

**IMPORTANT**

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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	48

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Eardley
<b>Forename:</b>	Hana
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	10 October 1928
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Pilsen, Czechoslovakia

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	8 February 2004
<b>Location of Interview:</b>	Liverpool
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Rosalyn Livshin
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	2 hours 20 minutes

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

**INTERVIEW: 48**

**NAME: HANA EARDLEY**

**DATE: 8 FEBRUARY 2004**

**LOCATION: LIVERPOOL**

**INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN**

**TAPE 1**

RL: I am interviewing Hana Eardley and today's date is Sunday, 8 February 2004. The interview is taking place in Liverpool and I am Rosalyn Livshin. If you could tell me first your name?

HE: My name is Hana Eardley.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

HE: Our family, I come from the Kohn family. K-O-H-N.

RL: Do you have any other names?

HE: No, not as far as I know.

RL: Do you have a Hebrew name?

HE: No. Again, as far as I know.

RL: And no nicknames?

HE: No. It's funny you should ask me that because when I started teaching as Miss Kohn - you know how inventive children can be - I realised my nickname could have been worse, because they started calling me 'ice cream'.

RL: Were you named after anybody?

HE: Not that I know of. I can't think of any aunts and cousins that were called Hana.

RL: So where were you born?

HE: I was born in Pilsen in Czechoslovakia.

RL: And when were you born?

HE: On 10 October 1928, with my twin brother, Hans. So maybe the name came from Hans – Hans and Hana.

RL: So how old does that make you now?

HE: Rather older than I'd like to be, 75.

RL: Your parents, what were their names?

HE: My mother was called Irma, I-R-M-A, and my father, bless him, was called Felix.

RL: And where were they from?

HE: Well, I'm not quite sure. As far as I know, I mean, they were both from Pilsen. But going further back, I'm not sure. I have a feeling that on my father's side we probably came from Austria.

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

HE: What I can tell you is only what I remember as a ten-year old child, and that is that Granny, that's his father [sic], lived just around the corner from where we lived in Pilsen. And she lived with her daughter Ada, so father had this sister Ada and he also had two other brothers, Kuba and Frantiček, I think. We didn't see much of those two uncles; they used to visit Granny from time to time, but I think they must have lived out of Pilsen somewhere. And Granny - her name was Žofie - her husband apparently died in the First World War, was killed in the First World War. He would be on the Austrian side I suppose, but I know no details of that.

### **Tape 1: 3 minutes 58 seconds**

RL: Do you know what he did for a living?

HE: My father or my grandfather? My grandfather? No, I don't. I don't, I'm afraid. But my father's side of the family were obviously fairly well to do and sort of patrician in their nature. I remember Hans and I going round to Granny's to start piano lessons and they had a beautiful grand piano which we certainly didn't have.

RL: Do you know what your uncles did?

HE: Again, I'm afraid not. I'm not quite sure what father did. I think he was an accountant at a steel firm or something like that.

RL: What are your memories of your grandmother and where she lived?

HE: Of father's mother? I know I was always just a little— not frightened of her, but just a little in awe of her, because she was very grand and wore beautiful clothes. I can't remember – oh, we used to go for our Sunday lunch - there were three of us, because we had an older sister, Greta. And we used to go for Sunday lunch to both of the grannies, one Sunday to one granny and the next Sunday to the other granny. And we always had a very nice lunch. And

when we went on holiday to a village nearby, I think sometimes Granny and her daughter, Auntie Ada, used to come with us. My memories are very vague.

RL: So that's your father's side of the family. Do you know what kind of education your father'd had?

HE: I don't. I really don't. No, I really don't know.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing he would have had?

**Tape 1: 6 minutes 19 seconds**

HE: Well, I think in one of our documents I could see that we were Jewish. And as he said in his letter when he looked for somewhere in England where he could send his children when the Hitler threat came, he said, 'We're Jewish and we're not ashamed of it. On the other hand, if families that are non-Jewish offer to look after the children, we will be just as pleased as long as they find love and friendship.' So I don't think the religion actually meant all that much. We certainly weren't orthodox Jews. We went to Schul, I think, just on what you would call high days and holidays.

RL: Tell me something about your mother's family now.

HE: Now, mother's parents, they were called Hamburger. And grandfather Willem, and granny, oh, her name just escapes me, had a modest little shop and they sort of lived in the flat above. Very gentle people. And they had a son, so my mother had a brother, Uncle Arnold, he was one of our favourite uncles. He used to come and visit us every week and bring sweets. Hermione was granny's name, Granny Hermione. And again, I remember very nice Sunday dinners there. I remember grandpa was very proud of a gramophone, you know with a horn, His Master's Voice, and he used to gently wipe his records with a little rubber thing. I can see him doing that now. He wouldn't let us touch the thing, but just listen. Yes.

RL: What was the shop?

HE: Those – carpet beaters, because there weren't vacuum cleaners in those days. And cases and wooden bits and pieces. I suppose in a way a haberdashery type of place.

RL: And your mother's brother, what did he do?

**Tape 1: 9 minutes 14 seconds**

HE: I'm not sure. But he, I remember, had a typewriter, which for us children was something new and exciting. And I remember he let us have a go on it. A lovely person. He was a slight hunchback, but he had the most beautiful hands. I think my brother got his lovely hands and, appropriately, became a doctor, from that side of the family. They were lovely people, very gentle and very quiet. Yes.

RL: Have you any idea what kind of education your mother had?

HE: No idea at all, no. All I do know, and I've only heard about this since I came to England - because we were only ten years old when we came - but apparently, mother had ten sisters, there were twelve of them: Uncle Arnold and twelve [sic] girls. But ten of those sisters

died of consumption before they were 21, apparently. So there's the weak side of the family there. But it also makes me think that they probably struggled and were poor as a family.

RL: How did you find this out?

HE: I forget now, it was some distant aunt or uncle or somebody who actually came to England and visited and brought some photographs after we'd realised what had happened and everybody and everything had gone, who gave us this information. So we seem to have a weak strand of the family on one side and a strong one on the other. The other granny— just for instance, Granny Hermione, my mother's mother, when they were all taken to Theresienstadt in the war, the Czech concentration camp, the shock — she would have been 74 I think then — the shock was such for the poor old lady, she died within a fortnight of getting there. Now, Granny Žofie, that is to say father's mother, she was the only one to live right through the war and returned to Pilsen after the war; her constitution was so strong. And sons, daughters, grandchildren perished, and she got back.

RL: Where did she survive? Where was she during the war?

**Tape 1: 12 minutes 29 seconds**

HE: She was in Theresienstadt all the time, I think, yes. Most of the younger ones of course were sent on to other concentration camps.

RL: And how long did she live?

HE: This is actually very sad because we never got to see her. We wrote to her, of course, regularly, and sent her things. And in fact, my brother's foster mother let her know that she would be very willing to provide her with a home. But it was understandable that an old lady like that, she didn't fancy learning a new language and uprooting after all she'd been through. But the sad thing is that for the few years she stayed alive and hoped to see us, we did not— my brother and I, were not able to get over there to visit because of the Russian occupation. And our English foster parents were afraid that they wouldn't let us out of the country if we went back. But I've regretted it ever since.

RL: Were there any other members of the family that survived?

RL: From what I can gather— I mean in most cases, we have got details of how her son died horribly, like my Uncle Arnold, because he was a slight hunchback you can imagine he was one of the first to go. And grandpa, who would never have hurt a fly, gentle old man, oh I don't know whether it was Treblinka or one of these places, where they were just lined up and shot. In a way I'm glad I don't know the details about mother and father and Greta. All we know is that in 1942 on a certain date, they were sent from the Czech camp, Theresienstadt, which was not an extermination camp then, on — we've got the number of the transport — on to, and then they say: 'destination unknown'. And all we know is that they did perish. As to who came back besides granny, there was just granny and apparently, from what I could gather from her letters, when she wrote to us, apparently a cousin of ours, father's brother's— that's Uncle František, he had a daughter called Liesl. She would be about 21 at the end of the war. And apparently, she managed to come back, she even visited granny. But within ten days or two weeks of getting out, she died of TB, she was so malnourished. I don't know details of where she'd been. So no, except for Hans and me who had a home in England, nobody else survived.

**Tape 1: 15 minutes 58 seconds**

My sister Greta was supposed to be coming to England. There was a home, I believe, ready for her. And it was just some red tape I think that made them decide that she should come not at the beginning of August 1939, but at the beginning of September. With the Nicholas Winton Kindertransport. And unfortunately that was the one that was just too late. It was ready to set off and stopped because it was the day that war broke out. And none of those children, 250 I believe in that transport including our sister Greta, none of them survived. So that was very sad.

