

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	186

Interviewee Surname:	Baruch
Forename:	Gerti
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	7 June 1926
Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview:	20 July 2016
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	1 hour 37 minutes



REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV186
NAME: Gerti Baruch
DATE: 20th July 2016
LOCATION: London, UK
INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

Today is the 20th of July 2016. We are doing an interview with Mrs. Gerti Baruch and my name is Bea Lewkowicz, and we are in London.

What is your name please?

Gerti Baruch.

And when were you born?

Seven six twenty-six. [7th June 1926]

And where were you born?

In Vienna.

Mrs Baruch thank you very much for having agreed to be interviewed for the AJR Refugee Voices Project. Can you tell us a little bit about your family background?

Well, I was born in Vienna in... as I said, in the year '26. And I lived there until Hitler- no, actually after Hitler. I left Vienna in '39... and came to England. I was still at school in Vienna and then I came to England.

And can you tell us a little bit about your parents and their backgrounds and...?

[0:01:06]

Well, my parents- my mother was a professional woman. She was a dressmaker. And my father was an agent for a metals firm. And... we were just brought up in, you know, in Vienna in the Hahngasse. And I went to school in... first the *Volksschule* and then I went to the *Hauptschule*. And left Vienna at the age of twelve... with my mother.

And where were- where did your parents come from?

My parents came from Czernowitz, Romania [present day Chernivtsi, Ukraine].

And did they meet in Czernowitz? Did they come ...

Yes, they got married in Czernowitz and they came to- in Vienna – came to Vienna.

And did they come with their families or they came by themselves?

By themselves.

So, they had no family in Vienna...

Eventually my...my grandmother came to...to Vienna - to live in Vienna. And my mother had a brother and one sister in the States, in America, who I never met.

And do you know why they came to Vienna? Did they ever talk about it?

Not really, no. Not really... They spoke Romanian.

Right. So that's my other question: which language did they speak to each other?

At home, German. But they spoke Romanian if there was something we shouldn't know about, they spoke... in their own language.

And when did they come to Vienna?

I think it was in 1914...maybe? I'm not quite sure about that.

So, before the First...

[0:02:51]

Yes, before...

The First World War.

Yes. Yeah.

And then they settled in...

They settled in Vienna.

And were you then in the 9th Bezirk or where did they live?

In... As far as I know in the *neunter Bezirk*.

And you said your mother was a...

Was a- was a professional couture dress maker.

And did she work?

Eventually she then managed to... start her own business, a private- you know, private customers. And she- she built it up from, you know, nothing.

In Vienna?

In Vienna yes. In Vienna she had- I thought you spoke about here.

No...

No in Vienna- In Vienna she had customers, yes, as far as I remember. And I also remember she had one help, who helped her.

Aha. So, she employed someone?

[0:03:45]

Yeah, she employed someone.

And where did she work? In the flat? Did she have a...?

Yes. At home. From at home.

Tell us a little bit about your home. What are your memories? What can you remember, where you lived?

What I remember as a child... we had a *Gasthaus* on the corner of Hahngasse. And I was quite friendly with their daughters who obviously were- they were not Jewish. But I was very...very friendly with them, and we used to play together. And... also I remember there was a... a shop downstairs... I think they sold chickens and butter. They were a Jewish couple, from Hungary. And we were all very friendly as well. So, these are the memories you know, I remember the shops. There was one shop - a barber... Vague, very vague, yeah.

And what sort of area was it, the 9th Bezirk?

Neunter Bezirk was quite near the 1st District, within walking distance. There of course was the *Promenade*, the Donau. And we had- I remember my father always took me to a little place where they sold cider... in the summer. And actually, in the summer was Vienna,

because we used to sit on the promenade and used to walk up and down. I remember that, as a child.

On the Donau?

On the Donau, yeah.

And what other memories do you have of that time?

I used to- On Sunday my father used to take me with him to Café Siller. I remember that. Which was- I'm not quite sure which district, but it was within walking distance along the Promenade. And he used to read the paper there. And I used to have- I think he used to buy me breakfast. Egg – soft-boiled egg and tea. I remember that. Next to it was an ice parlour, which I also remember. I used to go there and have... ice cream. It's all vague. I can't really- You know it's all...

Yes... yes. And what about school? You said you went to school...

Yes, I went to school first Hahngasse *Volkschule*, and then to the *Hauptschule* which was also in- not far, within walking distance.

And what sort of friends did you have?

[0:06:43]

I had a lot of school friends. Mostly Jewish girls who lived quite near me. And I also went to the Maccabi. I was a member of the Maccabi. And I had a lot of Jewish... friends.

And for Makkabi what did you do? What sports? Sports?

Yes, sports meetings. We met up. And eventually of course the girls went to Palestine then and I was too young, I was underage, so I didn't go.

Did you want to go?

I don't think so. I wanted to be with my mother. Yeah...

And what was the relationship between the non-Jewish children and the Jewish children?

At that time, very friendly. No problems at all. No problems. Yeah...

And what about religion and Judaism? How religious...

We...

... were your parents?

Yeah. My parents- we were not religious, but we kept the high Jewish holidays. Yom Kippur and Pesach. We always kept that.

And which synagogue?

The synagogue was in... Also, in Vienna... I think it was Wittengasse Synagogue.

And do you remember going there?

Vaguely, yes. Vaguely. Because they used to- they used to stay the whole day Yom Kippur in the synagogue. Vaguely. I can't remember it.

[0:08:24]

And who lived in your flat?

My flat was my sister and I, and my parents.

Was there any other help or...?

Yes, we had a maid living in... also. I remember her name was Rose, Rosl, Rosie or something...

Where was she from?

I can't remember. Somewhere from the country.

And then you said you went to Hauptschule?

Hauptschule.

Was that- how was that? Very different or...?

Yes. I didn't go there for long. Now you see I can't remember the years, but from there of course then I left Vienna... from the *Hauptschule*. But- I have been back to Vienna... on several occasions. And... I remember once I tried to get some details from my school days. But I was told that they have- They've put them somewhere where they can't get at them. So, I wasn't able to get at any details of my school days in the *Hauptschule*.

But it was a happy time?

[0:09:36]

Yes.

Your childhood?

Yes. Very happy. Very- I remember my father used to give me *zehn Groschen* [ten pence] every day to go and buy ice cream... That was the highlight of the day.

After school, or...?

Yeah.

And did your parents go back to Czernowitz at all? Did you go to Czernowitz?

No. Never- never went back to Czernowitz. No. But you know, I- I don't- I mean, at that time people didn't go back to Czernowitz. I know that my father had two sisters who lived in Bucharest. And then I think they lived in Vienna. But somehow, the family relationship with my mother and father with their family was not... We, we- I have to say we never really had a lot of relations. My mother didn't speak to my sister in America, nor did she speak to the brother in Vienna. And I cannot remember the sisters of my father at all. My sister can, but I can't. Because she's six years older.

And grandparents, did you...?

