was a redhead boy called William and he was fun and he was probably our age. No, he just took it in his stride. So we took him in our stride. No, it was actually quite a nice experience, evacuation for us.

SR: Did you do something Jewish, were you..?

BG: What happened was, the Board of Deputies had, I think, arranged that we should be catered for regarding Jewish education and it was all done by post. It was totally boring, it was extraordinarily boring.

SR: What do you mean by post? You got a kind of book—

BG: Maybe stuff they asked us to read and answer questions on. It had nothing, nothing to do with the Jewish life I knew from Munich. It was no fun. It was a bit pompous. While I was still in Sevenoaks at school they sent a father and his son, Jewish father and his son to do— to do presumably good works with these poor refugees. And they read a bit of the Old Testament to us and we remembered the son

saying: "And the people were overwhelmed." And we called them overwhelmed, because he pronounced the "h" before the "w" and he made sure that we knew that that is what he did. He was so pompous and so patronizing. I've had a problem with English Jews ever since, forgive me, but I married one of them and I made an exception. And he said that he had a problem with German Jews, but he was quite prepared to make an exception with me.

SR: So, till when are you in contact with your family? To when were you in contact.

BG: Well, of course the connections through Switzerland stopped. Probably in 1940, even before.

SR: Before it stopped, what did your parents write to you?

BG: They --- one letter I do not have, but seem to remember. Well, one letter I have is one my mum wrote to my brother and he gave it to me, in which she said, "Last night we saw Bobby off at the station (I was called Bobby at home). It was difficult to say goodbye to her on the one hand, but on the other hand I found it easier than saying goodbye to you." and when I first read this I was quite indignant. What does she mean it was easier? But I now realise because she knew I could cope, but it must have been much harder for my brother to come at the age of 18 as an adult to what? Question mark. I was going somewhere, I was going to a place. It is okay, I have forgiven her for it. So that's one letter I have seen. One letter I think my mother wrote in May of 1940 and how we got it I don't know. But she said something about the possibility of after all going to Peru but then I heard no more. And that, I think, was the last thing we heard.

SR: We shall stop here because the tape is finishing.

BG: Alright.

SR: We shall stop here because the tape is finishing and we will go back.

TAPE 3

SR: We are conducting an interview with Bea Green and it's 12th June 2006. This is the third tape. You were talking about your contact with the family, the letters your mother wrote to you and you started telling us about what you wrote in your letters.

BG: I can't remember a lot except that I did tell them what it was like in the house of the old Mrs Williams to the point that they were actually encouraged to telephone one day. My father managed-- this was before war broke out and I just remember him trying to speak English to old Mrs Williams who kept on saying: "I can't catch you, I can't catch you." and he of course, wasn't running away, but he didn't understand the phrase. So she put him onto me and it was a little bit inhibiting to have old Mrs Williams there, but it was lovely hearing my father's and mother's voice. So I spoke to them, I must have told them about school. I don't remember my letters: I believe my mother kept them, but I think she may have given them to me and I found them deeply embarrassing and probably threw them away. You know you don't identify

with yourself aged 13, 14, what was I saying? One letter I remember writing and that was very important to me was when we were evacuated to Wales and one of my uncles and his wife and his family had got to Los Angeles, and they had suggested to my parents, who had already fled by then, that I should come and stay with them. That they would give me an affidavit, so I could go and stay in the United States. And my parents wrote to me and said: "Onkel Siegmund and Tante Lilli would like to have you in Los Angeles" and I wrote back aged 16: "Please, please do not ask me to leave England. As long as I am in this country, I shall be learning something." I haven't stopped yet: I am learning woodcarving now.

SR: Did it ever cross your mind— lets say, what would have happened if the Nazis conquered Britain?

BG: Well, yes because there was a bad time in 1940, 1941 and I was in Itchen Abbas. My guardians offered us the title of Auntie and Uncle, so this was Uncle Ainsley and Auntie Hilda. And Uncle went out to shoot a rabbit or a bird because you know there was rationing, and we were coming back and he had hooked his gun over his arm at an angle so it wasn't pointing at anything when overhead— we were on the road from London to Portsmouth which was a port. And there was quite low flying aircraft, which had German markings underneath. And I remember saying to Uncle: "Shoot him, Uncle, shoot him!". But of course it would have been pellets, it wouldn't have done any good. And I remember also not exactly asking him if he would hide me or protect me if the Germans came. I was aware of the danger that there might be a German invasion and that I was entirely in their hands. But I think I trusted them.

Tape 3: 4 minutes 16 seconds

SR: And what is your relationship with them?

BG: Well, they were very English you see, even though she was Scottish. I think they liked me, I mean they liked me in the sense that I think Auntie wanted me to marry their oldest. They had two sons, their youngest son was engaged, but he was then killed in the air force. And I think she rather had hopes that I might be the saving grace of the older son, who was actually an alcoholic. A very nice man, but when I got old enough to seriously consider that — I think he had it in mind, too — I knew I could not cope with someone who drank too much. So what was their attitude to me? I think they were benevolent. I think the old lady had left some money for my education because they sent me to university and paid for it. I could talk more readily to Uncle Ainsley because during the war we had double summer time so it didn't get dark until 11 and after dinner we'd go out fishing in the river Itchen and I carried the net and he did the fishing and I remember once coming back and I asked him how do you distinguish right from wrong. I mean I could actually have a proper conversation and he was quite proud of that. And he used to read poetry to me, I think maybe his intentions weren't entirely honourable always, but that was alright because I could cope with that. Auntie trusted me and that was nice.

SR: What do you mean by she trusted me?

BG: She could talk to me about her son's drinking problems. But she was not very accessible either and when her son was killed, and asked for me to come—

SR: When was that?

BG: In 1941. They asked for me to come and again nobody told me anything, I thought I would have to spend my holidays back at boarding school. By this time little M wasn't allowed to live in the restricted area of Kent because she was over 16 and she was considered an enemy alien and I hadn't got there yet. And the headmistress said: "Pack your suitcase, your Uncle is coming to pick you up, your guardian is coming to pick you up." And then I stayed with them for six weeks and Auntie would disappear from time to time and Uncle would say: "Would you like to look for her?" - it was a huge garden. "She may be at the other end of the garden, go and talk to her, sit with her." So they, maybe I, I mean I obviously wasn't a substitute for the son but I, I was there.

SR: How was he killed?

BG: He was in the air force in Malta, and killed. So a very curious relationship, I can't work it out backwards, I just lived through it. Is it too soon to get onto my first husband when I was 21?

SR: I just want, before that- till when are you in contact, from when did you hear from your brother?

Tape 3: 8 minutes 23 seconds

BG: And when did I hear from my parents also, finally. My brother wrote to me from Liverpool and then said that he had saved up enough money for the fare and then came to visit me in Brasted still and subsequently he was able to- no he never came to Itchen Abbas, later he came to Sevenoaks when I was at boarding school. So he visited me twice when I was at school and once when I was at university before he went to India. But we wrote to each other quite frequently, very nice letters, we had a very, very nice relationship then. You know it was sort of past childhood fighting, past juvenile awkwardnesses. It was lovely, it was very nice.

SR: Did you talk about, in that time; did you talk about your parents or about when they are coming?

BG: Well, my brother was in the army when he received a letter from the dentist I mentioned earlier, Dr. Schindler, the old acquaintance of my father who had received a telegram in September of 1940 from Irkutsk in Siberia and the telegram said 'travelling to Peru, beg to inform children. Reply Poste Restante Kobi Japan'. They received this telegram because of course, my parents knew their address, but they didn't know where my brother and I were. And they sent it to my brother who was by this time in the army in Kettering and he sent it to me in Wales, in Bryn Gwalia [?] Hall that was the third big place we went and that was wonderful. I mean, you know, if I say wonderful it means that I actually haven't got the right words for it. I burst into tears, I couldn't believe it. I mean once before when I had, as it were, contact with my father was the picture, was the famous picture that had appeared in *Picture Post* earlier that year. And it had come to my notice and I was fairly upset because at

that point I didn't know where my parents were, so the next time I actually get this telegram, I knew they were safe. It was wonderful.

SR: How did you know actually? Did you listen then to the BBC? How did you know?