RL: Taking you back to your childhood, what is your earliest memory as a child?

HE: I was only thinking about this the other day. It's strange how little I remember. I suppose it's because so much new and different happened from the time that we came to England. One has memories of course, but I wish I had more. I remember going swimming with my mother and always being a little tentative about standing up and swimming properly. And then there was a children's pool and a ladies' pool on the river. And I was talking to mother and I fell into the ladies' pool and from that day I could swim because I had to! And I remember once going with my brother to the park in Pilsen. He was mad on football. And I was older, we were twins, I was sort of in charge, supposed to be. I think we must have been seven or eight years old. And there was a terrific storm that blew up and I remember how frightened I was because Hans didn't want to stop playing football. Anyway, we got over that.

**Tape 1: 18 minutes 23 seconds**

One of the memories is in winter, when we used to go skating, on each corner of the street there used to be hot chestnuts that we could buy and warm our hands and eat them. And when we came home from skating we used to pass grandfather's shop. We always used to go in there and have a hot cup of cocoa or something on the way home. One incident I remember: I'd been somewhere with mother, I suppose shopping, and she was, like the rest of the Humburger family, very gentle, very quietly spoken. And they must have already heard bad news from Germany, about Hitler and this and the other. Because as we passed two ladies, rather, what shall I say, loud-voiced and rather attracting attention in their bright clothes - and I remember it because it was so unlike my mother - when she said in a very bitter voice, 'It's that kind of Jewish person that's giving us a bad name.' Because they were attracting attention by being loud. I always remember that. And then- it was just a moment, but looking back on it-

RL: Where were you living?

HE: We were living in a flat. It wasn't our own house, it was a flat. I think it must have been quite a struggle, bringing up three children. As I said, I think my father was some kind of accountant. We didn't have a car or anything like that, but we were a very happy family. Lived in this second-floor flat, near a park. We enjoyed going to school.

RL: What was the address?

HE: The address was 18 Havlickovà Ul. in Pilsen. And I think I already mentioned Granny Žofie and her daughter Ada, Auntie Ada, lived just around the corner. I think it was in Jangilonskà, where we used to go for piano lessons.

**Tape 1: 21 minutes 35 seconds**

RL: Can you describe the flat to me, the rooms, what it looked like?

HE: Well, it was, as I said— because the main room was a living room, but was also a bedroom to all three children. And we had those sort of beds that go back into the wall, which were actually quite modern. And then there was a kitchen next to that and a little balcony, where we used to clean our shoes. And then there was my parents' bedroom. And then a room where we very rarely entered as children because it was kept for grown-ups and any grown-up visitors if they didn't want the children there. But our main room was the lounge, the sitting room, which you wouldn't have thought was a bedroom because all three beds sort of went into the wall. So it was a bit crowded when the beds were down. One incident I remember which strikes English people as rather odd was every Christmas we used to get a fish, a carp. The three children, we'd have our bath on Friday night, which was bath night. On the Saturday, father would go and buy a live fish, put it in a bathful of water and used to feed it up, fatten it up! And then on the Thursday, Wednesday or Thursday the following week, he'd get it out and kill it ready for eating. And we used to think this was great fun because often it used to slip out of his hands and wriggle all around the floor and then we were all trying to catch it. Rather odd memory, but it's there. And then other memories: just before we had these new beds which go into the wall, just after we'd got them, of course we had these lovely duvets, big duvets to sleep in. And they were lovely and downy and you could really sort of wrap yourself round in them. And my brother, for ages we used to find him asleep in his duvet on the floor. Because he'd tumble out of bed — they weren't very high — but never wake up they because it was so lovely and soft.

**Tape 1: 24 minutes 28 seconds**

RL: What would you do in your spare time as a family?

HE: This is the strange thing! I remember, as I said, going skating, we used to go for walks. I think our parents were quite keen that we did our homework. And the funny thing is I have very few memories of school work, and friends, Czech friends, before I came to England. Very few memories. I know we were happy, we sort of just accepted whatever came. And I think I was quite keen on getting good reports. But except for skating and swimming—

RL: Which school did you go to?

HE: I can't remember, to tell you the truth. It was a junior school, a local junior school. It wasn't a Jewish school. I'm almost sure we were in a sort of ordinary state school and I have a feeling— we did have Jewish friends, but we also had non-Jewish friends. I don't ever remember being aware of religion being a big thing, as far as I can remember.

RL: You mentioned visiting the synagogue on high holy days. Do you remember which synagogue the family visited?

HE: I can't remember the name, but it's a beautiful— it was a beautiful big synagogue not far from where we lived, I think within quarter of an hour's distance. And I believe recently it's been renovated, but not as a synagogue; I think it's been turned into some sort of a library. I'm not absolutely certain. My brother and I did go back to Pilsen, just once; when we went back in 1992 and that was quite a revelation. We walked past the old house, and granny and

grandpa's shop, which was very neglected. Everything— it all looked very downtrodden there in 1992. And yet, it was amazing when we went up to the park I think I mentioned, it's called Bory, Hans and I just looked at each other because it hadn't changed a bit. It could have been yesterday when we'd been there to play. So that hadn't changed at all, Bory Park.

**Tape 1: 27 minutes 38 seconds**

RL: How did you feel going back?

HE: Pretty awful. To think what had happened since. And a lot of Pilsen was looking pretty derelict. As I say, it's probably been vamped up a bit more. Old landmarks of course, it was— To tell you the truth, we never thought of going back past our old school, because I don't think I remembered where it was even; I know vaguely, but as I said we went round where we used to live and where granny lived. And then into the park. I think that's what hit us most because you could just think it hadn't changed at all in the— what was it, about 40 years, not quite, but 30 years.

RL: Did you meet anybody that remembered the family?

HE: No, unfortunately not. We did speak to the people who now live in the flat. But of course, and again, unfortunately, it was difficult because although I speak German, nobody seemed willing to speak German. And I'm afraid, both my brother and I, to our shame, have forgotten our Czech language except for a few words. I suppose that was because we were adopted by two separate families, which was good for learning English. We learnt English very quickly, we both passed for a Grammar School within six months of coming to England, but unfortunately we forgot our native tongue rather quickly, too.

RL: How big a Jewish community was there in Pilsen?

HE: Again, I really couldn't tell you. There must have been quite a large community, because – my geography isn't too good – but after Prague, Pilsen was one of the larger towns in Bohemia. And there was this beautiful synagogue. But with no sort of regular— as far as I know, I really couldn't tell you how big a community it was.

**Tape 1: 30 minutes 25 seconds**

RL: What memories do you have of any Jewish activities at all that you were involved in, or your parents?

HE: Again, I'm afraid, except for going into this rather awesomely beautiful building for, I suppose, Yom Kippur I have very few memories. What I do remember, once we were at home, I think it was a Saturday; it must have been a Saturday. And mother was doing her ironing, and I think it was John who through the window saw granny coming. And he obviously said to mother, 'Granny is coming round.' So we all scuffled round to get the ironing board out of the way! I think granny must have been more keen on keeping Saturday kosher than the rest of us. But I think my father and my mother, they were more of the attitude 'a good Jew and a good Christian are the same', and when it gets to the point where you are narrowing, that's it.

RL: Did you ever go away on holiday?

HE: Well again, this is what makes me think that mother and father weren't too well off, because we didn't go away much. I do remember this little village, I think it was called Nezvěstice, which is not far from Pilsen. I think we would go probably by train. But I remember this lovely river where we went swimming, and the countryside and beautiful forests, Bohemian forests. So we did go two or three times for summer holidays there, but that's all. Don't remember any— We certainly hadn't been abroad before.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs?

HE: Again, I really cannot remember. I have a feeling from some of the letters or reference to letters that I still have that we must have belonged to some gym club where we sort of went for exercise or sport. We went swimming, I don't know whether it was actually a swimming club. And then skating. But that was just fun with the skating; I don't think that was anything special. But otherwise not as far as I know. Of course we were only ten when we came to England, you know.

RL: Did you ever visit a cinema or a theatre?

**Tape 1: 33 minutes 22 seconds**

HE: Yes, I think we'd been to some theatre productions, whether it was round sort of Christmas time I'm not sure. But one that I do remember was, I think, our very first English film that we saw, which was 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'. Because when I came to England – and I'm still in touch with one of my neighbours' daughters who was nearly my age – and she reminds me that I made her learn 'Hey-ho, hey-ho' in Czech, because I remembered the words. So that film must have made an impression on us I think. So it must have had a Czech soundtrack because I'd learnt the Czech words to it. But as far as I know that was the only film that we saw before we came to England.