I had a grandmother. The grandfather I think died in Romania before she came to Vienna. I don't think he lived in Vienna. And she lived in... Stumpergasse off Maria- Mariahilfer Straße. I remember that because we used- my sister and I used to visit... occasionally. And she used to take us down Mariahilfer Strasse and used to take us into Meindl, to buy us biscuits, and...

So, you remember the food – the food...

...like a grandmother.

You remember the food...

Yeah! [laughing] I remember the food!

And the Kaffeehäuser? Yeah?

And the Kaffeehäuser...

Any other Kaffeehäuser you used to go?

No, no. Only Café Siller with my father. There are certain things that stick in your mind.

Well, certainly Kaffeehäuser...

And I do remember my mother and my sister and I, we used to go down Wipplingerstrasse sometimes, to the 1st District just- my mother loved to look into windows of- of dress shops, to find new ideas and... So, we went maybe on a Sunday we walked down to Kärntnerstrasse and Rotenturnstrasse.

To do window shopping?

Yeah, window shopping, yes.

And did she make your clothes, your mother?

Yes.

So, what were you wearing?

Beautiful, yes. I have pictures of beautiful you know, dresses and beautiful coats my mother made for me. Yes.

And when- when did things change? When- what happened?

[0:12:32]

Change in Vienna? Obviously when Hitler came... which did not really affect me that much somehow. It just didn't- either I can't remember or... But I think I do remember Kristallnacht. That they took all the Jewish- the men, into the concen- concentration camps. That's where my father went, to Dachau.

But Anschluss you don't remember...?

Anschluss I can't remember. I do remember that- for instance we had a housekeeper downstairs in our block, where we lived. And overnight he, he- he was in uniform. So, you know... And, and of course they were- I'm sure they were Nazis, the couple.

So, the Hausmeister...

Hausmeister, yes. Which, every block had a Hausmeister.

Yeah.

Yeah...

But Anschluss itself, whether you were in school or not in school, you can't remember anything?

No.

Well, maybe...

Nothing... Nothing at all.

And after the Anschluss, do you remember...?

Well, after the Anschluss we, we- you know we tried to leave Vienna. You know, tried, worked on that. Tried to leave Vienna. My mother was very determined not – not to stay. I do remember leaving Vienna with my mother, on the train. That's all.

But later.

Yes.

Yeah.

'39.

Yes, so between the Anschluss and Kristallnacht you said... And do you remember discussions about emigrating about possibilities, where to go to?

Nothing. Nothing at all.

And Kristallnacht?

Kristallnacht I - I remember vaguely because I know my father disappeared. So, you know, that's what I remember.

And what were you told? Where he went, or...?

Concentration- I was told he went to Dachau to this concentration camp.

[0:14:45]

And did you have contact? Did your mother have contact with him?

I don't know, you see, I don't know whether she had contact with him. It was very difficult. Very difficult.

And did you continue going to school? Or did you go to a Jewish sch...?

Yes, I think I- no, no, no. I continued going to school - *Hauptschule* - for a while. And I can't quite remember when I started going to the *Hauptschule*, but... I left at the age of twelve. And...

Yeah... So, after Kristallnacht did you continue going to school? Do you know?

No, I can't remember that. No...

Because many children didn't...

Didn't...

... continue. Or changed to Jewish school.

Yeah. No, no, no, I didn't change the school but I can't remember that.

Maybe you just didn't go to school.

Maybe- maybe I didn't go to school.

Yeah?

Yeah.

Yeah...

It was a difficult time. Yeah.

But what happened to your father then in Dachau?

Well, my father then eventually... my mother then got him a... not a visa. He went illegally to Palestine. Apparently before – after I left Vienna with my mother. We left Vienna in '39, two weeks before the war.

Yes...

And apparently my father must have left just- I can't see how he could have left illegally after us.

But he got. How did he...? He got out...

[0:16:28]

He got out of- she got him out of Dachau, but he had to immediately leave Vienna. Immediately he had to leave. And my mother managed that.

And did he get a visa to go to Palestine or...?

Yes, to Palestine, and illegal. He went on a boat... from where? ...That is...

From where...

Yeah...

You don't know.

No.

Well, we know, so he must have left, let's say... In '39 probably.

Yes.

Between maybe January and beginning of July...

Probably something like that. Must- not long in between.

And then he went on a boat...

He went apparently illegally on a boat to Haifa. He landed in Haifa. Then he went to live in Tel Aviv but apparently it was too hot, and then he moved back to Haifa. It was cooler, in Haifa. And lived there for around eleven years.

And you said, what did he train to do?

He trained, before... During Hitler's time, he trained as a, learned to make handbags - leather handbags. Another trade. And he tried to pursue this professionally in - in Palestine, but it didn't work.

And when you said before he was, he worked for a metal...

Yes.

Can you tell us a little bit about it?

Yes, well he was an agent... for the firm. Selling.

Yeah. And until when did that continue?

It must have continued until Hitler came. Yes.

And then that stopped.

Yeah. That stopped then.

So, what I'm trying to understand. Financially, how did your parents manage then?

[0:18:31]

Well, my mother worked.

Yeah...

It was actually...I think my mother was the breadwinner.

So, from '38 that was...

Yes. Yeah... That's how we...

So, tell us about your own emigration. How...

I then- my sister came to London... maybe a few months before us. And she had a permit to work as a nanny in Kensington. And somehow, she managed to... get a permit for my mother, probably through the family she worked with. To- that we, my mother was- managed to be able to come to England as a cook. And I came along with her, as a child who was under age.

So, she got a domestic...

A domestic permit as a cook...

And left before you...

Before...?

Before your mother and you; she came to England...?

My, my, my sister?

Yeah.

No, she came as a nanny to, to, to Kensington, before us.

Yeah.

And we came in '39.

And do you know, how was that arranged for your sister? Did she arrange it herself? Who helped? Did anyone help?

[0:19:56]

I think the family she worked for, must have arranged that. For us to come to England.

Yeah, but was it anyone you knew or was it...?

No...

Through Bloomsbury House or some official channels?

No. No. Probably maybe she did go to Bloomsbury House. I don't know. Because most of the people did come through that channel, didn't they?

But anyway, so you- she managed that you, that your mother got a...

Yeah, as a cook in Haslemere, Surrey.

So- when- do you remember at all when you were told that you could leave, in Vienna when...?

No.

No. And again, the journey. Do you remember anything at all?

I know we went on the train and that's it. I can't tell you anything about that.

And what were you allowed to take?

Our belongings- you know, clothes, and our belongings. And as it happens, I don't know how my mother managed it, but she- we had a beautiful like Art Deco coffee set, which is quite heavy. And I think it came when my father was an agent from that... company. And she managed to bring that over, which is standing in my house. Yes. That. Then she brought a *Kaffeemühle* [coffee mill] – yeah – which my daughter has got here. And things like that. I don't know how she managed that.

Maybe it was sent out. Maybe it was sent before...

I don't know. I don't think so. She must have packed it somehow. Yeah.

And what happened to the flat and... Just...

Just... I went to back, when I visited Vienna, to see the flat.

And?