BG: No, at school I didn't know anything. There was a war on. And we knew about Dunkirk because actually at that time or just after I was in Itchen Abbas and I asked Uncle how the war's going and he said to me not well. And that I credit him for, because he told me the truth. And I think that's what probably gave me confidence that he would protect me should they actually land. So now I knew that my parents were safe and then my mother kept a diary of the journey through the Soviet Union, Manchuria, China to Japan and then on a ship. And because they could— the Germans allowed Jews to exchange their money for dollars or whatever at a highly inflated rate, in their interest of course, but my father at the time - he explained later - said: "I am not going to leave any money here." So he exchanged everything, which allowed them to travel first class on the Japanese ship from Kobi to Peru. And my mum kept a diary and she actually said when they were harboured, when they were anchored outside the San Francisco Harbour: "This beautiful bridge and that's the Golden Gate Bridge," and if I stand at a certain window at my son's house today, I can see the same bridge and I think, you know 'history'.

Tape 3: 13 minutes 32 seconds

SR: And how did their life go on, what did they do?

BG: Very difficult at first, I mean, they had relatives there, but their houses were full with their own families and the Jewish community had a sort of in-take house where they stayed for a while, and my mother did cooking for other people and earned money almost as a domestic or looked after children or taught them German or English and it was hard. Then somebody offered my father a job in a Peruvian solicitor's office and he said that I can't work there because it's corrupt. He couldn't do that and then somebody had a bookshop and because my father was a scholar, a Hebrew scholar and a German scholar and a lawyer, they said, bookshop, just the place for him and he said - the story is, and I don't know how true it is - he read all the books, but didn't sell any of them, so that wasn't much good either. I can't see my father selling anything. It just wouldn't— so then the German Jewish community decided, there were 200 families, it would be nice to have a Rabbi and because he had been a Hebrew scholar and a friend of our lovely Dr. Baerwald and he was really knowledgeable, they approached him and said: "Would you like to be our acting Rabbi?" and he said right, yes. So when I ran away from the guy that I married by mistake I found myself the daughter of the Rabbi, I mean ridiculous, but there I was.

SR: And they stayed there?

BG: Yes, they stayed there My father— okay, so they were living very modestly in this *quinta*, which is sort of like a row of houses either side of a sort of paved long courtyard, corridor, and you went into a house and it was a bit like a railway where you have a corridor running alongside rooms off it. And a roof on stilts. It never rained in Lima. I think it does now, but the climate was different then. So you could

see the sky out through this raised roof, but of course the rooms were covered and at the end there was a little courtyard where there was the kitchen and a room where you had a maid, my parents had a maid, Aurora her name was, who lived there and that is how they lived. One of the rooms was my father's office because after 1950, I think, he was readmitted to the bar to the whole of Germany not just Bavarian so he could then represent clients in their restitutional compensation cases in Germany. So my parents would then come every other year through London to Germany.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 58 seconds

SR: But it must have been very difficult for them, culturally adjusting for them to Peru from Germany.

BG: Right. In Lima there was this quite strong German Jewish community, so that was their mainstay. And all their friends, nearly all their friends came from that community then there was the more Orthodox mainly Polish Jewish community but, interestingly enough, unlike in Germany where the German Jews, I understand, didn't mix much with their Polish brethren, in Lima this was quite different, kids married each other, festivals were celebrated together. They each had their own synagogues, please note, but festivities were together. During my stay there, there was a Jewish country club, it was a splendid affair, everybody went. They didn't know a lot of Peruvians, that is true. It was me when I got there, it took me 6 months to make friends, of which half were Jewish and half were Peruvian non-Jewish. So maybe the next generation and the generation after— There was a Jewish school at which I taught. I started teaching at the American school. And then—

SR: That is after your first divorce?

BG: Well, I didn't divorce until I came back, I left my future ex-husband so to speak on a trial separation. You know, you don't think of— I mean you didn't think immediately of divorce in the 1950s as readily as one does today. It had been an unfruitful marriage in every respect. I had umpteen miscarriages, I realised that the man I had married wasn't the sort of man I not only was looking for but also the sort of man I needed. So— but I didn't really spell it out to myself, so I thought it would be a good idea if we had a trial separation. I had saved enough money to take myself on a cargo boat to Peru.

Tape 3: 19 minutes 50 seconds

SR: I am going back to your father as a Rabbi in Peru.

BG: yes.

SR: What congregation, what was—

BG: Reform.

SR: Reform, what was the name of the synagogue?

BG: They had taken over a Presbyterian chapel I think as [sic] for the building. But permanently it never— it ceased to be a Presbyterian chapel, men and women sat together for the simple reason that there wasn't an upstairs. And they weren't going to cordon them off at the back either. So that is how it developed, out of necessity more than anything.

SR: Did he like his role as a Rabbi? Did he feel comfortable?

BG: Yes, yes. He was very proud of his short sermons. A bit like me writing about three generations in under 1000 words. You know, it's— you get to the point and that's it. So he acted both as a lawyer and as a Rabbi and you could ask how come that he came over here. Well, he said, this is his story, "I gave orders that nobody was to get married or have a Bar mitzvah or to die during my absence." and it worked. So that is how he managed both jobs.

SR: So, let's go back to you. How did your life carry on? What did you do, you went to university?

BG: Right, well having taken whatever, it was called School Certificate in those days. Then O levels, they are called O and A levels now.

SR: Yes.

BG: What happened then was you could also take an exam called Matriculation which enabled you to go to university, but if you got good enough grades in your School Certificate then you were exempt from the next higher up exam and with that I passed with enough credits and distinctions in my O levels to be exempt from the next exam and entitled to go to university provided I did the year during which you had to do Intermediate which was another three subjects. So I did this exam in 1941 and got good enough grades and went back to school, and I didn't know what for, because they did not teach you because they didn't have teachers for the Higher School Certificate. And I really didn't know what I was going back for, and when I got back, I wasn't informed— nobody asked anything, asked me anything. Everything was arranged— I got there and my headmistress informed me that she had enrolled me into a secretarial college, but I would live in the school, but go to the secretarial college. So I learnt shorthand and typing and bookkeeping and business routine. I learnt shorthand but I could never read it back. I was very good at typing, bookkeeping I was all right. Business routine I didn't understand. I did it, but it wasn't anything that really interested me. So at the end of that year I was at school. That was right, we are now talking about March 1942 and I had flu and the headmistress's husband came to the dormitory. And said, I have now— Oh no, no, no before that, the long vacation before that, the summer holidays before that, that is to say '41. I was in Itchen Abbas. I came up to London to go back to school, and as I got out of the taxi, Uncle— we went from one station to another station where I had to catch the train. Uncle was also coming up and said: "By the way, would you like to go to university?" And I said: "Yes, please." And got out of the taxi, end of conversation.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 30 seconds

BG: Fast forward to March. Headmistress' husband comes and says: "I have now heard from the three universities to whom I wrote on your behalf according to your guardian's instructions and they will accept you and I will tell you who they are. Oxford will take you, but not yet, you are too young, you will have to wait a year. Reading will take you next October, or University College London will take you next October." I knew I didn't want to wait a year, what will I do, I'd never heard of Reading, I had heard of London University and I said I'll go to London University, University College London. So that is how I got to University College London except that when I got there the tutor to women students— and we were again evacuated to Wales, to Aberystwyth - this time, she had a hat - and she said: "Miss Siegel, I seem not to have your Matric results for Latin." I said: "right". Why not? I've never done Latin. Oh, dear, it's one of the requirements; you had better do it in December then. This was October. Never done Latin. Panic. I wrote to my guardian, Uncle, would you pay for private lessons; I have to take this Matric in Latin. And he very sweetly agreed and I think three times a week I went to this wonderful woman and I learnt everything by heart. Everything, my head was full of Latin. It came out of my ears, out of my mouth, out of everywhere and I passed. I passed my Matric in December, so that was—

SR: What did you study at university?

BG: Well, the first year for my Inter I did German, French, Latin and English. It was going to be Modern Languages, then I went onto almost [sic] German with French subsidiary. And that's my degree. I have to say that at that stage my passive knowledge of German was good, perhaps nearly very good, my active knowledge of German was not good. I did not know how to speak German. I hadn't spoken German, I just didn't know how to speak German. So I found myself, to come back to Peru, having to learn how to speak German in Peru.

SR: In Peru?