RL: How aware were you of the political situation?

HE: Well, I'm afraid almost not at all. I think we were kept fairly— we really didn't know much about it at all. I mean obviously we were aware that our parents were making preparations; they were telling us about going to England. But we got the impression that we were going for an extended holiday and to learn the English language, because we hadn't learnt any English, we just started learning a few phrases. I think one of the main phrases was 'I don't understand'. And I think – I don't know about my brother – but I think if I had known the implication of going I would not have left mother and father. But as children we were quite excited and happy to come abroad because it was put to us that we were coming to an 'aunt' and 'uncle', in inverted commas, in England to learn English.

RL: How long were your parents actually looking for somewhere for you to go?

HE: That again I don't know, you see. Because I think they only told us when they knew there was a likelihood. We weren't aware of all this in the background, quite honestly. So I really don't know how long it was. And I don't really know how my parents got to be accepted by Nicholas Winton groups. Because from what I can gather they were mainly Czechs from the Sudetenland. Now Pilsen isn't— I mean it's just at the edge of the Sudetenland, but I don't quite know how— I have a feeling my Auntie Ada was a secretary to somebody who might have put some feelers out for her or something. I'm not quite sure.

RL: Had you heard about Kristallnacht?

**Tape 1: 36 minutes 52 seconds**

HE: Not until afterwards, in England, of course. But not at the time. I'm sure my parents had. But I think they just kept— We were very naïve as children, not like children these days, of course. As ten-year-olds we sort of were in a children's world of our own in a sense, because we were not aware of the threat at all.

RL: And were you not aware of any impending feeling of war?

HE: It meant nothing to us, to tell you the truth. I mean, obviously what we were aware of was our parents' anxiety, that came through, that they were worried about something. But no, not really. I mean, looking back, even when we were travelling, at first we thought all three of us, Greta included, were coming to England on the one train leaving Prague. We'd never been to Prague even, you see, our capital. And then we just accepted the fact that Greta for some reason was going to come a month later. But we were still very fortunate that we had each other, my twin brother and I. I've only realised that since I lost him seven, nearly eight years ago, how much I really depended on him. I don't mean physically, we'd often not see each other for several months, but I knew he was there, he was at the end of the phone. And then of course when we got on the train, when we were put on the train, mother crying, the father's husky voice when he said goodbye, but it's still— the sense of adventure was still there. We didn't realise how much it must mean to them, how much it must have meant to them to say goodbye till much later, when we looked back on it.

RL: How did you prepare for leaving?

HE: Well again, I don't remember; except that mother packed our cases. And I suppose these document things had to be gone through; but it all seemed to be done without us being involved. Except for the fact that, as I say, that we were coming to England for an extended holiday — that was the excuse. And for the purpose of learning English. And of course we were excited: we'd never seen the sea, never been on a boat. We were very aware of the different atmosphere on the train from Prague, which was a 3<sup>rd</sup> class sort of train with wooden seats. And then there were German soldiers. Again, we were just told not to laugh or talk too much when they were around. But then when we went over into Holland, the different atmosphere, and the people coming on the train with drinks and cakes, I remember that.

**Tape 1: 40 minutes 48 seconds**

RL: How many children were travelling together?

HE: I think there were about a hundred on that transport, I couldn't say exactly.

RL: And were there adults looking after you?

HE: There were just one or two people who seemed to be in charge. I believe there were people who sort of were allowed to go and then had to come back, I'm not sure. But it was mainly just older children looking after younger children. And then of course when we got on the boat, the girls— I think overnight, the girls were separated from the boys. So that was the first time I became anxious, because I was split up from Hans. But then in England, when we arrived in London, of course we had these labels that identified us, big labels with numbers

on. I don't know what mine was. But then apparently it was a Mr Pomerance in Sheffield who was the head of the Czech Jewish Refugee Committee Organisation. And he had a sister living in London, so he'd arranged for her to pick us up and put us on a train to Sheffield. Because the Moroy family who were adopting Hans lived in Rotherham, and the Crooks family who were adopting me were in Sheffield, and they met us at Sheffield station. But the change from that train in Czechoslovakia and through Holland, Germany / Holland and this one— because Miss Pomerance put us in a 1<sup>st</sup> class carriage, pre-war. Those wonderful carriages, we thought we were in a palace. I remember that made quite an impression. Of course nobody could understand us, but she had obviously asked the stationmaster or somebody to put us off at Sheffield. So we just didn't know where we were going. It seems we were just— there were very few of us actually sent up north. Most of the children on the transport were sort of going to families in the south and around London, I believe.

**Tape 1: 43 minutes 32 seconds**

RL: How old was the youngest child on that transport?

HE: On that transport I would think three or four. And the oldest I think was fourteen, only because that was my sister's age limit, as I say, whom we were then expecting to come a month later.

RL: What had you been able to bring with you, what did you pack?

HE: Well, I think mother was so keen on us having a good wardrobe so that our foster parents wouldn't have to fork out too much money that it was mainly clothes. I did bring a book with me, a book called *Babička*, which is a well-known Czech book. But I don't remember bringing a toy with me, a doll or a teddy bear. I really don't remember bringing— I don't think we were refused, but we just didn't bring them. I think we brought a yoyo with us or something.

RL: How many parcels or cases were you allowed to bring?

HE: As far as I remember we were just allowed one quite large trunk which I still have. Whether we had some hand luggage — we probably were allowed a small hand luggage as well - but I just don't remember. One thing I do remember that mother packed for us, and that was a little sack, little bag of Czech soil. Czech soil just tied up the top. And a few photographs. Of course, again, the illusion: when you are going away on an extended holiday, you don't necessarily take toys with you. Whether it was because of that I don't know.

RL: Did you know at the time that this was a Winton Transport?

HE: No. Not at all. Didn't realise that until that Esther Rantzen programme, I don't know whether you remember. Was it 1980? Round about that time, when this was discovered. By this time I'd sort of severed relations with the Pomerances, Mr and Mrs Pomerance. I'd kept in touch with them for many years. And they'd sort of not gone into detail through whom— but obviously we were part of that transport, yes.

RL: So you actually saw that programme—

HE: On television.

RL: And then what happened after that?

**Tape 1: 46 minutes 40 seconds**

HE: Well, I can't remember whether I wrote to Esther Rantzen, or you know, somewhere just to enquire. And then we eventually actually heard from— I think it must have been Nicholas Winton's secretary or part of the family, and they were able to say, 'Yes, you were part of the group.' So it was only through that roundabout way that we found it was actually through Nicholas Winton.

RL: And as you say, your older sister, her transport—

HE: Unfortunately was too late. It was all ready to set off. Now, I heard conflicting views on this. I thought from what I'd heard that the train had actually set off and had just reached the German-Dutch border when war was declared and was sent back. But then I have since heard that apparently this transport, where children were about to board the train in Prague, never actually left the station. But that's academical, isn't it? The point is that it never left. It was a large transport, I believe that had 250 children on it and none of them survived, apparently. Because I know that Nicholas Winton, apparently, really regretted that.

RL: I know you've got a letter that your father had written to the English family that had promised to adopt you, with a few instructions to them. I wonder if you could read that out for us?

HE: Right. The rather stiff English translation: 'I'm sorry not to see in this moment the possibility to express my thanks for help granted in hard times. I only may hope that in future, and as soon as possible, I should be able to do it. You must not be concerned about the children's religious training. They have been taught a little Hebrew at school. But you know perhaps that in this country no great stress is laid on religious practicing. We are Jews and are not ashamed of it. And the children are brought up in a similar spirit. We should not like to see them forget their origin, as no upright man can agree with such an attitude. But we do not ask a special education for them. At the same time, of course, not objecting to it when there is a possibility without expenses for the foster parents.'

**Tape 1: 49 minutes 45 seconds**

The children are very fond of gymnastics, skating and swimming. They are modest as regards food and eat what they are given. Naturally they like fruit. All three children have frequented Czech schools. We hope that they will learn English quickly. We shall let them have English lessons so that they may acquire at least the elements of the language.' – Which was probably *thank you, please, and I don't understand*. 'It is obvious that each of the children will have a complete trousseau. But I should be very glad if you would let me know special wishes of the ladies who are so kind to receive them. My wife will do everything to comply with them.'

RL: When was this letter written?

HE: It seems— it's the 11 July 1939, so just a month or two before we came.

RL: And then I know that, as you left, a little postcard was written. Can you tell us about that?