[0:21:47]

Some person from Slovakia or somewhere lived there. Couldn't speak German, but she let us in. We explained to her who we were. I was there with... Unfortunately on one holiday in Vienna with my husband, and friends, he, at the end of the holiday, he passed away. We were there for one week. And... we were packed and he - he had a heart attack. A severe heart attack. Fatal. And... which was terribly sad. Because my - my daughter and my son had to come over you know because I was there with friends.

Yeah...

So, they had to come and you know...do all the official things and... So then, they wanted to know where I lived. And I went back... to the flat. And ...you know, it was strange. It was very strange.

Could you recognise it?

Oh, yes. Yes. Strange.

Which way? In which way strange?

Well, I remembered it, but it became very you know, strange to me that I used to live there, you know, with my parents. So, you know.

In which year? When was that?

I went back...My husband died in 199...97. Yes. 1997. So that was the year I went. And after that I used to go once or twice because it was arranged by an organisation in Vienna, to bring back people who used- you know, Jewish people – who used to live in Vienna. And... I went back once with my sister. I went back about three times to Vienna.

And you wanted to go back?

Yes. Yes. I liked living in Vienna, from what I remember.

Ok, we'll talk about that at the end of the interview a little bit more. Just to come back to you, so you can't remember much of the journey.

No.

But what about arriving in Britain? What were your first impressions?

Of the what?

Of- in Britain. Arriving...?

[0:24:30]

Arriving in Britain. Very unhappy. Terribly unhappy because... eventually I was parted from my mother. And she went to live with, in the- where she had her job, in Haslemere. And I was put into an English family who, you know, looked after me. But I couldn't speak English. So, I was terribly unhappy there. And eventually my mother managed to have me with her, where she had her job... For a while. But my mother was determined to leave, and she was more ambitious.

And what was her first job? Who was the family she worked for?

Oh well, they were an English- English family. Who...the husband was a Colonel in the Indian Army. And they were very English, very strange - for us.

In which way?

Because they ...How can I explain it to you? The whole thing. You know the way- my mother was a cook you know and she had to cook all these strange... I mean I didn't know what prawns were, or you know, shrimps. And... And for instance, they used to eat- my mother used to roast one piece of meat and they used to eat from it the whole week. You know the whole thing was very strange, and very- you know, the whole thing was strange.

They didn't ask her to make something Austrian? They didn't want...?

No. My mother brought a book – an English cookery book with her, and cooked the English...you know...dishes, there. And then, you know eventually we left...both. And came to London. I don't know whether you want to know about that now, do you?

Yes, just one more- just stay with me a little bit more.

Yeah, ok.

About the first foster family: who were they?

Pardon?

The people who fostered you first...

[0:26:38]

The people were a very English – very English family who had a- lived above the shop. They had a shop downstairs with sweets and ice cream. I remember that. And... had I think two or three daughters and we, we - we slept in one room. That - that I remember. I was very unhappy because I couldn't speak English. Although I learnt English in Vienna, I couldn't speak a word of English.

And were you close to your mother? You...?

Yes... Very. You know, I was most... unhappy... Very unhappy.

And did you go to school? Did they send you to school?

No.

No.

No.

And how long...

It was in the summer.

Aha. And how long did you stay with them before you went to your mother?

Not long. Just maybe a month or two, because then she managed to, you know, that I came and lived with her.

And when you lived there, what did you do during the day while your mother- Did you help her?

Nothing. Nothing! Just...nothing. Didn't go to school. Nothing.

And you said the food was strange. What else was strange for you, coming from Vienna?

Well, the whole English way of living was strange... yeah...

For example?

Tea- tea with milk. And, you know, the whole thing was terribly strange for me. They were very, very English. You can imagine that he was a Colonel. They were sort of upper-class English people. They had one son I remember, but... they were very strange and not very homely and, you know... not- Not nice.

[0:28:36]

So, your mother wanted to leave as well?

Yes.

Yes.

She wanted to leave.

So, what did she do? Where did you go next?

So, then... We had a connection in Vienna. Friends who lived also in Belsize Park, who had an apartment there. And they took us in. We lived there for a while. Then my mother managed to ...get a place in a hostel in Belsize Park Gardens. But they didn't allow children. So, then I was again farmed out... with English families. And one English family was in Ruislip Manor. And I didn't go- they didn't send me to school and I more or less looked after their little boy. I was only... twelve or thirteen. Twelve, getting on... Looked after their little boy while they went out working and had a job. So, I- then I stayed there. And then I was ...evacuated to near Oxford... in Kidlington, with an English family and they did –with a friend. And they did send us to school there for a while. And that didn't last long, because then, my mother managed to get an apartment in...in London in... Hopefield Court in Belsize Grove. And then my sister and I, and my mother, we lived in that flat. And I got married from that flat.

So, in Oxford- so you were evacuated to Oxford...

Yeah. Yes. Yes, I was evacuated there.

And do you remember- you said you were not happy. Was it throughout the time you...?

I was- In Oxford I wasn't too unhappy because I was with a friend, my age.

And who was the friend?

She was a friend, a friend of my mother's. From... she- I think she was one of the customers of my mother because she was a dress maker. A couture dress maker. And, and I and her daughter- and her daughter and I got very friendly and we went together... to Oxford.

What was she called? Do you remember her name?

[0:31:00]

I think her name was Gloria. Yes. Yeah.

And once you got to that English school, was it a problem? By then did you speak English? What was it like?

Yes, I spoke, then I- then I did begin to speak English, and it - it wasn't a problem you know. But I didn't go there for long. I don't think I stayed there very long because my mother managed to get that apartment, and we then all lived together.

And when you then came to Belsize Grove, did you go- continue schooling there? Or, at that point...?

No. No. Belsize Grove... Because I'm now jump- I was- I must have been around fourteen or fifteen. And my mother managed to get a job as a machinist in... Clerkenwell Road... in the City. And my sister and I were employed there. I was only fifteen. I was underage so I was employed illegally there. And I was employed as a - I remember that - as an overlocker. Because the people who owned this business were Jewish, a Jewish couple. And... worked for a firm called C & A - dresses. So, I was employed there with my sister. I was underage but we- we worked there during the war. And I worked- I remember that we used to go by underground to Goswell Road, and then walk down Goswell Road to save the bus fare...to Clerkenwell Road. We walked in the blackout to Clerkenwell Road. And that's where we worked.

So, it was really to support yourselves...

Yes.

...that everyone...

Yes. I don't know what I got. I probably got three pounds a week or something. Or maybe less.

And your mother worked there as well?

My mother worked as a machinist, and so did my sister.

And what did you have to do exactly? What was your job?

Overlock seams. Overlock – you know?

What does that mean?

Overlocking is to... stitch seams. To tidy seams. It's a machine that tidies the seam inside garments.

Right.

Yeah.

So, was it quite tough?

Yes. Yes. But I – I followed, you, see?

But at that point, were you happy to be together with your mother?

[0:33:50]

Yes, absolutely. And we- during the war we went to sleep in Belsize Park Underground Station every night. We packed our things and went...

Well it's literally opposite.

Yeah. Belsize Park.

Yeah. And what was that like? And how- the...?

It was very, very sociable.

The shelter?