BG: Yes, because my parents spoke German. I think at the beginning I spoke English. When my mother— maybe I can come back to when I picked up my mum in 1948 from Liverpool. We had five hours on the train, Liverpool – London, which was a wonderful bit of linguistic and emotional no-man's land where we could try and find each other. My mother spoke German, I spoke English, we understood each other. We didn't have— we didn't bother two hoots about other people in the same compartment, but it was 5 hours during which we got together, which of course helped me in 1952 when I came to Peru. My father came also and I had absolutely no problem with reconnecting with my father in 1951 when he came for the first time to Germany via London. Interesting, I guess I must have just picked it up again. So, yes, so those were my studies.

Tape 3: 28 minutes 30 seconds

SR: I am going back to the university times, how was it to live in London at that time after the war?

BG: Well, I had two years in Aberystwyth '42 to '44 and then they decided to bring us all back, because different parts of the University of London were in different parts

of the country and we all came back to London in '44 in time for the flying bombs, so I enjoyed that in London. I mean I escaped but again we had a bomb very near us, and glass flying all over the place. At that time I only put my feet— my one foot into a slipper full of glass, so that was the one bit that got cut then, not serious. In Aberystwyth already, there were hardly any men students, of course, because they were all in the army. They were either medically unfit or conscientious objectors or something, but there was one chap who had been in the British Army and literally shot himself in the foot, so he was limping, so he came back as a student and he was actually a Nazi, an English Nazi who'd been in Germany and had been all in favour of the Nazis and he'd say to me 'You're alright it's all the other Jews' and I remember sitting on the beach in Aberystwyth crying my eyes out. How could that be? Stan Price his name was. Stan Price. I think he changed his mind, but he never said anything.

SR: Who were your best friends? With whom did you socialise? Did you socialise with other Germans specially or refugees?

BG: No, oh yes, one. My dear lovely friend Celia Sharpe known as BC who— we were the two youngest and she was instrumental in getting me out of university accommodation to live where she was living which was with Professor Terry and his wife. So I was with a private family, which was actually lovely for me. Because Mrs Terry was in a way more of a mother than Auntie had ever been to me. Auntie had left laundry, that's my business. Lovely, we called her Mrs Terry, Mother T, both BC and I called her Mother and Father T. Mr and Mrs Terry. Mrs T washed my undies for me, I mean she looked after me like a mother and that was very nice. We were quite close, that was lovely. And there was another girl RD [Ardi?] Hock, who was a year above me who was Viennese, of Viennese origin, wealthy Austrian Jews. I think her father worked for bankers Singer and Friedlaender and when my brother came to visit me in Aberystwyth he promptly fell in love with RD, but unfortunately she married somebody else. She was killed very young. And we were good friends. I stayed with her and her family in London on one holiday. And we kept in touch for a while, but then— oh no, I actually did keep in touch with her even after she married the other guy. And then she had a son and then she was killed in car accident.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 14 seconds

SR: So what year did you come back to London?

BG: Came back in '44 and stayed again in London accommodation, in university accommodation in Frogna, didn't like it very much, made friends with a girl called Maureen Chamberlain [Tremblain?] and we got ourselves a little flat in Belsize Park and then she fell in love with an American and went to America, with an American soldier, joined him there and she got killed in a car accident.

SR: Also?

BG: In America. Years later.

SR: And how did the area Swiss Cottage and Finchley Road look like then?

BG: It was exactly the same. I lived in Froggnal, which is now very posh but this was just a house. But I didn't like being there. Because one of my friends was a Sinhalese chap then engaged and subsequently married to an English girl. Conrad Diaz his name was. And he came to visit me and the landlady said: "I don't want any blacks here." So I said that I'm not staying. That is early days to say that. I didn't like that. Years later my real husband, the father of my children, was appointed as the economic adviser to the Central Bank in Ceylon and I re-contacted Conrad Diaz and his wife Eileen and we became best of friends again in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

SR: Did you hang out in Dorice, all these places for refugees that were on the Finchley Road?

BG: I had nothing to do with refugees.

SR: Nothing to do.

BG: No, it wasn't my life. Partly because of Itchen Abbas. I mean my youngest son teases me because if I am in certain company, he says: "Mum, you are talking Itchen Abbas." You know, it is a way of being English, it must have rubbed off on me somewhere. It is not the core of my being, but it is one of the sort of suits of armour I can wear maybe. And it must affect you, you can't just live through all of this dog training and Englishness and meeting Lord x or whatever. Somewhere it must mean I am not afraid of titles or something like that but it doesn't impress me. They're just people like you and me.

SR: So where did you meet your first husband?

BG: In the students' club, International Students' Club in Gower Street. And he just said to me one day, don't you think that people like you and I should get married? And looking at it like that, objectively, I thought, OK, why not? I mean he didn't even have the courage, poor chap to say, I love you, will you marry me? I mean for God's sake, excuse me, but I mean, really. But I didn't have the judgement then. So okay, he was an architect and he had, he was a good architect and he had a job teaching architecture in Bristol, so we moved from London to Bristol. So my first job actually was teaching at Bristol University, because somebody fell ill, that was my first job.

Tape 3: 36 minutes 0 second

SR: Languages?

BG: Well, my first job after doing part-time secretarial jobs in London. I had bumped into my Professor, Professor Willoughby, before going to Bristol and I had told him I was about to go. And he said, well give my regards to Professor Closs, so dutifully I went, I knocked at the door of Professor Closs's room. And he said: "What a pity you didn't come earlier because I was looking for staff." And I was all of 23 or something, and I was absolutely terrified and, in fact, somebody fell ill and he rang me up and said, would you— I need somebody for translation. And that was absolutely my cup of tea. I mean, I am a passionate translator. I am a passionate bridge-builder. If I can do it linguistically, that is how I do it. And that was my way in a way, it was through a translation for which I won a prize. That's how I connected with AJR or

just before. There was a chap called— an architect, never mind it will come to me in a minute, who said he had the words of a song that they had to sing marching out of Buchenwald, the workers. Walter Marmorek, Dr. Walter Marmorek was the chap and could somebody translate it to make it accessible for his non German-speaking friends. And I sat in this room and translated. You know, I mean I worked quite hard at it because it touched me and I showed it to my oldest son. He said, yes, that's not bad and I found Walter Marmorek in Richmond and I found his address in the telephone directory and I sent it to him, not to the *AJR Journal*. And he said thank you, pop in sometime as you live near and I saw him at this architectural practice and we laughed about funny poetry and that was that. And six months later my sister-in-law rang up and said congratulations. I had won £100, it was a competition, I didn't even know, and my son— (my husband was already dead) And my son said: "Oh, how wonderful Mum, what will you spend it on?" And I realised I couldn't spend it on myself, not on the back of a Buchenwald song. On myself, to wear jewellery, clothes, no, never. So I had to give it away. Phew, I have got to give £100 away, to whom can I give £100! And it was difficult, I almost sympathise with millionaires: you know, to whom do you give your money? It was about then that I read about the Imperial War Museum

SR: Imperial War Museum

BG: Imperial War Museum, Holocaust Exhibition. And I sent them a little letter and said, would you like £100, you know, what is £100 to them? But I just felt that's who I wanted it to go to. And I delivered the cheque myself and I got to talk to them and that is how my involvement with them started.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 29 seconds

SR: Let's go back, when did you hear after the war about— from your parents, how did you reunite with them actually?

BG: Of course, I knew that they were alright and they could write from Peru. So we did have a correspondence, if you like, throughout the war between Peru and England. Postal services took ages. I was not a diligent letter writer and I would often get a second letter from my poor mum saying: "I am starting this letter in the hopes that there's one from you in the post." I remember one letter she wrote to me in which - and that was when I was already in Aberystwyth at University College London - "You never say anything about boyfriends." And I remember writing back indignantly: it may have been customary in your time to talk to mothers about boyfriends, but it isn't now. Ha! I probably didn't have one, but even if I had, I wouldn't have told my mother. Not anywhere [sic]. I had a very good relationship with her when we were together in Peru and that was quite girly then, so [sic] I still didn't tell her about the boyfriends I had in Peru. You know, because then I felt liberated from my husband and I suppose you could say I played the field. But there was one chap who wanted to marry me, but I decided that he was too old for me. There was another chap who seemed to express an interest and we've kept in touch and, boy, am I glad that I didn't.

SR: You didn't!

BG: Yes– no, no at the end of two years there, being neither married or divorced, I decided I'd better come back and face reality.