HE: Yes, that was a postcard written to my foster parents, Mr and Mrs Crooks in Sheffield, from father. This was on the 31 July 1939 father has written: 'Dear Sir, I beg to inform you that Hana is leaving today at midnight from Prague with her brother in a transport of children to England. I take the liberty to repeat my request to be so kind as to let me know about the arrival of our daughter. Thanking you once more most heartily, I beg to remain yours faithfully Felix Kohn.'

RL: Can you tell me what happened when you were picked up at Sheffield? Can you take me through the events?

HE: Yes. May I just before that— I think I would like to report on record, because it just shows how things happen, not arbitrarily, but you know, you just don't know what's going to happen type of thing. Apparently Mr Pomerance, who was I think, I've just forgotten, yes, the Sheffield Jewish Aid Committee Representative— apparently Mr Moroy, who eventually with Mrs Moroy adopted Hans was— Mr Pomerance had a furniture shop, he sold furniture in Sheffield.

**Tape 1: 52 minutes 45 seconds**

And through business contacts, Mr Moroy was talking to him about business and he saw a photograph of my brother Hans and he said, 'Who's that beautiful little boy?'. And Mr Pomerance, who was of course a Jew, said to Mr Moroy, 'Well, it's one of the children we're trying to bring over on a transport from Europe, from Czechoslovakia'. And Mr Moroy probably hadn't heard of these transports or anything at all. 'We are trying to find a home for several children.' So Mr Moroy said, 'Would you let me take the photograph to show my wife?' And apparently they decided they would love to adopt this little boy. And then Mr Pomerance said, 'Well, that's wonderful, but we can't bring the little boy over without his twin sister.' So they tried all sorts of things and there wasn't one available— There seemed nobody to adopt me, at least not in the Jewish and business circles that Mr Pomerance had at his fingertips. So they passed my photograph on to the Quakers. And one lady who belonged to the Quaker movement was the neighbour of the Crooks family who eventually adopted me. Now, Mr Crooks was the headmaster of a junior school in Sheffield. And what this lady did who lived next door to him, she went round and said, knowing he was a headmaster, she said, 'I wonder if you'd be kind enough to read out this plea to your children', thinking of course maybe a family with a child that age would be willing, at least temporarily, to give a home to a refugee child. Now, Mr and Mrs Crooks had three boys: Tom, who was at university; Ted, who'd just finished studying medicine and was a doctor. And the oldest one was a chartered accountant. They were between 20 and 30 years of age. And apparently they'd always wanted a little girl, but couldn't afford more than three children to raise.

**Tape 1: 55 minutes 39 seconds**

And they just looked at each other apparently and said, 'She's ours.' Didn't let it go any further. Didn't announce it, just said, 'We're going to have that little girl.' So through the Quakers they were able to send us together. That's how it happened. So you can see what lovely parents we had. They took us in like their own children and gave us both a good education. So going back to the train, of course this was all very strange to us. So when we got off the train we knew, we'd been told, that there would be two families and that we would be split up. But they were awfully good because they made it clear straight away that we would be in touch on the phone and that at weekends we would see each other. But the funny thing was of course this language barrier. They knew no Czech, which is not surprising. We

knew very little English. But then John and I started arguing, because the Moroy's had a lovely home and they had three dogs. We'd never had— of course in a flat we hadn't been able to have a dog, in Czechoslovakia. So Mrs Moroy I could see was trying to make John understand that they had three dogs. And she just hoped he wasn't sort of anti-dogs. And I knew what she was getting at, and I said, 'Oh, you lucky thing, you've got three dogs.' And he said, 'No, they're talking about cats. Don't like cats.' And they could see us arguing, and I can see it now, because we used to laugh about it afterwards. But eventually, John wasn't sure, but I kept assuring him it was dogs. But of course Mrs Moroy told me later that the next day— she tried to keep the dogs away that evening, but the next day when John found the dogs he was just delighted, of course. So eventually we found it easy learning English of course because—

RL: I'm just going to stop you here because this film is about to end, so we just break off.

**Tape 1: 58 minutes 10 seconds**

**TAPE 2**

**Tape 2: 0 minute 12 seconds**

RL: This is the interview with Hana Eardley and it's Tape 2. I was going to ask you, now that we've arrived in England, what your first impressions of England were?

HE: Yes, it's difficult, isn't it, looking back. I know one or two things, obviously, like the lack of double glazing. You know, 1939 in England – in Czechoslovakia we had double-glazing. And on the inside of the houses it was always beautifully warm. And I was very much aware of the draughts and cold of – Probably because the Crookses lived in a lovely old house, but it was an old house with sash windows and draughts. Lovely open fireplaces, but you're warm in one spot and feel cold elsewhere. That was one thing I became aware of. Food was a little different, but I think I slipped into that easily.

RL: What was the difference with food?

HE: I don't know whether I really particularly noticed anything really adverse or not. I think of course the war broke out soon after I came to England, so the rationing started fairly soon. And I think things like porridge I wasn't too keen on. On the other hand I took to Yorkshire pudding, and the roast. And as far as I remember of course there wasn't a great deal of fruit around, but that was again the war. And things about the house, like a lot of the doors had knobs rather than handles, I found a bit difficult to get used to. But I think we slipped into the way of things fairly easily and quickly.

RL: Can you tell me about your first few days here?

HE: I don't know whether I can really remember those too well. You know, when you say 'the first few days', and you think, 'Well, what were my impressions?'. I know we used to phone each other, John and I – I'm calling him John now, you see, because ever since about 1949 he became anglicised and changed his name to John Moroy, so of course I slip into that easily – we used to speak to each other every evening on the phone and see each other every weekend to start with. So I suppose we must have compared notes. But we slipped into the way of life fairly quickly.

RL: How did you manage with the language at first?

**Tape 2: 3 minutes 45 seconds**

HE: Well, I was very fortunate in that because Mr Crooks being a headmaster and Mrs Crooks had been a teacher, or she had at least studied as a teacher before having a family. And took me in hand and every evening Mrs Crooks used to sort of help me with my English; and I found that extremely easy slipping into that, especially playing with neighbours' children during the day. What I found much more difficult and mystifying was the whole English mathematical system, with feet and inches and yards and oh, I thought it was so unnecessarily complicated. So Mr Crooks used to teach me every evening for an hour. He showed me the mysticism of English maths. And that I found much more difficult, getting off the metric system and into that system. So that helped me a great deal, because within six months I was able to take the exam and pass for a Grammar School.

RL: Now of course when you first arrived it was summer holiday time.

HE: It was indeed. Now again, the Crooks family and the Moroy family, they hadn't known each other before we children arrived. But they were very good indeed at organising things so that every weekend, either with the Crooks or with the Moroy, we were together. I remember going up to Scarborough and to various places, but together. And introducing us to beaches and the sea, which was of course very new to us. So as I said, learning English was no problem, maths was a little bit more difficult. But to start with, I remember going to Mr Crooks's school, he took me to the school and just let me copy something. And I remember seeing all these children who thought I was from another planet, I think, because of course they couldn't understand Czech. But when you're dropped in and you can't communicate you soon learn.

**Tape 2: 6 minutes 39 seconds**

Apparently I went straight to the dog; the Crooks had a black mongrel, a lovely dog called Bob. I spoke Czech to him and apparently he growled back. But not too harshly, we became very good friends.

RL: What was the school that you went to?

HE: Well, as I say, initially Mr Crooks took me to his junior school and I remember just going to just one or two classes and copying things. And then very soon after that we were put on to Home Service I think, what they called Home Service when the war broke out, and we sort of went to neighbours' houses, groups of children. I don't even know who taught us, whether there were actual teachers or whether some of the parents did it. But it was probably quite advantageous being in smallish groups because obviously I picked up the language better. So I don't really remember a great deal of any sort of official teaching up to taking the Grammar School exam, which would be, I suppose, the following spring, wouldn't it? And then after that I went to a Sheffield Grammar School, Hurlfield Grammar School and I settled in very well.

RL: Were the children evacuated at all?

HE: Oh, now: there were some troubles in Sheffield, and I believe some of them were— but I think it didn't enter either the Moroy's or the Crooks' heads to— having just adopted us, to send us away. And I think Sheffield had, of course, with the munitions, had quite a few raids.

And I remember sitting on the cellar steps instead of an air-raid shelter, but we never seemed actually in imminent danger where we lived. So no, we were not evacuated again.

RL: How did you get on with the other children at school?

**Tape 2: 9 minutes 5 seconds**

HE: I think I got on very well because I think what you have to be prepared for was, obviously, making faux-pas and people laughing, which I think is a great thing, really. I never minded people laughing at me because I soon felt they were laughing with me rather than at me. So that's how you learn, isn't it? So, no, I seemed to get on pretty well, fitting into school. I had no problems at school.