Yes. Very sociable. You know. We got friendly with the people and it was social thing. What could we do? And then the sirens went we went up and the all-clear. And then showered or had a bath and went to work.

And living in Belsize Park, did you know and meet many other refugees?

Well, I- my mother of course befriended people in the hostel. So, we were quite friendly with people from the hostel because eventually people left you know and... some stayed, some left. But my mother- in the beginning... she... took at, when we lived in Belsize Park, she didn't have any – any people, customers you know, to make- private customers. So there, she took, she took... outer work. From a... a friend. I don't know how we got friendly with him, but I know his name was Hirsch. And he took outer work in, and my mother- And then passed it on to my mother. He was a sort of agent.

[0:35:32]

Yes...?

And my mother did outer work. And this is how she... In the meantime, I worked in a factory in Argyle Street. A friend of ours, also friends- they were friends of my sister. And you know, we had friends. We became friendly with people. And I worked in Argyle Street also as a machinist. That- I must have been about fifteen or sixteen. I didn't work illegally. I think that was already the age where I could work legally. And I was a machinist there. And... I must have been sixteen. And a Jewish- a Jewish firm. And they had a son... who took me out, then. Took me out.

To places like- such as?

Chinese restaurant. I didn't- I didn't have a clue about Chinese food. What do you do with Chinese food? How do you eat it? You know, all the different dishes there. And, you know, I was too shy to ask what- you know. And I just couldn't eat anything. But that was the outing.

The first outing. And- no, it was quite sociable there. Quite nice. And I also had somebody there who pierced my ears. She- [laughing] she suggested piercing my ears. So, it was... a sociable thing. I worked there for- I don't know for how long. But eventually I then worked with my mother at home.

For private...?

Yeah. For private customers. Because then, we moved up to a... a larger flat. I think it was on the second floor, and I helped my mother with her work. Yes.

So, you could...?

Yeah. I took up- there my mother smoked, and then I smoked, you know? And that wasn't a good thing. ...So, but eventually then... my sister got married. I remember I was sixteen when she got married. My sister lived in Cumberland... up in- by Whitehaven. And... you know this is, this was our life. You know, she came to visit.

Who did she marry?

She married an - an Oppenheim... Yes, yeah...

Who was a refugee?

[0:33:50]

No, he was- He... No, you know in wartime the government helped people to open up factories in- out of London to create work for...because people were very poor in these, in Cumber- you know, in these places. Because for instance, Whitehaven was a mining town...

Yes...?

And... the government helped people to open up their businesses there. There were a lot of refugees opening up. Kangol. People, there were hat... You know, so that's where she was. But I was in London and- with my mother.

And when did she get married?

My sister got married... I was sixteen, she was six years older, at twenty-one. No, how old was she? Sixteen? Yeah. Around twenty-one, twenty-two. Yeah...

And during the wartime, did you have any contact with your father?

During the wartime... my mother used to receive letters through the Red Cross, I think. Could it have been the Red Cross? I think so. Could have been. But she did- I think she did receive letters from him.

And what was he saying? Was he...?

Unhappy, you know, and he wanted to come and join us. Which wasn't possible because there was a curfew... in Palestine at that time.

So, he didn't have a good time?

No, not a good time at all. Very unhappy. Very unhappy. Unsettled.

Couldn't find his...

No, couldn't settle. And also, the climate didn't agree, you know? With people who are a little bit older, the climate didn't agree.

Yeah. We'll come back to your father in a second. Did you have any contact with the Austrian cultural institutions, let's say, the Laterndl or any- Do you remember anything like that? Austrian Cultural Centre or any...or Young Austria? Anything?

I remember something like that you just mentioned. Laterndl? Somewhere in Swiss Cottage?

Yeah...

Yeah.

[0:40:42]

Did you ever go to any shows, or any...?

No. I think that was more... my sister's....

Aha... She did?

Yeah...No, I, I... no...

Or any other- did you join a synagogue then, at that point? Did you go anywhere?

My mother joined the Belsize Park- Belsize Square Synagogue, which I still belong to.

And did she go? Did you go there?

Yes. Occasionally.

Yeah...

Yeah. Yes, it was very nice.

What do you remember from that time? Anything? Because that synagogue was founded in... 1941, so...

Yes. I didn't go- actually- I didn't...I got married in quite a different synagogue, actually.

But you didn't go to the youth...

No.

There were youth activities... You didn't go...?

No. I know there was an Austrian centre in... Paddington, I think, somewhere?

Yes...

Yes? Am I right? I used to go there... with friends. Yes.

And what was there? What did you see, or...?

Social. It was a social. Yes, I remember that. Just came back to me. Yes, in Paddington.

And apart from that, your social life, what other things you remember... from that time?

[0:42:05]

Not a lot. Not a lot. No. I had friends. We used to go out, but... nothing else. I had boyfriends, you know, who used to take me out. I remember they used to... One boyfriend I had used to take me to Fischer's... off Bond Street. There they had a sort of tea dance, at that time. And I had boyfriends. I remember that.

Yeah...

Yes.

So, your mother managed to settle- I mean, she managed to get an income and to...?

Yes. Made a living.

Made a living, yeah...

Eventually, made a living. And then had her own private clients.

And the clients, do you remember? Who were the clients? Were there other refugees, or other...?

There were sort of, for instance... my... then- became my sister and her mother, came. It was through recommendations that she became known... and... made dresses. Yeah.

And what was your plan when you- when you stopped working in the factory? What...?

Well, I went- I went to the St Martin's School. My mother enrolled me to the St Martin's School of Art. I did...fashion drawing and, and also still life. Then I went to... another... I went to the Hammersmith School of Art for a while. And then also to another one in Arkwright Road, which I don't think exists anymore.

And did you want- what was your plan? Did you want to join your mother?

I was- I was- I was always into fashions. It was always my pet thing. Fashions. I was always interested in fashions. And I, I worked with my mother then, most of the time. So- Until I got married. And that was my...my pastime.

And how did you meet your...?

My husband I met him through... introductions, through friends... who knew my husband's family, and we were somehow introduced. And this is how it came about. And I... got engaged to him and got married at the age of twenty-one.

[0:44:47]

And what was his name, and what was his background?

Max. His name was Max, and he came from Germany.

And how did he...?

Yes. And he came with the Kindertransport.

And did he have parents? Did the parents...?

Yes, he was very lucky, because most of his family came to England. His parents, all his siblings, you know, his, his brother and sisters... were very lucky to escape and come to England.

And where did they live? Where did they settle?

They also settled in- his parents settled- I don't know- I think they also came on a permit as a married couple, you know, domestic couple. And worked somewhere in a family where eventually they also rented a flat in Adelaide Road... Lived there. And you know, my husband came with the Kindertransport. And... I think he was also... somehow in... Didn't they take them somewhere to the coast, the people who came? I can't remember what happened with him, but he...

How old was he when he came?

I think he was about seventeen or eighteen. Yeah.

Was he interned at all? Was he interned?

I think he was interned as well... with his brother. He came with his brother.

Right.

Yes, I remember he told me.

And when you met him, what was he doing... work-wise?