SR: Could you describe– you started it, but could you describe again please the meeting with your mother. Where did it take place?

BG: In Liverpool.

SR: In Liverpool Station again?

BG: No, no, no, in Liverpool.

SR: In Liverpool the city.

BG: Off the ship, I remember standing on the quay and the ship was down below and I could see her before she could I think actually saw [sic] me, you know, because you have more of a view down than up. And I don't remember the time between seeing her and her coming up and I don't remember an embrace, but there must have been one and I think we both cried. I mean it was, it was something that you– there just weren't any words, it is a long time, nine years, a long time between her stepping behind my dad and taking out her handkerchief and meeting in peace, but I was aware of the fact, I think I was aware, and this is where the five hours of train journey came in as a good thing, I was aware of the fact that she had come because my brother was ill. So, the day after she arrived, and I was then married, she and my future ex-husband got on very well, I mean we got on okay, he wasn't a bad person, he just was no good for me. His second wife also divorced him, but that's another story.

Tape 3: 43 minutes 15 seconds

And next day I took my mum by underground from North Kensington to University College Hospital and I remember 'cause I knew perfectly well which ward he was in and one of the nurses came towards us and said, we have put him in a separate room to meet your mum. And I remember pushing her in and staying outside and that is perhaps one of the most delicate things I've ever done in my life, leaving her, because I was aware of the fact that it was because of him that she'd come. Which was good for my brother, because I think that when I was born, I kind of put his nose out of joint. You know, so it was nice that he had this privilege and he was sitting up and he was just going to show them that he could sit up because they didn't think that he could ever, without help. And from there he went from strength to strength, so I mean it was wonderful for him that my mother could come. It was hard for her to have to face a son as sick as that. She had brought all sorts of things with her from Peru, like raw coffee that we had to roast before we could have it. She and I also went down to Itchen Abbas and she had brought with her one of my father's collection of Buddhas as a thank you present. There was a language problem.

SR: You just couldn't talk German at this stage? You just couldn't–

BG: No, it was a language problem between Auntie and Uncle and my mother.

SR: Oh, okay.

BG: So, I mean I would do the sort of in-between, and my mum, I think, probably really would have wanted to be back and stayed with my brother, you know, I remember her actually— when Auntie very kindly asked her after Peter's health, she burst into tears and I realised that, you know, she doesn't really want to be here at all. It was civil, it was friendly, it was alright.

SR: But the Auntie and Uncle were worried about the fact that the mother— your parents had come back?

BG: Auntie was seriously concerned when I decided to go to Peru, because the night of the two, no I think three nights before I got on the ship, no I also left from Liverpool. I stayed with them the weekend before I left and she said to me, you will come back, darling, won't you. That was as far as she allowed herself to go,

Tape 3: 46 minutes 40 seconds

BG: and I said, Oh, yes, I'm only going— it is only a trial separation. So then I went back to London not to Bristol where I had been living, stayed in London with my brother who again very sweetly accompanied me to Liverpool to get upon the Sanaveri which was amazing. Six weeks it took on a cargo ship from Liverpool to Lima.

SR: And how was the meeting with your father? You said that you were actually very close to him.

BG: Before I went to Peru he came over in 1950 or 1951 and he arrived in Plymouth of all places. So I took a train down to Plymouth from Bristol and a lot of people had given him presents to take to friends and relatives in England and Germany, which of course he couldn't declare because he didn't know what was in the parcels. So they made him open all his luggage, he missed the boat train and I was standing there and I was talking to some of the customs people and it must have been in November or early December because one of these customs guys said to me, so your dad's come for Christmas, has he? And I said, yes, yes, he has come for Christmas. So I think they did a body search and everything and it took absolutely ages and they finally said, let him to go, and he kept on saying, to pay please, to pay. He was prepared to pay for all what ever he was supposed to have brought. No, go away, let's not think about it. So we went back to Bristol together and because I had— he felt that I had rescued him, the boot was on the other foot, I was the parent. And it was wonderful, we just talked, no problem, I mean, they allowed me to actually go in to talk to him before he came out of whatever you call it, the sort of search area, so we had a quick hug. And I remember saying to him: "*Überlass es mir.*" Leave it to me. I remember actually saying that to him because I felt that he was maybe too honest or telling them things they didn't even want to know. So I explained that he was a lawyer and he had all these friends and it was the first time back in Europe after the war. And they understood, I mean they believed me, and I told them the truth. So I rescued him, and you know that was nice and my brother was alright by then so there wasn't anybody— there was nothing sad about this trip.

SR: Let's go on now to your husband, to your second husband.

BG: Oh good, that is much nicer.

Tape 3: 49 minutes 44 seconds

SR: Tell us what was his name, tell us about him?

BG: He was Michael Green, né Menachim Michael Greenberg or Michael Menachim, I think that way round, it was Michael Menachim Greenberg, I think his parents called him Menachim. His first language was Yiddish, he was born in Manchester, his father had come from the German end of Poland. His mother was from Rumania; they had come to this country as youngsters with their parents and settled in Manchester. Michael was a very bright boy and got a scholarship to the Manchester Grammar School which was the top educational establishment on a no fee-paying— His dad was a failed businessman; his dad had tried to run a wine shop and failed and tried something else and failed. He would have liked to have sat and been a scholar himself, and Michael's mum was a lovely lady whom I never really knew well because by the time I met her she had had already a stroke that had affected her speech. So I never really knew her at her best. (May I drink some water.) From Manchester Grammar he got two scholarships to Trinity College Cambridge from which he paid his father half because his father had no money. He went up as an orthodox Jew, kosher, and within weeks of being there he decided that is not for him. And his story is, he did two things: he got onto one of the bridges over the river Cam and threw his tefillin into the river. He then went back to college and told the servant: "I no longer wish to eat kosher food", only to be told by the servant: "Oh, but you can't do that, Sir." He was sort of taking up a paternal interest in his Jewish heritage or something. However, that's what he did and he reacted against his Orthodox background with a vengeance, I mean fiercely. He got a double first in History, I mean he was really, really, really bright. But started— got a fellowship to do a PhD, did a year of the fellowship when war broke out, but it broke out after he had been offered a fellowship at Harvard.

Tape 3: 53 minutes 12 seconds

So either just before the war or at the very beginning of the war, he went to the United States, where he completed his fellowship at Harvard. According to his records he was considered lazy, which his sons and I think is very funny. He then got a job at the White House with Roosevelt, something or other warfare and his speciality was of course - I say of course because his PhD thesis which Cambridge University Press published as a book and re-published and re-published several times is called "The Opening of Trade with China and the Opium Wars". So he was actually on the desk in Washington of what to do with Japan after the war and then McCarthyism hit him, because all decent people in the 30s were at least Marxists, Communists or whatever, which was his case as well. There was a woman called Elizabeth Bentley, interesting - I normally forget her name - I am now pleased to know that it was Elizabeth Bentley, whom he did not even know, who denounced him as a Communist. So he left Washington, so he actually left Washington - oh, by then he had married an American Jewish girl and according to him he'd married her because he had wanted to go to Washington with a wife. I think there was probably a bit more to it than that. But since they also divorced subsequently, at least she ran away from him, that maybe was a good way of explaining the marriage to himself. Many years later I met her and her

then husband, and she is now dead. Her then husband— his present companion, female, and I are in constant email correspondence.

SR: Really?

BG: I love that sort of thing. His name is Gene Searchinger and we were wondering what our official relationship is: ‘out-law in-laws’ or ‘related by divorce’ or something like that. Anyhow he is very bright, too. So anyhow he then came back, Michael then came back to England to do the last year of his fellowship at Trinity because he had done two years, or maybe he was there for two years, I can’t remember, anyhow his then wife couldn’t stand the cold, 1947 in England was pretty difficult and what with that and probably not then getting on with Michael, she went back to America and got divorced. She instigated the divorce and got it. Michael then was offered a job with Unesco in Paris, only to be blocked by the British government at the instigation of the American government because of McCarthy and he found himself unemployable so he fled to Paris where he mixed with all the Hollywood blacklisted guys. It was, yes, okay, so that is what he did there and he got himself a job doing PR for the cognac industry, anything just to keep body and soul together. And he was in the group with Ben Barzman who was one of the Hollywood writers and, well, other names as well. He then applied for and got a job in Switzerland doing, again, PR work for the watch industry and there again he was named in a paper, in one of the papers, and he got the sack and he managed to get back to France across the lakes illegally and was, in due course, apprehended by the French police. And rescued by a lovely friend here in London who drove over or went over and got him back to England, by which time he had lost both the American citizenship and, for some curious loophole in the legal system, his British nationality.