RL: Did you ever come across any hostility at all?

HE: Not as far as I know, not at all. No. There were no other— I don't think there were any other Jewish children at Hurlfield Grammar School, not that I'm aware of. The Crooks were very open-minded, they gradually let me— well, I gradually realised what the situation was. And also, through Mr Pomerance I had access to— there were one or two Jewish people who would take me to the synagogue now and then. But they sort of left it to me to eventually make up my mind. And I'd go with Mrs Crooks, who went to the Church of England, and I went with her to church once or twice. So I'm tempted to say when I was in need of any sort of divine sustenance I found it equally comforting to go into a beautiful church or into a lovely synagogue.

RL: What did your Jewishness mean to you at this stage?

HE: I'm afraid I have to say not a lot. In fact I was inclined to blame it for the situation we were in. As much as to say, why should this happen to us, me? I suppose one might just as well ask, well, why not? You know, it's just one of those things. But I must admit that, I just don't know how I got to know this chap— A Jewish girl who very much wanted me to visit, who was a very nice orthodox girl. I'm saying 'girl', now this was later in life. And I couldn't cope with it! It was on a Friday, and they were orthodox people where you can't put the light on. And they were extremely kind, and it was very sweet of them to invite me, but I thought I couldn't do it again. It was too restricting. And I feel the same in a way about Christian religion. I'm only too pleased for them, where people can get a lot of solace through their religion, but I just can't do that.

**Tape 2: 12 minutes 47 seconds**

I just don't get that sort of comfort from— To me it's almost like hiding from reality, to go too much in that direction.

RL: You say you sometimes visited a synagogue.

HE: Yes.

RL: Where was that?

HE: That was in Sheffield. Because through Mr Pomerance I got to know two sisters, two ladies, Misses Wolfman, who were charming, very nice. And I think they sort of thought I

ought to be— which was quite right, to just have somebody to go with to synagogue. And they'd invite me for meals and were very kind to me. And I knew them for many years, but both my brother and I, we didn't— we just felt the way things were we couldn't really follow any actual religion. Sort of follow the 'Nathan the Wise idea' of a good Christian and a good Jew and a good Muslim, are the same, or where they become— where they narrow too much that's not right.

RL: What about your feelings towards God? Where do you stand in relationship with God?

HE: Well, one hopes there is someone with omnipotent might which will eventually see that people get their just desserts, you hope, one day. And then I still hope that my parents and all the people who suffered are in some kind of happy heaven, eventually, I don't know what form it will be in. But you hope it's just not all doom and ashes. But on the other hand, not being able to— more in sort of nature, I just cannot think that there is any— I mean when you see all the suffering that goes on in the world, just natural disasters, you just wonder how there can be something— very conflicting feelings and ideas.

**Tape 2: 15 minutes 45 seconds**

RL: Coming back to school, if you can tell me more about the Grammar School you went to and how you got on there.

HE: I got on very well. I think I was what they used to call a goody-goody at school. And I remember we had a very boring history teacher. Oh, I love history, but if anybody could kill any interest it was this woman who just stood there, read out of a book and was as boring as could be. A good lesson for me, because I was a teacher later. I thought I'm never going to bore children as much as that. But on the whole I was very happy at school and enjoyed learning. And I remember my very good geography teacher, maths teacher. And I enjoyed my schooling. I actually became deputy head girl for a year or two, I think, couple of years in the sixth form. I was very happy at school. Except of course through that period I became aware of what had happened to my parents, so that the happiness obviously was saddened by that.

RL: Were you in touch with your parents?

HE: We were in touch at the beginning because through the Red Cross, and then through a distant aunt and uncle, [I] think they were called Kolb, who lived in Sweden which was neutral, we were able to get letters from our parents. Even I think after they'd gone— no, up to when they went to the Czech concentration camp, in 1942 I think. But even when the letters stopped coming we realised it was because of the war, and of course we had no idea what had happened at that stage. So not 'til much later—

RL: I know you've got some of the letters that you received. And I wonder if you could just read out the first one, I know this is translated. Could you read out the date and who it was from and then what it says.

**Tape 2: 18 minutes 31 seconds**

HE: '9 January 1940', so this would be just three months after we'd come. And in the meantime, again, Mr and Mrs Crooks and my brother's foster parents were very good. They took photographs and made sure that we wrote regularly, so that our parents would get our letters. But I have a feeling that already theirs were probably— what's the word, they had to go

through censors, I have a feeling, yes. Anyway, it says: ‘My dear little Hana’ – that’s Hanička instead of Hana – ‘We received your letter 10/12 and it gave us again great pleasure as you say you have found everywhere only good friends and you are showered with presents.’ I remember this was my first birthday in England and everyone was extremely kind. I suppose, knowing my– I never had so many presents in my life! ‘You seem to have lots of toys. Have you enough time to play?’ What I remember about home, with homework and sport, there wasn’t much time left for play, but we never really missed it. My mother goes on to say, ‘I’m also very pleased that all goes so well in school and that the teachers are so satisfied with you. I wish you continued progress and you give us great happiness. We never see your friend here. I do not know how she is faring at school.’ I think this must be referring to a girl called Hanna Kalamsovà, who was a particular friend. ‘She goes to a different school. Oli attends where Greta goes to school.’ Oli must have been a friend of Greta’s. ‘Your letter of the 17/12 has just arrived and your news has again given us great joy. So you have Baba as a good friend.’ – that’s the dog who was called Bob. I think she must be referring to that. ‘We also are doing well and we always think of you. Mrs Jelinek’ – I’m afraid I can’t remember who she is – ‘still comes and sends you her greetings. Greetings to all your dear ones and a thousand kisses from your mother.’

**Tape 2: 21 minutes 28 seconds**

RL: Thank you. So did you used to go on holidays with the Crookses?

HE: Well, again, I remember going to holiday to Llandudno with them that first year. That’s to say when I came in August, so it must have been almost immediately. And of course it was wonderful on the sand and the sea; that was all very new to me. And then after that we’d go somewhere at the weekends, because both Mr Crooks and Mr Moroy, they both had cars, which was a wonder to us of course, because we didn’t have transport at home. So it all seemed very glamorous to have cars and to go on holiday. And then of course with the war, we didn’t go away so much. We were at home most of the time. But I still met Hans regularly. We’d go to Rotherham Baths or somewhere swimming.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs?

HE: At the beginning, I don’t think so. I think I used to meet children and we’d play in the vicinity. I don’t think we belonged to any clubs. Eventually, after a year or two, I think the local Birleycar - it was a chapel and two of my neighbour-friends of my age belonged to this chapel. And they put on a dramatic show about gypsies, so I got a good part in that as a gypsy, I remember. A long time ago, just a little amateur dramatic production.

RL: Did you do other things like that or was that the only time?

HE: I think I was perhaps in– I was in the school choir, I enjoyed singing. But I don’t think I had a particular talent, either dramatically or for singing, although I enjoyed both to a certain extent.

RL: When did you become aware of what was happening in the war?

HE: You see, there again, I’ve often thought back and I thought, well, when did I become aware of it? And I think the Crookses, like my own parents, somehow kept it away from me. I wonder how I didn’t– why I didn’t read the newspapers more. But I don’t remember getting much of a feedback about the war till actually after the war. In fact, something I should have

done before now is to really sort of look back, go to the library and see what the papers were publishing, you know, during the late 1940s, to see what I could have gleaned. But I seemed to have my nose to the grindstone with books and things I needed for study. I don't think I was into newspapers and I don't think I was encouraged too much. Mind you, during the war I don't think we were told much, were we?

**Tape 2: 24 minutes 53 seconds**

So as I say it was then after the war and when they started discovering the concentration camps and so on when it came out. And of course for several years we were hoping that something would come up and got in touch with the— I think it was the Swiss—, well, the Red Cross, to try and trace things, but it wasn't easy. And I think the Crooks, they gave me a free hand, but they tried to— they didn't encourage it, let's put it that way. But I think by about 1949 it became evident, quite clear, that there was no hope. Although we had not as much evidence as we've had since we've been back to Czechoslovakia. But before we both went to university the Moroy's were very keen that John, that Hans – in his Grammar School he was known as Hans Kohn – but he went to Maltby Grammar School near Rotherham and enjoyed his time there. He was very much into football. They were very keen to adopt him officially. Now, the Crooks left it open, I mean I was one of the family and I knew I was and that was enough for me. They never officially adopted me. But the Moroy's did decide this with of course John's agreement; they wouldn't have done it otherwise. And I was just a little bit, not unhappy, but when they suggested, 'Well, we want him to take on the name John Moroy', I thought, well, I can get used to John, but are we going to lose our family name, Kohn? But when I talked it over with John, I mean it was his choice, obviously, I told him, I said, 'Well, what about this business of losing our, you know, our name?' But he decided eventually that maybe it would be a good thing. And so I thought, well, it's up to John. And so he's been John Moroy ever since. Some people might think it was not the right thing to do.