He... Yes... I think he worked. Yes. Well... His sister, one of his sisters...worked for... Now how can I explain that? She was a - a cook for five- I think four or five men in a, in... a, a, block of flats in Maida Vale. Clive Court, I think. It was Clive Court. There were four men living in- I don't know how she got that job but she became their cook there. But she then befriended one of the men who was Czech. And he already had a... a... a factory... for military uniforms or something. And she befriended him, and then worked with him. And then my

husband, worked in that firm, with them. So, this is how he- then he worked there... Already as a young boy.

[0:47:45]

When you met?

Yeah.

Yeah...

He was involved with this... you know, this sister.

And was it important for you that he was also a refugee? Was that a...?

Yes. Yes, it was somehow a connection, wasn't it?

Yeah?

Yeah... No, it was- I was- I mean, I got engaged to him I think not for terribly long - maybe a few months, a year or so - then we got married.

And what did your mother think? Was- did she- was she in favour?

Yes. She was very pleased- very pleased. I got married from the flat, and my mother made a reception in - in the flat. I remember that. And... No, she was pleased. Yes. It was very young, twenty-one, at that time.

And which synagogue? You said you got married not in Belsize...?

Dennington Park... off West End Lane. I got married there. And... went on honeymoon to Torquay, to a hotel where about six other young married couples stayed.

But your father wasn't there...?

No... no. When I got married, my father wasn't there.

And which year - which year was that?

My father- I got married in... wait a minute, what year was it? Fifty...no. Forty-seven.

Yeah. So...

I got married – Yes, '47. I got married '47.

[0:49:27]

*And just to come back a little bit. How did the end of the war affect you, when the war ended?
Did that affect you?*

...Not that I can remember a lot about it...

And when did you become British?

Yes, I think in forty- forty-seven. Around forty-seven. We got- yeah...

Before you got married?

No.

Aha...

Wait a minute. Fifty-two. Sorry. It could have been fifty-two we got the British citizenship.
In fact, I've got the document, so... Yeah.

So, when you were married, you were not - not British?

No. We became British. Yes.

And was that important for you to...?

Yes. Very important. Very important. And you know I'm pleased that we did it and that we were here.

Yeah. And just tell us now, what happened to your father? So, after the war ended, did he try to come to England, or did you...? Or did he...?

Yes, my mother managed then to get him over to- over to England, and he wasn't very happy. No. Wasn't very happy. Couldn't settle after eleven years. In fact, he was quite strange to me. He was a stranger to me.

Where did he- do you remember picking him up, when you saw him first?

Yes, I remember from the station.

Can you tell us a little bit...?

I think it was Liverpool Station, I'm not quite sure, but we did pick him up. Strange. Very strange. By then I had one child. A baby. And... No, he couldn't get to grips with it. For my mother as well! Very strange.

Because it was a long time...

Yeah... It doesn't seem a long time, but eleven years is a long time.

[0:51:32]

You were twelve, and now...

Yes, yes, a child, and then I was an adult...

And could he not come before, after the...? It seems it's a long time again, from the end of the war, even...?

Well, first of all, in Israel, in Palestine was a curfew, so he couldn't leave.

Right...

No, he was not allowed to leave at all. As soon as they lifted the curfew, he came. Yeah...

And did he work when he came? What did he do? Or did he just...? No...

Nothing. Nothing at all. ...Yeah.

And as you said to me before, sadly he - he couldn't...

Yes, he couldn't live. ...Took his own life. Yeah.

Did that- was that- that must have been a big shock...

For my mother yes, terrible. But for all of us, of course. Terrible! Just awful! Yeah. So...

But he... had had a tough time in Palestine, and then...

Yes. Just couldn't...

Couldn't adapt.

Yes. I mean, I must admit, the courage... you know, to do it, it must be... You know, unbelievable. To do something like that.

Was there any indication, or was it a complete surprise?

Nothing. Complete. Yes. So...

[0:53:00]

And how did your mother deal with that? Did she...afterwards?

Yeah, but you see, also my mother probably also had a guilt feeling. I don't know. Maybe... You know, guilt feeling...

It's a complex...complex.

Yeah...

But it's the later effects of Hitler, really.

Yeah. It destroyed people.

Yeah. It's an interesting topic, you know...? Because I'm sure...

Yes, it is. But what I- you see the thing is, that when you're a child, everything seems to be, you know, it's not- not serious. It's like an adventure. Everything is an adventure. And I know that when I left with my mother, I - I didn't think anything serious. It was an adventure! Oh, we're going to London! You know?

Yes. Yes. And you were sheltered by your mother...

By my mother! Didn't take it so serious. But then, the separation from my mother, that was, that was an unhappy time... for me. So, you know.

So yeah... So, tell us a little bit about yourself and your husband. Where did you settle and where did you...?

Well, we- again, my mother was very - as I said - very determined. And she managed to... get a flat for us in Weymouth Street in the West End, in Malcolm Regis Court. So, we lived in - in the basement. And I had one- only one bedroom flat, and I had one baby there. And my husband...My husband then managed- my husband and his brother, managed to...

manufacture swimsuits. Yes. So, they were very sort of enterprising. And he- they worked together, and they established a big company – a company manufacturing swimsuits... and knitting factory. And I looked after... the baby. So... eventually, we moved to a bigger flat. And I had my other- my daughter there. And things were beginning to get, you know because my husband was doing well. But he had to work very hard. And things became- to begin to get better, for us. And things looked up, then.

[0:56:11]

What was the name of his company?

“Kittiwake”. Yeah. Mostly for mail-order. Yeah. Mail-order for companies, you know.

And did you help in the business as well, or...?

I helped... no. In the beginning- You see now the sequences are...

Go on...

Because when I- the first child- when I was pregnant with my first child, my husband’s brother opened a workshop in Chepstow Road. An outer work shop. And I helped him. Because... I don’t know where I got- probably from my mother- I got the tendency. I was able to- when he brought samples in of dresses, I was able to take patterns from it. And he used to cut the – the bulk of the dresses. But I made the pattern of the- of these samples he brought in from different companies, you know. Different orders he’d got. And we had about ten machinists... making up the dresses. It was outer work, called outer work. So, I worked there until I had my baby, with him. Just with him. Because my husband worked for his sister, as I told you. And so, I worked there until I had the baby, and then I stopped.

[technical interruption]

Yes, you were telling us about your involvement in the – in the company.

With... my husband?

Yes.

[0:58:00]

Not really, no. I only- I was only involved with my brother-in-law, until I became pregnant. And then I stopped...

You didn't...?

I didn't work anymore. And then I had my second baby. Then we moved up to you know, a bigger flat. And then I had the help. Yeah. And we lived there... until the seventies. We lived there, in Weymouth Street. Then there was a choice should we buy the flat, or should we invest in a house. Because the children had to be moved- they had to be taken to Regent's Park every day, because there wasn't a garden. So, the choice. So, we made the choice of... living in Haslemere Avenue in Hendon, in Shirehall Estate... in a house. In a house. And... that was when the children were growing up. My son then went to Haberdashers. He was a weekly boarder. And Susan went to Kidderpore Gardens to the school in Kidderpore Gardens. ...That's how we then, you know, lived. In Haslemere Avenue.