SR: I am stopping you here because the tape is over. We’ll continue on the next tape.

TAPE 4

SR: We are conducting an interview with Bea Green on 12th June 2006. This is the fourth tape. So you were telling us that your husband was coming back to England with no passport.

BG: Right, so how to get a job. Because he had always been interested in films, he actually got a job with the British Film Institute. At that time, I was writing subtitles on foreign films, so when we met we were both in the film industry, which was completely different from anything that either of us had done up to that point.

SR: What did he do in the industry?

BG: He was both one of the editors of their journal *Sight and Sound* and he went off to lecture on the Italian film all over the country. So he was an expert on films, on foreign films, and I subtitled, it was curious. We met at a party in St. John’s Wood, to which he was invited by an ex-girlfriend and I was invited by a would-be future boyfriend.

SR: Would-be?

BG: Would-be, he wasn't. So we met there and he --- that's right, the party was full of young Israeli men, who to me seemed rather arrogant and by then I was already 30, right. So they were all younger than me and I didn't have much to do with them and I was talking to a couple who were interested in the fact that I had relatively recently come back from Peru. That was still a talking point. And apparently Michael told me years later, well some time later, that he had overheard me speaking about Peru and thought I was some exotic Peruvian female. And decided to talk to me. He was no doubt seriously disappointed in not finding me an exotic Peruvian female, but that is how we started our friendship. And it was a friendship as well as a relationship. I remember when I was on my own after I got my divorce I realised that what I was really looking for was a man with intellect and human understanding. Neither of which was present in my first husband and I found both in Michael who by this time had found it was much easier to find a job if you dropped the "berg" from Greenberg. So he was Michael Green, so that is how that happened.

Tape 4: 3 minutes 20 seconds

SR: What year did you get married?

BG: We got married in September '57, we met in February '57, got married in September '57 and had our kids in '58, '60 and '62. Bang, bang, bang, me thinking I couldn't have children. Because that was one of the problems with my first husband.

SR: Could you describe the wedding day?

BG: With Michael?

SR: yes.

BG: Yes, it was the Chelsea Registry Office, I was pregnant, we got in a car and drove down to Seaford in Sussex where I promptly threw up, so we decided to come back again. I am concentrating the story a little bit.

SR: Yes.

BG: But, no the wedding day was actually totally irrelevant to me, I was just happy to be with him, I'd been married, unmarried, fortunately I had inherited some of my parents' unconventionality. We married in a registry office, it was nice, we had a little party afterwards. Close friends, a dozen of them maybe. It was great.

SR: Could you tell me a bit about your family life, about your children?

BG: You mean what happened, we got married, okay we got married; a dear friend who'd been a student of mine, another very English Englishman, offered us his flat in Chelsea to have a place to live in after we got married. So we moved in there and one day we found-- and we knew we could only have it for 5-6 weeks and we saw a flat opposite some workmen [sic] and Michael went over and said is the flat empty - it was very difficult to get flats these days, rented stuff - and they said yes and these are the owners and to cut a long story short we rented the flat and so we moved across the

road. My husband was out of a job because the British Film Institute had wanted to send him to Paris and he didn't have a passport. And they said you can't travel, end of job. I was teaching part time so that's how we survived. I taught right up until three weeks before Danny was born, and then he had some savings and I had some savings and then a friend had a travel agency. And they offered him a job but to work on the PR so that was it. And I was still pregnant and we had just moved into this flat when a telegram arrived from Ceylon offering him the job of economic advisor to the Central Bank, which he accepted. It was offered to him through the recommendation of Professor Joseph Needham who was a great China— he was actually a biologist and he wrote the whole history of Chinese science and medicine - and so it was decided that he sent a telegram back to say that we were expecting a child and that he would come soon after its birth which he did and I joined him 6 weeks later. Which I did. We are now talking about '58.

Tape 4: 7 minutes 31 seconds

BG: He went I think in— Danny was born in January '58 and he went out in March '58 and I got on a ship, he went out by plane, I got on a ship in Southampton, I think it was Southampton, in May of '58 with my baby. First class. The Ceylon government paid, first class on this ship, first class I mean, you know amazing, two weeks.

SR: How was life in Ceylon?

BG: Very interesting, it was the only 2 years in my life where, except for short spells for having babies, I didn't actually have a job. It is a very beautiful island. The problem in 1958 was already the problem between Tamils and Singhalese, the problem which developed much later which is now represented by the Tamil Tigers. The boot was a little bit on the other foot at the time, they were burning— Michael wrote to me saying, I am not too sure if you should come. They were burning Tamils in the streets of Colombo. What had happened, the Tamils had objected to the names of buses written in Singhalese even in Jaffna in the north of the country, north of the island, where everything was Tamil. So I went, I said: "There must be other people with babies, I'm coming", so I went. And I had a fairly leisurely life because, again, in the position that he held it was understood that one had servants, so the first place we lived in— it was customary to go to 'leave' bungalows, this is to say that Brits who went on leave would let people like us rent their bungalow. So the first bungalow was this huge Dutch bungalow and we had a cook and a house boy and a gardener and a bathroom coolie and a bathroom coolie came only to clean the bathrooms. He had hairy legs and shorts and everybody else wore sort of sarongs. And it was curious, very odd to live— I mean, I felt seriously outnumbered by the servants. There were only three of us and this sort of slew of people padding around barefoot. It was strange - and then there were snakes. And there was a snake on a tree, and then the cook came and said Oh, snake, lady, snake in garden. What was I supposed to do with a snake in the garden? So, a snake in the garden, so I got a fly spray or something like that, sfff, you know and I went up to the snake, and went sfff and it dropped off, stunned poor thing. So I said to the gardener: "It's dead", I pronounced it dead, it probably wasn't, so he put it onto the fire. And you know, do I know the difference between harmless or poisonous snakes. So we had all these excitements, so then I went— we did some travelling, we went to see all the sites. I mean, having seen all the sites in Peru like Machu Picchu and so on I now had the privilege of being the other

side of the globe and going to places like Sigiriya which has all those fantastic caves with the paintings of these lush females, I mean obviously courtesans or something.

Tape 4: 11 minutes 40 seconds

And we made Singhalese friends, the Brits didn't want to know us because there was a British High Commission of course, but they didn't want to know us because Michael was appointed by the Singhalese government not through the British. We met them, but we didn't have a lot to do with them. So our friends were Singhalese, lovely.

SR: So you come back after two years and how does young –

BG: Well, we had our second child there. Paul was born in Sri Lanka - in Ceylon - and we had a lovely woman, a lovely woman obstetrician, who had done her training at the same hospital, namely Hammersmith Hospital where Danny was born, so you know all these things come together. She was a Tamil lady who promptly did the circumcision on Paul, I mean what do you do, she knew all about it, so that was that one sorted out. We were very friendly with the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires. Netel Nellorch [?]. Mean anything to you? Netel Nellorch and his wife. Erika originally came from Vienna and they had three children, Yali, Yippi and Nonni, and you know we had relationships with them and that was lovely, and our Singhalese friends. And after two years I came back but they had not renewed Michael's re-entry visa so we came back via Israel. So he stopped there and I came back with the two kids on my own. And that was another difficult time of my life. Where's the money coming from? I had a little bit of money saved. We had let the flat which was now empty because the tenancy had come to an end, so there was no money coming in and I went to see Lord Lever and Amnesty International, a chap called Martin Ennals, please will you help me get a visa for my husband and they tried this and they tried that. Do you know what I did finally? I picked up– I looked in the telephone directory where it said Home Office and I dialled the number and I get through to the switch board and I said will you please put me through to the Home Secretary and she did.

SR: Try today.