**Tape 2: 27 minutes 32 seconds**

RL: What made him take that decision?

HE: Well, I think from the Moroy's point of view they thought, perhaps, there still is prejudice, anti-Jewish prejudice, even in England I think, that with a name like Kohn as a doctor he might do better with Moroy. I think that was in the back of the mind. And, really, John had become so anglicised, and seeing that it wouldn't harm anyone, I mean if we were in agreement with it, so John decided he would. Now he's got a large family, of course, I sometimes wonder— but our parents up in heaven, I mean they'll know, they'll be just as happy for the children even if it's under a different name. So we've lost our family name. And there are loads and loads of Moroy's now because John married a very nice English girl and had four children, and they've now got eight grandchildren. But poor John, he died of a heart attack about eight years ago, nearly eight years ago. So he doted on his five grandchildren, and he's had three more grandsons since. He would have loved them, they are beautiful.

RL: Where was his wife from?

HE: His wife is a Rotherham girl and he met her— she was a nurse and he was a doctor. They met in a hospital.

RL: Where did he do his training?

HE: He did his training up in, I think, Durham or Newcastle. And was very happy up there. Yes, our parents would have been very proud of him. He was a very well-loved doctor. I have to smile, I remember sitting with Mary, we were crying and looking through the letters and cards that Mary received after John had died about seven years ago. Letters from his own patients, lots of patients. And one had put, in the nicest possible way, 'Although he wasn't English, he was a wonderful gentleman.' This was so— what an amusing thought, because you can only be a gentleman if you are English! But it was meant so nicely, you know.

RL: Where did he practise?

**Tape 2: 30 minutes 34 seconds**

HE: He practised in Rotherham all his life, strangely enough. They moved from a smallish house to a bigger house. And Mary still lives in Rotherham because they've got this lovely big house and the children and grandchildren all seem to still gather there. They've had a lot of lovely holidays abroad, but yes, he stayed in Rotherham as a family doctor all his life.

RL: How were the children brought up in terms of religion?

HE: Mary is— do you know, I'm ashamed to say this - she is non-Jewish - she goes to church, a fairly modern church, but I think it is Church of England, I'm not even sure, to tell you the truth. But I think they feel about religion a bit like John and I did, they got married in church and they are all good— what I call good, kind people and responsible, sensible people. But I don't think religion as such, or churchgoing, is very much on their agenda.

RL: Now coming back to you, if you can tell me what you did after leaving the Grammar School.

HE: Right. Well, I think in a way I drifted into wanting to study languages because I found them easy. I think as children in Czechoslovakia we must have had a maid who spoke a bit of German or who taught us one or two German songs because I found German easy. I found German easier than French, but I loved learning languages, so I ended up studying French and German at university and then teaching: German as my main language and French subsidiary. So that's what I did, I taught languages. Around Sheffield, partly in Whitefield, in Manchester, first of all.

RL: Which university did you study at?

HE: I went to Sheffield University and lived at home.

RL: How did you get on there?

**Tape 2: 33 minutes 25 seconds**

HE: Fine. I had an average degree; I think I had a 2:2 degree. But what I did find, although I just slipped into learning languages, mainly German, and then suddenly realised: I'd have to go to Germany! And I thought, what am I doing teaching German? But I think it was probably the best thing that could have happened. I went on a— I had a very understanding headmistress at Whitefield actually, my first school. Because at university my professor said, 'There's no need for you to go to Germany with the students; your German's good enough.' But then when I was teaching I felt I ought to have more oral practice. And the headmistress arranged

for me to go— she knew that I might not want to stay a whole year, but she said, ‘What about trying three months?’, which I decided to do. And I thought I might hate it. But it was the best thing I could have done, because I very soon realised that individuals, individual Germans can be nice people. And you know, it was that barrier of Germans, and I realised that bitterness was no good. I was suspicious of anybody who was older, two or three years older than myself and above that, you know, what they might have been guilty of. But, on the other hand, you can’t blame everybody for what a section of the people do. And I went to Solingen for a three-month exchange and then I came back. And then after a few years, when I got a senior position at Whitefield, I decided I ought to have a change so I went on an exchange and taught English in Salzburg, which was rather nice, for a year. And then I met my husband in Liverpool.

RL: Can I just ask you about your time in Germany, how did you get on as a Jew there and how were you treated? Did you experience any ill feeling?

**Tape 2: 36 minutes 2 seconds**

HE: Yes, trying to cast my mind back, this was 19— I graduated 1951, so it’d be 1958 I think when I went to Germany, Solingen. I’m not quite sure how much of my history they would know in Germany. In those days you didn’t broadcast those things. You know, it seems to be in the open domain now, but I quite honestly don’t— They probably must have known, I think, from my looks that I was at least partly Jewish. But the thing is, I was there as an English teacher from England and I don’t think religion came into it. I mean I certainly didn’t push it forward and say, you know, start a conversation and say, ‘Do you realise what you did to six million Jews?’, because I don’t think I was sure— But I only know for myself that I was glad I went, because it stopped me feeling bitter about the whole experience. And I do know that even one or two members of staff, I could just see - you know, the sort of Hitler gangster types there clicking heels - and I just avoided them. Had the minimum conversation with them, sort of thing, and no problem really. It was only three months actually, and most of the people and pupils, my landlady and so on, were very nice and very good.

RL: You say that after you graduated you went to Whitefield. Was that your first job?

HE: Yes, that was my first job, in Whitefield as a Junior German Teacher.

RL: And where did you live there?

HE: I lived in digs.

RL: And how did you get on in this new town?

HE: I got on very well. Because again, I used to be fairly— I used to love going to Manchester to the concerts, but otherwise, I’d often go to— at the weekends, I would go back to Sheffield where Mrs Crooks still lived. Mr Crooks unfortunately died of a heart attack when he was sixty-odd. But it was before I was 21, so that was quite a shock because I was very fond of him. I was very fond of both of them, they were lovely people. And I sort of felt, before I was 21 I’d lost two fathers. So I really felt that. And in the meantime the doctor son of Mr Crooks, my foster brother, who’s fifteen years older, he’d married and started up a practice in Liverpool. So when I was teaching in Manchester I used to go back to Sheffield for a weekend and the next weekend I would probably come to Liverpool to spend with them and

that's how I met my husband, at Woolton Golf Club. Not that I played golf, but my foster brother did, so through that I met him.

RL: And when was this?

**Tape 2: 39 minutes 49 seconds**

HE: This would be in the late 1950s I suppose. I actually didn't meet Steve, my husband, till after I came back from Austria. I spent a year in Austria, from 1960 to '61, I decided I wanted a break from --- I'd been in Whitefield for nine years, I think. And so I taught English in Salzburg, which was a lovely experience. And again, I still met people who I thought, I wonder if he was a Nazi because-- but I had a very good time for a year in Salzburg. Because with being musical, it's a wonderful place to be in.

RL: How did you come to choose Salzburg?

HE: Well I think one applied in those days to, as a language teacher, to have experience abroad. And on the application I think I simply put of the German-speaking countries I would prefer Austria to Germany. And at first I was hoping that they'd send me to Vienna, but eventually, just by chance I got to Salzburg and it was lovely.

RL: Again, were they aware at all that you were Jewish or not?

HE: I think by this time, 1960, things were --- Well, some of them were --- It was actually a boys' school with all-male staff except one, a widow of a prior teacher whom I became great friends with. I told her, you know, she eventually got it out of me what my sort of past was. And I think it sort of got round, possibly. But most of them, again, were very nice. Again, there were one or two that just reminded-- you know, touched a nerve, but on the whole it's a lovely country. And of course some of the things reminded me of home, some of the cuisine and way of life was in fact a bit more like Czechoslovakia had been than England. So in a way I fitted in very easily and happily. So it was actually when I came back, trying to get a job from abroad, and I sort of got a job in Liverpool and that's how I met Steve. So it had been in fact post-1961 and we married 1964. He was a real Liverpudlian.

RL: So what job did you get on returning from Salzburg?