And what sort of identity did you want to transmit to your children... in terms of, I don't know, Jewish or... How...how...?

Yes, yes, we brought them up Jewish. Not religious, but we- we used to keep High Holidays... but not religious- of course, they went to religious classes, in the synagogue.

And which synagogue did you both join?

We belonged to Belsize Square Synagogue.

You stayed with Belsize Square?

Yes, we stayed there. And... then we- I think- no, well, I got married, as I said, I got married in Dennington Park. But then my daughter got married in Abbey Road Synagogue. Yeah.

[1:00:29]

And did you talk about your past with your children? Did you talk about your - your past?

Yes. I did, but from what I remembered. But now things come out more, you know they ask me more questions. And- you know. And more I think now than before. Yeah.

And what about your German? Did you speak to your mother in German or English or...?

I spoke to my mother in German, but she could speak English. And when I got married, we mostly spoke English. Although sometimes German so the children shouldn't know what we are talking about. But- Susan always regrets that I- my daughter always regrets that I didn't... speak more German to her. Because- but she is, she does speak. And so, does my son. But my son was always inhibited about speaking German. He had something against the whole German, you know... So, he...he. But I know he can. He can read and translate and speak.

Yeah...yeah. And you said so when you were growing up you didn't go to Austria. When was the first time you went?

Back?

Yeah.

The first time I went back was... with my husband, on holiday. And with- I think with the children. No. Not with the children. On our own. Because my husband's- had a business friend who lived in- out of Vienna. ...I've got to cough now. [Coughs] Can we stop a minute? [Continues] Yes. Yes, so I... Yes. He had a friend, a business friend, who was a very artistic designer. He was a designer of... cloth. Cloth. You know, material.

Yes.

He was very clever. And he had an office in Vienna. In- I think it was in Kärtnerstraße, he had an office. And we, the first time we went to Vienna it was because of him. He then

entertained us and, you know, took us round. And that was the first time I went to Vienna with my husband.

And what was it like for you to come back?

I enjoyed it, yes. I did. I mean it- it brought back memories. Bad memories. But I did enjoy it. I did enjoy going back. And...

[1:03:30]

I mean you were old enough to also have good memories. I mean there are some people a bit younger than you, who only have bad memories...

Only- only the memories I told you before, that I had friends from the Gasthaus downstairs. The three girls. We were friendly. And also, I had Jewish school friends. And, which, you know, we, I enjoyed being with my friends. But... yes. But there wasn't- actually nobody in Vienna that I really knew anymore, because they all left.

You didn't find...?

Nobody. I didn't ...And also, I went back to the Jewish- to the Kultusgemeinde in Vienna to find out about- I think it was about myself. I thought they would have any... But they didn't have anything on us. On our family. So... you know. I did that.

And today, how would you describe yourself in terms of your own identity?

Well first of all I'm- I'm very happy to be in England. I mean, I - I say I'm British, but really I'm well - Continental. But I've got a lot of English friends, and I've got a lot of Continental friends. But I am- I'm very grateful that I'm here. Very happy.

And did you ever have any experiences, did you ever experience any anti-Semitism or anti-German Austrian sentiments? I mean this is obviously...

No.

...previously.

No. No.

Did you have anything to...? No...

No. Never. I've got non-Jewish friends, and I've never had any...no. I can't say that.

And what do you think, what impact did the experience have on you, of your emigration, on your later life?

I often think what would have become of me... in Vienna. I often think of that, you know. Because you know the whole thing is, you know, I'm so lucky to be here... you know that... but I often think what would have happened, you know, in Vienna? That's it's like- it's like a dream.

And what do you think? What would you have done?

I don't know, really. I - I just don't know. No. I don't know. I mean I was eleven, twelve years old, and I didn't think of what- what do I want to be or, you know. I just- I lived, you know, my...from day to day. Go to school and... I didn't think of my future.

[1:06:46]

For one, your father would have probably lived longer.

Yes. Yeah. That's true. ...And who knows who I would have married.

Yeah.

Anyway.

Yeah. Where would you think today is your home? What would you...?

Oh, here. Definitely here. ...This is my home. Well, because I you know, I mean, I'm one of the lucky people... to be here and have been accepted. And my husband and, you know, we had a good life together. So...

But then you said he passed away in Vienna?

In Vienna, yeah, which was very sad. I was very lucky to be with another friend and her partner, because they sort of, you know, helped... until my children came over.

But is he buried in Vienna?

No.

No.

No. Here.

You didn't want to... No.

No. That was very sad. Very sad, you know. Because everything was fine. We were only there for a week. And after one week we were packed to go home.

Yeah...

So, it was very sad. And unprepared. For me, terrible!

And how did you manage after that to...?

[1:08:26]

Well it was very hard for me, but I- I'm very- also I'm very determined. You know, I promise that I'll do everything to be able to cope. I promised myself. I, you know I'm- to cope. And I did. I mean I did... You see, my husband did most everything. My husband retired... You

know, he retired, I'm not quite sure what year, but we, you know, he retired. And we used to go on holidays a lot. Two, two or three times a year. Even before my husband retired, we used to go a lot, because he used to... for instance to keep his business going, he used to go abroad with buyers buying samples. And I used to go with. So, we used to go a lot to the south of France, and to Italy. So, I - I was used to going away. Well, when my husband passed away, I - I did go with one of my friends. I did manage to go away, but it wasn't the same... It wasn't the same. And... I managed to - to make a life here. You have to, you see, when you are- When you are on your own you have to try, and be sociable and make a life. And I did. And I learnt to do most things, you know. To pay cheques, and you know, which my husband always did. I...

Yeah...

You know, I relied on him. But I learned how to do it. And I'm pretty independent. But, of course my children help a lot, as well.

And I know you have grandchildren...

I have grandchildren. I have five grandchildren. So that is a nice big family.

Yes, yes, and did you speak to- were they interested, the grandchildren in...?

Yes. The funny thing is that my granddaughters, from my son, who... one is a doctor and the other one is a psycho- I think, analyst. They are more interested in my past, than my grandsons.

Aha.

Yeah...

The girls?

Yes. They're very English. And they're more interested. They always bring up the past. And they call me 'Omi' and bring...And look at my pic- my albums you know, with the

photographs of my family. And they're more interested than my grandsons, somehow. But my grandsons are different, you know, they're very sweet and caring.

Yeah...

Yeah. But they're busy... you know.

Yeah. No, it might be a gender aspect as well. I think it's interesting.

Yes?

Yep.

Really?

Mnn...

My girls you think are more...? Or is it from...?

[1:11:34]

Might be. Yeah, might be that... I don't know. But there is a future study to be...but that's interesting in terms of grandchildren.

Yes. Yes.

...Who takes it on or who is interested.

They always sort of bring up the subject: "Omi," you know, "What did you do?" and – you know...

And have you taken them to Vienna?

No. No. They've never been. No, they've never been. The one is married now with a child, you know. She is a doctor. And, and, no, the other one... No.