BG: Well, I got through to his assistant with a long double-barrelled– you don't know me but my name is so-and-so. I am here with my two children and fortunately one of started crying. My husband is in Israel and born in Manchester and for all sorts of curious reasons he's lost his British– without ever renouncing it has lost his British passport. I want him to get his visa. Leave it with me, he said, ring me same time tomorrow. Very nice, I gave him all the details. And he rang me next day; he said, I'll think you find that the visa's going through within the next few days. [Click] I did. Fortunately the British High Commissioner in Israel had been at Cambridge with my husband, so that was alright and he was quite actively looking for the answer and he - and this might interest you maybe - the chap, the High Commissioner, said to him, you know I have been in many posts and we have a lot of work finding out what is happening, but in Israel they come and tell us. You know, I think he didn't have a bad time there, except for the insecurity of not–

Tape 4: 15 minutes 39 seconds

SR: For how long was he there?

BG: After I came back probably nearly a month, which was not easy, not easy either for the children, I mean the older child who knew that dad's missing, but he came back.

SR: And you went back to work here?

BG: I then, yes, I did then for many years part time teaching English as a Foreign Language. And then Michael got a job with the Petroleum Press Service, which didn't impress him, then he got a job as the assistant editor of a journal called *The Banker* and the editor died quite soon after and then he became the editor of *The Banker* which was a very respectable journal. And then somebody in the City took an interest in him and one of the big broking firms headhunted him so for the last six or seven years he was the economic advisor to one of the broking— City brokers. So I mean, we could afford to live.

SR: When did you go back to Germany? Did you, when did you go back and visit Germany?

BG: The first time I went was with my ex-husband who went to an international architectural students' conference in, guess where, my home town of Munich and that was in 1950 and not everything had been built up and the press was interested in this conference and was delighted to find somebody who could speak English, namely the wife of one of the participants. And they said what did I think and I said I am very impressed by all the building that is going on. What I am not impressed by is some of the whingeing that is going on, because, damn it, who started the war? And of course it was all reported except for that last remark. They couldn't— nobody could talk about anything then, nobody wanted to talk. I visited my father's good friend, a really good friend, not a Jew, Eisenhofer, not Eisenhower, but Eisenhofer who was decent and who would have protected my brother when he called on them after leaving the school on Kristallnacht and his wife wouldn't have him. And it was his wife who said to me at that time when I visited them, standing in the bay window she said, well, you did alright then, you missed all this, looking, pointing to all the rubble. What a cow, you know; she didn't know what the Jews went through.

Tape 4: 18 minutes 55 seconds

BG: Or she didn't want to know, she was just sorry for herself and this being sorry for themselves, I don't know how long it lasted, but it was still going on in 1950. I then went back—

SR: Did you go in that time back to your house to where you—

BG: Yes, I went back to where we had been living and from where we had been ousted already before I came to England because it was this nice residential area near Hitler and I went back there to find that in the whole street only one bomb destroyed a block of flats and that was ours. It had been rebuilt, but it looked quite different. Then, we had gone there by car, then we drove out to my little village.

SR: Did you meet the neighbours or other people?

BG: No, I didn't go in.

SR: Didn't go in.

BG: No, didn't go in. We went to Walchensee and we were approaching the lake and I felt really like being rubbed across sandpaper, you know it was quite painful, but somebody hitched a lift and my future ex-husband stopped and picked him up. I really wanted to cry, but I was inhibited, so I didn't, so I had to sort of swallow whatever emotions I felt. That's when I visited the farmer's wife who said I am glad you are alive. That was good and then—

SR: Tell us again the story about when you saw the farmer's wife, because you told us before—

BG: We went there and she said she was glad, she said, I'm glad you're alive, but then she said in the end we peasants were the best off, because we were free and then she said, sort of like, oh, by the way, I did hide a Jewish couple, but then after a while they left, but they couldn't really touch me, the people in the village, because they knew that we provided the food. You see, so that's how she felt protected. She was lovely and I said do you still— she offered me tea and cake or something and what about your bread because she was always giving me bread and butter and buttermilk with little bits of butter floating in it. She said she no longer makes the butter and she no longer bakes her own bread and I realised the changes that had taken place.

Tape 4: 22 minutes 3 seconds

BG: I went back to our little house, which had been bought at the time legally, but to the disadvantage of my father. They rang up my father, I am going back to '38 now, or even '37, they rang up my father, Gestapo did, in his office, and said if you ever go back to your house we'll burn it over your head. And he happened to have a client in his office at the time, client from Berlin who either overheard the conversation or my father explained what it was. He said, I'll buy it from you there and then, but my father could only ask for, I think, a tenth of the value of the house. But my father said Done! I'd rather you had it. And all the legal documents were drawn up there and then, so when I went back in 1950 it was in fact that couple who lived there. What my father did not know at the time, but found out later, was, in fact, Herr Kernreuter his name was, his wife had a Jewish father, so she was partly Jewish which made their son a Mischling, so he was not allowed to join the army, but was doing forced labour, but survived the war. So in— they lived— the Kernreuter parents lived and died there and were buried in the churchyard and subsequently the son lived— and did not die in our house but had it pulled down and built a stone villa and that upset my father. Upset me, too and I think my brother, you know, because we left them the house, our little house. They didn't need [it] any more, but he thought well, he wanted a proper villa. And then he got married and I dare say, his widow is still there, I don't know. I don't want to go back there.

SR: Did you go again?

BG: I subsequently went with my husband and my children because I wanted to tell my children everything, about how when the Nazis came to look for Feuchtwanger we were able to find— we knew the way through the forest to get to their house and warn him to go away and I knew where all the mushrooms grew. Except, when we went back after the war they'd cut the trees down and that was another shock to me, where is my forest, because we were on the edge of the forest. No, I told my children everything of what happened.

SR: How old were they?

BG: First time we went, it was— they were probably 8, 10, 12

SR: Oh, they were young.

BG: or 7, 9 and 11, something like that.

SR: Were they interested in the story?

BG: Oh, yes, yes, very interested.

SR: Are they interested in Judaism?

Tape 4: 25 minutes 25 seconds

BG: Yes, funnily enough.

SR: Yes?

BG: They are all atheists, passionate atheists: well, they are all scientists, difficult, well there are religious scientists, but rare. But only one married out, the one who married that beautiful Julie. They adopted two children, who are being brought up Jewish, that's interesting. They will tell you that they identify with their history and that's why they are Jews. And when Danny my oldest one married an English Jewish girl from whatever it is called, the sort of conventional— the West London Synagogue, Hugo Gryn and all that, they were married by Hugo Gryn, and I said to Danny, as an atheist, how do you cope with being married in a synagogue and he said to me, but mum I have nothing against ritual. So he's married to Emma and Jeremy is married to an American Jewish girl whose mother was a Hebrew teacher and she's a Hebrew speaker and they met at the Weizmann Institute in Israel and she is more fervently interested in her— even religious background although she would accept it only herself as ritual, but Jeremy is quite happy to go along. We have Shabbats Friday evenings here since she—

SR: Was it always or since she came?

BG: No, that's Melissa because both she and Jeremy were working, because both had jobs at Harvard and they didn't like it much and he got a job here at Kings, Guy's London to have his own lab and they got a— they're renting a house in Sheen, so we do Friday evenings here. Sometimes I go there, but I sometimes invite other friends. I

have a friend who converted to Judaism and she— I have sort of adopted her now and she comes and joins us.

Tape 4: 27 minutes 54 seconds

SR: So the connection with Judaism was all through the years or is it now more developed?

BG: I completely lost it for years. I completely lost it for years after I married, or even before I married my first husband, until one day - I was teaching in Bristol after the temporary job at the university, I got a job at Bristol High School for Girls - and I received a letter from my father saying Yom Kippur is on whatever, such-and-such a date and it happened to be the day I opened the letter. I walked to school, walked straight into the headmistress's office and said: "I'm terribly sorry, I don't know if I told you I am Jewish, I should have told you before, but it is the Day of Atonement today, would you mind if I had the day off?" She said, no I don't mind, I'm sorry you didn't tell me before, but it's alright. I walked out of the school, found my way to the synagogue and felt nothing. It was so strange to me because they were Orthodox. And you know it was just so different. I felt— when I say I felt nothing; I felt no affinity with them. But I was glad I had done what I had done, and that was my first step back.

SR: I am interested to know how did the refugee experience influence your life?

BG: How what?

SR: The refugee experience

BG: How it influenced my life?

Tape 4: 29 minutes 32 seconds

SR: Yes, how did the premature, let's say, ending of your childhood influence your life, do you think you have any emotional effects of leaving home at such a young age and what did it bring to you as a person?