**Tape 2: 42 minutes 48 seconds**

HE: Oh, I taught at the Belvedere in Liverpool which is a GPDS school. But the way it worked out there was less German than French and I could see that there was not much opening for that. And German's my stronger language, so strangely enough I got a job back in Manchester where I still had quite a few friends. Then I met Steve, who lived in Liverpool, so I only taught at Levenshulme in Manchester for a year then before coming back to Liverpool. Marrying and coming back to Liverpool. Then I did part-time teaching at various venues including the-- oh, my memory, Notre Dame High School. Just to show you how varied it was: Notre Dame High School which was a Catholic school, part-time. And part-time at the local comprehensive. And I also got a job quite easily for doing the orals for the NUJNB [i.e. exam board], for the German O-Levels, which took me all round the country really. And it was through that, when I did the orals at King David School, which is of course the Jewish School in Liverpool, they were just looking for a German teacher because they were just developing German into the sixth form for the first time. And so I didn't even have an extra

interview, the headmaster asked me there and then. And so I stopped teaching at the other schools and taught at King David's until I retired.

RL: When did you start there?

**Tape 2: 45 minutes 8 seconds**

HE: Oh, it would be --- you know I'm afraid I can't tell you exactly. But it would be probably post 1965, so let's say '66 or '67. And then I was there for about 12 years till I retired.

RL: And was that full-time or part-time?

HE: No, it was actually only part-time. My husband travelled part of the week and we tried to arrange it so that I could go with him when he was travelling. But it fitted in very well and I was very happy at King David's.

RL: I haven't really asked you very much about your husband. Can you give me a little bit about his background?

HE: Yes. I met him through my foster brother's introduction, taking me to social events at the-- Because I lived with them when I first started teaching in Liverpool, at the Belvedere. So I met Steve at the Woolton Golf Club. And I don't know whether it had anything to do with the way I had lost, so to speak, two fathers early on, but he was quite a lot older than me. It was his second marriage, my first, but we were very happy together for 16 years. He was buyer at Blackners, one of the stores in Liverpool.

RL: Did he have children to his first marriage?

HE: Yes, he has one son, Roy, who became a minister and married an Antiguan girl and they live in Canada. I still see them when they come over to England. They have two children, so I have got two sort of adopted grandchildren there too. They are grown up now. And then one of my foster brothers had two sons. One has unfortunately-- he died quite young. But the other son has a lovely wife and two lovely boys just in their teens. So I've got a lot of relatives as such.

RL: Where did you marry when you got married?

HE: Well, it was a civil do. My husband wasn't religious either, but he wasn't Jewish. So, yes we lived very happily for 16 years. He died in 1980. He was over 70, he was a lot older. But I've stayed on in Liverpool.

**Tape 2: 49 minutes 0 second**

RL: Had you already taken out naturalisation?

HE: Oh, I'm sorry, yes, that goes way back to when my brother changed his name, it all came together and we were naturalised, it must have been somewhere around 1949. Yes, we became British aliens [sic]. I always remember Mrs Crooks being very cross when she realised-- When I was in the sixth form, my school friends were all going on-- delivering post

at Christmas time, delivering Christmas cards. And I wasn't allowed to because I wasn't a British citizen. Anyway, in 1949 I became a British citizen.

RL: Did you have to register as an alien; did you have to register with the police before that?

HE: I don't think so. I think we were just a little too young to be in that category. We had to register as refugees, I think. I think on the card, on my birth— on the pass that I showed you it has something connected with that. But no, I don't think we ever had to be registered as aliens.

RL: Besides your brother, were you in touch with any other refugees? Any others that had come over?

HE: Yes, now this is the strange thing: I've got to know quite a few people since we have had these Nicholas Winton reunions. But really, for the first, I suppose, 20 years after we came here or longer, up to about the 1970s or even later, we really weren't in touch with them at all. We'd come with this group of children on the transport, but we didn't have personal contact with any of them. And I think especially with coming up to the North, Northwest, we weren't in touch with any of them. We sometimes wondered— remembered two boys, they were identical twins actually who were very naughty and they sort of caused a bit of a rumpus on the way. Just naturally naughty little boys, I think they were our age. We often wondered how they got on, or how they got on with their foster parents but we never were in touch with any of the others. And partly that showed how well we'd integrated into the families. We never really thought of trying to get in touch with them, or wanting to. We had English friends and just never did seek contact.

RL: At that stage in your life, did you feel different in any way to the children around you?

**Tape 2: 52 minutes 24 seconds**

HE: Well, I must say I did. I think that's why I had, what shall I call it, I didn't have problems with boyfriends, but I think English boys were a bit— I don't know how to put it quite, they didn't know quite what to make of me, I think. And I did feel that had I sort of been thoroughly English, I might have had more boyfriends in my earlier life. I had lots of general friends, but I don't know, I did feel sometimes as though there was just something— I often wondered if they thought there was just something a little bit different. But I must say that, through my own fault probably, I had less contact with Jews in the sense that I never joined any sort of Jewish community groups.

RL: Did you join any groups at all? Did you become a member of any organisations?

HE: I joined a scrabble group once and, I think, briefly a chess club. But nothing really permanently. Oh, and I've always been fond of art and anything to do with art and sculpture. And later on— I didn't seem to have time whilst I was teaching, but later on I was happy to join art classes and carving, wood carving, that sort of thing.

RL: Of course when you were teaching at KD, that way you came into contact with—

HE: True, I did indeed. But again, I didn't make, what shall I call it, perhaps full use of it, partly because I had a lot of— I felt equally at home with Jews and non-Jews. But I suppose

on the whole I was more in contact with non-Jews. And I used to— in fact, generally speaking, especially with pupils or when I went abroad, felt I could get on with any class, any station, any religion, I felt I could feel at home and make others feel at home whatever their background.

**Tape 2: 55 minutes 22 seconds**

RL: How would you define yourself in terms of nationality?

HE: Well, I must say both John and I, we felt more Czech than Jewish. We've always been very proud of being Czech. And you know, after the Velvet Revolution and so on, we went back to Czechoslovakia. I took my niece first, and then when my brother retired we went together. That's always been— don't like anything being said against the Czechs! Yes, quite proud of being Czechs.

RL: In terms of Britishness?

HE: Oh, right, well of course, that goes without saying! The beauty of our being British is you can be British and proud of it and yet be able to criticise. Oh yes, indeed, I mean good heavens, where would we have been without the British?

RL: So in terms of identity, you know you talk about being Czech and about being British, where do you feel you lie between those two?

HE: That's a bit tricky. But with the --- what shall I say, with living here so many years, I suppose I would definitely say I'm British first. But with Britain and Czech [sic], I think I feel a bit like that as I do with the religion, I'm proud of being both. We both became anglicised and got a British passport, in 1949 I think it was, so yes, definitely British now, but being proud of having been Czech as well.

RL: Do you feel, I've asked that before slightly, but in that context, do you feel different to the British? Do you feel that there is some part of you that's different?

HE: Yes, I suppose I do, because again, I found this more recently with joining the AJR and a group here in Liverpool, which are not just Czechs, but you know, Jews who've been through the Holocaust in one way or another, and losing a lot of relatives. And of course you do find affinity there. I think people who haven't suffered the way we have, only if it's even mentally, not physically, can't really understand what it's like. So in a way we find comfort in that. Yes, I suppose that's true.

RL: We just stop here because this film is about to end.

**Tape 2: 58 minutes 40 seconds**

**TAPE 3**

**Tape 3: 0 minute 7 seconds**

RL: This is the interview with Hana Eardley and it's Tape Three.

Now, we've spoken about your brother and his family, his four children and grandchildren and so forth. You yourself never had children.

HE: No, I had a different philosophy of life and I'm so glad that my brother's did differ from mine, Because it was a real shock to me when I gradually realised exactly what had happened to our family, like to many others. And putting myself into my mother's place, it must have been so terrible to say goodbye and to know that it was probably for ever. And I don't know why, but I just felt that history could repeat itself. And I couldn't even bear to think of having children. And yet, I love children. So I'm just grateful that I'm very close to my twin brother's children and grandchildren and hope I will remain so for a long time.

RL: So this was a conscious decision?

HE: Yes, yes, it was.

RL: At the end of the last film we were speaking about your becoming involved with refugee groups and refugee organisations in the last few years, AJR and the Liverpool Group. Can you tell me when and how that started?