And what do you miss most from...from Austria? From Vienna? Is there anything?

Oh, Vienna itself? You know, the town, Vienna, was - is beautiful. Because there you can- I mean you can walk everywhere. You don't have to have a car. You can see... go sightseeing without having a car. You can walk everywhere. This is what I miss. No, I don't miss Vienna - I like Vienna. I like the museums. And, and Schönbrunn. And... what else is there? Stadtpark. I went back to all these places with my children and showed them.

Ok. I think we should take a break now.

Yeah.

Yes, so we are continuing just to ask a few questions, which I haven't asked or some themes we haven't covered.

Yes.

So, one of the themes was your piano playing.

Yes, I started at a very young age, piano. But our- and my sister; we both had lessons. At home. But I didn't like my piano teacher. She was- I just disliked her intensely. I was sort of forced to learn the piano, which I regret now, because it's a lovely thing to know how to play the piano. But unfortunately, when I came to England, I just didn't... pursue that. I just didn't play. Which is a pity. I regret that.

[1:13:55]

In terms of music, do you...?

Yes, I like music. Yes, I do. I go a lot to... the opera. And... theatre, when there's something, you know, interesting on. Concerts as well, if you know, if there's something worth listening to. So, I, I do that. I go quite a lot to the Opera. Covent Garden.

Yeah... Another thing we didn't discuss was the - the coffee shops and restaurants in the 'refugee heart' so to speak, of the Finchley Road...

Yeah! Well, that, we used to visit a lot – you know Cosmos – a lot with the family. And the, the children and the grandchildren. And... the other one was Dorice which I didn't frequent but Cosmos yes. A lot on Sundays, we used to go there. What else was there? I don't know. Waitrose. Waitrose had a coffee shop. We used to go there, after shopping. And... I don't know...

And the Cosmo, can you describe it a little bit? What did it look like?

The Cosmo, well, the Cosmo was a very- a very social thing. Because you always used to see the same people in Cosmos on a Sunday.

And did you go to the restaurant or the bar?

Yes, to the restaurant. The restaurant. I believe that in the bar, they used to have a lot of the Continental artists... used to... meet up there.

Yeah... And what did you eat?

In Cosmos? We used to have the Cont- you know, Schnitzel, or, or.... I think I just used to have Schnitzel. I can't remember what my grandchildren had. Also, the Continental salads. They had a salad bar, which you could help yourself to. And... All Continental. Continental food. Yes.

And did you cook? Did you continue to cook Continental...?

Yes, I cooked. I cooked- yes, I cooked for my husband and for my family. And then for my husband. And now I'm on my own, sort of, yes. I come a lot to Susan or to my son. I'm invited. And what I cook at home.

What's your favourite?

Chicken, probably.

But anything Viennese? What's your...? No.

Frankfurter. Yes. But mostly you know chicken and the things – healthy. I try to eat healthy food.

[1:16:31]

So, when you went to the Cosmo it was with your- [Gerti coughs] with your mother- with your mother and your children.

My mother- I don't think when my mother was alive that we went there such a lot. But then, we – we you know after my mother died, we went quite a lot. Yes, we used to take my mother there, yes. I remember.

And I just want to ask you about your mother. How did your mother manage in later in- as she got older?

No, later in life, I'll tell you what happened. Later in life, my sister who lived in Cumberland, had a... a house here. In Belsize Lane. And ...my sister- my mother eventually moved to that flat, and she lived in that flat. And my sister came on the odd occasions, when she came to London, she stayed in that flat. So, my mother basically lived in... that flat. My sister's flat, in Belsize Lane. Yeah.

OK. Is there anything else you think we haven't discussed? Maybe about the reunion? Your husband's- The Kindertransport reunion he went to?

I didn't, you see. The last one was in the Roundhouse. I think, I didn't. But I've not been to a Kindertransport reunion at all. No.

No, because you didn't come on the Kindertransport.

No, I didn't; I came with my mother. But he – he went with his brother.

But did he go on a reunion?

Yes, I'm sure he went to a reunion, because he had quite a few friends who came with- on the Kindertransport. Or he got to know them when he was interned- was it internment somewhere in- somewhere in, on the coast, I think. I can't remember where it was. Yes.

So, he did- he did go. But both of you, you didn't join the AJR. Did you join the AJR?

No.

No.

No.

And how come? It's not a personal question but...

I'll tell you how. My, my sister's husband used to go there, sort of when he got elderly, and to join a group there.

Yes?

Did they have, I don't know, cards? Playing cards?

Yes...

I think that's what he did in Swiss Cottage. I remember that. This is how I remember it. But there was an Austrian Centre somewhere wasn't there?

Yes...

But I can't remember where. Was it in Swiss Cottage? Austrian Centre.

Austrian Centre...yes, there was...

Yeah. Somewhere, but I don't know where it was.

[1:19:20]

But you personally, you were not looking as such, for a refugee...

No.

No.

No. No, never.

It wasn't important for you to belong to...

No.

No. But you said you still are a member of Belsize Square Synagogue?

Oh, yes.

And do you go to...?

Not regular. No. I go on my husband's... You know, we go for the... What do you call it?

Yahrzeit?

You know, once a year we go...?

Yahrzeit?

Yeah. That's right. *Yahrzeit*. We go once a year. But no, I don't. No. But I you know, I'm very- I ring them up sometimes and I give them clothes or if I am sort of- a television maybe sometimes. They like to have things like that. Old televisions or radios. So, I do give them. Yeah.

And have you got a message for anyone who might watch this interview, based on your experiences?

A message?

Mn-hnn.

Suggest... What? I mean...

I don't know...I mean...

No. A message, to my family?

To your family or to...

Yes, my family. I'm very happy that I've got my son and my daughter and the families. You know, my grandchildren. And... here, and I'm very happy to have a biggish family, which you know, makes life nice and exciting... at times.

Yeah...

You know there is another great-granddaughter coming. So... things to look forward to.

And... having come here, as a young person with your mother, what do you- do you think today of the refugees? Do you have a particular point of view, or...?

I think the refugees... have done well, here, for themselves. Especially the ones who have a trade. You know who have- doctors and... They did well, here, I think. And, and they were enterprising, I think. Clever people- Some were very clever people and...

Yeah... But I meant today the- do you think the British Government should let in unaccompanied minors?

[1:21:41]

Oh, I see, yes. Well, you see, I have a view, a different view. Because when we came to England, nobody helped us at all. You know, we were just refugees. We had to fend for ourselves, and we didn't get any help or benefit. And that was very hard for us. And I feel that if the refugees come here, I think they...you know, they should try and be enterprising and try, and not to just benefit from the government. And give something to the country.

Yeah.

I think.

Mn-hnn... And maybe my last question I asked you already. What impact do you think this had on you? I mean do you think it had, your experiences- I mean, separating from your father, from your mother. Do you think it had an impact on your- you or your parenting at all? On your children at all? Do you think it had impact or do you think...?

Well- I, I always- Yes, well. [laughing] I suppose every grandmother does this- tell the young grandchildren, "You don't know how well off you are." [laughing] That's what we always say! Because you know, we- we were just, you know, not...nothing compared... But you can't do that really because that's not fair. Times have changed.