BG: Well, I must tell you another story, which is possibly an answer. One year I was invited back to Munich by the Mayor, you know some German cities invited refugees back at their expense and I was invited back with my husband. My children were already grown up and we were put up in a hotel, little hotel bang in the middle of Munich and we got there at three in the afternoon and suddenly found that we were hungry. Now in Munich you can eat any time of day or night, and we went to a sort of pedestrian area and walked into one of the beer cellars and ordered Weisswurstl and potato salad, a very Bavarian dish. I took one mouthful and burst into tears and my husband said, what is the matter. And I said, I don't know. To this day I don't know. I just have to— it was sort of a wallowing cry, I was just overcome with some emotion and I think that is when this irretrievable loss of original identity hit me. So maybe that was when it was coming together who was I, who am I and what is the bridge. I think I have got there, I think I have got there. I remembered that when— my first few days at school in England I discovered something, and that also has to do something with your question. I suddenly realised, they don't know who I am, because I was in

this community in Munich with Jewish friends, with non-Jewish friends. But the people I knew knew who I was. And here I found myself and these guys didn't know who I was. They don't know and I thought I'll show them who I am and that was another thing that was another reason why I studied. I'll show them who I am, so being a refugee maybe made me more aware of who I am. I didn't think of myself as a refugee.

SR: You didn't.

BG: No, I never thought of myself. I don't even think of myself as a refugee now. I just came here. I came here. I came here for a good reason and I came here with the Kindertransport. Thank goodness it existed. But I don't— I don't think I have ever attached the label refugee to myself.

Tape 4: 33 minutes 0 second

SR: Or a victim. You didn't attach more the refugee in a sign of a victim. [sic]

BG: I don't want to be a victim. No, no.

SR: But I reckon that the refugee experience forced you to be a survivor and to do things in life.

BG: Absolutely, absolutely. And you see there's nothing you can't get something positive out of, I imagine. I survived and that's great. You know, Hitler, damn it, is dead. You know, it's lovely.

SR: And how do you feel yourself, how would you define yourself, Jewish and German, English, German Jewish?

BG: I am a Bavarian Jewish Brit and that fits. And when people think that I have to be one thing or the other, not necessary, we have many facets. I am Bavarian, when I speak German I speak Bavarian, I can speak proper German, but why should I? I am definitely British and I will tell you when I actually feel English, when I'm abroad, I mean in France, "*Je suis anglaise.*" I am an English woman. When I am in Munich, no I am a Bavarian, maybe a funny Bavarian to them, but I am a Bavarian.

SR: Do you feel at ease with the German language and Germany? Just a second. [Pause] I asked if you feel at ease with Germany and the German language.

BG: I must tell you, I have German friends who are in their 30s, 40s and maybe early 50s. They have nothing to do with the Germans that I wouldn't want to meet. I would not want to meet anybody older than me because I would not know who they were or what they were doing. I asked this lovely Doctor Häntzschel, this historian who wrote the article, and asked actually what brought you into what they call exile research, Exilforschung, and she was hesitating and she finally said, it's because my mother is a Nazi and she is still alive. So she has to battle with that. Now I cannot talk about forgiveness because I cannot forgive the second or third generation something that they haven't done. To me, I take them as they are and the people I meet, all of the

people I've met are fantastic and I have met a whole lot of them from Bremen down to Munich.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 20 seconds

BG: As for the others I don't forgive. You can't forgive the unforgivable. Not on, never. May they rot in hell is what I say.

SR: And where is your Heimat?

BG: My Heimat is in Munich, but I feel at home in England. You can't change a Heimat, it is where you were born and brought up. I have two pictures of Munich on the wall there; I have pictures of Walchensee in the kitchen. Yes, I think of it with great affection, would I want to live there now? I doubt it. You can't really turn the clock back. No, I love being here, I love being in England.

SR: And what in your character do you think you have brought from Germany, from your culture?

BG: Oh, certain Bavarian vulgarity [laughs], since you ask. From my German— you see I don't feel German, I feel Bavarian. What makes me Bavarian? Yes, a directness, I think. A directness, a love of pleasure you know, I like good food, I like singing, I like dancing, I like being friendly. I mean the sort of— if you like, the extreme example of it is the Bierkeller where you all go like this [gestures]. Okay, I don't necessarily want to do that but you can't see that in a pub. Here they just get roaring drunk and fall onto the floor and I can't identify with that. It is a joie de vivre, a joie de vivre.

SR: Do you feel like you got the same chances like other English people?

BG: The same?

SR: The same chances in life?

BG: Chances?

SR: Yes.

BG: But I have been very lucky. I mean, I don't how many Kindertransport children got to be magistrates or actually even go to university here, manage to have jobs that they enjoyed. I mean work for me was never a burden, it is what I like doing, whatever it was, whether subtitling foreign films or teaching at the Poly or even, at the Poly I was seconded to the media services, helped making films for the business school. You know, I interviewed the Lord Mayor of London when it was a woman and all sorts of wonderful things.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 16 seconds

SR: Could you tell me a bit, we didn't talk about it, about how you got to be a magistrate and what —

BG: Well, I bumped into a colleague at the Poly, doing some photocopying and he very proudly told me that he'd just been made a magistrate and I said how did that happen and he told me. And I said, what sort of work do you do and he told me. And then he said, people like you should apply because at that point— time was when you were put forward by your political party. So you got a politically balanced bench and there were always 3 people sitting. But they ran a bit short of people in the 50s, no in the 70s and you could apply, so I said yes, yes, yes and I didn't, and then by chance bumped into him again although I didn't see him from one end of the year to the other and he said have you written. And I said to whom do you write and he gave me the address, Lord Chancellor's office, House of Lords, SW1 or something, so I wrote and had a very snooty letter back saying, well you know, bla bla bla, but would I fill in the form. So I filled in a little— it wasn't very complicated, little form and sent it off. And then I heard nothing for a long time. And then I had a letter months later saying the Lord Chancellor has it in mind - you know it is wonderful expression - has it in mind to appoint you, but you would have to— if you really— terribly vague, but I would have to agree to be trained. You know when you are a teacher you love the idea of being trained. Yes, yes, I would love to be trained and sent it off. And the next thing I heard was from the Richmond bench saying would I come to an interview. So I went to this interview and there was this sort of horseshoe of people. And the first question they asked me was, Mrs Green, what is your attitude to crime and punishment, so I felt like saying can I come back tomorrow and tell you. I had to think on my feet. And then at the end of the interview, they said, well if we are interested, you will hear within weeks. No, if we are not interested you will hear very shortly and if we are interested you may not hear for months because it depends on what vacancies we have on the bench. So that must have been autumn and come December a red book was delivered by a little chap on a motorbike and it said "for newly-appointed magistrates" and I burst into tears. And then we had training and then after 5 years, you are eligible to get the speaking part in the middle but you had to be voted in as chairman. And I got that after 5 years and that was scary because suddenly you are running the court. You know, you have got your two wingers and you have got your clerk down there and if the worst comes to the worst you have got a little button which brings a light on in front of him and he leaps to his feet and turns round, but you're kind of in charge. But it is interesting; I worked both in the main part which in the criminal court as well as the family court. And I preferred the family court because in the criminal court you had to be reasonable, you had to be sure beyond reasonable doubt whereas in the family court you could judge on the balance of probabilities, which I prefer. I always have doubts; I mean who can be dead certain.

Tape 4: 43 minutes 31 seconds

BG: And also you can play Solomon in a family court.

SR: Okay. What would you say career-wise was your main achievement?

BG: Career-wise, probably teaching the interpreters, future interpreters, students at the Geneva School of Interpreters and my subject was translation. And I produced several good interpreters, I helped produce several good interpreters, I think, because translating and interpreting are so important and when you think if an interpreter gets it wrong what chaos it can cause, what damage it can cause— I did once do a legal

interpretation, a friend who had to do a court case somewhere in Kent and took me along and that was quite interesting. But no, I think— if my career was basically— in the teaching it was that, in the subtitling it was one of the films that I did, *Calabuch*.

SR: Tell us again about the films that you subtitled.