HE: Yes. Again, I seem to drift into these things without having actual points to refer to. But one thing is that I've become recently very friendly with Margaret and Eric Strach who you will probably meet. Eric is Czech, he came to England under different circumstances and settled here. But although we'd been almost neighbours for many, many years, we only realised this about ten, fifteen years ago. Anyway, with their friendship, through them, I have really got to know this group much better. And I think it has blossomed and spread a lot in the last couple of years where people keep in touch and talk about old times. We get the odd lecture and it's quite comforting and interesting to see how the change from living in one country to another and all we've gone through, there are similarities and yet there are great differences as well. And it's interesting and quite comforting to come together from time to time.

RL: When did this group start?

**Tape 3: 3 minutes 27 seconds**

HE: I'm afraid I can't tell you exactly, but it must be about four or five years ago.

RL: And how long have you been connected?

HE: Well, that time.

RL: How big a group is it?

HE: Well, there are about a dozen of us get together, but it could be less, it could be more. Because it is not just the immediate vicinity of Liverpool, we get the odd person from Manchester, although they have their own group. But I think the Liverpool Group includes people in Wales who find it less easy to join us. So I think the actual group is larger than any one meeting.

RL: And how often—

HE: About once a month we meet.

RL: Do you attend each month?

HE: Most months. Once I was indisposed, but yes, usually we meet once a month.

RL: Now, before that, were you involved with the Kindertransport reunion?

HE: Well, of course not for many years. Not until it was publicised through Esther Rantzen. And since then, more recently, when anything special is taking place connected with Nicholas Winton, including his microlite flight recently— My niece and her little son came with me down to witness this and that was quite a happy occasion.

RL: So what kind of gatherings have there been?

HE: Well, different people give talks about either their journey or their impressions, what's happened to them, or their home towns.

RL: Is this with the Nicholas Winton children?

HE: Not only. Other refugee groups as well. I mean there were a lot that came from different parts of Germany that were parallel, so it includes those as well, of course. Or any 'foreign refugees', in inverted commas.

RL: So under what organisation is this?

**Tape 3: 6 minutes 6 seconds**

HE: It's all under the AJR.

RL: And what about the Winton children themselves, I mean do you get together with them?

HE: Yes. Again, they seem to have settled mainly around the London area, so I think they have more meetings perhaps than I can get to. But my brother and I went to the initial one, which was of course very interesting and emotional. And then ten years later, I think on the 50<sup>th</sup> or the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and of course Nicky Winton just goes on! He's 94, he's amazing for his age.

RL: Can you tell me about that first meeting?

HE: Now, that first meeting was in— I think it was called the Survivors' Meeting. And they tried to arrange for people from the various— I think there were ten transports altogether of roughly 100 children each - tried to arrange it for where people came from one area, like Pilsen, the town we came from, there was a table reserved for people in that area. And we met people of our own age and probably with their children, the sort of second generation. But they were all strangers to us; we didn't know any of them personally. But again, it was interesting to get together. But we haven't necessarily kept in touch in that way.

RL: Did you meet anyone who had been on the same transport as you?

HE: Well, we tried to find out, but it didn't seem like it. We didn't really. I mean they tried to arrange it so that we would, so there might have been --- But we didn't actually recognise any sort of similarities, closer similarities, no.

RL: How interested have your brother's children been in your background?

HE: They're all very sympathetic. And interested in as far as, for instance, I have found great comfort in the Beth Shalom in Newark, which was set up about six years ago by the Smith family. Because they've got this beautifully quiet area and a library, it's really an educational effort, with beautiful gardens. And we refugees or anyone can buy a rose in memory of the original Holocaust. And I have a rose there and my brother's children have also paid for a rose with their inscription on it. Of course for people they've never known, but through us they recognise --- So they haven't yet all got there, because young people live fairly busy lives these days. And some of their children are just a little too young to appreciate what it is, so I'm hoping that maybe this summer they will all manage to get there. It will be nice if they could all go as a family. But as I say, some of them already know; and I'm glad they've been and know the significance of it.

**Tape 3: 10 minutes 32 seconds**

RL: And your brother's children, you were mentioning that you've taken some of them back?

HE: Well, since we've been able to go back freely to Czechoslovakia, I have taken all four of them back to Prague for a brief visit for their 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. An invitation: I wasn't sure whether it would be, but it was, very eagerly accepted. And so I've taken them back and we've been to the Pinkas Synagogue where the names of all the Holocaust victims are printed. And so they got a sense of a bit of their history and they all find that interesting.

RL: Did any of them want to go back to your home town?

HE: Well, no, not yet. But I have a feeling they might get there, yes.

RL: Coming onto something slightly different: What are your feelings towards Israel?

HE: Mixed, I'm afraid. I see it as a deserved homeland for the Jewish people, but it worries me when I see all the violence. I know one can find excuses easily for the dreadful things that happen, for instance with the suicide bombers killing innocent people. But I think it's more violence breeding violence than stopping it. I wouldn't like to say how to resolve the situation, but I'm not entirely happy with the continuous violence.

RL: Have you ever had a desire to visit the country?

HE: To settle no, but to visit yes. But, let's say I haven't got there yet, but I would like sometime to visit before it's too late.

RL: Did your brother ever visit Israel?

**Tape 3: 13 minutes 17 seconds**

HE: He did, in fact. He and his wife, I think they were in Cyprus when they went on a short outing to spend a couple of days in Egypt and a couple of days in Israel. And I think they were quite— well I'm sure they were impressed by what they saw. But how much time they had to absorb it, I'm not quite sure. And whether it was long enough to actually get a proper impression. But I think they found it very interesting, yes.

RL: How secure do you feel in this country?

HE: How secure?

RL: Yes.

HE: Well, I think I feel just as secure as the next man or woman in the street. Do you mean in my particular situation?

RL: Yes. You know, with your background.

HE: Right. I don't think that makes me feel any less secure than if I was British through and through, as you say. I don't think so, I don't think that worries me. I think I feel British enough to, you know, not to have any fears on that account.

RL: Is there anything else that you would like to mention that we might have passed over?

HE: Well, I would really like to stress the point that from our own experiences – I wish my brother was here to put his point of view which might have been a little different from mine – but I know we have found, generally speaking, the English, the British people extremely kind and extremely helpful. And I would like to say that I am particularly aware of how kind non-Jewish people were as far as we are concerned. The two families that adopted us gave us just unconditional love and opportunity for becoming part of the family and getting a good education. And I just can't say enough in praise of them in that way. We are very grateful to them.

RL: Thank you very much.

HE: Thank you. It's a pleasure.

**Tape 3: 16 minutes 38 seconds**

**Tape 3: 16 minutes 43 seconds**

HE: (1) This is a photograph of my granny on the left and her daughter Ada. Granny is Žofie Konová, my father's mother, and his sister Ada. The photograph was taken in Pilsen, probably just before we came away to England, so it'll be 1939, I think.

(2) This lovely photograph was taken when my mother and father got married. And the date was December, 1923. As far as I know it was taken in— it was somewhere in Pilsen. It's Irma and Felix Kohn. Looks lovely of them, doesn't it there?

(3) This is a picture of the three of us. We had photos taken every year, I think on our birthdays. This must have been when Hans and I were perhaps 5 years old and Greta was 4 years older, so she would be 9 there. And that would again be taken in Pilsen, our home town.

RL: And the year?

HE: Oh, if we were 5, that would make it 1933.

RL: Can you just give the names from left to right?

HE: Yes: Hans, Greta and Hana Kohn.

(4) This photo shows Hans and myself with our Uncle Arnold who was mother's brother. His name was Arnold Humburger. And this was taken in the local park in Pilsen. Again, I should think it was 1939.

(5) This is the identity document issued at the end of July 1939, a kind of passport-cum-birth certificate. In fact it was the only document I had coming through from Czechoslovakia to England. These are the various stamps needed for passing through between Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland and then Harwich in Britain.

**Tape 3: 19 minutes 49 seconds**

(6) This is a photograph of my husband and myself, taken at a dance in, I think, 1970. My husband was Steve, Steve Eardley, and that's me, Hana, with him.

RL: And the place?

HE: This would be taken in Liverpool.

(7) This is a nice photograph taken of my brother's family. On the front row he is there with his beard, my brother Hans, or John Moroy, with his wife Mary. And their four children behind them: on the right are Jane and Tim, who are twins, and on the left is Michael, the youngest son, and daughter Sue. It's rather a nice photograph of the whole family together.

RL: And the date?

HE: It would be about 1980.

RL: And the place?

HE: In Rotherham.

(8) This photograph was taken in the year 2000, when my sister-in-law managed to get all the grandchildren together on the lawn. So there they are, eight lovely children, seven boys, one little girl. From the age of about three to seventeen.

RL: Taken in?

HE: Taken in Rotherham.

**Tape 3: 21 minutes 47 seconds**