Yes...yes...

And life is different.

And do you have any regrets? What is...?

Regrets? Yes, I have regrets, that I didn't have more of... you know, schooling, and studying. I do. Although I haven't done badly. You know. I, I, I learnt a lot... and I've- I read. So, I'm, you know, I'm- I'm basically well-informed. And I keep myself occupied and do crossword and I try to keep ahead of... things.

And can you just tell me one last thing. What do you think of Austria or of Austrians or of Germany and Germans today?

Well, quite frankly, I mean, the young people have nothing to do with what happened in the past... And I don't- I don't really think badly of them. You know, I mean they are what they are. I mean, when we go to Austria, they're very polite, and everybody's a doctor. [laughs] And you know. They're trying their best...I think. But... you know, as people, I don't think much of them.

When you go to Austria do you say you're from Vienna? Do you speak...? Yeah.

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And I speak German. Yeah. Yeah. I don't- I don't hide it. Well, I can't hide it, because they know that I'm [laughs] Viennese or German. Yeah.

[1:24:46]

Yeah. And how do you think do other people- in England, I don't know whether- did you have any experience with the- you know, what do you think was the relationship between the refugees and the English Jews?

Well, you know, that's a funny thing, because you know, I just said that my son-in-law is actually from Harrogate. And his parents, they had no idea. No connection with refugees. They didn't mix with refugees, or... you know, they didn't know. Who are refugees? Didn't have a clue.

Yeah.

And people here, also, I mean. You know, some- when- when I spoke to English people and they say, "Where do you come from?" And I say, "From- from Austria." "Oh, Australia!" "Vienna, Australia!" You know, before the war, I think, before the war here in England... there were not a lot of foreigners coming in. It was quite a sensation when they met a foreign person.

Yeah.

This is the impression I have. It was quite something big. "Oh... French." In Vienna, the same, when we had... foreign visitors. When they spoke a different language, it was a big sensation. But I mean now, you know.

And does it bother you when somebody asks you where - where you're from, or...?

Not at all. No.

In England.

No. "Oh, Austria! Lovely!" Now of course there are more. You know. Yes, oh, no, no, no. I've never had bad experience...

OK.

...And I don't hide where I come from. I can't, because I've got an accent.

What about your sister? Just to finish. How, did she settle down and she...?

Oh yeah, yeah. She's... yes. She's - can't hear.

OK. Is there anything else you'd like to mention, which I haven't asked you?

I don't think so, no. I don't think so. I think we covered most... most of the things.

OK, in that case Mrs. Baruch, thank you very much again for sharing...

Pleasure.

... your story with us.

Pleasure.

And we're going to look now at some photographs and some documents.

OK. Probably after you leave, I'll know, I'll remember much more! [laughs]

That can happen but that's normal.

Yeah. Thank you very much for taking the time to interview me.

Thank you.

[End of interview]

[1:27:26]

[1:27:32]

[Start of Photographs and documents]

[Photo 1]

So that picture shows my parents. My mother and my father, and my sister and I. And I think I must have been three years old on that picture. In Vienna. Yes, that was taken in Vienna.

[Photo 2]

This is a... I think a picture from 1931. And it's a school- picture from my school friends. And it is *Fasching* [carnival], which is a kind of festival in Austria.

[1:28:13]

[Photo 3]

This is year '33, and this picture was taken by a professional photographer, I remember that, in- near the Prater. And I can actually remember that, and also remember the colours of what I wore. It's- it's navy blue and a navy- blue hat- cap. And also, a kind of leggings.

And did you go to the Prater a lot?

Yes! We went a lot to the Prater. But this is taken at the photographer there.

[Photo 4]

That was taken in the year 1936, in the grounds of the school I attended.

And the name of the school?

I can't remember the name of the school.

Is the school a Volksschule or Hauptschule?

This must be *Hauptschule*, yeah. Yes.

[Photo 5]

I probably was around ten or eleven years old. That's all I know about this picture.

[Photo 6]

That is my sister... and the year, what was it, '36, I think. Standing actually outside our synagogue, the one we attended in- not far from where we lived.

What street?

I haven't- I really don't know the street but it could have been Servitentempel... Maybe Servitentempel.

And your sister's name please?

Lilly.

[1:30:13]

[Photo 7]

This is a picture of me. I think I was about twelve years old. On the Promenade along the Danube.

And what is the photograph?

[Document 1]

Ah- It's a Makkabi- I joined Makkabi around the year 1938. And this was my identity card for- that shows that I'm a member of Makkabi.

Gerti nothing from you as a child in England?

As a child... What... a child.

As you... no? Anyway, it's not important. These the Viennese ones.

Yeah. I have more recollection of, than when I was with my mother. You know, what happened before was very sort of...

No but I mean with your mother in...?

Oh, with my mother? With my mother?

Yeah.

No.

It wasn't a time to take photographs? No.

No. No.

Of course not.

There wasn't anybody who would want to take a photograph you know. No. We- We- It was difficult to survive.

Yeah. Exactly.

Yeah.

[1:31:29]

[Long audio pause]

[1:33:10]

Once again?

Yes please.

[Photo 8]

Right. This is a picture of my son's Bar Mitzvah, in the year '62. And there is my son, or no, my husband Max and Susan, my daughter.

[Photo 9]

This is a picture with my husband, and I think we were on holiday in Italy.

Roughly when?

I can't remember...

Seventies?

Maybe seventies, yeah.

[Photo 10]

This picture was taken around 1998 with my daughter, her husband and the three boys.

[Photo 11]

This picture is from my ninetieth birthday party, which was in... last June. And this is Susan, my daughter. And it was a lovely, lovely party.

[Photo 12]

OK this is my great-granddaughter, Lilly, who is now two and a half. And she is the daughter of my granddaughter, Nina. So... Yeah.

[Document 2]

Yeah. This is my... British- This is when I became a British citizen. And this is the year- what did- we said, forty...

Nine.

Forty-nine. And that's the certificate.

[Audio pause]

[1:34:55]

This is when he came...

[1:35:55]

[Document 3]

This is the document of my husband, that was issued to him to come- permitted him to come to England. Into England. That was in 9 – when was it? ...I can't remember... what year. ... '38. 1938, yeah.

[Document 4]

This is what we used to called a *Stammbuch* in Vienna. And all my school friends wrote little poems for me, probably when I left the *Volkschule* to go to the *Hauptschule*.

Thank you.

So, this is an entry from Gerti Baruch's *Poesiealbum*, which I think is very poignant, so I'm going to read it in German:

*Die Erinnerung ist ein Paradies,
aus dem wir nicht vertrieben werden können.
Zur freundlichen Erinnerung an Deine Lehrerin, Maria Parzer.
Wien, am 30. November 1936*

*Memory is a paradise,
From which we cannot be expelled.
To remind you of your teacher, Maria Parzer.*

Mrs Baruch, thank you very much for this interview...

Pleasure.

...And for sharing your story, and photographs and documents. Thank you.

Pleasure.

[End of photographs and documents]

[1:37:29]