BG: Well, I did all the Spanish films and then— oh, I did a German operetta, oh, that must have been quite good although that it didn't see the light. Well, what happened was, there was a German operetta and I translated it so that you could sing my subtitles, they both rhymed and scanned to the music that you heard. That was good, but the guy committed suicide and the film was never shown. I was paid, but the film was never shown, that's not the object of the exercise, I wanted the film to be shown. But no, that was nice, too. And I suppose being published, having some short stories published in prospect. Yeah, that must be a feather in my cap. I feel very humble about it really, I think. I think if you want to tell a story it kind of— it's almost like being sick, you know, you have to do it, and then to get it right is quite painful and when it's finished you doubt whether it's any good. And you send it— and I almost don't want to put it into the post because I get so scared. And then the next thing is I get £100 cheque or something and I think, wow he liked it! So yeah, I think you just— you can't go through life without courage unless you want to suffer. It's probably— you need courage and love and tenderness, especially tenderness.

Tape 4: 47 minutes 10 seconds

SR: Is there anyone special to you who you would like to mention and talk about who we haven't mentioned?

BG: Apart from my lovely husband, I suppose my sons who— I mean I'm prejudiced in favour, you realise I'm their mum. But, again, people say, are you proud of them, no, I'm totally amazed, totally amazed. I mean they are nice, you know, they are really nice guys, apart from being bright and that is just lovely for a mum. They— professionally they're doing okay, I mean I am the only person in the family with only one degree, they all have PhD or what have you, so it's okay, I can hold my own. I mean this room was full of blokes and me. There was my husband, we could— we had a piss-up here with my father, my father-in-law, with my husband, with my three sons and me, so it is all chaps. And that's very nice. The result being that I know men rather better than women; women always amaze me. But no, my sons are lovely and I love my daughters-in-law and I adore my grandchildren. You know, if you can fill your life with love and affection like that, do I owe it to Hitler? I wouldn't have been here if it hadn't been for him. And he is dead, finished, and I'm here.

SR: Did you have— did you discuss with your grandchildren your past? Is it different, let's say, from the way you discussed it with your children.

BG: Well, the oldest is only 11 and he is the one in San Francisco, but he asked me to write the story of my uncle, the black sheep, you know the one who skied into Yugoslavia.

SR: The one who did the photo?

BG: Exactly. Onkel Ernst who took the photo. And he loved that story, so that is what he knows. Michael who's nine, when he and his parents - this was before his little brother was born - were in France we went down to Gurs which was a concentration camp. And his mum explained everything to him and then he came to me and he was only about 5 at the time and he said to me, I hope God punished all those bad people. And I said you know something, Michael, I think they are all dead, they are all dead and we are alive and he was happy.

Tape 4: 50 minutes 44 seconds

BG: So, yes, I would never not tell them what they ask and if they don't ask I will tell them anyway. Because some parents can send a message to the children: 'don't ask'. I have a friend to whom that happened and he said, no, no we want to protect them. And then I asked the son on a different occasion, have you asked your father and he said no, no, no we don't want to dwell on the past. I said: "We are not talking about dwelling, just ask." You see, but they give that message, so I would never not talk.

SR: Have you any message for anyone who will watch this video in the future. Have you got any special message about your life for you as a person?

BG: Yes, some unpleasant things can happen to you, but how you deal with them is in your hands. How you deal with what is given to you, which may be beyond your control, how you deal with it is entirely up to you. And it's your life, your responsibility. That's what I would tell my kids, that's what I would tell my grandchildren, you can't have everything you want, it doesn't mean to say that you can't dream. But accept reality courageously, don't recoil, don't step back, say yes to life.

SR: Bea Green, I thank you very very much.

BG: Thank you.

SR: Okay, now we'll do the photographs.

BG: Okay.

SR: Okay, are you alright?

BG: Yeah, I'm fine. I'm just sorry in case you are hungry or.

SR: No, no we are fine.

BG: Are you sure, no look he is hungry.

SR: Are you fine.

Tape 4: 53 minutes 5 seconds

SR: Could you please tell us about the picture when was it taken?

BG: This was 10th March 1933. My father had gone to the Police Headquarters to launch a complaint on behalf of a client whose store had been damaged and he'd been taken prisoner. And they said to him, oh Dr. Siegel, you are wanted in room number so-and-so which happened to be in the basement where he found a whole lot of Brownshirts who beat him up and kicked in his teeth, bashed his eardrums, cut off his trouser legs and marched him round Munich like that for an hour maybe, let him go near the main station. Now he never told me this, but he told it to a cousin of mine, they then said 'go!' and as he was going they cocked their rifles and said: "*Jetzt stirbst du, Jud!*" Now you are going to die, but they never actually fired a shot. So he got into a taxi and a man came up to him and said, look I have just taken some photographs do you mind if I publish them and my father said, do what you like. And that was the photographer.

SR: Do you know what was his name? Who was it?

BG: Somebody claims, I can't remember his name. There is— I can tell you later, there's a book on the subject. And he sent it off to America, and he was afraid to use it in Germany because apparently the other story is that when Hitler actually got to hear of it he was furious because he did not at that point want that sort of behaviour to be known.

SR: What was the date?

BG: 10th March 1933

SR: Thank you very much.

BG: Parents. Do you want them now? I have got them up there as well.

SR: Could you please tell me who is in the photo?

BG: That is my father and my mother taken in the 1930s, my father Dr. Michael Siegel and my mother Mathilde Siegel and that is how, in fact, I remember them although of course I did know them when they were older, but that's how I like to think of them.

Tape 4: 55 minutes 45 seconds

BG: That is the 27th, midnight of 27th June 1939 at the station, the main station of Munich in the train where at that point from Munich there were 26 children on that train. The tall girl is the daughter of Herr Sterneck who was the opera singer and the little girl came from the Jewish orphanage.

SR: Do you know who the picture was taken by?

BG: By a family in England, but I don't know their name. I've been actually trying to find her at various reunions, but without success.

SR: Thank you.

BG: 1929 Walchensee in Bavaria in the garden of our little house, little chalet if you like, where I am with my father and my mother and my brother Peter and me sitting on the back of the bench.

BG: I got the accordion when I was 10 years old, had a wonderful teacher and was playing in concerts with her at the age of 11 which is what I was then with my dirndl and my hair, my long hair.

SR: What year was that photo taken?

BG: That would have been '35, '36.

SR: By whom?

BG: Probably the same uncle, come to think of it. Yes, but I am amazed.

BG: Well, that was in Walchensee with a lovely friend Stefan Eisner when we were four and five respectively in 1929. I think we were quite sure we would marry each other, but we kind of found someone else each in due course.

Tape 4: 58 minutes 3 seconds

BG: That is in 1936 in the Jewish school in Munich where I am with all the rest of the class, most of whom, of course did not survive; I think out of the whole class only four of us survived. And there we are.

SR: Which one are you?

BG: I am the one who is resting her hands on her knees and bending forwards. On my left is Steffi Biernau, now Norman Bier [?] and the naughty little chap resting his face in his hand with a round face on the stone stairway is Bert Bilski who now lives in New York.

SR: Thank you.

BG: That is 1935, St Anna Lyzeum in Munich, my first year at the Lyzeum with all the other children, five of us Jewish girls.

SR: Which one is you?

BG: I am the one with the black cardigan right in front.

BG: That is autumn 1939 just before I was about— just before I went back, or went to school in Sevenoaks with a school uniform which was green, supposedly green and silver and of course, turns out to be green and white and it was at Nayland House and it was the school uniform of Nayland House High School, it was called Nayland House High School for Girls, but we had boys as well, there was a war on.

BG: This was in 1990, or just afterwards, when we made the documentary film “The Children who Cheated the Nazis” and we used only a human voice as background, one child and mine was the adult voice in the background in the film.

BG: That was the opening of the permanent Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum¹ to which the Queen came along with her husband and a few other dignitaries. And she stopped before the occasional bod including me and said: “This is a very important exhibition.” And I said: “Yes, your Majesty, especially for our children.” This was totally unrehearsed. I didn’t know what she was going to say and it didn’t really hit me until, like, a week later that I actually had been addressed by the Queen. But I was glad she was there.

BG: That is or if you like rather was our Häuserl, our little house in Walchensee in Upper Bavaria, I say was because the people who bought it had it changed and then subsequently pulled down altogether in favour of a stone villa. We all mind, mourn its loss, I think, the whole family because it was lovely.

SR: When was this picture taken?

BG: That picture must have been taken before we were obliged to give it up in 1936.

¹ Date confirmed with Imperial War Museum as 6 June 2000.